

Translational Research Grant (TRG)

Proposal Guidelines & Instructions

Deadline for Application

FY2027 Cycle 2 Proposal Deadline

NOON, Wednesday, January 27, 2027

At-A-Glance Overview

All applicants should read these TRG Proposal Guidelines & Instructions thoroughly prior to preparing an application. If you have any questions about the program, use the contact information at the end of this document.

- **Important First Step** - The PI must register for an account on the NCBiotech Funding Portal at least five days prior to the deadline in order to submit a proposal. The funding portal link is <https://ncbiotech.fluxx.io>.
 - If you have applied for a grant using the funding portal previously (for any NCBiotech funding program), you do not need to register again.
- A maximum of \$130,000 may be requested, with a \$14,000 supplement available to engage the required project manager.
- Projects may last up to 24 months.
- No match is required, except for any request for a single piece of equipment costing over \$25,000, in which case a 25% cash match is required.
- NCBiotech grants do not pay for any type of overhead or indirect costs.
- A two-stage review process includes evaluation of the written proposal followed by invitations to select teams to pitch-style presentations.
 - For those invited to pitch, pitch presentations will be scheduled **March 22 – 26, 2027**.

TRG projects are team-driven and milestone-based, to advance scientific discoveries towards commercialization opportunities.

- ❖ **Team-driven projects** must include the following Team members:
 - Principal Investigator
 - Project Manager
 - Technology Transfer Officer
 - End User
 - Business Case Advisor (optional)
- ❖ **Milestone-based technical projects** plans must include:
 - Clear study designs with appropriate controls
 - Quantifiable data collection and analysis
 - Identifiable go/no-go decision-making points and endpoints
 - Clearly defined milestones with success criteria
 - Contingency plans

Table of Contents

Proposal Guidelines & Instructions.....	i
Deadline for Application	i
At-A-Glance Overview.....	i
Translational Research Grant Proposal Guidelines & Instructions.....	1
Purpose	1
Pre-Submission Information	1
Online Submission Portal - Important First Step	1
Pitch Presentation.....	2
Eligibility.....	2
Eligible Institutions.....	2
Principal Investigator Eligibility.....	2
Intellectual Property Eligibility.....	2
Program Details.....	2
Team-Driven Research.....	2
Milestone-based Project Plan	5
Examples of Translational Research Projects	6
Successful Outcomes of a Translational Research Grant Project.....	6
Review Process and Evaluation Criteria.....	7
Review Process	7
Evaluation Criteria.....	8
Other Program Information	10
Preliminary Consultation	10
Resubmissions.....	10
Information Release.....	10
Confidentiality.....	10
Final Decision	10
Notification	10
Post-award Oversight	11
Kick-off meeting.....	11
Quarterly written reports	11
Milestone Achievement – Request for Release of Funds.....	11
Final technical and financial reports.....	11
Follow-up impact surveys	11
Application Instructions.....	12
Step 1: Read the Guidelines & Instructions.....	12
General Proposal Formatting Guidelines.....	12

Step 2: Prepare the Team Composition Form	13
Step 3: Prepare the Translational Research Project Technical Proposal.....	13
Proposal Requirements.....	13
Convert Your Technical Proposal into a PDF Document.....	17
Step 4: Complete the Budget Package.....	17
Budget Guidelines	17
Budget Package Instructions.....	19
Step 5: Supporting Documents	21
Required Letters of Commitment	22
For projects involving human subjects or animal studies (required)	23
For projects requesting a single piece of equipment costing more than \$25,000.....	24
Step 6: Complete the Coversheet	24
Step 7: Complete the Online Application Form.....	24
Complete all fields of the TRG online application form.....	24
Step 8: Attach the Required Documents	25
Step 9: Review and Submit	25
Submission Notification	26
Contact Information.....	26
Glossary.....	27

Translational Research Grant Proposal Guidelines & Instructions

Purpose

North Carolina's technology-based economy is fueled by the innovative research taking place in universities and research institutions across the state, but groundbreaking ideas are just the beginning. The results of basic research must successfully undergo the translational phase of development in order to result in the new technologies and products that solve problems and foster economic growth. NCBiotech is committed to supporting North Carolina's life sciences researchers through this critical stage of technical development and to maximizing the impact of university research in the marketplace.

TRG projects explore potential commercial applications or initiate the early commercial development of university-held life sciences inventions. The invention or technology being developed must have the potential to solve a real-world problem as a commercial product in the life sciences sector.

The goals of the TRG program are:

- Advance basic research discoveries towards product-focused translational development
- Generate data that addresses important technical and scientific product development milestones, addresses the concerns of potential licensees or investors, or otherwise de-risks the technology for a specific commercial application
- Enable strategic "go/no-go" decision-making regarding further technology development and/or pursuit of intellectual property protection
- Enable technology licensing efforts by the university
- Establish goal-oriented partnerships between university scientists, product development professionals, and key stakeholders

Pre-Submission Information

All application materials can be found on the TRG webpage at: ncbiotech.org/TRG.

Online Submission Portal - Important First Step

The Principal Investigator for the TRG proposal must register for an account on the NCBiotech Funding Portal at least **five (5)** days prior to the deadline in order to submit a proposal. The link to create an account is: ncbiotech.fluxx.io.

- **If you have applied for a grant using the Funding Portal previously** (for any NCBiotech funding program), you do not need to register again.

Pitch Presentation

Competitive proposals will be invited for a required pitch presentation to be scheduled for **March 22 - 26, 2027** (see page 6 for details).

Eligibility

Eligible Institutions

Proposals may be submitted by any North Carolina university or non-profit research organization.

- ⊗ *Projects that appear to be subsidized R&D for any commercial entity may be administratively declined. Direct funding of R&D expenses for commercial firms, except contracted services, even if they have ties to NC-based universities and research institutions, is not consistent with the objectives of the program.*

Principal Investigator Eligibility

At the time of submission, the Principal Investigator (PI) must hold a full-time, tenure-track or tenured faculty appointment, or an appointment as full-time research faculty with a dedicated independent lab at the applicant institution, or an equivalent faculty designation in a medical/professional school.

- ⊗ *The PI may not have more than two active awards from the North Carolina Biotechnology Center at the same time.*

Intellectual Property Eligibility

Eligible projects support inventions that, at a minimum, have been disclosed to the university's technology transfer office at the time of application.

The applicant must attest that the IP rights are assigned to the applicant's institution and have not been committed through license or option to license to any third party at the time of application.

Program Details

Key attributes of the TRG program are **scientific projects that are team-driven and milestone-based**, with post-award oversight by NCBiotech staff, as described below. Please review the evaluation criteria beginning on page 7 for more information on the features of a successful TRG project.

Team-Driven Research

The TRG application should clearly identify the contributing team members and define how the efforts of each will be coordinated to achieve the proposed project outcomes. A TRG team is comprised of four required core members and one optional member.

Required Team Members

A. *Principal Investigator (PI)*

The faculty researcher responsible for oversight and execution of the technical project.

- ⊗ *The PI may not have a financial relationship with the project manager, end user, or business case advisor(s), whose roles are described below. Any potential conflicts of interest pertaining to financial relationships among team members and/or commercial firms subcontracted through any grant award **MUST** be disclosed in the written proposal.*

B. Project Manager

The applicant is required to identify and obtain a commitment from a project manager prior to submission of the written proposal.

Evidence points to the active participation of an experienced project manager as the best predictor of the success of academic translational research projects.

The project manager is expected to be an integrated member of the project team and is responsible for driving the efficient and timely completion of project tasks and achievement of defined milestones. This person will be responsible for coordinating team activities, scheduling regular team meetings, and submitting quarterly project reports to NCBIotech.

The TRG project manager will preferably have direct experience with managing technology or product development projects in industry or other non-academic settings.

To ensure that the project management component is addressed, supplemental funds of up to \$14,000 may be requested to engage the services of a qualified project manager. These funds are in addition to the \$130,000 maximum for the base grant. More details are provided in the Budget section, page 20.

In the event that qualified project managers are not available at the applicant's university or through other sources, NCBIotech staff can provide a list of resources for identifying qualified individuals, if requested at least three weeks before the submission deadline.

NCBIotech will not be responsible for any communications, contacts, or recommendations in selecting the project manager. The choice of the project manager is wholly the responsibility of the applicant.

- ⊗ *Research personnel working in the PI's laboratory are not eligible to serve as project managers.*
- ⊗ *The project manager may not have a financial relationship with any other team member, including the PI or the Business Case Advisor.*

C. Technology Transfer Office Representative

(or administrator responsible for the intellectual property (IP) and licensing interests of the university)

- Corroborates the current status of IP protection related to the technology.
- Confirms the university's intent to continue investing in the protection and/or licensing of the associated IP.
- Participates as an integrated team member in project calls/meetings.

D. End-User (Potential Licensee, Clinician, or Practitioner)

A representative target customer of the proposed commercial product who:

- Provides an independent “voice-of-customer” confirmation of the potential usefulness of the technology. Advises the team on the technical features, performance capabilities, or specifications that the final product will need to demonstrate to be attractive to the target user or partner.
- Confirms a market need for the technology.
- Provides continuous input during the technical development, as needed.
- Provides a non-binding letter of interest that corroborates the potential of the technology/invention, indicates preliminary interest in using or licensing the technology/invention, and attests to the value of the outlined translational project.
- Provides guidance regarding performance specifications, other specific technical milestone(s), or other key product features necessary for the technology to solve real-life problems experienced by the end user.

The specific requirements and activities associated with the end-user role vary depending upon whether this team member is a potential licensee, clinician, or practitioner of the targeted use of the technology or invention. Examples of potential end users are described below:

1. Potential Licensee

Representative of an independent third-party commercial entity that has expressed an interest in licensing the technology being developed.

We recognize that many TRG-funded technologies may eventually be licensed to a university startup company involving the faculty inventor and/or other founders. In these situations, we encourage applicants to also include a letter from an entirely independent and established company in the target market which provides credible corroboration of the commercial potential of the technology, and corroboration of the value of the project and milestones proposed.

- ⊗ *The PI may not have a financial relationship with the end user, project manager, or business case advisor(s). Any potential conflicts of interest pertaining to financial relationships among team members and/or commercial firms subcontracted through any grant award **MUST** be disclosed in the written proposal.*
- ⊗ *Projects that appear to be subsidized R&D for any commercial entity may be administratively declined. Direct funding of R&D expenses for commercial firms, except contracted services, even if they have ties to NC-based universities and research institutions, is not consistent with the objectives of the program.*

2. Clinician

Certified healthcare provider (M.D., P.A., R.N., D.V.M., etc.) who has clinical expertise in the proposed application field of the technology (e.g., surgery, treatment of autoimmune diseases, etc.). Key opinion leaders are welcomed.

3. Practitioner

Practicing potential end-user (farmer, researcher, *etc.*) in the associated target market (*e.g.*, crop production).

E. **Business Case Advisor (BCA) - Optional Team Member**

The BCA is an optional team member who contributes independent commercial guidance to the team as needed.

Up to \$20,000 of the TRG budget may be used to undertake well-defined business case activities that result in one or more deliverables. Examples of allowable business case activities are listed on page 18.

The BCA role allows for a wide variety of relevant experiences and backgrounds, including but not limited to:

- Business expert associated with the university, such as an entrepreneur-in-residence (EIR), business school faculty member, or university staff responsible for new venture development.
- Commercial experts outside the university, such as industry-experienced product development consultants, serial entrepreneurs, or investors with experience funding and/or serving on the boards of life sciences companies.
- Representatives of local entrepreneurship support organizations.

Many organizations throughout the state provide business or product development assistance and could potentially serve as BCAs.

- ⊗ *The Business Case Advisor may not have a financial relationship with the PI, the project manager, nor may the BCA be a member of the PI's laboratory.*
- ⊗ *The Business Case Advisor may not be employed by or have a financial relationship with any commercial entities acting as the End User or as a potential licensee.*
- ⊗ *Business case activities and technology development plans cannot be the sole deliverable of a TRG project. TRG projects must have a dedicated scientific or technical project, with allowable business case activities as a sub-project.*

Milestone-based Project Plan

A TRG project operates in the translational research phase of development and, therefore, must be centered on a focused, achievable scientific or technical research project with clearly defined milestones, success criteria, and go/no-go decision-making points.

Note that foundational (basic) research studies designed to primarily delineate underlying biological mechanisms are typically not considered for TRG funding. Compelling TRG projects are those for which the underlying biological mechanisms have been suitably established so as to support early product development.

Establishing well-defined, realistic, and appropriate milestones with clearly defined success criteria for

each, is crucial, as release of award fund tranches are based on timely achievement of these milestones.

The research plan must include one or more milestones for each scientific objective of the study. Milestones, as defined in the Glossary, page 26, must be proposed such that there is a clear mid-point for the project associated with a go/no-go decision-making point.

Disbursements of project funds will be triggered by the achievement of one or more of these project milestones. A 50-40-10 disbursement strategy will be employed by NCBIotech to encourage the timely completion of critical milestones (see Post-Award Oversight below for details).

- ⊗ *Technical project activities cannot be subcontracted to any commercial firm that has a financial relationship with either the PI(s), the project manager, the End User, and/or the BCA. These arrangements carry the risk that the project may appear as subsidized R&D for a company, which is not consistent with the objectives of the TRG program.*

Examples of Translational Research Projects

- Proof-of-concept and feasibility studies
- Compound screening against a validated target
- Prototype development
- Scale-up pilot studies
- Optimization studies
- Studies designed to independently reproduce or confirm crucial preliminary findings
- ⊗ Proposals primarily focused on artificial intelligence (AI), in silico modeling and/or simulations, or in-silico experiments are highly discouraged.

Successful Outcomes of a Translational Research Grant Project

- Data that is used by the university to determine whether to support its continued investment in intellectual property protection (*i.e.*, go/no-go)
- Data that satisfactorily addresses concerns presented by a potential licensee or strategic partner and enables the execution of a license to the core IP, subsequent investment, or a strategic partnership
- Data that leads to a clear decision to support applications for follow-on funding from national or foundational grant programs
- Data that leads to a clear decision for a company, established or start-up, to license the IP that is the subject of the TRG research project

Review Process and Evaluation Criteria

Review Process

Upon intake, all submitted proposals will be examined by NCBiotech Center staff to ensure the proposed project meets program requirements and goals. The TRG review process includes evaluation of the written proposal with associated materials and a pitch-style presentation.

Written Review

Each written proposal and their supporting materials will be reviewed in writing by 2-3 commercialization and scientific/technical experts consisting of NCBiotech staff and external professionals with significant industry experience in developing and commercializing life sciences technologies. The reviewers will be asked to consider and rate the proposals on all of the evaluation criteria listed below.

Pitch Presentation

The pitch presentation is an integral part of the TRG proposal materials as it prepares teams to describe their science quickly and convincingly, with an emphasis on potential future commercialization pathways. The TRG pitch provides a similar experience as presenting to potential investors. All members of the TRG team are expected to participate in the presentation, unless precluded by IP concerns.

The TRG teams with top-scoring written reviews will be invited to present their projects in a virtual pitch-style format of no more than 45 minutes to NCBiotech staff and members of the advisory panel. The pitch will consist of a prepared presentation from the entire TRG Team, followed by a question-and-answer session from pitch judges.

Invitations to present will be emailed to the selected teams approximately one to two weeks prior to the presentation date. All members of the team are expected to participate in the presentation, except with prior approval of NCBiotech staff.

For this cycle (FY2027 Cycle 2), the pitch presentations will be held March 22 – 26, 2027.

A selection of morning and afternoon times will be available from which invited teams may choose. Teams submitting TRG proposals should be fully prepared with the entire team to present during one of those days if invited.

Pitch judges will include NCBiotech program staff and members of the TRG Review Panel, which is comprised of Ph.D. - trained scientists who have specific expertise in intellectual property, technology development, commercialization, and entrepreneurship. All pitch judges will sign a confidentiality agreement. Pitch judges will be tasked with evaluating the pitch based on the pitch evaluation criteria listed below.

Evaluation Criteria

Each proposal will be evaluated on the likelihood that the proposed work will advance the technology toward intellectual property protection and/or commercialization.

Written Proposal Review

Review criteria include the following:

Effective Team

1. Is there evidence that the project team will collaborate effectively together during the project?
2. Does the team have the relevant skills, expertise, knowledge, and resources for the project to succeed?

Stage of Translational Research

1. Has the PI established a sufficient scientific foundation in advance of the TRG submission to support the proposed work?
2. Is the proposed study truly translational?

Translational Research Study Design

1. Are there clear and detailed descriptions of all aspects of the technical project?
2. Is it likely that the study will generate the necessary data to advance the line of translational research to the next stage of development?
3. Is it likely that the project will yield results that support go/no-go decisions regarding further technology development and/or IP investment?

Timelines

1. Does the study design and sequence of tasks fit with the timelines proposed?

Milestones and Success Metrics

1. Are there clear and precise milestones linked to each task?
2. Are the success metrics clearly defined for each task/milestone?
3. Is the first proposed milestone achievable within the first 9-12 months of the project?
4. Will achievement of the mid-point milestone(s) reflect a go/no-go decision-making point?

Realistic and Compelling Market Potential and Product Goals

1. Does this project target a verifiable unmet need?
2. Where applicable, are the business-case activities associated with deliverables that are well-defined and achievable, as well as well integrated for this stage of the project?
3. What are the competitive advantages of this technology over existing technologies that meet the same market need?

Budget

1. Are the proposed technical and commercialization (if applicable) activities an appropriate use of funds?
2. Are the budgeted line items appropriate and well justified in the proposal?

Potential Impact of Project

1. How well is the proposed study positioned to attract further funding once the project ends?
2. Will the project further support or clarify the IP claims and/or improve the patentability of the invention?
3. What may be the commercial and societal benefits of the proposed study?
4. Will the proposed project enhance, de-risk, or generate value in the development of the technology?

Pitch Presentation Evaluation

The pitch evaluation criteria include the following:

Overall

1. Is this proposal fundable with the information presented, as is?

Pitch

1. How well did the team sell their story? Was it dynamic and engaging?

Team

1. Did the presenter convince you their team has the requisite skills to build a technology that will lead to commercialization?
2. Was the presentation inclusive of all team members/evidence that all team members contributed?

Study Design

1. Is this a truly translational technology with a strong scientific foundation?
2. Is the study design clear, comprehensible, and without significant problems?
3. Will milestones guide development towards success?

Intellectual Property

1. Does the technology transfer office have a plan to advance the IP?
2. Will the project generate follow-on IP?

Business Case

1. Did the team build a business case for the technology?
2. Is this a compelling market opportunity?

Other Program Information

Preliminary Consultation

A pre-submission consultation is strongly encouraged.

Please contact NCBiotech program staff at least three weeks prior to the deadline if you would like to schedule a consultation. Use the contact information at the end of this document.

Resubmissions

Only one resubmission of a previously unfunded TRG proposal is allowed. If resubmitting a TRG proposal, please contact the Director of Grant Process Operations as indicated at the end of these guidelines to schedule a mandatory re-submission consultation. Resubmitted proposals must include a thorough response to each concern expressed by reviewers of the previous application.

- *Resubmitted proposals must follow the current guidelines and include updated letters of support and other documentation.*

Information Release

The North Carolina Biotechnology Center announces its awards through press releases and other publications. These communications typically include the Project Title and Public Information Summary that are provided by the applicant with the online application. No information is released on declined proposals.

Confidentiality

As part of our grants review process, the Biotechnology Center routinely shares the contents of grant applications with both internal and/or external experts to assess the merits of each application. The Biotechnology Center will endeavor to maintain the confidentiality of all information provided by the applicant. While measures are in place to assure the appropriate handling of all information provided, the applicant is responsible for limiting the disclosure of any sensitive information that should not be shared outside of the Biotechnology Center.

We encourage applicants to consult with their university's technology transfer office (academic applicants) or an intellectual property professional for more specific counsel as necessary.

Final Decision

Final award decisions will be made by a designated sub-committee of NCBiotech's Board of Directors.

Notification

Notification of awards will be made within two weeks of the final decision date. For this cycle (FY2027 Cycle 2), notification is anticipated to be made by mid-June 2027.

Post-award Oversight

The TRG program includes several post-award activities that are intended to facilitate the timely and successful completion of the awarded project.

Kick-off meeting

An in-person or conference call kick-off meeting with NCBIotech staff is required. The purpose of the meeting is to review roles and responsibilities, to discuss the milestones and the steps to be taken to achieve those milestones, and to review the reporting requirements for the award.

Quarterly written reports

Quarterly reports written by the project manager are required to keep team members and NCBIotech staff apprised of the progress towards achieving the milestones. These reports will be a brief (2 pp.) summary of technical and business case (if applicable) activities to date, approximate timelines towards completion of milestones, changes to team composition, challenges faced, *etc.* The reports should include key findings and data when available.

Milestone Achievement – Request for Release of Funds

Milestone achievement reporting requirements are similar to those for quarterly reports, but also include:

1. Technical reporting showing data and evidence that the established first half milestone(s) has been achieved, and
2. A current financial status report that presents an accounting of the project funds expended and remaining.

Upon receipt of the Milestone Achievement – Request for Release of Funds reports, NCBIotech staff will schedule a meeting/call with the project team to discuss the report contents. If it is determined that the required milestone(s) has been achieved, NCBIotech staff will authorize the release of the second tranche of funds.

Final technical and financial reports

Final technical and financial reports are required for the release of remaining grant funds. The technical report provides a final analysis of the project, including achievement of proposed milestones, and data to support the successful completion of each aim. The final report will also include updates from each team member re: current IP and licensing status, the business case advisor project (if applicable), and a discussion of next steps.

Follow-up impact surveys

After a grant is closed, participation is expected in periodic surveys to track information on subsequent funding, patents, licenses, publications, jobs, companies created, *etc.* that are a direct result of the award. This information will be used to demonstrate the impact of our programs and may be collected for up to 10 years.

Application Instructions

Application materials are located on the TRG webpage at ncbiotech.org/TRG.

A complete TRG proposal is comprised of **five** PDF documents:

1. Coversheet signed by the PI and a representative of the institution's sponsored research office
2. Team Composition Form
3. Translational Research Project Narrative
4. Budget Package
5. Supporting documentation

Please follow the steps below and use the checklist provided on the website to make sure all components of the proposal application are included.

Step 1: Read the Guidelines & Instructions

Read these TRG Program Guidelines & Instructions thoroughly prior to preparing an application. If you have any questions about the program, use the contact information at the end of this document.

It is recommended that you consider the Evaluation Criteria (pages 6-9) when composing your proposal.

- ⊗ *Applications that do not follow all requirements and instructions may be administratively declined without external review.*
- ⊗ ***Applications that do not have a fully signed coversheet at the time of application may be administratively declined without external review. Signatures of the sponsored research office are required and can take several weeks to obtain. Plan your submission accordingly.***

General Proposal Formatting Guidelines

- Use standard font (such as Times New Roman, Calibri, or Cambria) generally no smaller than 12 point.
- Page set-up should be for single-spacing on 8½"x11" paper.
- Number each page.
- Margins should be ¾" to 1".
- Each section should be titled using the header sections listed below and should match the Table of Contents.
- Do not use logos or letterhead on any pages of the proposal except for support letters.
- Judicious use of headings and white space for ease of reading is appreciated.

Step 2: Prepare the Team Composition Form

Use the Team Composition form provided on the NCBiotech TRG website (ncbiotech.org/TRG) to describe the specific roles and responsibilities for the Principal Investigator, Project Manager, Technology Transfer Office Representative, End User, Business Case Advisor (optional), and any other key personnel (*e.g.*, co-PIs, co-investigators, post-docs, research technicians, *etc.*).

The Team Composition Form includes:

- Team member biographical data (name, title, department, institution) and roles/responsibilities with a brief summary of relevant experience for this project for each team member, as well as for key personnel.
- Disclosure of potential conflict of interests (for all team members)
- Current and pending support (for scientific/technical research team members and key personnel only)
- The biosketch for the PI. Use of the NCBiotech Biosketch Form is required. Other biosketch forms (*e.g.*, NIH, NSF, *etc.*) are not allowed. *No other biosketches are required.*

Step 3: Prepare the Translational Research Project Technical Proposal

Proposal Requirements

The Proposal must include the sections listed below. Use the headings provided to identify the sections of the proposal.

A. Table of Contents

(does not count toward page limit; should be on a separate page)

Include title, PI name, institution, and sections of the proposal with page numbers.

B. Project Overview

(1 page maximum; does not count toward page limit; should be on a separate page)

Summarize the entire project as it relates to the purpose/problem to be addressed, methodology, anticipated results, and potential impact towards commercialization of the technology.

C. Translational Research Project Narrative

The technical narrative has a 10 page limit and should include all sections below. Use the headings provided.

1. **Technology/Product in development** (suggested 1 paragraph)
Briefly describe what you envision your “product” to be and how it will be used.
2. **Expected application for technology/product (suggested 2-3 sentences)**
 - Define the problem or unmet need that your technology/product will address.

- Reference the current “gold standard” solution and explain how your technology/product is superior.

3. Intellectual Property Position (suggested ½ page)

The minimum IP eligibility status for TRG projects is an invention disclosure submitted to the university’s technology transfer office at the time of application.

The applicant must include a statement indicating that the IP rights are assigned to the applicant’s institution and have not been committed through license, option, or letter-of-intent to license to any third party at the time of application.

Describe the intellectual property held by the university surrounding this technology or line of research. This description must include:

- a. Current type of IP protection (invention disclosure, provisional patent application, patent application, PCT application, issued patent, trademark, copyright, trade secret, *etc.*)
- b. Title and brief summary of claims
- c. Patent application numbers/patent number and issue date if applicable
- d. Filing dates
- e. Assignee name(s), inventor name(s), *etc.*
- f. A description of the nature of all IP protection to date relating to this innovation (*e.g.*, composition of matter, field of use, manufacturing methods, *etc.*) and the strategic value provided (*e.g.*, freedom to operate, barrier to competitive entry).
- g. A description of how the proposed research will influence, support, and/or clarify the IP claims, improve the patentability of the invention, improve the licensing position, or other considerations related to the IP.

4. Foundational Research (suggested 1-2 pages)

Describe the status of background and foundational research that has been done to date, both as the state-of-the-art for the field and in the laboratory of the PI. Explain why this collective knowledge base is sufficient to support translation towards the innovative solution advanced by this project.

5. Current Stage of Development (suggested ½ page)

Describe where the technology is in the translational research/product development process (*e.g.*, prototyping, feasibility testing, pre-clinical testing, *etc.*).

6. Milestones (suggested 1 page)

Provide *clearly defined and realistic* milestones that align with the Translational Research Project Plan (below). Milestones indicate the completion of key project tasks and are different than goals, aims, or deliverables.

For this project, list each milestone(s) to be achieved and for each milestone list:

- a. The objective(s) for completing the milestone(s)
- b. The milestone success criteria (e.g., How do you define success? How do you know when you have met a milestone?)
- c. One or more contingency tasks to be completed if the proposed milestones are not achievable

Indicate which milestone(s) will serve as the Milestone Achievement – Funding Tranche Request for Release of Funds milestone(s) that will trigger the release of the second tranche of funding. This milestone achievement point should represent the point at which approximately half of the technical project plan milestones have been successfully completed.

7. *Translational Research Project Plan (suggested up to 5 pages)*

- a. Describe in detail the tasks and experiments that will be performed in order to meet the project milestones. Include study design, protocols, measurement methodology, end points, and data analysis methods.
- b. Discuss any potential challenges and provide contingency plans for each experiment or protocol.
- c. Explain how the research plan will:
 - Provide clear and unambiguous results that support go/no-go decisions regarding continued development of the technology, and/or
 - De-risk the technology for further development and funding
- d. Describe the critical next steps for translating your invention, including those steps that will be achieved after completion of this project.

D. Business Case

(does not count towards overall page limit, 2 page maximum)

1. *General commercialization information*

(required for all proposals, even if the team does not include a Business Case Advisor)

Describe the anticipated path towards commercialization or towards a market. Include the following details:

- Who is your customer? Who will buy your product/technology?
- Who/what/where is your target market?
- What regulatory approvals will your technology/product need to achieve in order to enter the market?
- What competition is present in the target market?
- What is the size of the target market?

Please indicate which, if any, of the questions above will be addressed by a Business Case Advisor.

2. **Business Case Development Activities**

(required only if the project team includes a Business Case Advisor)

Examples of appropriate Business Case activities for which funding may be directed include, but are not limited to:

- A long-term technology development plan that identifies critical developmental milestones required to meet end-user, investor or regulatory requirements and presents a logical roadmap to guide further technical development.
- Market research intended to assess the commercial opportunity for the invention/product.
- Analysis of the intellectual property (IP) landscape within the intended application.
- A regulatory plan or assessment of the anticipated regulatory path necessary to gain market approval.
- Competitive or SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) analyses of the market.
- Studies designed to assess commercial feasibility and guide further IP protection or investment.
- Analysis of other factors influencing commercial development.

The proposal should describe how the BCA project will complement the scientific/technical project and how the BCA will be integrated into the project team.

This section of the proposal should describe in detail the scope of work for which the BCA will be responsible, including:

- The specific activities and deliverables
- The methods and sources used to develop the business case, technology development plan, *etc.*
- Other information to be gathered that will assess and guide the commercial product development strategy.

E. Project Timeline (does not count toward page limit)

Provide a graphic (*e.g.*, Gantt chart) that depicts the timeline, milestones, and sequence of tasks to complete the research plan, including both technical steps and business case deliverables (if applicable). Indicate in the graphic which team member(s) will perform each step.

F. Bibliography (does not count toward page limit)

Give full citation including title and complete author list for publications cited in the project narrative. If the complete author list is extensive, include the first three (3) authors listed.

Convert Your Technical Proposal into a PDF Document

Once items A-F are created, merge all technical proposal sections into one Technical Project document. Then, convert your proposal document into a PDF file.

- ⊗ *Do not print and scan the proposal into a PDF document as this may cause the size of the PDF to be too large for submission.*

Step 4: Complete the Budget Package

The Budget Package consists of one (1) PDF document that encompasses three parts, which include:

- Budget Form
- Budget Justification
- Quotes

Instructions for completing each section of the budget package are described below.

Prepare your budget using the **Budget Form** provided on the TRG webpage. The form is provided in Excel format and must be converted to a PDF file before submission. Before you convert your Budget Form to a PDF, please scale to print to ensure information is not cut off and additional blank pages are not included in the final document.

Budget Guidelines

Funds can be allocated toward technical and business case aspects of the project.

- A maximum of \$130,000 for project periods up to 24 months may be requested.
- Any single piece of equipment costing over \$25,000 requires a direct 25% cash match.
- No other match is required.
- Up to \$20,000 may be budgeted for Business Case Activities.
- Up to \$14,000 in supplemental funds can be requested for project management services. See details below.
- Please review each budget line item amount for consistency with the project narrative and the accompanying letters of support.

Allowable budget requests

- Salary costs for research scientist(s) and technical personnel directly conducting work on the project, excluding undergraduate and graduate students
- Project manager supplemental expenses (up to \$14,000, see below)
- Laboratory equipment and equipment fees
- Lab supplies, chemicals, disposables, etc.
- Core laboratory fees/costs

- Animal purchase, per diems, and associated costs
- Contractual and consultant fees, including fee-for-service contract research costs
- Business Case Activities Expenses (up to \$20,000)
 - BCA consulting fees
 - Market reports (some reports may be available at reduced cost through the NC Biotechnology Center library)
 - Commissioning an independent professional assessment of the patent landscape or patentability opinion
 - Commissioning an independent professional assessment of the regulatory landscape and pathway
 - Commissioning an independent professional assessment of the market, reimbursement, or competitive landscape

Unallowable budget requests

- ⊗ Indirect costs/overhead/facilities and administrative (F&A) costs
- ⊗ Salary, tuition support, fees, or stipends for any graduate or undergraduate student(s) (this program is not intended to be a support mechanism for students.)
- ⊗ Salary for the Technology Transfer Office Representative
- ⊗ Salary for the End User(s)
- ⊗ Salary for the BCA, if the BCA works for the University in a tech transfer/ innovation/ entrepreneurship/business development role
- ⊗ Travel by ANY personnel to scientific or business conferences or meetings FOR ANY REASON
- ⊗ Legal fees, including licensing or litigation fees
- ⊗ Patenting costs
- ⊗ Publication costs
- ⊗ *Technical project activities cannot be subcontracted to any commercial firm that has a financial relationship with the PI(s), the Project Manager, the BCA, or the End User. Such arrangements carry the risk that the project may appear as subsidized R&D for a company, which is not consistent with the objectives of the program.*
- ⊗ *Salary requests for a to-be-named postdoctoral fellow, research technician, or project team member are strongly discouraged. TRG applications are evaluated on the collective strength of the project team; applications requesting funding for unspecified trainees or team members may not be competitive.*

Supplemental Funds for Project Management Expenses

A qualified project manager is a required member of the TRG project team (see page 2-3 for details). If the services of this individual are not available to the project as a free university resource, applicants may request up to \$14,000 in supplemental funds designated for the salary or fees for project management services.

These supplemental funds are in addition to the \$130,000 maximum for the base grant. These supplemental funds may not be requested for expenses other than project management services.

The Letter of Commitment from the Project Manager should be submitted with the Supporting Documentation, not with the quotes contained in the Budget Package.

Funds for the Business Case Advisor and Business Case Activities Deliverables *(if applicable)*

Requests for Business Case Advisor expenses must be itemized on the budget form, explained in the budget justification, and documented in a quote or statement of work (SOW) from the BCA. This quote or SOW letter should include a brief statement detailing the tasks and activities to be performed and the deliverables to be produced as described in the roles/ responsibilities section of the team composition above, as well as the total costs for all time, materials, and/or expenses.

BCA quotes or Statements of Work should be submitted with the Supporting Documentation, not with the quotes contained in the Budget Package.

Budget Package Instructions

The Budget Package consists of one (1) PDF document that encompasses three parts. The three parts of the Budget Package include:

- 1. Budget Form:** Prepare your budget using the TRG Budget Form provided on the TRG webpage (ncbiotech.org/TRG). Use of the TRG Budget form is required.

It is required that the project title and principal investigator's name be included at the top of the Budget Form.

It is required that the title at the top of the Budget Form match EXACTLY with the title on the Coversheet and the Translational Research Project Technical Proposal.

The Budget Form is provided in Excel format and should be converted to a PDF and merged with the other PDF documents in the budget package.

Please ensure that all line-item row heights and columns widths are fully readable after document conversion.

- ⊗ *Proposals with budget components uploaded as separate files are subject to administrative declination.*

Budget form instructions:

A. Technical Personnel

- All technical personnel who will be paid from grant funds should be included on separate lines.
- Salary and fringe benefit costs should be entered into the column "Amount requested from TRG Grant" Do not separate salary from fringe benefits.

B. Project manager

- Project manager requests cannot exceed \$14,000.
- A Letter of Commitment for the Project Manager must be included among the Supporting Documents. See below for instructions on preparing the Letter of Commitment.

C. Technical Project Direct Costs

- Description of project scientific/technical direct costs – standard laboratory supplies, experimental materials, chemicals and reagents, kits, and equipment, each costing less than \$500, *etc.*
- Experimental costs entered into this section do not require quotes.

D. Contract Manufacturing (CMO), Contract Research (CRO), Core Laboratory (including vivarium per diems), DNA/RNA sequencing and synthesis, animal purchase, contractual, and consultant fees and contractual costs

- **All line items in this section require quotes or Core Laboratory rates to be submitted as part of the Budget Package.**
- All quotes must match the line-item expense exactly.
- All expenses to conduct the technical research plan that are outsourced to a company or a laboratory outside of the PI's lab (including on-campus cores labs such as vivarium, sequencing, microscopy, clinical lab, or mass spectroscopy, *etc.*) or purchased from an external vendor (*e.g.*, animal purchase, DNA/RNA/viral constructs, *etc.*) must be entered as individual line items.

E. Business Case Activities

- Fees, consultant costs, and direct costs cannot exceed \$20,000.
- Description of direct costs related to business case activities - market research report purchases, focus group incentives, intellectual property landscape analysis, *etc.*
- Consultant fees – *e.g.*, Business Case Advisor fees or hourly rate, regulatory consultant costs, market and competitor analysis consultant fees, *etc.*
- Advisor and consultant fees or hourly rates must be described in detail in a Statement of Work or Letter of Commitment included in the Supporting Documents.

F. Lab Equipment, Instruments, and Machinery

Equipment is defined as tangible, nonexpendable property having a useful life of more than one year.

Any single piece of equipment, instrument, and/or machinery over \$500 must be listed in this section of the Budget Form.

Equipment includes software and software subscriptions. For software subscriptions, the cost must be for the duration of the project or a maximum of 2 years access.

Required information:

- Name of equipment, model number if appropriate, vendor, and description of any/all equipment above \$500.

- If an item exceeds \$25,000, a 25% cash match is required, which must be detailed in a Letter of Support by a university representative committing the cash match to the equipment purchase.
- **All equipment in this section requires the inclusion of a quote in the Budget Package.**

2. Budget Justification: All funds requested on the Budget Form must be justified by line item in a separate document and then merged into the Budget Package PDF.

Describe each budget line item and provide justification for each cost. Personnel for whom salary is requested should be identified by name and title in the budget justification.

3. Quotes: If you are not sure which items on the budget require quotes, please seek a consultation regarding your budget.

All quotes must be on letterhead, dated, and signed by the vendor.

Quotes are required for all contracted services, fees/rates, or equipment listed on the budget form, which includes:

- Core facility fees
- Animal purchase and *per diems*
- Contracted manufacturing costs
- Contracted research costs
- Equipment costing over \$500
- Business case development materials

Limit quotes to a maximum of 3 pages each.

- For consultants, a Letter of Commitment or Statement of Work may be provided in lieu of a quote, provided that the letter/SOW is dated, is on letterhead, and directly references the total cost, tasks, and deliverables to be provided.
- For *per diem* or fee schedule documents, the exact rates being used must be clearly highlighted on the quote and justified within the budget justification.

Step 5: Supporting Documents

Please note: Statements of Work (SOW) or quotes for Business Case Activities services and consultants are required, if applicable. All SOW/quotes for consultants should be included within the Supporting Documents listed below.

Combine the following Supporting Documents into a single PDF file.

- ⊗ *Proposals with letters uploaded as separate files are subject to administrative declination.*

Required Letters of Commitment

All letter(s) must be on letterhead, dated, and signed.

1. Letter of Commitment from the Project Manager

This letter should include a brief statement summarizing the activities that this individual/team will perform on the project and the deliverables to be produced, as described in the roles/responsibilities section of the team composition form.

2. Letter of Commitment from the Technology Transfer Office Representative (or appropriate authorized institutional official)

This letter should:

- Confirm the current status of intellectual property (IP) protection relating to the core technology (minimally, an invention disclosure) including filing numbers, titles, and dates where appropriate
- Confirm the university's commitment to continued IP development
- Describe the university's broader IP strategy to be pursued related to this technology
- Provide a non-confidential summary of any licensing discussions to date relating to the technology
- Indicate how the proposed project will support continued IP development and licensing efforts

This letter should align with the activities described in the roles/responsibilities section of the team composition form and in the description of the intellectual property contained within the technical narrative.

3. Letter of Commitment from the End User

The letter provided by the End User should:

- Strongly corroborate the potential utility of the technology
- Indicate the necessary specifications or features that the technology must exhibit in order to be of commercial value
- Indicate ongoing commitment to provide recommendations and advice to the team regarding the technical features, performance capabilities, or specifications that the final product will need to demonstrate in order to be attractive to the target user or partner
- Attest to the significance of the project aims to the overall development of the desired product.

In the event that the End User is a potential licensee, this letter of support should be a non-binding letter indicating general interest in potentially licensing the technology as well as indicating the specifications or features that the technology must meet in order to be of further interest. This letter should specifically indicate the value of the proposed project milestones to subsequent licensing discussions.

4. Letter of Commitment or Statement of Work from the Business Case Advisor (if applicable)

This letter should include a brief statement summarizing the activities that this individual/team will perform on the project, the deliverables to be produced, the hourly rate and approximate hours to complete the tasks to produce the deliverables, or the total costs of the business case activities to be conducted as described in the roles/responsibilities section of the team composition form.

An SOW can also serve as the Letter of Commitment to the project, and this should be reflected within the SOW.

5. Letter of Commitment or Statement of Work from any/all Business Case Consultants (if applicable)

This/these letter(s) should include a brief statement summarizing the activities that this individual/team will perform on the project, the deliverables to be produced, the hourly rate and approximate hours to complete the tasks to produce the deliverables, or the total costs of the business case activities to be conducted.

For projects involving human subjects or animal studies (required)

IACUC or IRB Notification or Approval

- A letter from the PI's Institution's IACUC or IRB documenting that notification of the proposed research project has been made at the time of the application and that approval from the IACUC/IRB will be sought if the project is awarded if an approved protocol is not currently in place. This letter must be on the institutional IACUC/IRB's letterhead, signed, and dated.

Or

- Documentation from the applicant's institution's IACUC or IRB stating that an approved protocol is in place to support the research. This letter or other documentation must provide the name of the investigator of the approved protocol, all persons entitled to work under that approved protocol, the title of the approved protocol, the approval date and duration of the approved protocol, and confirmation from the IACUC/IRB that the proposed research project falls within the approved protocol.

If the investigator of the approved protocol is not listed on the Team Composition Form, then a letter of intent to collaborate on the project with the PI must be included in the Supporting Documentation. This letter must acknowledge that the project will use the approved protocol under the collaborator's name. This letter must be on the collaborator's institutional letterhead, signed, and dated by the collaborator. This letter does not replace the letter from the IACUC/IRB.

Power Analysis

- Provide a power analysis indicating that the studies proposed have the correct number of human or animal subjects required to achieve an *a priori* confidence level of at least 80%.

Or

- For proof-of-concept studies, provide the rationale for why a power analysis is not warranted.

For projects requesting a single piece of equipment costing more than \$25,000

Letter of Commitment of matching funds (required)

The signed and dated letter should come from an individual authorized to commit the matching funds and should include the dollar amount of the match (25% of the cost of the piece of equipment).

Step 6: Complete the Coversheet

Use the Cover Sheet form provided on the TRG webpage (ncbiotech.org/TRG).

It is required that the title on the Coversheet match EXACTLY with the title on the Translational Research Project Technical Proposal and at the top of the Budget Form.

The Cover Sheet must be signed by the PI and an authorized official of the Sponsored Research Office of the university or non-profit.

Step 7: Complete the Online Application Form

After completing the registration in the funding portal (Fluxx™), log into your Fluxx account. The TRG application form will be located under the “Apply for Funding” folder at the left of the screen. Follow the instructions provided.

The PI for the proposal must submit the proposal through her/his account. TRG proposals cannot be submitted through accounts belonging to OSR personnel or others.

Click [here](#) for more information on the registration and application process.

Proposals sent by e-mail or hard copy will not be accepted.

Complete all fields of the TRG online application form

A. Project Summary

Enter the following project information into the corresponding sections on the online application. Space limitations apply.

- IP status
- IRB/IACUC requirements

B. Public Information Summary

The online application form includes a field for the Public Information Summary. If your proposal is funded, this concise, easy-to-read summary may be used in Biotechnology Center press releases and other publications.

This summary is intended for a general audience, allowing the Biotechnology Center to share granting information with the general public and other interested parties.

- This summary should not include complex scientific terminology.
- The summary should convey to the citizens of North Carolina why the project is important.
- The maximum allowable length for this summary is 50 words.

C. Start Date

The earliest projected start date for TRG awards is **July 15, 2027**, depending on the terms and conditions of the award.

Step 8: Attach the Required Documents

Follow the instructions for attaching the five required documents to the online application:

- Coversheet
- Team Composition Form
- Translational Research Project Proposal
- Budget Form/Justification/Quotes
- Supporting Documentation

Important note: Only one of each of the proposal files may be attached to the application for a total of five attachments.

Step 9: Review and Submit

Carefully review your application package for completeness and consistency throughout, using the checklist provided on the website. Then, submit your TRG application prior to the Program Deadline.

Submission of your grant application indicates that:

1. You have read and understand the information and directions in this Application Package and agree to be bound by the conditions stated herein.
2. You release the North Carolina Biotechnology Center from any claim for damages caused by:
 - a. Disclosures required under the provisions of any North Carolina or United States law, statute, or regulation
 - b. Disclosures made in connection with the North Carolina Biotechnology Center's funding review and approval process
 - c. Disclosures required by rule or order of any court of competent jurisdiction
 - d. Any other non-negligent, inadvertent, unintentional, unknowing, or immaterial disclosure.
3. All research conducted during the proposed project is performed in accordance with established university policies and procedures, including—but not limited to—policies and procedures applicable to research involving human subjects, laboratory animals, or hazardous agents and materials.

4. If the project proposed involves vertebrate animals, the project complies with federal guidelines for vertebrate animal care and experimentation.

Submission Notification

You will receive a confirmation email notifying you that the Biotechnology Center has received your application. Any Center request for additional proposal information must be addressed promptly.

Contact Information

Michelle Collins, MPA, CRA, CPRA
Director, Grant Process Operations
North Carolina Biotechnology Center
michelle_collins@ncbiotech.org
(919) 549-8845

Glossary

Translational research: Scientific studies that are designed to convert the knowledge of biologic mechanisms discovered in the laboratory, clinic, and community into interventions that improve the health of individuals and populations.

Milestones: Unambiguous checkpoints that correspond to the successful completion of key project steps and tasks.

Milestones describe discrete, stand-alone concrete, and measurable points along the technology development pathway that have concrete and measurable success metrics associated with them.

Milestones that begin with or use the word “optimize” are not concrete and measurable, and thus are not advisable as TRG Milestones.

- Milestone-driven research is used to ensure research is focused on a well-defined goal and that project goals are achieved in a timely and efficient manner. As translational research is inherently high-risk, the use of milestones provides clear indicators of a project's continued success or emergent difficulties.

Objective: The rationale for conducting the proposed tasks in order to achieve milestone completion.

Tasks: The steps associated with the performance of the research project

- These are activities that typically have defined start and end times.

Deliverables: The work products or measurable accomplishments that were created at each key arm of the project.