



January 02, 2024

Translational RAAS Interest Group
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Translational RAAS Interest Group: Request For Proposals

Mission statement of TRIG: The *Translational RAAS Interest Group* brings together medical professionals and scientists from both the veterinary and human fields and serves as a ‘thought leader’ in the area of the renin-angiotensin aldosterone system. The TRIG enables innovative research and collaboration that expands our understanding of the RAAS and improves our ability to modulate it to improve and prolong the life of companion animals and people with cardiovascular and kidney disease.

Objective of the RFP: To advance this mission, this request for proposals (RFP) seeks to award ‘seed grants’ for studies that investigate all aspects of the renin-angiotensin-aldosterone system (RAAS) with the goal of answering clinically relevant questions, increasing our understanding of the pathophysiology of cardiovascular and kidney diseases, and ultimately improving veterinary and human patient outcomes. In keeping with the focus on clinical patients, studies using experimental animal models will only be supported if a clear benefit to veterinary patients can be demonstrated. Terminal studies will not be supported through this funding mechanism.

Grant Information:

- Total allowable budget is \$20,000 per grant. Seed grant funds may not be used for indirect costs, equipment purchases, or salary support. Publishing and travel costs may be reimbursed from the grant.
- Funds will be spent within 24 months of the disbursement of funds. Unused funds after 24 months or the conclusion of the project must be returned to TRIG.

- A progress report will be required at 12 and 24 months and should be submitted to the TRIG Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP) via the TRIG secretary (secretarytrig@gmail.com).
- The 12- and 24-month progress report should include a progress update, challenges, budget and updated timeline, and reference to any presented or published abstracts, scientific presentations, or publications. If the project is completed, these reports may also be in the form of an abstract or publication in a relevant peer-reviewed journal.
- There will be no restrictions on publishing studies funded by TRIG grants. TRIG should be acknowledged as the full or partial funding source.

Applicant Qualifications:

- Submissions must be from TRIG members or a trainee working under a TRIG member (with guidance and co-authorship from a TRIG member).
- TRIG membership is free and can be obtained by emailing the TRIG secretary to request membership (secretarytrig@gmail.com).
- A maximum of 1 application as Principal Investigator per grant cycle is permitted.
- SAP members may submit grants either as PI or Co-PI, but will be recused from reviewing **any** grants in the cycle involved.

Application Process:

- The RFP will be announced January 2, 2024.
- Deadline for grant submission will be April 1, 2024.
- Awardees will be announced by July 1, 2024 and funds will be disbursed from the TRIG as a single payment no later than September 1, 2024.

Review Process:

- Grant proposal review will occur between April and June.
- Proposals will be reviewed by the TRIG Scientific Advisory Panel (SAP).
 - Reviewers will be blinded to the identification of the applicants. The secretary will indicate the experience level of the investigators so the SAP can account for this during scoring.
 - The SAP Coordinator will appoint 2 individuals from within the SAP to act as primary reviewers of submitted grants. Primary reviewers will review the grants utilizing a pre-established scoring rubric outlined below. Each proposal will be reviewed on scientific merit, potential impact, feasibility, and budget justification. SAP members will read all grants to provide input and eventual scoring but will only be responsible for presenting to the group, those in which they are assigned as the primary reviewer.
 - The SAP will convene via videoconference to discuss the grants. Primary reviewers will present each grant and critiques to the entire SAP for discussion. All members in attendance will score all grants (unless recused) and scores will be averaged. Final funding decisions will be made by consensus of the SAP.
 - In some cases, funding will be contingent upon the primary investigator submitting suitable responses to reviewer comments.

- The sponsoring organization (Ceva Santé Animale) has an *ad hoc* member on the SAP who will be able to review proposals (though not as primary reviewer) and provide comments and scores to the SAP.
- A maximum of one grant will be awarded per cycle. If no grants are deemed suitable for funding, it is possible that no grant will be awarded for a particular cycle.
- Resubmission to the next funding cycle will be authorized once.

Proposal Format:

- Please submit as a single PDF document via email to the TRIG secretary (secretarytrig@gmail.com).
- Formatting should be single-spaced with 1-inch page margins, using no smaller than 11-point Times New Roman or Arial font.
- Technical terminology should be defined on first usage; acronyms and abbreviations may be used subsequently.

Proposal Components:

- Title page (maximum 1 page) should include:
 - List of the name and email addresses of all investigators (identify the principal investigator)
 - Short lay abstract
 - Total funding amount requested
- Project narrative (maximum 3 pages) should include:
 - Background / Rationale / Hypothesis (including preliminary data if applicable)
 - Specific Aims
 - Experimental Design and Methods (include timeline, potential pitfalls/solutions, power calculation if appropriate, planned analyses)
 - Please provide justification and a statement of clinical relevance if research animals will be used
 - Plans for future funding
- Ethical (IACUC and/or IRB) approval or assurance of pending submission (no page limit)
 - Funds will not be awarded until IACUC/IRB approval is granted
- Detailed budget and budget justification (maximum 1 page)
- References (maximum 1 page)
- Biographical sketch (NIH format) for all investigators
- Total maximal length of proposal: **6 pages** (not including ethical approval statement and biosketches)

Scoring rubric

- Scientific Merit (**0-5 pts**)
 - Quality of hypothesis and objectives, experimental design and methods, data analysis
 - Quality of preliminary data (if applicable)
 - Likelihood proposed research will effectively address hypothesis
 - Appropriateness of planned analyses
- Feasibility of Objectives (**0-4 pts**)
 - Likelihood that the objectives will be completed based on timeline and adequacy of expertise, facilities and equipment
- Potential Impact and likelihood of supporting effort for additional funding (**0-3 pts**)
 - Independent of scientific merit, importance of study in advancing our understanding of the RAAS and solving important animal health issues
 - Proposal includes a plan for additional studies that could logically build on or follow the present study
 - The study, or future hypotheses arising from the study, have the potential for translational applications
 - The disease being investigated has a high incidence or is of high importance
- Innovation (**0-3 pts**)
 - Explanation of how the application challenges and seeks to shift current research or clinical practice paradigms
 - Proposed theoretical concepts, approaches or methodologies, instrumentation, or interventions that: (a) are novel and have advantage over *status quo*, or (b) will be refined, improved, or applied in (important) new ways
- Supporting junior investigators (**0-2 pts**)
 - *Assistant level* academics and PI's in private practice receive 2 points
 - *Assistant professor, lecturer, instructor, junior professor, research fellow, graduate research assistants and residents*
 - *Associate level* academics serving at PI receive 1 point
 - *Associate professor, senior lecturer*
 - Full professor academics serving as PI receive 0 points
- Grantsmanship - quality of writing, clarity of presentation (**0-2 pts**)
- Appropriateness of Budget (**0-1 pts**)
 - Justification and suitability of proposed budget
- **Total points possible: 20**