

CORE RESEARCH FACILITIES

Total Body PET Facility

Pilot Study Seed Funding Scheme

Guidelines to Applicants

Background

The University of Sydney, in partnership with the Northern Sydney Local Health District (NSLHD), has established a Total Body PET (TBP) facility in the Department of Nuclear Medicine at Royal North Shore Hospital. The \$15 million facility is jointly funded by the University, NSLHD and the National Imaging Facility (NIF) through the Commonwealth Government's National Collaborative Research Infrastructure Strategy (NCRIS). Under a partnership agreement with NSLHD, 50% of the capacity of the TBP system is used for routine clinical imaging studies and 50% is used for academic research. Access to the research component of the TBP is managed by the University through its core research facility, Sydney Imaging, as an open access research facility. New projects are assessed by an independent scientific panel on the basis of scientific merit according to NIF/NCRIS principles. While the NSLHD provides clinical staff to operate the TBP scanner, the University and NIF also jointly fund staff to support research operations and provide technical support and advice to researchers.

Objectives

The objective of this funding scheme is to enable researchers to collect pilot data in support of future competitive grant applications. Specifically, the scheme is intended to fund the radiopharmaceutical costs and other project related costs for small pilot studies, sufficient to acquire compelling evidence of feasibility.

Eligibility

To be eligible for the Total Body PET Pilot Study Seed Funding Scheme proposed projects:

- Must be led by a University of Sydney academic or a researcher from another institution formally affiliated with the University of Sydney (e.g., Centenary Institute, Westmead Research Hub) or institutions that are nodes of the National Imaging Facility network,
- Must formulate a meaningful and original research question that hasn't previously received competitive funding from national and/or international sources,
- Shall clearly identify the importance and impact of the Total Body PET facility towards addressing the imaging requirements of the project,
- Shall have the potential to lead to high quality research outcomes, promote interdisciplinary collaboration and attract further external funding.

Applications will be assessed on scientific merit and originality (for more details on proposal assessment see relevant section below) and a strong preference will be given to:

- Early- and mid-career researchers (ECRs and MCRs) seeking to achieve results that contribute to the establishment of a research track record in Total Body PET imaging,
- A strategic proof-of-concept imaging experiment that will generate sufficient pilot data towards a stronger application for external funding opportunities,
- Applicants that haven't previously accessed this facility and do not have external funding to support TBP studies.

Funding

Successful applications will be awarded funding sufficient to enable a small pilot study (up to 4-6 scans). There are many methodological factors that may impact the project costs of a Total Body PET study, with the most significant being the radiopharmaceutical production and scanning fees. The overall project costs for a typical pilot study on the Total Body PET can vary greatly but are expected to range between \$5,000 and \$15,000. Funds awarded to successful applicants under this seed funding scheme can be used towards covering the radiopharmaceutical production and delivery. In addition, any scanning fees will be waived for successful applicants under the existing User Access Scheme, enabling a small pilot study at no additional costs to the user.

Application Process and Guidelines

Prior to submitting an application, researchers must contact the National Imaging Facility Fellow (georgios.angelis@sydney.edu.au) or Sydney Imaging (sydneyimaging.admin@sydney.edu.au) to discuss the basic eligibility, as well as any preliminary project-specific aspects (e.g., imaging protocol) that may impact the project costs, the feasibility of the study or the success of the application. There are no deadlines for this scheme and applications can be submitted at any time.

All applications must be submitted via the Sydney Imaging Total Body PET online application [portal](#) and must include the following information:

- A **project title** (Max 200 characters),
- A **project statement** (Max 300 words) outlining the novelty and significance of the proposed project, as well as the potential impact of the Total Body PET Facility on the findings,
- A **project plan** (Max 500 words), including relevant background, aims and research methodology. It would be advantageous for proposed projects to demonstrate interdisciplinary research and/or involve other Core Research Facilities,
- A **budget and justification** (Max 200 words) that provides an outline of the direct costs and a justification for the requested resources – including a justification for the selected radiotracer and its availability within NSW,
- **Applicant's track record** (Max 500 words) that includes an overall summary of publications and citations and impact factors listing up to five top publications and providing an outline of the impact of the applicant's work, any awards received, and if applicable any career interruptions to demonstrate performance relative to opportunity.
- A **statement of intention** to leverage future funding opportunities based on the acquired pilot data if seed funding is offered.

Recipients of the Total Body PET Pilot Study Seed Funding scheme are expected to report on the outcomes of their research 12 months from the date of the award (the template can be provided by Sydney Imaging). In addition, publications in scientific journals or conferences resulting from this funding scheme must include an acknowledgement of the Seed Funding Scheme, as well as the support of the Sydney Imaging CRF and the National Imaging Facility.

Proposal Assessment

All applications that meet the eligibility criteria will be assessed by an independent Scientific Advisory Committee based on the following information:

- **Project quality and innovation** – merit and originality of the proposed project, clarity of the methodology and research questions, potential to stimulate national and/or international collaboration,
- **Impact** – potential for the seed fund to make a significant impact on the career development of the applicant, as well as to create an opportunity for further external funding,
- **Investigator track record** – evidence of high quality and innovative research outputs (relative to opportunity),
- **Feasibility and benefit** – feasibility of the proposed project given the available resources and budget, as well as the potential advancements in the field from the outcomes of this project.

Key Contacts

For further information on this funding scheme or the Total Body PET Facility please contact:

Dr Georgios Angelis – National Imaging Facility Fellow

Phone: +61 2 9351 0612

Email: georgios.angelis@sydney.edu.au

Sydney Imaging Admin – General Enquiries

Phone: +61 2 8627 0955

Email: sydney-imaging.admin@sydney.edu.au