

# **Terms of Reference**

## **Request for Tender Submissions**

**Accelerating Translation of Type 1 Diabetes Research**

**A Program to Empower Researchers, Inspire Change and Impact Lives**

**Submissions Open**

**15 December 2022**

**Submission Deadline**

**7 March 2023**

**Submissions must be emailed to [crn@jdrf.org.au](mailto:crn@jdrf.org.au) by 5 pm AEST/ADST**

## 1. Purpose

The JDRF Clinical Research Network funds world class research in Type 1 Diabetes in Australia and aims to accelerate the progress of early-stage scientific discoveries to impact the lives of people living with T1D.

Tenders are invited from parties external to JDRF to assist in the design, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of a Translational Program for “*Accelerating Translation of Type 1 Diabetes Research*”. Tenders may be submitted by a single entity or conjointly by more than one entity to form a highly specialised team with proven expertise in assisting translation and commercialisation of investigator-led research.

Interested parties are highly encouraged to contact the JDRF team to discuss strategic fit and proposed approach.

## 2. Background

Type 1 diabetes (T1D) is a serious, chronic autoimmune condition that affects 127,000 Australians<sup>1</sup>, and nearly 9 million people globally<sup>2</sup>. T1D is characterised by a sudden and pronounced onset in children, adolescents and young adults, requiring immediate and life-long dependence on insulin due to autoimmune destruction of insulin producing beta cells in the pancreas. To date there is no cure for T1D, and administration of insulin via daily injections or a pump remains the treatment for people living with T1D.

JDRF is a leading non-profit funder of T1D research with the ultimate goal to find cures for T1D. While the focus of our research is on search for cures, we also support research and programs which focus on easing the burden for those living with the disease. For over two decades JDRF invested nearly \$260M of funds towards globally impactful research projects and programs in Australia.

T1D research in Australia ranks highly on a global scale<sup>3</sup>, but adoption into clinical care remains a challenge<sup>4</sup>. Overcoming this challenge requires an important step out of the laboratory and the translation of research into human trials and health care. *The swift translation of research into clinical care is in the centre of JDRF strategy and is key to treating, preventing, and ultimately curing T1D.*

In 2010, the JDRF Australian Type 1 Diabetes Clinical Research Network (CRN) was established with the support of funding from the Federal Government. Since inception, the JDRF CRN has been committed to building a national framework that supports the most promising T1D research and clinical trials in Australia. To date the JDRF CRN has established a highly successful research ecosystem, bringing together world-class researchers, patients, industry and international partners to answer critical T1D research questions, with a strong focus on patient benefit. In addition to fostering the most outstanding T1D research talent, the JDRF CRN attracts exceptional scientists from other disciplines to broaden the scope of T1D research in Australia.

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<sup>1</sup> [jdrf.org.au](http://jdrf.org.au)

<sup>2</sup> [www.t1dindex.org](http://www.t1dindex.org)

<sup>3</sup> [The Australian Research Impact Analysis](#)

<sup>4</sup> [The Australian Type 1 Diabetes Research Resource Map](#)

In the past 12 years the JDRF CRN initiatives have supported more than 300 researchers across 70 institutions, connecting approximately 2,500 Australians with the latest research, treatments and technologies. The sharp focus on patient benefit is a unique dimension of the JDRF CRN and the patient-centric approach provides a platform to accelerate therapies and amplify research impact.

In 2019, the Australian Government committed a further \$25M to build on prior achievements and increase the impact of JDRF CRN via expansion of its scientific priorities that include supporting “bench to bedside” research and ensuring researchers have the required supporting tools and environment.

The JDRF CRN has established important collaborations with global funding partners, most notably with The Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust to bring in funding of \$25M to support T1D research in Australia. Furthermore, local fundraising by JDRF provides additional support towards Australian research in T1D.

### 3. Objectives of the Program

The contribution of Australian research in T1D is well recognised globally representing approximately 5% of the global scientific literature<sup>3</sup>. As evidence to the quality of T1D research, Australia is a world-leader in the proportion of T1D articles in the top 10% of cited publications<sup>3</sup>. Moreover, Australia ranks among the top 3 nations outside of the U.S. for the share of internationally competitive JDRF grants. However, excellence in research does not necessarily lead to excellence in research translation. Australia performs well in knowledge creation but poorly in translating this knowledge into new products or other innovations to impact patient care<sup>5,6</sup>.

In addition to recognising Australia’s systemic deficiencies in translating fundamental research to clinical outcomes, it appears to JDRF that scientists and clinicians working in T1D research may also be falling behind their counterparts in other disease areas such as oncology and immunology where more robust ecosystems exist.

The challenges facing T1D researchers in Australia to progress their scientific discoveries to clinical care or to a good business opportunity are many. Perhaps the most significant barrier is the mindset, or lack of it, among researchers to seriously consider the translation pathway as part of the research process. We have also recognised that many Universities and research institutions do not foster a strong culture of industry engagement and collaboration as much as could be beneficial. Researchers often find it challenging to engage effectively with their institutions to develop bespoke business plans and connect meaningfully with investors (government, philanthropic, venture capital etc).

JDRF believe that a key to success in translating research outcome, is to empower the researchers by helping them develop business skills, identify the right market, and manage risk throughout the entire value chain of translation. JDRF also want to ensure researchers can access capital from knowledgeable, well-connected investors. In Australia this space is

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<sup>5</sup> Innovation, Science Australia, Performance Review of the Australian Innovation, Science and Research System, 2016

<sup>6</sup> WIPO, Global Innovation Index: Australia, 2020

relatively small so having the right connections is extremely important, and access to overseas investors where possible can significantly drive translation of research outcome.

Although translation of early research discoveries towards patient access has become a national priority<sup>7</sup>, commonwealth grant schemes focus predominantly supporting companies with products that are close to market entry. It is encouraging that a University Research Commercialisation Action Plan<sup>8</sup> committing \$2.2 billion was recently announced to support university-based innovation and industry collaboration. Australian discoveries in T1D, remain largely in the academic stage. In a handful of cases, newly formed companies are in the very early stages of strategic development and need assistance in overcoming the challenges faced in commercialising their ideas.

As a result, the JDRF CRN aims to identify the most promising research ideas and invest in a sustainable and impactful way that will facilitate early-stage scientific discoveries towards translation and commercialisation. The JDRF CRN has recognised the need to bridge the gap between research, industry expectations and investment to support the translation of research.

*To achieve this, the JDRF CRN is seeking external expertise to assist in the design, facilitation, monitoring and evaluation of a Program that will:*

- i. Identify and evaluate early-stage (mostly T0 to T1) research opportunities in Australia that have strong translational potential.
- ii. Build translational capability within the T1D research community to effectively engage industry, end-users and investors.
- iii. Prioritise activities that would accelerate translational outcomes; and
- iv. Quickly capitalise on commercial and/or translational funding opportunities available from private investors, state, federal or international funders.

## 4. Expected Outcome

A strong focus on *empowering* researchers is expected to ensure that they are equipped with the tools and the know-hows to actively pursue translation and commercialisation as part of their research agenda. The goal is to differentiate JDRF from other funders by being adaptive to the needs of the researchers and providing practical bespoke support mechanisms for them so that the impact of their research can be realised by people living with T1D.

To that end the success of the Program will be realised on:

- i. ***Building a strong community*** of researchers committed to impacting the lives of people living with T1D by translation of their research and seek to support the wider network of researchers to adopt best practices in research translation, establish industry connections, access funding opportunities, and influence policy decisions.
- ii. ***Expanding the capacity and capability of researchers*** that build entrepreneurial skills to take discoveries outside of the lab and resolve industry specific challenges. Providing a structured framework for researchers to discover markets, effectively engage customers, industry and investors.

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<sup>7</sup>[National Innovation and Science Agenda Report](#)

<sup>8</sup>[University Research Commercialisation Package](#)

- iii. **Leveraging further investments** that accelerate translation by actively engaging researchers to source funds from government sources, industry partnerships and private investments.

## 5. Invitation for tender

Parties external to JDRF who are specialised in accelerating researcher-led translation are invited to apply to JDRF to propose a detailed framework, methodology, timeline and budget.

Submissions are expected from specialised teams with strong proven expertise in assisting academic and clinician researchers in translating and commercialising innovations. Submissions that propose to support the Program in its entirety are highly encouraged. It is not necessary that a single party/ company delivers the entire Program. We strongly encourage con-joint submissions should applicants require expertise outside of their organisation in order to strengthen their proposal.

Interested parties are highly encouraged to contact the JDRF team (Section 7) to discuss strategic fit and proposed approach.

*JDRF have considered some potential mechanisms outlined below, however, we strongly welcome novel ideas and recommendations to help achieve the desired objectives and impact of this Program.*

### 5.1 Translational Grants Round

For over a decade the JDRF CRN has funded bold transformative projects focused on complex questions to understand physiological processes in T1D and addressing key challenges, leading to further development and innovation in the field. In addition, with the aim of bringing experimental technologies and therapies closer to market, the network has funded several clinical trials and infrastructure platforms. A comprehensive description of areas of T1D research is available [here](#).

With the opening of Request for Applications (RFA) from researchers, the JDRF CRN aims to ensure that prior investment into cutting edge research of high relevance to T1D continues to be supported across the translational pipeline and is accelerated along the pathway of developing novel applications. The JDRF CRN also wants to ensure that promising ideas in other disease models (e.g., cancer, auto-immune diseases, stem cell research) can be identified and repurposed to address challenges in the field of T1D.

The grants round would aim to identify, fund and mentor projects that have already shown strong translation potential and require additional support to overcome specific challenges along the translational pathway to be progressed to an endpoint that is potentially attractive to investors/funders. The JDRF CRN wants to ensure that funding is provided to selected grantees for research-related costs to support activities that would accelerate translational outcomes. Additionally, the grantees would be supported by individualised mentoring, access to networks and specialised knowledge, access to investors and a broad base of collaborators.

JDRF is seeking to form partnership with the tenderers who can provide bespoke stewardship and mentoring to the researchers to accelerate translation and build enduring capability and capacity with the T1D research community.

**It is expected that the Grants round will:**

- Provide funding and access to specialised knowledge, to enable and accelerate progress towards translating research with commercial potential into development of novel solutions for management, diagnosis, preventing or curing T1D.
- Strengthen and expand the skill set and knowledge base of Australian researchers, building lasting capacity in Australian T1D research via mentoring, network development and capital investment.

*JDRF have considered the following components and encourage recommendations from tenderers for additional concepts to support the desired outcomes above.*

Assistance to JDRF in:

- Preparing the terms of reference, application requirements and selection criteria for the release of an RFA
- Shortlisting concept proposals and providing guidance to shortlisted applicants in preparing full proposals.
- Selection of proposals for funding recommendations

Mentoring and Stewardship to Awardees:

- A 6 to 12-month mentoring and stewardship that provides bespoke solutions to steward individual projects.

**Success measures**

- Identification and selection of at least 5 research ideas with strong potential for translation,
- For the selected ideas, development of strong business proposals evaluating path to market and helping them get grant ready, partner ready and investor ready,
- Assistance to selected researchers for presenting to investors and raising capital,
- 1-2 spin off/legal entities formed, licencing deals secured.

## 5.2 Innovation Challenge

One of JDRF's aims is to better connect researchers to the industry so that they can gain industry specific experience. JDRF intend to partner with an Australian or international industry partner (e.g., a biotech or pharma involved in R&D in the field of T1D) to identify a small but real-world pressing issue for the industry partner. The intention is to work collaboratively and structure a case challenge and facilitate competition for Australian researchers to present potential dynamic solutions to address a challenge faced by the industry partner.

JDRF envision that the industry partner will select at least one solution proposed and provide matched funding and/or the laboratories, expertise, mentorship and resources needed to help Australian researchers test and progress a solution through strong industry engagement.

**It is expected that the Innovation Challenge will:**

- Position JDRF as a forward-thinking funder that engages Australian researchers to the industry in non-traditional ways,
- Provide industry research experience to researchers,
- Accelerate resolution of real-world research bottlenecks faced by industry.

Tenderers are expected to engage with prospective industry partners to identify a problem that will open for the challenge. JDRF, the tenderer and the industry partner can work collaboratively to structure the challenge.

### **Success measures**

- Identification of industry partners willing to offer a case challenge,
- Selection of at least 1 industry partner committing to the innovation challenge,
- Selection of 1 potential solution for JDRF-matched financial support, industry experience and mentorship provided by the industry partner.

## **5.3 Training workshop**

JDRF intend to build long term capability in research translation for emerging leaders in T1D research. Emerging researchers often lack the basic understanding and know-how of taking their ideas or discoveries to a suitable market. JDRF believe an intensive training workshop will enable a select group translationally focused researchers to seriously consider translating their research ideas as they progress towards independent research. JDRF would want to ensure the participants chosen for this workshop have a strong interest in research translation and have entrepreneurial tendencies to drive commercialisation of their research outputs.

### **It is expected that the training workshop will:**

- Inspire emerging leaders to create impact through translation of their research ideas,
- Train researchers to create an actionable plan for translation of their ideas,
- Encourage engagement with industry, and
- Identify the best ideas for further development.

*JDRF have considered the following components and encourage recommendations from tenderers for additional concepts to support the desired outcomes above.*

- Assistance with identification of translationally focused investigator
- Facilitation of a 1 to 2-day workshop for ~ 20 researchers

### **Success measures**

- Identification of at least 20 ideas and creating translational plans for them,
- Identification of 1-2 ideas that have high potential for translation and may be supported further to assist in progressing or implementation of the translational plans developed during the workshop,
- High satisfaction level of participants.

## **6. Submission requirements**

The following checklist can be used to ensure tenderers provide the required information.

### **General Information**

- Organisation(s) name and address.
- Organisation(s) ABN.
- Name and contact details (including email) of primary contacts (CEO or equivalent)

- The name and contact details (including email) of representatives, for the purposes of this Program.
- A brief profile of your organisation(s), its key features, and previous experience in similar projects. Real or perceived conflicts of interest should be identified, together with a description of how these will be managed.

### **Summary of Deliverables**

Summarise your understanding of the Program, including

- Its aims and why it is needed.
- How your proposal will address the desired outcomes.

### **Methodology and plan**

- Provide information regarding how components of the Program will be conducted, including:
  - Methodology to be adopted (including rationale for the choice of methodology).
  - Planned activities
  - Timeframes of key items and Program completion.
  - Evaluation measures.
  - The expected deliverables/outputs.

### **Personnel**

- Provide information on key personnel their relevant expertise in executing similar programs, roles and commitment on this Program.
- The names, roles and time commitments of the other personnel (including external expertise outside your organisation if needed) who will be involved.
- You may attach brief CVs outlining relevant background and experience of personnel who will be involved.

### **Budget**

Provide information about your budget for the Program, including:

- The total funds required.
- Detailed quotation/ breakdown of your budget.

The budget must identify costs associated with the activities/ methodology and represent value for money. The indicative budget for the Program is: \$300,000.

## **7. Contacts**

*For enquires on strategic fit and submission requirements, please contact:*

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