## UNTHSC Proof of Concept Program:

## Commercialization Bridge Grant

## FY 2016 Intramural Grant Program

1. **Proof of Concept: Commercialization Bridge Grant Deadlines**

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| Announcement Date | October 7, 2015 |
| PI Letter of Intent & Project Eligibility and Commercial Assessment Form Submission Deadline\* | As requested by ORDC after discussions with PI  |
| Notification of LOI & Eligibility Review (anticipated) | 4 weeks or as arranged |
| Proposal Submission Deadline | 4 weeks of LOI approval notice |
| Expected Notification of Review Outcome | 6 weeks of proposal submission |
| Research Commences | 4 weeks after approval |

\*NOTE: Applications for Proof of Concept grants will be accepted only by request from the Office for Research Development and Commercialization (RD&C). Initial determination of project eligibility will be determined at LOI stage.

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*Questions regarding this funding opportunity may be directed to the Office of Research Development & Commercialization.* E-mail Aurelio.Rodriguez@unthsc.edu or call 817-735-7649

# UNTHSC Proof of Concept: Commercialization Grant Overview

The goal of the UNTHSC Proof of Concept: Commercialization Grant (PoC) is to accelerate the commercialization of technology developed at and assigned to UNTHSC by providing funding to bridge the gap between scientific research and commercialization development. Projects appropriate for this opportunity will have already demonstrated successful results in the research environment and are poised for commercialization pending a specific, targeted demonstration, test result, or prototype that will advance the concept as may be required for licensing. Projects at the appropriate stage of development are those that have progressed beyond the stage where research funding opportunities (e.g., NIH, NSF, among others) are typically available, but capital from industry or an investment partner has not yet been secured because of unanswered questions that must be resolved before the technology would likely be licensable. Applicants must demonstrate that successful completion of the project would likely result in either a technology being licensed to an existing company or spur the development of a start-up company within 1-2 years.

# Scope of Activities

PoC projects must propose research and development activities for technologies or products on the brink of commercialization or licensing that must *overcome a specific identified hurdle*. The successful outcome of the proposed activities would likely result in technology being licensed or spur the development of a startup company within 1-2 years. Applicants must identify a clear path to commercial development, market potential, and the significant impact of funding on advancement to commercialization for their projects.

Projects solicited under this program may include but not necessarily limited to:

* 1. Building of a prototype or second iteration prototype to prepare for commercialization.
	2. Commercial feasibility tests.
	3. Research to demonstrate mitigation of risk for potential licensees.
	4. Research to address a specific gap identified by industry that impairs the ability to attract capital.

A PoC Grant provides funding only for technologies:

* + - Where the technology has been disclosed to the RD&C and RD&C has invited the application for PoC funding.
		- Project time is specific and limited to the time needed to complete the scheduled work, in any case, not more than one year.
		- Technologies that do not have other sources of funding, and have progressed beyond the stage where research funding opportunities (e.g., NIH, NSF, among others) are typically available.

Budget: Work plan will be developed with collaboration of RD&C and will key on specific information that is required to significantly advance the commercial potential for the technology. Allowable costs will be only those directly related to the specific scope of work in the proposal. Funds may not be used for the purchase of laptops, to attend conferences, for travel (except when it directly supports project completion), for publications, or to cover costs of securing or protecting the intellectual property (IP).

# Eligibility Criteria

PoC Grants are open to all fields of research in which the proposed project fulfills the goals and funding priorities of the program outlined above. Proposals must meet both applicant and IP eligibility criteria outlined below.

The following are **not** eligible for funding under this program:

* Proposals to fund basic research or theoretical development, or to generate models, new pilot data, or assess the feasibility of a further research project.
* Projects for which the proposed activities require more than one year to complete.
* Projects with existing industry sponsorship, investment partner, or grant support.

Applicant Eligibility

Applicants must have Principal Investigator (PI) status.

Intellectual Property Eligibility

All intellectual property (IP) related to the proposal **must** have been disclosed to the Office of Research Development & Commercialization and **must** be identified in the proposal by case number and title.

All IP related to the proposal must have been assigned to UNTHSC and be available for licensing unencumbered by other obligations. Existing IP cannot be jointly owned with a commercial entity. If IP is jointly owned with an academic institution or non-profit, there must be an inter-institutional agreement in place and UNTHSC must have the lead role in commercializing the technology. Any new Intellectual Property developed as a part of the funded PoC project must be assigned to UNTHSC.

# How to Apply

The application process:

* 1. Submission of a Letter of Intent (LOI): Submission and approval of an LOI is required in order to submit a full proposal. LOIs can be submitted at any time when requested by RD&C. This process begins with discussions with RD&C. Do not submit and LOI without previous discussions and an invitation to submit an LOI.

Projects determined eligible at the LOI stage will be given access to the full application materials. LOIs found to be ineligible will be declined.

* 1. Proposal Submission: Complete applications must be submitted within the agreed upon time. Applicants must adhere to the Application Instructions and guidelines. By submitting a proposal the PI is attesting that both applicant and IP eligibility criteria have been met.

# Review Criteria for PoC Grants

PoC proposals are reviewed by external commercialization advisors selected by RD&C to evaluate projects’ commercial merit, relevance to program goals and funding priorities.

The main review criterion for proposals is the commercialization potential as described below:

* *Commercialization Potential*: Projects must have demonstrated research success and be ready for commercialization pending a specific, targeted demonstration, test result, or prototype that can be completed timely, *and* must demonstrate that successful completion of the proposed activities will likely result in a technology being licensed to an existing company or serve as the foundation for a start-up company. Additional review criteria include:
* *Excellence*, as demonstrated by an innovative, well-conceived, high quality and feasible project.
* *Qualifications of Personnel*, as demonstrated by the leadership and meaningful engagement of well-qualified personnel.
* *Resources and Facilities*, as demonstrated by an appropriate, well-defined and justified budget, and sufficient access to adequate facilities, infrastructure, and other resources necessary for the conduct of the proposed activities.

# Review of Proposals and Funding Decisions

Proposals will be reviewed by internal and external technical and business experts and members of the investment community. Applicants are encouraged to avoid jargon and to prepare proposals in a manner comprehensible to a general audience. Reviewers are required to sign a confidentiality agreement prior to the review. Applicants must provide sufficient information for reviewers to make a determination regarding commercialization potential.

Awards are subject to final approval by the Vice President for Research and are contingent on availability of funding.

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