



Request for Proposals:

MRM-MI4 Collaborative Seed Fund Grant

1. Background and Description of Funding Opportunity

1.1. Background

The current Request for Proposal (RFP) provides the details to apply for the McGill Regenerative Medicine Network (MRM) - McGill Interdisciplinary Initiative in Infection and Immunity (MI4) Collaborative Seed Fund Grant (SFG) competition.

This grant will support a new health research project focusing on *stem cell or regenerative medicine within the domains of either infection or immunity*. The MRM-MI4 SFG aims to catalyze innovative and impactful research at McGill and its affiliated hospitals, by providing initial funding to help position a new project to become competitive for sustained external funding. This opportunity provides one-time funding of up to \$50,000 for a 12-month project.

1.2. Key Dates:

- Launch of MRM-MI4 SFG: May 4, 2021
- **SFG application deadline:** **June 4, 2021, 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time**
- Evaluation period: June 5, 2021 to June 30, 2021 (TBC)
- SFG announcement to applicants: July 2021 (date TBC)

2. MRM-MI4 Seed Fund Grant - Funding Available and Funding Cycles

2.1. Objectives of the MRM-MI4 SFG

To support a preliminary or proof-of-concept study by the research team that will position them to secure external funding. The goal is to seed new research, not to replace conventional sources of funding for already-established programs and teams, or serve as bridge funding for established programs.

2.2. Scope

The MRM-MI4 SFG supports innovative approaches that will provide answers within a 12-month timeframe. These projects should focus on *infection or immunity AND stem cell or regenerative medicine*.

2.3. Team Composition

The MRM-MI4 SFG can be held at any McGill University Department or McGill University-affiliated Research institute. An investigator's location is defined as the primary location where their research team is located. The inclusion of other McGill community investigators as collaborators is encouraged, but only one Principal Investigator is permitted. The Principal Investigator or one of the designated collaborators must be a member of the McGill Regenerative Medicine Network. Investigators external to the McGill community are welcome to join the project team as collaborators, but may not be Principal Investigators.

Subcontracts to investigators outside McGill University and its affiliated institutions are only permitted under exceptional, well-justified conditions, subject to MRM and MI4 approval.

2.4. Eligibility

The Principal Investigator must meet the conditions of University Researcher or Clinical University Researcher as defined by the Fonds de Recherche du Québec ([frqs-generales-communes](#)). In accordance with McGill policies, a researcher devotes more than 50% of their time to research and teaching.

The Principal Investigator must hold a McGill appointment.

2.5. Available Funds and Grant Term

One award is available up to a maximum of \$50,000 in value. All funds will be disbursed in one payment at the start of the project. The grant term is 12 months. The MRM-MI4 SFG award is non-renewable and unspent funds must be returned to the source from which the funds originated (either MRM or MI4) at the end of this period.

3. Submission Deadline and Procedure

The deadline for submissions is June 4, 2021 at 11:59 PM Eastern Daylight Time.

All applications must be submitted by email in PDF format to grantsmcgill4.med@mcgill.ca, copying mrm.coordinator@mcgill.ca and mi4programmgr.med@mcgill.ca. Please include “MRM-MI4 SFG” in the email subject line.

4. Additional Information

If additional information is required to complete the MRM-MI4 SFG submission, please contact mrm.coordinator@mcgill.ca or admincoordmcgill4.med@mcgill.ca. Generally, a response will be provided within one business day.

5. MRM-MI4 SFG Submission Package

Free-Form Project Description (8.5 pages maximum, extra material will not be reviewed).

Use the same headings for each section as shown below and respect the required page length per section.

1. Project Information (1 page)

- 1.1. Project Title
- 1.2. Lay Abstract (max 250 words)
- 1.3. Selected Themes: infection or immunity (select one) AND stem cell or regenerative medicine (select one)
- 1.4. Principal Investigator: department, location, email
- 1.5. Collaborators
- 1.6. Project duration and total budget requested
- 1.7. Suggested reviewers **EXTERNAL TO MCGILL INSTITUTIONS** (3 names, positions and email addresses)



2. **Project Description** (4 pages, including figures, excluding references)

2.1. *Research Rationale and selected Thematic Area*

Explain the research question and concept behind the research and *justify the novelty of your idea*. Identify which broad thematic areas the proposal best aligns with: Infection or Immunity and Stem Cell or Regenerative Medicine.

2.2. *Primary Deliverables*

Provide up to three, in brief bullet points.

2.3. *Background Research (last 5 years)*

Summarize previous work leading up to the proposed project. Preliminary data is not required and projects for which extensive preliminary data is available should be submitted to traditional granting agencies.

2.4. *Proposed Research Activities*

- Briefly describe the proposed study and timeline for the proposed experiments. Employ language that is comprehensible to a scientific audience.
- Provide clear 12-month milestones (i.e. interim achievements along a path towards the project deliverable) that can be used to assess progress of the proposal.
- Describe the research outputs and their impact, and provide metrics where possible. Avoid general phrases such as new knowledge, better understanding, or highly qualified personnel (HQP) training.

3. **Project Team - Ability of Team to Implement the Project** (1 page)

- Describe the expertise of the Principal Investigator and how the team will help achieve the project's goals.
- Describe the role and expertise of co-investigators, trainees or research associates.
- Discuss Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) of the Project Team, (two useful links are http://www.nserc-crsng.gc.ca/doc/EDI/Guide_for_Applicants_EN.pdf and <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/50836.html>)
- See sub-section 8 for CV attachment requirements.

4. **Long-Term Plan** (0.5 page)

One of the major objectives of the SFG program is to enable researchers to apply for external funding using the data and experience gained during the SFG project. Describe in this section the anticipated grant opportunities that will be pursued, and the anticipated submission dates.

5. **Budget** (1 page)

Provide a detailed budget covering the 12-month grant term. Clearly indicate the site where funds will be spent (See Section 7 - Eligible Costs). The investigator's budget cannot exceed \$50,000.

6. **Indication of Consent to Share Elements of Proposal with External Donors**

Fundraising for research is an important part of the MRM-MI4 mandate. Indicate your consent for MRM and MI4 to share each of the following elements of your proposal with external donors in the future, should an appropriate opportunity arise. The applicants' response in this section will have no bearing on SFG proposal assessment. Please include the following text in your proposal and indicate the appropriate response.



I allow MRM and MI4 to share the following elements of this proposal with potentially interested external donors:

- | | |
|------------------|--------|
| 1. Title | Yes/No |
| 2. Lay Abstract | Yes/No |
| 3. Full Proposal | Yes/No |

7. References (1 page)

8. CVs

Using the NIH Bio-Sketch format (<https://grants.nih.gov/grants/forms/biosketch.htm>), attach to the main package the CV of the applicant and a maximum of two other key project team members. Please limit the CV to 5 pages and only PDF format is acceptable.

6. Submission Format and Procedure

The free form document and the CVs must adhere to the following format:

- Page size: 8½ x 11 inches
- Margins: no less than 2.54 cm (1 inch) on all sides
- Font: Times New Roman (no smaller than 12 pts) or Arial (no smaller than 11 pts)
- Header: include the name of the Principal Investigator
- Graphs and illustrations may be included, and may be in colour if they are of high enough quality to be legible upon printing, but will count as part of the set page limits for each section.
- Assemble the Free-Form and CVs into one PDF package with bookmarks; each page to be consecutively numbered.
- Title the PDF file using the last name of the Principal Investigator. For example: “MRM-MI4 SFG Proposal-Smith.pdf”
- If the Free-Form Project Description exceeds the maximum page limit, it will not be reviewed.

7. Awarding Funds, Eligible Costs

7.1. Awarding Funds

Funds for the successful MRM-MI4 SFG award will be disbursed to the Principal Investigator’s institution in a single payment.

7.2. Eligible Costs

All budgeted items must be in compliance and compatible with the policies and guidelines of the Principal Investigator’s institution, as well as the Tri-Agency Financial Administration Guide (TAFAG) (<https://www.mcgill.ca/research/ran-welcome/tri-agency-administration>), and must clearly align with proposed activities outlined in Section 2.4.

Only the following are eligible costs:

- Salary support for trainees and research personnel (includes benefits)
- Materials and supplies (consumables)
- Core or platform fees for project related samples or data
- Data evaluation costs by appropriate research experts
- Small equipment up to \$5,000 total
- Appropriately justified project-related travel



Please note that final decisions regarding budget eligibility will be made by MRM-MI4 leadership.

7.3. Overhead

There is no acceptable overhead component to the MRM-MI4 SFG award. All the awarded funds are to be directed towards eligible costs.

8. Review

8.1. Assessment Criteria

SFG submissions will be evaluated according to the following equal-weighted assessment criteria:

- Originality, innovation and potential impact of the proposed research
- Well-defined research outputs and metrics
- Feasibility of the research
- Expertise of Principal Investigator, and entire Project Team
- The plan for the Principal Investigator to apply for external funding using the data and experience gained during the SFG project.

8.2. Review Process and Funding Approval Time Frame

SFG submissions will be reviewed in three stages:

Step 1 Due Diligence: The MRM Coordinator and the MI4 Program Manager, will conduct a due diligence review of the SFG submission to validate the required elements in the submission package (Section 5). Submissions that do not comply will be eliminated from further review and applicants will receive a summary of missing elements or deficiencies.

Step 2 Scientific Review Committee (SRC): A SRC comprising a majority of members external to the MUHC-RI/McGill community will evaluate and rank the submissions according to the Assessment Criteria (Section 8.1) and provide recommendations regarding the top ranked submissions.

Step 3 Approval by the Executives: The MI4 Executive Committee (Director and Co-Directors), with the MRM Director will validate the review process, review the recommendations of the SRC, and will make a decision regarding the awarded application.

Conflict of Interest (COI): MRM and MI4 will adopt a COI policy to ensure that anyone participating in the review process does not have a COI. Any person declaring a COI, or a potential COI, will be required to recuse themselves from the review process. COIs will be defined using the CIHR definition that can be found at: <http://www.cihr-irsc.gc.ca/e/46378.html>.

9. Approval and Grant Agreement

MRM and MI4 will contact principal applicant with the funding decision comprising one of the following formats:

- Approved “as is”.
- Approved with recommendations to be incorporated into the project activities.
- Not approved with inclusion of any feedback provided by SRC.

A Grant Agreement and Fund Release Agreement Form will be sent to the awarded Principal Investigator outlining the terms and conditions of the award. The awardee will be asked to sign and return the award agreement as a proof that they accept the award and its terms.



Documentation of appropriate biohazard, radioactive, animal use, Stem Cell Oversight Committee (SCOC) and ethics approvals will be required for the release of funds. For grants held at McGill University, completion of an OSR checklist is required.

10. Reporting Requirements and Evaluation of Progress

The Principal Investigator will be required to submit a final narrative and financial report 30 days after the end of the project implementation period, using a template to be provided by MRM and MI4.