TRANSLATIONAL RESEARCH GRANTS SCHEME
ROUND 3

GUIDELINES FOR APPLICANTS

NSW GOVERNMENT | **Health**

Contents

Call for Applications

Translational Research Grants Scheme Round 3

NSW Health invites Local Health Districts (LHDs), Specialty Health Networks (SHNs), the Ambulance Service of NSW and NSW Health Pathology to apply for funding under the Translational Research Grants Scheme (TRGS). These guidelines provide information about the submission procedure, selection process, and reporting and evaluation requirements for the scheme.

Further information on TRGS is available at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/Pages/trgs.aspx

For queries regarding the scheme, email TRGS@doh.health.nsw.gov.au

Application and selection process

The process includes three stages:

1. Expressions of Interest
2. Proposal development
3. Full applications

Submission of Applications

All applications must be completed using the application forms available on the TRGS website, at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/Pages/trgs.aspx. See below for submission dates.

All Expressions of Interest and Full Applications must be submitted to the Ministry of Health by the TRGS Coordinator at your Host Organisation. See below for contact details.

Key dates

STAGE 1	
Call for Expressions of Interest	5 June 2017
Information sessions	June 2017, see TRGS website
Expressions of Interest submitted to Host Organisation	31 July 2017
Chief Executive sign off period	28 August – 4 September 2017
Expressions of Interest submitted to Ministry of Health	4 September 2017
EOI Review Panel assessment	4 September – 20 November 2017
STAGE 2	
Invitations to progress to Full Application	20 November 2017
Feedback on Expressions of Interest and Full Application development	20 November 2017 – 29 January 2018
STAGE 3	
Full Applications close	29 January 2018
Independent Selection Panel assessment	29 January – 19 March 2018
All applicants notified of outcome	March 2018

Funding for successful applications will be allocated to the Host Organisations from July 2018.

Host Organisation TRGS coordinators

Applicants must contact their TRGS coordinators to ensure that the proposed projects meet the intent of the scheme. All Expressions of Interest and Full Applications must be submitted through the TRGS coordinator for your Host Organisation. See below for contact details of TRGS coordinators.

NAME	EMAIL ADDRESS	HOST ORGANISATION
Ms Rosemary Carney	rosemary.carney@health.nsw.gov.au	Ambulance Service of NSW
Ms Jodi Humphreys	Jodi.Humphreys@health.nsw.gov.au	CC LHD
Ms Kristy Morris	Kristy.Morris@hnehealth.nsw.gov.au	HNE LHD
Professor Leonard Arnolda	leonard.arnolda@sesiahs.health.nsw.gov.au	IS LHD
Ms Julia Bowman	Julia.Bowman@justicehealth.nsw.gov.au	JH&FMHN
Ms Nicole Rashcke	Nicole.Raschke@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au	MNC LHD
Ms Jill Reyment	Jill.Reyment@health.nsw.gov.au	Murrumbidgee LHD
Ms Debbie Wyburd	Debbie.Wyburd@swahs.health.nsw.gov.au	NBM LHD
Dr David Hutton	David.Hutton@ncahs.health.nsw.gov.au	NNSW LHD
Ms Julie Wright	julie.wright@health.nsw.gov.au	NS LHD
Ms Amanda Koegelenberg	NSWPATH-Research@health.nsw.gov.au	NSW Health Pathology
Professor Chris Cowell	chris.cowell@health.nsw.gov.au	SCHN
Dr James Mackie	James.Mackie@health.nsw.gov.au	SES LHD
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Philip Cunningham and Ms Anna Byrne	p.cunningham@amr.org.au; anna.byrne@svha.org.au	SVHN
Ms Annamarie D'Souza	research.support@sswahs.nsw.gov.au	SWS LHD
Ms Lisa Daly	lisa.daly@sswahs.nsw.gov.au	Sydney LHD
Mr Richard Cheney	Richard.Cheney@gwahs.health.nsw.gov.au	WNSW & FW LHDs
Mr Mark Smith	MarkT.Smith@health.nsw.gov.au	WS LHD

Supporting Resources

Information sessions

Information sessions will be delivered face-to-face and via webinar in June 2017 to provide an opportunity to clarify the intent and scope of the scheme and to answer questions about the application process.

Info session dates are available on the TRGS website and will be conducted both face-to-face and via webinar. Register your interest and availability to attend one of these sessions as soon as possible by emailing TRGS@doh.health.nsw.gov.au. Schedule your preferred date and time in your calendar.

ATTENDEES	FORMAT
SES, SWS, SVHN, IS, Ambulance Service of NSW, JH&FMH	Face to face, Liverpool
Sydney, NS, WS, SCHN, NSW Health Pathology	Face to face, Westmead
HNE, CC	Face to face, Newcastle
NBM, FW, NNSW, SNSW, WNSW, Murrumbidgee, MNC	Webinar
All Host Organisations	Webinar

Translational Research Grants Scheme Website

The TRGS website contains further information and resources for applicants including:

- An overview of process guidelines for Expression of Interest and Full Application review;
- General feedback to applicants to the previous round of the scheme which identifies common areas where past applications could have been strengthened;
- Details of funded projects from previous rounds which provides an indication of the range of project types funded through the scheme;
- FAQs about the scheme's processes and requirements.

Translational Research Framework

The Translational Research Framework has been developed by the Sax Institute to assist with the program intent to build research capacity. The Framework assists grant applicants to refine research questions, and identify feasible research methods to answer these questions.

The Framework provides a number of prompts to help identify the steps you need to take to:

- demonstrate that a health service, program or policy innovation works;
- understand the conditions under which it was successful (or unsuccessful);
- where appropriate, identify how to scale up an innovation for greatest impact.

The Framework has been developed for health professionals who may have limited research experience, but may also be useful for more experienced researchers as a structured reminder of the range of issues that will be taken into account in the screening and assessment of proposals.

You can access the Framework at: http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/ohmr/Pages/trgs.aspx

Guidelines for Applicants

Introduction

TRGS is currently in its third round of funding. The scheme offers funding to staff within NSW LHDs, SHNs, Ambulance Service of NSW, and NSW Health Pathology, including medical staff, nursing staff, allied health professionals and population health practitioners. Grants support research projects that will translate into better patient outcomes, improve the delivery of health services and improve population health and wellbeing.

In Round 3, Expressions of Interest will be capped to a maximum of five per Host Organisation.

Host Organisations are required to carefully consider the applications that are submitted, and encouraged only to submit those that reflect the intent of the TRGS and are of a high standard. Host Organisations commit to the implementation of research results if successful, and need to ensure they can support this.

Applicants are encouraged to consult with the Research Director and TRGS Coordinator of their Host Organisation and to partner with other LHDs, universities and medical research institutes. The scheme is designed to support the development of local research capabilities and accelerate evidence translation and uptake within the NSW health system.

Purpose and objectives

The overarching purpose of TRGS is to harness the research capacity within NSW Health to improve the health system, patient outcomes and population health and wellbeing in NSW. TRGS aims to incentivise research that is a priority for the State or articulated in local strategic research plans, and to support the translation of that research into policy and practice.

TRGS intends to:

1. Foster the generation of high quality research which is directly relevant to clinical, health service and population health practice in NSW. The scheme supports:

   ▪ projects that demonstrate sufficient evidence and background to justify the research proposed

   ▪ rigorous research with appropriate research design which aligns with the question

   ▪ the following examples of types of research (which must be supported by a rigorous methodology): randomised control trials, pragmatic clinical trials, implementation science, translational research, health services research, population health research, and proof of concept studies.

2. Support projects that have the potential to be translated into policy and practice. The research proposal must be supported by a robust knowledge translation/implementation plan. Such research includes:

   ▪ research that is translatable: that is, research that can be generalised and scaled across other LHDs/SHNs across the state

   ▪ translation research: that is, implementation science projects which examine how to more effectively apply best practice in models of care.

3. Reduce the time from evidence generation to practice implementation. The scheme:

   ▪ Supports research with a governance framework to:

     – guide the research project and drive knowledge translation,

     – ensure existing evidence and policy is implemented, and

     – facilitate engagement with key stakeholders who help to drive both the project and implementation of results, if successful.

   ▪ Encourages engagement with key policy makers, networks, health system administrators and practitioners to ensure the proposed research is effective.

4. Enhance health and medical research capability and capacity within the NSW health system including:

- enabling opportunities to leverage complementary programs which support workforce development such as the NSW Health Early-Mid Career Fellowships and the NSW Health PhD Scholarships, and other researcher development workshops
- enabling opportunities to leverage philanthropy and non-government organisation in-kind and financial support for research.

5. Drive collaboration and practice change that improves health outcomes. The scheme supports meaningful collaborations that support the above.

Details of funding

Grants ranging from $50,000 to $1 million will be provided to successful applicants for projects of a maximum two year period.

TRGS funding may be used for costs associated with the research project and translation activities, but cannot be directed towards research administration costs, capital works, general maintenance costs, telephone/communication systems, basic office equipment such as desks and chairs, rent and the cost of utilities.

Priority theme – cardiovascular health

Round 3 of TRGS will focus on cardiovascular health as a priority theme. Priority theme proposals will be reviewed through standard TRGS processes and must be in keeping with the scheme's focus to support research that translates into better patient outcomes, improves the delivery of health services and improves population health and wellbeing.

Within the priority theme of cardiovascular health, research proposals will be considered covering:

- Heart disease
- Vascular disease
- Stroke
- Hypertension
- Renal disease as related to cardiovascular disease, and
- Diabetes as related to cardiovascular disease.

Research and implementation partners

Host Organisations will need to identify and engage relevant partners who are essential for the effective delivery of the research project and implementation of the outcomes in NSW. Applicants are encouraged to partner with other organisations to assist with generalisability of the research findings. An explanation will be required if this is not considered appropriate for the research project.

These partners may include consumers, internal cross-disciplinary partners or external organisations including universities, medical research institutes, NSW Health Pillars (Agency for Clinical Innovation, Clinical Excellence Commission, Health Education and Training Institute, Bureau of Health Information), the NSW Ministry of Health, other LHDs/SHNs/Ambulance Service of NSW, Research Hubs, relevant clinical networks non-government organisations, Aboriginal Community Controlled Health Organisations and primary healthcare networks. Where the research is likely to impact any of these groups or their policy, an appropriate partner must be included in the project Steering Committee.

Knowledge translation

TRGS aims to generate high impact research that is directly relevant to clinical, health service and population health practice in NSW and to ensure the translation of these findings into policy and practice. TRGS aims to support meaningful co-production of research and the early identification of activities that will move the findings along the translation continuum, including scaling up the findings across a system or to other settings.

Partner engagement must occur throughout the research project and follow through to knowledge translation, for example:

1. **Prior to and during research** key policy and practice partners must be included in the development of the research question and participate in relevant stages of the process including translation activities such as:

   a. Co-production of research

   b. Presentations of findings

   c. Publication of findings in policy- or practice-relevant formats

   d. Steps required to change practice.

2. **At the completion of the research project** researchers and key partners in the Host Organisation will need to continue to follow through with planned translation activities. Applicants will need to consider how they will measure the success of their knowledge translation activities and the uptake of the research findings into practice, noting that the Chief Executives are required to certify that practice change will be implemented in the Host Organisation and any partner Host Organisations (see Section F in the Expression of Interest form).

Applicants may find the following publications useful in considering knowledge translation activities:

Centre for Epidemiology and Evidence. Milat AJ, Newson R, and King L. *Increasing the scale of population health interventions: A guide*. Evidence and Evaluation Guidance Series, Population and Public Health Division. Sydney: NSW Ministry of Health, 2014. http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/research/Pages/scalability-guide.aspx

Ruppertsberg AI, Ward V, Ridout A, Foy R. The development and application of audit criteria for assessing knowledge exchange plans in health research grant applications. *Implementation Science* 2014;9:93. http://www.biomedcentral.com/content/pdf/s13012-014-0093-0.pdf

Eligibility criteria

Project criteria

1. The project must be conducted in NSW, within a Local Health District, Specialty Health Network, the Ambulance Service of NSW, or NSW Health Pathology.

2. The Host Organisation for the project must be a LHD, SHN, the Ambulance Service of NSW or NSW Health Pathology (see Host Organisation criteria below).

3. The project must directly align with the strategic plan of the Host Organisation, Premier's priorities, state priorities, or the TRGS priorities:
   - Priority theme – Cardiovascular health
   - Aboriginal health
   - Childhood overweight and obesity
   - Diabetes
   - Alcohol and other drugs
   - Mental health
   - Quality end-of-life care
   - Vulnerable young people and families
   - Timely access to care in emergency departments.

   Investigators are encouraged to identify specific research questions that are a priority for the Host Organisation and where there is potential to apply the findings in policy or practice and/or scale up a successful intervention.

4. The project cannot be specific to one site only, unless justified because it is a proof of concept study. The results of the research must be generalisable into policy and/or practice, and be applicable to other LHDs/ SHNs or across the Ambulance service/NSW Health Pathology. The project and its results must have the capacity to be scaled up across settings, for example in other LHD or state-wide. Projects involving collaborations across multiple sites within an LHD, or between one or more LHD/SHN or across the Ambulance Service/NSW Health Pathology will be prioritised.

5. The application must demonstrate engagement and consultation with relevant stakeholders (e.g. clinicians, consumers, health service administrators, researchers, patient groups, policy makers).

6. Applicants must provide a clear governance structure, including a steering committee for the project, including confirmation that grant funds will be quarantined for the purposes of the specified research project through a dedicated cost centre in the general fund.

7. Applicants must commit to report six monthly on research progress and expenditure.

Host Organisation criteria

1. Host Organisation must provide financial and in-kind support for the research/translation activities.

2. Host Organisations must conduct a review of the applications, ensuring they meet the intent of scheme before submission.

3. The Chief Executive of the Host Organisation must sign off on the grant application and agree that practice change will be implemented if the results from the project are positive. Partner organisations affected by practice change will need to co-sign the Full Application.

Selection criteria

All Expressions of Interest and Full Applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed against the following selection criteria:

1. Extent to which the project will generate new and relevant evidence for policy and/or practice; and likely impact of the results of the study on disease prevention, patient care or health service delivery.
2. Strength, rigour and appropriateness of the research design, including the ability of the research team to carry out the proposed project in the timeframe[1]
3. Extent to which the project supports the translation of positive research outcomes into policy and practice, including formal and informal activities for research translation and knowledge exchange.
4. Consideration of sustainability and scalability of the results of the study in the research design and translation plan, including that the study design will provide evidence to support funding decisions regarding the implementation of positive outcomes.
5. Engagement with appropriate stakeholders (e.g. researchers, clinicians, consumers, policy makers and the community) including:
   a. Consultation with partners and consumers in the development of the proposal.
   b. Inclusion of essential partners who will contribute to the conduct and management of the research project.
   c. Ongoing engagement with relevant stakeholders for the dissemination of new knowledge as it emerges, including clear links to the groups that will likely implement positive outcomes from the research.

Out of scope

This grant scheme is targeted at supporting practice-based research projects. The types of research listed below are out of scope for this grants scheme.

1. Basic science research.
2. Research only occurring in a primary health care network.
3. Pharmaceutical-sponsored clinical trials.
4. Projects with a primary focus on cancer. Funding in this area is provided by the Cancer Institute NSW and includes the Translational Program Grants.
5. Projects where the host LHD is not responsible for implementation of the research findings.

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1 Projects with fundamental flaws in the methods will not progress through to the Full Application stage or be funded.

Application and selection process

Review panels

The TRGS EOI Review Panel and Independent Selection Panel are Chaired by the Chief Health Officer and Deputy Secretary Population and Public Health, NSW Ministry of Health. The review process guidelines and Terms of Reference for all committees are detailed on the TRGS website.

Stakeholder engagement

The Ministry of Health will engage with a range of policy and health service stakeholders on specific applications throughout the review process. Advice may be sought from the EOI Subcommittee, NSW Health Pillars, relevant policy and program areas within the NSW Ministry of Health and other experts at any stage of the assessment process.

Host Organisation review

Prior to submission, Expressions of Interest are reviewed and certified by the Host Organisation. Each Host Organisation has its own review processes to ensure that applications

- meet the intent of the scheme;
- are aligned with organisational, state or TRGS priorities;
- propose high quality research projects with appropriate methodological design; and
- are certified by the Chief Executive of the Host Organisation.

This process allows for Host Organisations to select the applications they will submit to the scheme, and to work with applicants to improve the quality of submitted Expressions of Interest.

Expression of Interest review

On behalf of the applicant, the TRGS coordinator will submit an Expression of Interest that has been reviewed and supported by the Host Organisation's Research Directors/Coordinators and approved by the Chief Executive.

Expressions of Interest will be assessed by the EOI Review Panel against both eligibility and selection criteria. Expressions of Interest must meet all eligibility criteria. The EOI Review Panel may contact applicants in order to clarify or confirm information contained in the Expression of Interest.

All applicants will be informed as to whether they have been selected to progress to Stage 2. The EOI Review Panel's decision is final. General feedback on Expressions of Interest will be made publicly available.

Proposal development

Stage 2 involves a participatory feedback process involving ongoing engagement between reviewers and applicants. This stage is intended to enhance the quality of research proposals, ensure that proposals are consistent with the objectives of the TRGS, capitalise on potential synergies between projects and build research and translation capability.

Successful applicants will be provided with detailed feedback on their Expression of Interest and an opportunity to speak with the EOI Review Panel member who assessed their Expression of Interest.

As a key part of the feedback process, applicants will be provided with advice on potential partners and specialist expertise to improve the rigor of the research proposal or the associated translation activities. The Ministry of Health will facilitate engagement with relevant collaborators to further develop the proposal, based on the recommendations of the EOI Review Panel.

Reasons for reviewers to suggest new partners to involve in a proposal might include:

- connecting project teams to researchers with existing capability or expertise across the state;
- connecting the research project to similar research that is ongoing in other organisations;
- involving different organisations and/or demographics to increase the applicability of results to facilitate state-wide scale-up of successful outcomes;
- testing the scalability of an intervention in a different setting/organisation with a different organisational structure, skill set or history that might impact implementation; or
- ensuring policy/strategic alignment of the research with NSW Ministry of Health and the Pillars.

Where applicants from two or more LHDs submit similar proposals, and there may be benefits of working together, the EOI Review Panel may recommend a meeting of relevant applicants.

All Stage 2 participants will be invited to submit a Full Application. Development of the Full Application is the responsibility of the research team. Participation in Stage 2 of the process is not a guarantee of funding.

Full Application review

On behalf of the applicant, the TRGS coordinator will submit a Full Application approved by the Chief Executive of the Host Organisation. Partner sites that will be affected by research or implementation activities will also need to co-sign the Full Application.

The TRGS Selection Panel will assess all Full Applications against the selection criteria. The Selection Panel may contact applicants in order to clarify or confirm information in the application.

All applicants will be informed as to whether they have been successful in receiving funding. The Chief Executives of all Host Organisations will be informed of the outcomes for their organisation at the same time.

Reporting Requirements

Successful applicants will enter into a funding agreement with NSW Health which sets out obligations including that the applicants provide six-monthly financial acquittals and forecasts; and progress reports on research and translation activity. Funding for the subsequent year will be made available only when the Host Organisation has provided these reports showing satisfactory progress.

TRGS Implementation assessment

The scheme will periodically be assessed to ensure it is meeting its objectives. This will be done in collaboration with the Host Organisations and grant recipients.

TRGS recipients may be asked to meet with staff from the Ministry of Health from time to time during the funding period. Meetings with recipients will facilitate feedback and inform the future direction of the scheme.