Kidney, Transplant & Diabetes Research Australia

a charity of The Hospital Research Foundation Group

THRF-KTDRA CNARTS Research Project Grants 2024

Guidelines v1.0

Round closes: Wednesday 1 November 2023 at 4:00pm (ACDT)

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1. About Kidney, Transplant & Diabetes Research Australia

Kidney, Transplant & Diabetes Research Australia (KTDRA) supports ground-breaking translational medical research that is helping to improve the lives of people suffering with these diseases.

KTDRA supports research on the mechanisms of disease and potential avenues for improving patient outcomes in transplantation and immunological kidney diseases. While there is a focus on the Central and Northern Adelaide Renal and Transplantation Services (CNARTS), KTDRA also proudly promotes wide collaboration with many research groups in Australia and world-wide, working to improve the health and wellbeing of people living with diabetes and kidney disease.

KTDRA is a charity of The Hospital Research Foundation (THRF) Group. THRF Group consists of 11 charities and supports the community by funding vital medical research and patient care initiatives, and will be the entity administering this round.

2. About the Round

The THRF-KTDRA CNARTS Research Project round is seeking proposals relating to any aspect of kidney disease, transplantation, or diabetes research.

Proposals must be for research projects that are:

- Led by a staff member of CNARTS or with meaningful CNARTS staff member involvement on the investigator team
- Ready to commence by or before June 2024
- Currently unfunded or have funding due to cease by or before June 2024.

THRF Group particularly encourages proposals incorporating:

- Teams combining suitably experienced research and clinical personnel.
- Transdisciplinary teams combining ideas and approaches from different fields. Such teams could include personnel from engineering, computer science, or other suitable “non-medical” disciplines, and/or suitable industry organisations.
- Early career researchers.
- Effective and meaningful consumer participation and engagement.

Proposals **must not duplicate or substantially overlap with** existing projects or pending proposals.

Assessment Criteria for the round are detailed in Appendix A.

3. Requirements

3.1 *Administering Institution*

Applications must be submitted via a single, eligible Administering Institution. The Administering Institution (AI) must, *inter alia*:

(a) have publicly available policies and procedures governing the responsible and ethical conduct of research of the AI in accordance with NHMRC Approved Standards and Guidelines, including the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and all applicable Commonwealth, State and/or Territory laws and regulations;
(b) be able to commit and manage the time contribution of the Chief Investigator A (CIA) to the project; and
(c) commit to the provision of the general facilities and supporting resources necessary for the project’s conduct.

If an application is approved for funding, THRF Group will enter into a funding agreement with the nominated AI detailing appropriate management and administration requirements for the approved project.

3.2 *Eligibility Requirements for Chief Investigators*

The first-named investigator on an application – Chief Investigator A (CIA) – will be considered the Project Leader, who has the primary responsibility to run and report on the project (if approved). The CIA must be a salaried staff member of the nominated Administering Institution. A CIA with more than one formal appointment can only nominate one organisation to be the Administering Institution (AI) for the purposes of this round.

The CIA must hold either:

1) a Higher Degree by Research (HDR) (either a Masters by Research or a PhD) in line with Australian Qualifications Framework Levels 9 or 10 (see www.aqf.edu.au/framework/aqf-levels) from a recognised institution, or
2) an equivalent combination of relevant skills, training, and/or experience. Evidence for claims of equivalence is to be provided in the CIA biosketch.

For this round:

- An applicant may only submit a maximum of one (1) application as CIA.
- Up to three (3) additional Chief Investigators (*i.e.* CIB – CID) may be included on each application.
- CIs can be involved in no more than two (2) applications (including involvement as CIA).

THRF Group reserves the right at its sole discretion to exclude from further consideration any application(s) contravening these limits.

All CIs must:

- be able to demonstrate a track record relevant to the field of this round;
- provide a meaningful contribution and time commitment to the proposed project over its duration;
- not be a currently enrolled HDR candidate; &
- have met their obligations regarding previous THRF Group-funded projects, including submission of satisfactory reporting as per the relevant funding agreement/s.

Investigators playing a minor role in the project and/or with an intermittent/low time commitment should be indicated as Collaborators/Associate Investigators. Currently enrolled HDR candidates contributing to the project should also be similarly listed.

Researchers (i) located outside South Australia, and/or (ii) whose **only** organisational appointment is by a non-salaried honorary, visiting or affiliate appointment, cannot be CIA, but may be listed as an additional Chief Investigator (CIB – CID), or included as a member of the broader project team.

3.3 *Incomplete, False or Misleading Information*

All information submitted to THRF Group (including EOIs, full applications and reports) must be complete, current and accurate at the time of submission, and free of false or misleading information.

Examples of false or misleading information include, but are not limited to, providing:

- dishonest statements regarding time commitments to the research for which support is being sought;
- incomplete or inaccurate facts regarding other sources of funding;
- inaccurate claims in publication records; or
- incomplete or misleading information of ethics and governance requirements or other factors that may impact the researcher's ability to commence the research program in a timely manner.

If THRF Group becomes aware of omissions or inclusion of misleading information in an application,

it may choose to exclude an application from assessment, withdraw funding, and/or refer the matter to the AI.

3.4 *Terms and Conditions for Funding*

If a project is selected for funding, THRF Group and the AI will enter into a formal funding agreement detailing funding terms and conditions. Unless otherwise agreed, the project must commence within six (6) months of receiving notification of the award, but not before the funding agreement is fully executed and all relevant ethics approvals and collaborative agreements are in place.

The funding agreement between THRF Group and the AI will include provisions that Chief Investigators must:

- provide regular reports on the progress of the research through SmartyGrants as requested. Progress will be monitored against agreed milestones, and evidence of outputs and outcomes will be required;
- present their project at the CNARTS Clinical Research Group meetings and other CNARTS forums as requested;
- report any unexpected delays or changes to the research plan to THRF Group – KTDRA in a timely manner;
- acknowledge THRF Group – KTDRA funding support in all presentations and publications relating to the project;
- provide updates upon request to THRF Group - KTDRA;
- participate in media opportunities coordinated by THRF Group & KTDRA where necessary, including local radio and local and national media announcements. Relevant media advice and preparation will be available via THRF Group's Communications team;
- ensure THRF Group - KTDRA is consulted regarding any media opportunities led by the recipient's university, SA Health or other organisation, and seek in advance THRF Group - KTDRA approval regarding the content, timing and release of public announcements, media releases, and/or online information relating to the project; and
- assist in future grant reviews if requested by THRF Group (where reasonably practicable).

4. Funding

4.1 *Funding Amount*

The maximum funding that can be requested is up to $50,000 (total) over (up to) two (2) years. Funding can be requested to support salaries and direct research costs as further described below.

Funding cannot be requested to support organisational indirect costs, infrastructure levies, or administrative costs. THRF Group reserves the right to vary the available funding in this round at its sole discretion.

4.2 *Salary Support*

Salary support may be requested for CIs and/or other personnel needed for the project. The need for any such salary support must be well-justified. For the avoidance of doubt, salary support may be requested for Collaborators/Associate Investigators, but such requests must be very well-justified.

Salary support requests should include the base salary and direct on-costs, such as leave accruals and the superannuation guarantee contribution. Such on-costs are limited to a maximum 30% of the base salary request. Applicants must verify their AI's base salary scales and rate of on-costs before finalising budgets in the application form. Project staff are to be appointed at standard award conditions, commensurate with experience, as determined by the AI.

Due to the limited term of project funding, stipends for Higher Degree by Research students should not be included in proposal budget requests.

4.3 *Direct Research Costs*

Direct research costs are those directly related to the conduct of the project and may include research reagents, consumables, services, software, minor equipment (<$10,000 unit cost), and travel for the purposes of conducting the research program. For clarity, conference attendance, publication, open access fees, patenting and/or IP protection costs are not considered direct research costs and should not be included in proposal budget requests.

5. Application Stages and Assessment

This round will follow a two-stage process as outlined below. THRF Group reserves the right to modify or amend these stages at its sole discretion.

Stage 1. Full Application
Stage 2. Further Information / Interview

These stages are described in further detail below.

5.1 *Stage 1: Full Application*

Elligible applicants may submit a full application in the specified format through THRF Group's SmartyGrants platform. Full applications must provide sufficient detail on scientific merit, feasibility and budget considerations, and expand on how project outcomes can deliver beneficial impacts to CNARTS and patient healthcare more broadly. SmartyGrants will be open for 4 (four) weeks to allow preparation and submission of applications. THRF Group expects applicants to provide all necessary information to make evaluation possible on the SmartyGrants full application form, but reserves the right to request additional information if needed.

Eligible full applications will be will be assessed by (non-conflicted) members of the KTDRA Advisory Committee, which includes members of the CNARTS Clinical Research Group Executive, Renal Laboratory and THRF Group. Conflicts of interest will be managed by the Chair. External reviewers may be invited if required.

Further details on the assessment criteria and scoring system are provided in Appendix A. All assessment criteria will be considered in the context of the Round Objectives, and THRF Group's Purpose more broadly. Please note that assessors will follow the NHMRC Relative to Opportunity policy (www.nhmrc.gov.au/about-us/policy-and-priorities#download), and will be required to deal with applications and assessment matters confidentially.

Lay language components of the invited submissions may be used to engage consumers in aspects of the decision-making process.

In the case that no submission is deemed worthy of funding, THRF Group may close the round without awarding funding. If THRF Group reasonably considers any applications to be similar or complementary to other applications received, THRF Group may request that the applicants consider some or greater cooperation between the researchers (where appropriate). There is no obligation imposed on applicants under this condition. Any cooperation that might arise from such a suggestion by THRF Group would be voluntary.

It is the CIA's responsibility to ensure that the nominated AI certifies the full application in the specified format as part of the submission (refer Appendix B for details).

5.2 *Stage 2: Further Information / Interview*

Before the final decision is made, THRF Group – KTDRA may request further information or detail from applicants and/or the AI. Shortlisted applicants may also be interviewed by a panel convened by THRF Group – KTDRA.

5.3 *Funding Decision*

The final funding decision will be made by THRF Group, informed by reviewer assessments, and determined by funding availability. This decision will be final, and no further negotiations will be entered into.

THRF Group reserves the right not to fund any application for any reason, including where the relevant project personnel and/or Administering Institution have not fulfilled their obligations under previous THRF Group funding agreement/s, including but not limited to reporting, financial acquittal, and acknowledgement requirements.

Successful applicants and their AI will be notified by THRF Group, and THRF Group will prepare a funding agreement for the nominated AI.

6. How to Apply

EOIs must be completed and submitted online through THRF Group's SmartyGrants platform. Please note:

- **Only electronic submission through the SmartyGrants system will be accepted.**
- **Applicants must click on the "Submit" button when the application is finalised.**
- **Applicants will then receive a confirmation of application submission by email.**
- **If the email is not received (after checking junk/spam folders), applicants should assume that the submission has not occurred and re-attempt submission.**

Please also note:

- Due to incompatibility issues, **do not use Internet Explorer** with SmartyGrants.
- Unless otherwise specified in the application form, all uploaded files should be provided in PDF format. File names should include a short description of the item followed by the CIA's family name, for example "Transcript_Smith.pdf".

Apply at:
https://hospitalresearch.smartygrants.com.au/2023-KTDRA

Round closes on Wednesday 1 November 2023 at 4:00pm (ACDT)

All queries should be directed to **savelives@hospitalresearch.org.au**

Incomplete, late or incorrectly submitted applications will not be considered

THRF Group expects applicants to provide all necessary information in their submission to enable evaluation. However, THRF Group reserves the right to request additional information if deemed necessary.

6.1 *Round Timetable (indicative)*

Round opens	Tuesday 3rd October 2023 at 12:00 PM (ACDT)
Round closes	Wednesday 1st November 2023 at 4:00 PM (ACDT)
Outcomes	Indicatively mid-December 2023

APPENDIX A – Assessment Criteria

All Assessment Criteria will be considered in the context of the Round Objectives

Unmet Need (20%)

The proposal addresses an unmet need that is, in the context of kidney disease, transplantation, or diabetes research, an issue of:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
4	Top 5%	**Critical importance** The proposal compellingly articulates: • the criticality of the unmet need; • its significance to consumers; & • describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would be extremely significant in improving clinical care and health outcomes.
3	Next 20%	**High importance** The proposal provides a strong case for: • the importance of the unmet need; • its strong relevance to consumers; & • describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would significantly improve clinical care and/or health outcomes.
2	Next 25%	**Importance** The proposal provides reasonable justification for: • an unmet need in the field; • its relevance to consumers; & • describes how, if addressed and resolved, it would have some significance in clinical/healthcare settings.
1	Bottom 50%	**Not competitive**

Approach and Feasibility (30%)

The project's approach to addressing the defined area of unmet need is:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
4	Top 5%	**Outstanding** The project's approach: • convincingly addresses the defined unmet need; • clearly and effectively engages consumers across all project elements; • is extremely cost-effective and of high value for money; & • will almost certainly achieve its stated aims.
3	Next 20%	**Excellent** The project's approach: • clearly addresses the defined unmet need; • engages consumers in key project elements; • shows good cost-effectiveness or value for money; & • is highly likely to achieve its stated aims.
2	Next 25%	**Good** The project's approach: • reasonably addresses the defined unmet need; • reasonably engages consumers in some project elements; • is reasonably cost-effective; & • should reasonably achieve the stated aims.
1	Bottom 50%	**Not competitive**

Impact (30%)

In the context of kidney disease, transplantation, or diabetes research, the project's ability to deliver new knowledge, relevant outcomes and sustainable impacts for CNARTS and healthcare more broadly is:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
4	Top 5%	**Highly compelling** The proposal convincingly describes how it will: • result in highly significant new knowledge; • deliver highly relevant outcomes; & • follow a highly credible translation pathway to sustainably deliver strongly positive healthcare impacts.
3	Next 20%	**Compelling** The proposal shows strong potential to: • measurably advance the field; • deliver outcomes of significance; & • make good progress along a translation pathway towards positive, longer-term patient/healthcare impacts.
2	Next 25%	**Reasonably compelling** The research has good potential to: • add new knowledge to the field; • deliver outcomes of some significance; & • progress some way towards positive patient/healthcare impacts.
1	Bottom 50%	**Not competitive**

Project Team (20%)

Relative to opportunity, the capability of the CIA and the combined project team team to deliver the project is:		
Category	Band	Descriptor
4	Top 5%	**Outstanding** Relative to opportunity, the CIA and the combined project team demonstrate outstanding, highly relevant track records with **excellent**: • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to necessary resources, expertise and know-how; & • connections to CNARTS.
3	Next 20%	**Very good** Relative to opportunity, the CIA and the combined project team demonstrate strong, relevant track records with **very good**: • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to necessary resources, expertise and know-how; & • connections to CNARTS.
2	Next 25%	**Good** Relative to opportunity, the CIA and the combined project team demonstrate solid track records, with **good**: • combined capability to execute the project and deliver outcomes; • access to necessary resources, expertise and know-how; & • connections to CNARTS.
1	Bottom 50%	**Not competitive**

APPENDIX B – Administering Institution Endorsement Details

At Full Application stage, the prescribed form (to be provided) will require sign-off by the CEO/DVCR of the Administering Institution (or their authorised delegate), to certify and confirm the following:

- They have read, understood and complied with the relevant THRF Group Grant Guidelines (the grant guidelines) and, to the best of their knowledge, all details provided in this application form and in any supporting documentation are true and complete in accordance with the grant guidelines.
- Proper enquiries have been made and they are satisfied that the participants and organisations listed in this application meet the requirements specified in the grant guidelines.
- The listed participants are responsible for the authorship and intellectual content of this application, and have appropriately cited sources and acknowledged significant contributions to this application.
- To the best of their knowledge, all personnel contributing to the project activity have familiarised themselves with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, the *National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research*, the *Australian code for the care and use of animals for scientific purposes* and other relevant policies concerning the conduct of research, and have agreed to conduct themselves in accordance with those policies.
- To the best of their knowledge, all material personal and financial interests and Conflicts of Interest relating to parties involved in or associated with this application have been disclosed to the Administering Institution, and, if the application is successful, they agree to manage all Conflicts of Interest relating to this application in accordance with the *Australian Code for the Responsible Conduct of Research*, and any relevant successor documents.
- They have obtained sufficient written agreement of all the relevant persons and organisations necessary for this application to be submitted. This written evidence has been retained and will be provided to THRF Group if requested.
- They consent, on behalf of all the parties, to this application being referred to third parties for confidential assessment purposes.
- They consent, on behalf of all the parties, to THRF Group copying, modifying and otherwise dealing with information contained in this application for the purpose of conducting the funding round.
- The application is being submitted with the full authority of, and on behalf of, the Administering Institution, and they acknowledge that if found to be in breach of any requirements the application may be excluded from consideration by THRF Group.
- If this application is successful:
    - The project can be carried out as set out in this application and in accordance with the terms and conditions of the grant guidelines and the relevant funding agreement.
    - The project can be accommodated within the general facilities of this Institution and if applicable, within the facilities of other relevant organisations specified in this application, and sufficient working and office space is available for project personnel.
    - This Institution and relevant participating organisations will make the financial and/or in-kind contributions to the project as set out in this application.
    - Access to privileged data or resources, such as patient data or patient samples, or workspaces, such as clinics, can be accommodated by this Institution or by other relevant Institutions specified in this application.
    - Approval of the project activity by relevant institutional committees and approval bodies, particularly for ethics and biosafety, will be sought and obtained prior to the commencement of the research, or the parts of the research that require their approval.
    - Arrangements for the management of the project will be agreed in writing between all participating organisations associated with the application before the project can commence.
    - In carrying out the project, the Administering Institution will comply, and require the participating organisations to comply, with the provisions of any applicable legislation, regulations, by-laws, and requirements of any applicable Commonwealth, State, Territory or local authority.