

Guidelines for mRNA Victoria Research Acceleration Fund

Round Three - October 2023

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Authorisation

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1 Program Summary

1.1 Overview

The third round of the mRNA Victoria Research Acceleration Fund program (mVRAF Program) is being launched by mRNA Victoria, a business unit within the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) (mRNA Victoria) as part of the Victorian Government's investment to grow mRNA capability in the state. The mVRAF Program is designed to capitalise on Victoria's comparative advantages in research, increase the RNA candidate pipeline of next generation vaccines and therapies and enhance the Victorian economy by growing the RNA ecosystem.

This third round of the mVRAF Program fund will provide \$1.7 million to support and accelerate RNA-based therapeutics research through the provision of one-off grants to successful applicants.

Two tiers will be offered under this round of the mVRAF Program, these are: 'Tier 1' for early-stage research projects and 'Tier 2' for fast tracking the translation of research into health and economic outcomes.

The mVRAF Program is designed to complement the Victorian Government's existing [Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund](#) by providing a dedicated funding stream for RNA-based therapeutics projects. Projects submitted to the mVRAF Program will not be eligible to be submitted to the Victorian Medical Research Acceleration Fund.

mRNA Victoria and the Department of Jobs, Skills, Industry and Regions (DJSIR) will administer this program.

1.2 Program Objectives

The objectives for each tier of the mVRAF Program are:

Tier 1 - Early-stage research

- Support innovative early-stage RNA-based therapeutics research, that is moved to proof-of-concept stage faster and will bring health and economic benefits to Victoria
- Facilitate collaboration between medical research institutes, universities and industry that will maximise innovation and grow the RNA ecosystem in Victoria

Tier 2 – Research translation

- Provide direct funding to 'fast-track' the translation of RNA-based therapeutics and vaccines research to increase Victoria's RNA-based candidate pipeline
- Facilitate collaboration between medical research institutes, universities and industry to support the translation of research into more commercially attractive products

1.3 Program Outcomes

The intended outcomes of the mVRAF Program are:

Tier 1 -

- Innovative early-stage RNA research that could grow the RNA therapeutics and vaccines pipeline is moved to proof-of-concept stage faster
- Research collaborations increase the likelihood that the research can be successfully translated into economic and health benefits for Victoria and foster a more cohesive RNA ecosystem.

Tier 2 -

- The pipeline of Victorian RNA-based therapeutic and vaccine candidates reaches clinical research and manufacturing phases of development faster and eventually are delivered to the public faster
- Research collaborations support effective translation of research and foster a more cohesive RNA ecosystem

1.4 Longer-term outcomes

Over the longer-term the intended outcomes of the mVRAF Program are:

- Victorian production of world-leading mRNA therapeutic candidates
- Increased attractiveness of Victorian RNA therapeutics research to investors
- Increased capability, knowledge, and expertise across the Victorian RNA research sector
- Victoria's reputation as a world leader in RNA therapeutics research is bolstered and attracts global investment
- A stronger RNA therapeutics research sector supports growth of the broader RNA ecosystem.
- A stronger therapeutic candidate pipeline supports a self-sustaining manufacturing industry

1.5 Promoting Gender Equality

Under the *Gender Equality Act 2020 (VIC)*, DJSIR has a duty to promote gender equality and this Program seeks to promote gender equality by encouraging the participation and inclusion of women in Applicant project teams.

This mVRAF Program allocates a proportion of the Assessment Criteria weighting (5% total) in favour of Applicants with project teams who include at least 50% members who identify as women or are led by a person who identifies as a woman as Chief Investigator (CI).

2 Funding of mVRAF Program Projects

The third of the mVRAF Program will provide \$1.7 million total (excluding GST) of funding across the two tiers as follows:

Tier	Description	Available grant funding per project
Tier 1 – Early Stage	Early-stage innovative research proposals for projects that demonstrate potential for translation at a later stage.	Up to \$100,000 (GST exclusive)
Tier 2 – Fast track	'Fast track' translation of research to products into clinical trials.	Up to \$500,000 (GST exclusive)

2.1 Co-contribution requirements

- Grant funding under this third round of the mVRAF Program will be provided on the basis that Applicants provide a 1:1 matched co-contribution in the form of either a financial or in-kind contribution (Co-contribution).
- Applicant Co-contributions must comply with the requirements set out in these guidelines and Applicants must provide evidence in support of Co-contributions in accordance with Section 8.

2.2 Financial Co-contribution

- For a financial Co-contribution to be eligible for the purposes of an Applicant's Co-contribution, the financial Co-contribution must be applied to the Applicant's project but does not need to comply with the specific criteria at sections 5.2 and 5.3.
- Grant funding received by an Applicant from other State or Commonwealth Government programs in relation to an Applicant's project can form part of an Applicant's required Co-contribution. The Applicant will be required to provide detail in their application of how much State or Commonwealth Government funding makes up the Applicant's Co-contribution.

2.3 In-kind contributions

- An in-kind contribution is a contribution of a good or a service other than cash.
- In-kind contributions may be eligible for the purposes of an Applicant's Co-contribution where the in-kind contribution:
 - relates directly to the costs of delivering an Applicant's project; and
 - satisfy the requirements listed in section 5.2 (Eligible Project Expenditure).
- In-kind contributions that relate to expenses/activities listed in section 5.3 (Ineligible Activities/Expenditure) are not eligible for the purposes of satisfying an Applicant's in-kind Co-contribution obligations.

Examples:

Tier 1

- If the total project cost is \$320,000 (excluding GST), the maximum Grant contribution will be \$100,000 (excluding GST). The remaining \$220,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.
- If the total project cost is \$82,000 (excluding GST), the Grant will cover up to \$41,000 (excluding GST). The remaining \$41,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.

Tier 2

- If the total project cost is \$1.2m (excluding GST), the maximum Grant contribution will be \$500,000 (excluding GST). The remaining \$700,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.
- If the total project cost is \$780,000 (excluding GST), the Grant will cover up to \$390,000 (excluding GST). The remaining \$390,000 (excluding GST) must be covered by the Applicant.

3 Eligibility Criteria

3.1 Eligible Applicants

Applicants must meet the following criteria, as assessed by mRNA Victoria and DJSIR, to be eligible (Eligibility Criteria):

- Hold an active Australian Business Number (ABN);
- Hold insurance policies in accordance with the following minimum requirements:
 - public liability insurance to a value appropriate for the project; and

- insurance against any loss or damage to the project infrastructure for full replacement cost;
- Be one of the following entity types:
 - a company incorporated pursuant to the *Corporations Act 2001* (Cth) and registered with the Australian Securities and Investment Commission; or
 - an incorporated association incorporated pursuant to the *Associations Incorporation Reform Act 2012* (VIC) or equivalent legislation of another Australian jurisdiction;
 - education body established by statute;
 - a public health service established under the *Health Services Act 1988* (Vic); or
 - other incorporated entity approved by DJSIR.

Applicants must attest that:

- they can comply with the Co-contribution requirements specific to their project (in accordance with these guidelines) and provide evidence of this capability in their application;
- they will participate in future mVRAF Program evaluation activities;
- they will deliver the funded project in collaboration with a Collaborative Partner;
- they will spend the majority of the grant funding in Victoria
- research activities will predominately be led from and conducted in Victoria.

3.2 Ineligible Applicants

Unless specified in section 3.1, the following entities are not eligible to apply for the mVRAF Program:

- a Commonwealth department, agency or body
- a State department, agency, entity or other body established under the *Public Administration Act 2004* (VIC) or equivalent legislation of another Australian jurisdiction; or
- unincorporated associations; or
- partnerships; or
- individuals/sole traders.

Note: Commonwealth agencies, like CSIRO, are not eligible to apply for the program, but are eligible to be Collaborative Partners as long as they are not the primary/lead applicant for the program.

3.3 Criteria Specific to Certain Applicants

The following criteria apply to certain categories of Applicants:

- Applicants that are medical research institutes or industry and health services organisations are invited to apply for funding for up to four research projects that are independent to each other.
- Universities are invited to apply for up to four research projects per faculty.
- The Applicants to which these rules apply will need to provide assurance to mRNA Victoria and DJSIR that their institutes, organisations or faculties have sufficient resources and can undertake multiple concurrent projects (if approved).
- Applicants who previously applied to an earlier round of the mVRAF Program and were unsuccessful are eligible to reapply.

4 Collaborations

4.1 Collaborative Partner Requirement

To apply for the mVRAF Program, an Applicant is required to collaborate with at least one other organisation (Collaborative Partner).

Applications must identify the Collaborative Partner and must attach relevant proof of collaboration as an attachment to their application in accordance with the requirements set out in the 'Documentation and Information Requirements' in section 8 of these guidelines.

The application and supporting evidence should demonstrate how the Applicant and Collaborative Partner organisations will work together under the collaborative partner arrangements to maximise research impact, innovation, and overall quality of research, and how this will lead to effective translation and/or commercialisation of research. Organisations based outside of Australia are eligible to be collaborative partners, providing that the majority of research activity will be led from and conducted in Victoria.

4.2 Collaborative Partner Eligibility

Applicants and their Collaborative Partners must be entirely separate entities. They may not be owned by the same parent company, share governance or have common directors.

In the application, Applicants are required to declare there are no existing governance relationships between themselves and the nominated Collaborative Partner, including that they:

- are not subsidiaries or related bodies corporate within the meaning of *the Corporations Act 2001* (Cth); and
- do not share common directors, officers, or senior managers.

5 Project Eligibility

5.1 General Project Eligibility

Projects should meet a current need or gap in a field of RNA-based therapeutics research. This could be, but is not limited to:

- mRNA, siRNA, Cas/CRISPR RNA approaches and other RNA-based approaches
- Both prophylactics and therapeutics including vaccines, cell therapies, treatments for rare diseases, infectious diseases and cancer.

Projects looking to address key RNA enabling technology, such as novel nanoparticle encapsulation technology or novel modified nucleotides will not be eligible to apply to the mVRAF Program.

Eligibility of projects will be determined at the sole discretion of DJSIR.

Applicants are only eligible to submit a project to one tier of the mVRAF Program.

Examples of eligible projects under the two tiers of this mVRAF Program are as follows (to be used as a guide only):

Tier 1

- Early-stage RNA-based therapeutic research projects, including discovery, early-stage and pre-clinical research.

Tier 2

- RNA-based therapeutics projects that can demonstrate a clear pathway to translation and can secure development and commercialisation opportunities.

5.2 Eligible Project Expenditure

Eligible expenditure items are:

- Regulatory and intellectual property fees and charges associated with registering domestic or international patents or other intellectual property enforcement expenses.
- Equipment, consumables and services required for the research activity as outlined in the project description provided that such equipment, consumable or service is not listed as an ineligible activity/expense in section 5.3.
- Staffing costs that relate solely to either:
 - new employees; or
 - the expansion of hours for current employees, provided these employees are working on the funded projects.

The majority of grant funding received must be spent in Victoria on eligible project expenditure.

5.3 Ineligible Activities/Expenses

Grant funds delivered through this mVRAF Program must not support activities or expenditure which involve:

- Usual operational expenditure, including existing staff costs, onboarding costs for staff, communications, travel, entertainment, vehicles, accommodation, and office computing equipment
- Routine replacement, maintenance or minor upgrade of plant and equipment
- Printing, stationery, postage, and bank charges
- Basic and routine professional services including legal and accounting fees
- Any amount paid on account of goods and services tax
- Costs related to preparing the grant application, preparing any project reports and preparing any project variation requests
- Building routine websites, sales and promotional activities, marketing or communications campaigns
- Retrospective funding for projects that have already been completed prior to receiving successful funding approval under this Program
- Retrospective funding for projects that have already:
 - been completed prior to receiving an offer of grant funding under this mVRAF Program; or
 - commenced prior to receiving a successful funding approval under this mVRAF Program, except in circumstances where the application of the funding can be demonstrated to effect a change of scope or acceleration of a project commenced prior to any funding approval.
- Any other expenditure as determined by DJSIR or mRNA Victoria in its sole and absolute discretion.

5.4 Project Budget

Applicants are required to submit a project budget summary, detailing how the grant funds and the Applicant's Co-contribution will be spent.

Grant funds provided to the Applicant under this mVRAF Program must only be committed to expenditure in accordance with the eligible project expenditure criteria outlined in section 5.2.

Where the eligibility of an expense included in the project budget is uncertain, DJSIR or mRNA Victoria may seek further information from an applicant.

5.5 Program Timeline

To assist Applicants, DJSIR is targeting the following indicative timeline for the Program:

End of April 2024	Letters of offer issued to successful Applicants. Draft grant agreements will be issued following acceptance by Applicants.
June 2024	Earliest date by which Applicants can expect grant agreements to have been finalised and fully signed.

The above indicative timeline is subject to change at the sole discretion of DJSIR. Applicants are not to rely on this indicative timeline and neither mRNA Victoria nor DJSIR accept any liability in relation to any consequences attributable to reliance on this timeline.

Projects funded by a grant under this mVRAF Program must be commenced by the Applicant following execution by the Applicant and DJSIR of a grant agreement and completed within two years of the commencement date recorded in that grant agreement.

Projects initiated or completed beyond the timeframe of this mVRAF Program may still be eligible if the proposed activities supported by the grant funding are completed within two years in accordance with the conditions of the Applicant's grant agreement.

6 Assessment Criteria

This is a competitive program and successful applications will be required to rate highly against the Program's assessment criteria compared to other eligible applications.

6.1 Assessment Criteria

Eligible applications will be assessed by an expert panel (external to DJSIR) on how well they meet the assessment criteria as outlined below with reference to the relevant tier of the program applied for by the Applicant. All supplementary attachments and information provided as part of the application will be taken into consideration during the assessment and scoring process.

	Assessment Criteria	Description	Weighting
1	The quality of the research project proposal and the extent to which it aligns with the	Tier 1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Demonstrates how this grant will support innovative early-stage research. Application should address how the project delivers value through innovative knowledge creation, knowledge transfer and/or knowledge application. 	30%



	<p>program objectives as set out in section 1.2</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The health and/or clinical need for this research has been clearly articulated • Clearly articulates how the partnership will collaborate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ maximise innovation; and ○ improve the quality of research 	
		<p>Tier 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Articulates how the grant will ‘fast-track’ the translation of research to increase Victoria’s RNA therapeutics pipeline. • The health and/or clinical need for this research has been clearly articulated • Clearly articulates how the partnership will collaborate to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ strengthen the research activity ○ progress the research to the investment-ready stage; and ○ stimulate translational activities 	
<p>2</p>	<p>The extent to which the proposal could meet the outcomes of the program as set out in section 1.3</p>	<p>Tier 1</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of the expected outcome/s of the research project to Victoria, Victorians and to grow Victoria’s RNA therapeutics pipeline has been well defined. • Potential future pathways to translation and/or commercialisation have been articulated. 	<p>30%</p>
		<p>Tier 2</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The value of the expected outcome/s of the research proposal to Victoria, Victorians and to growing Victoria’s RNA therapeutics pipeline has been well defined. • Articulates how this grant will accelerate translation into therapeutic products. 	

3	Demonstrated project feasibility and delivery	<p>For both Tier 1 and Tier 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear implementation strategy and resourcing to be able to deliver the project • Appropriate organisational commitment to the project • Commitment from Collaborative Partner/s or demonstrating support from industry, philanthropy, or research institutes • The required Co-Contribution has been identified and committed to the project • Identified appropriate technical resources, skills and capabilities, including where appropriate a strong track record of key personnel • A well-developed and suitable budget for the project • Evidence of agreed and suitable environment in which to undertake the proposed research • Identified project risks and mitigation strategies 	25%
4	Ability to deliver within timeframe and need for government support	<p>For both Tier 1 and Tier 2:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The applicant demonstrated the ability to deliver the project within the set timeframe and realise its outcomes. • Whether the project would proceed without Government support due to considerations such as timing, resourcing and/or level of risk impacting project initiation. 	10%
5	Promotion of gender equality	For both Tier 1 and Tier 2:	
		The Applicant demonstrates that at the time of project commencement the project team will consist of at least 50% members who identify as women.	2.5%
		The Applicant's project is led by a Chief Investigator who identifies as a woman.	2.5%

6.2 Due Diligence Assessments

Applicants may be subject to due diligence assessments to enable DJSIR to assess financial and other non-financial risks associated with the application. Outcomes from such assessments may be taken into account in any decision to recommend or award a grant and in contracting with successful applicants.

Any of the following circumstances may be taken into consideration in any decision whether to award a grant:

- any adverse findings by a regulator regarding an Applicant;
- if an Applicant is placed under external or voluntary administration or is subject to receivership;

- there is a petition to wind up or deregister the Applicant;
- the Applicant is or becomes deregistered or unregistered in respect of its registration regulatory body (including cancellation or lapse in registration); and
- whether the applicant has failed to meet key contractual obligations for previous grant agreements with the State.

Where DJSIR undertakes a financial risk assessment (FRA) of an Applicant to assess the ability of the Applicant to deliver its proposed project, the outcomes of that FRA may be taken into consideration in any decision to recommend and award a grant to an Applicant.

DJSIR may, at any time, remove an applicant from the application and assessment process, if in the department's opinion, association with the applicant may bring the department, a minister or the State of Victoria into disrepute.

6.3 Financial Risk Assessments

Applicants will be required to provide the following documents for a Financial Risk Assessment:

- Audited Financial Reports for the last three financial years. This should be the 'final accounts' with Directors' Report and Declaration and should include:
 - Profit and Loss Statement
 - Balance Sheet
 - Cash Flows
 - Notes to the accounts.
- If the latest financial report is more than six months old:
 - up-to-date Management or Interim Accounts for the current year including: Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet
 - in case of public listed corporations, half yearly financial report.
- the company's financial projections** for the next three financial years, including:
 - Profit and Loss
 - Cash Flow**

** The cash flow projections should include project expenditure and project funding as separate items in cash outflow and inflow. The financial projections should cover the life of the project and should reflect the financial benefits expected to be generated from the project.

Applicants may be exempt from a FRA if they satisfy one of the following conditions:

- Entities applying for a grant of up to and including \$50,000
- Publicly funded universities and educational institutions

Applicants with less than 3 financial years of operation are still eligible to apply. If the last three financial years reports are not available, then Profit and Loss and Cashflow projections for the next three financial years are required.

7 Application Process

7.1 How to apply

Applicants must undertake the following steps to apply:

1. Carefully read these guidelines and ensure all eligibility requirements are met.

2. Compile all necessary supporting documents and complete all required attestations as detailed in the 'Documentation and Information Requirements' section of these guidelines.
3. Submit an application online via the Business Victoria website.
4. Await email confirmation of application submission. Please check spam/junk mail if confirmation email cannot be seen in your inbox.

7.2 Open and Close Dates

Applications will remain open for 7 weeks.

Applications must be submitted in the Business Victoria portal by 1pm on the closing date. Please note late applications will not be accepted.

All applicants will be advised via email of the outcome of their application approximately 20 weeks from the closing date.

Opening and closing dates will be listed on the Business Victoria website:

<https://business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/mrna-victoria-research-acceleration-fund-round-3>

8 Documentation and Information Requirements

Requirement	Reason for requirement
<p>Evidence of Co-contribution:</p> <p>Applicants must provide evidence which demonstrates, to the satisfaction of DJSIR, that the Applicant has the required Co-contribution amount for the project.</p> <p>For financial Co-contributions, this may include evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written confirmation from the Board or business owner that the business can undertake the project and meet the required co-contribution amount • An approved loan facility (including loan amount) • Sufficient cash in a bank (current bank statement) • Management accounts demonstrating satisfactory cash flow or liquid assets <p>For in-kind Co-contributions, this may include evidence of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written confirmation from the Applicant that it can provide the required in-kind co-contribution amount • What form this in-kind co-contribution takes and if it meets the eligibility criteria at section 5 • Details of the source of the in-kind co-contribution and any materials supporting the commitment of the in-kind co-contribution where sourced from a third party • Valuation of the in-kind contribution in monetary terms 	<p>Eligibility criteria</p>
<p>Evidence of Financial Records:</p> <p>Unless an exemption applies (see section 6.3) applicants must provide evidence which demonstrates, to the satisfaction of DJSIR, that the Applicant is financially viable and able to deliver the project and its outcomes. This requires at a minimum, the provision of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audited Financial Reports from the last three financial years (including Profit & Loss Statement, Balance Sheet, Cash Flows, and notes to the 	<p>Due diligence</p>

<p>accounts). If accounts are not audited, unaudited accounts from an Accountant will be accepted.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If the most recent Financial Report is more than six months old, then up to date management or interim accounts for the current year, including Profit and Loss Statement and Balance Sheet, Also, in the case of public listed corporations, a half yearly financial report. • The company's financial projections for the next three financial years, including Profit and Loss Statement and Cash Flow. See Section 6.3 for more information. 	
<p>Evidence of Collaborative Partner:</p> <p>Applicants must provide evidence of an agreed Collaborative Partner or arrangement for the project, including a copy of any agreement, letter or memorandum of understanding entered into between the Applicant and Collaborative Partner or letter of support from the Collaborative Partner, in relation to the proposed project or activities.</p>	<p>Assessment and eligibility criteria</p>

9 Conditions of Funding

9.1 Grant agreements

If successful, Applicants will be issued a letter of offer (Letter of Offer) inviting them to enter into a legally binding grant agreement with DJSIR (Grant Agreement).

The Grant Agreement will detail all funding obligations and conditions including payment deliverable milestones and reporting requirements.

To receive the grant funding, applicants will be required to enter into a legal contract with DJSIR using the standard DJSIR Grant Agreement Template. A copy of the template is available to view on <https://business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/mrna-victoria-research-acceleration-fund-round-3>.

Successful recipients are required to provide timely notification to DJSIR in the event of any potential delay to the project, change in scope, estimated costs, project timeline, change of Chief Investigator or lead recipient organisation to the project.

Applicants will have 14 calendar days from the date of the Letter of Offer to respond in writing to DJSIR indicating their interest to enter into a Grant Agreement on the terms of the letter of offer and must execute the Grant Agreement within 30 calendar days of the Applicant's response to DJSIR. Failure by the Applicant to respond indicating their interest to enter into a Grant Agreement or to sign the Grant Agreement within each of the specified periods, may result in DJSIR withdrawing its offer of funding.

Projects to be funded by the grant must not commence until a Grant Agreement has been duly executed by both DJSIR and the successful Applicant.

If a successful applicant does not commence the project by the commencement date recorded in the Grant Agreement, DJSIR has at its absolute discretion the option of terminating the Grant Agreement.

9.2 Publicity/Acknowledgement

Successful Applicants must agree to cooperate with DJSIR in the promotion of the program. This may include involvement in media releases, case studies or promotional events and activities.

Successful Applicants may be required to attend a presentation ceremony and agree to be photographed for news articles or appear in videos regarding the mVRAF Program.

Successful applicants must not make any public announcement or issue any press release regarding the receipt of a grant without prior written approval from DJSIR.

DJSIR may publicise the benefits accruing to the successful Applicant and/or the State associated with the provision of the grant and the State's support for the Project. DJSIR may include the name of the successful applicant and/or grant amount in any publicity material and in DJSIR's annual report.

DJSIR may request successful Applicants fact check any text and seek approval to use any owned imagery associated with the activity prior to the publication of any such promotional materials.

Successful Applicants are required to acknowledge DJSIR in any publications, public announcements, scientific meeting presentations or discussion forums, pertaining to research conducted with the assistance of the Program's funding. Signage and promotional materials must be consistent with the Guidelines for Victorian Government Advertising and Communications or as otherwise specified by DJSIR. The Department may include the name of the recipient organisation in its annual report.

10 Reporting for Program Evaluation

As a condition of funding, successful Applicants will be required to deliver regular project reports in accordance with conditions set out in the Grant Agreement.

Grant recipients will also be required to participate in any Program monitoring and evaluation activities initiated by DJSIR. This may include completing surveys throughout the Program to measure progress to achieving outcomes, and for up to three years after Program completion. Non-compliance could impact future applications to DJSIR's programs.

Reporting is critical to DJSIR in understanding program impact, supporting continuous improvement in program design and delivery, and delivering more effective grant programs to the people of Victoria.

11 Privacy and confidentiality

Information provided by the Applicant for the purpose of this application will be used by DJSIR for the purposes of assessment of applications, program administration and program review.

In making an application, the Applicant consents to the provision of their information (including personal information) to State and Commonwealth Government departments and agencies and third-party assessors for the purpose of assessing applications. If there is an intention to include personal information about third parties in the application, please ensure they are aware of and consent to the contents of this privacy statement.

Any personal information about the Applicant or a third party will be collected, held, managed, used, disclosed or transferred in accordance with the provisions of the *Privacy and Data Protection Act 2014* (Vic) and other applicable laws.

Enquiries about access to personal information, or for other concerns regarding the privacy of personal information, can be emailed to DJSIR's Privacy Unit by emailing privacy@ecodev.vic.gov.au. DJSIR's privacy policy is also available by emailing the DJSIR's Privacy Unit.

12 Probity and Decision-making

The Victorian Government makes every effort to ensure the grant application and assessment process is fair and undertaken in line with the published program guidelines.

Decisions in recommending and awarding grant funding under this program are at the department and minister's discretion. This includes not making any funding available or approving a lesser amount than that applied for.

These guidelines and application terms may be changed from time to time, as appropriate.

DJSIR may request the applicant provide further information should it be necessary to assess an application to the Program's policy objectives.

Victorian Government staff work to the Code of Conduct for Victorian Public Service Employees (Section 61) of the Public Administration Act 2004 (Vic), including processes set out to avoid conflicts of interest.

12.1 Complaints and feedback

Any complaints or feedback you have about this grant opportunity may be made in relation to:

- the timeliness of the process
- communication provided by the Department
- adherence to the published program guidelines.

You can send your written feedback to mrnavictoria@ecodev.vic.gov.au

13 Conflict of Interest

A conflict of interest is a situation in which someone has competing professional or personal interests or duties.

Applicants must advise the Department of any real, potential, or perceived conflict of interest relating to a project for which it has applied for funding.

14 Tax advice

Tax implications for grant applicants may differ depending on individual circumstances. DJSIR recommends successful applicants seek independent tax advice, or alternatively liaise with the Australian Tax Office (ATO) for advice that is specific to their individual circumstances. The ATO website also provides guidance in relation to specific grants payments which may be used for tax determination purposes.

15 GST

Grant payments will be paid on a 'GST Exclusive' basis. If a grant payment to a specific Applicant is determined to be a taxable supply, subject to DJSIR receiving a valid tax invoice from the relevant Applicant, DJSIR will make payment to that Applicant of an additional amount equivalent to 10% of the grant payment to account for the GST payable in relation to that taxable supply. Grant payments will be made following receipt of a valid tax invoice from the successful Applicant.

16 Information Only

These guidelines and any discussions you may have with the Department are for information only, and do not constitute advice.

Applicants should seek independent advice before making an application or entering into a Grant Agreement.

17 Further Resources

Further information regarding this program can be found here: <https://DJSIR.vic.gov.au/medical-research/initiatives/mrna-victoria>

and on the Business Victoria website: <https://business.vic.gov.au/grants-and-programs/mrna-victoria-research-acceleration-fund-round-3>

If you have any questions during the application period, please contact us via the Business Victoria contact form/ chat function or call the Business Victoria hotline on 13 22 15.

For email inquiries relating to the mRNA Victoria Research Acceleration Fund, contact mnavictoria@ecodev.vic.gov.au

Appendix A: Glossary

Innovation	The implementation of a new or significantly improved product (good or service), a process, a new marketing method, or a new organisational method in business practices, workplace organisation or external relations'. ¹
Fast-track	To accelerate the progress of something
Research translation	The process whereby knowledge is passed anywhere along the translational pathway i.e., research findings are translated into practice, policy, or further research
Chief Investigator	The overall lead researcher for the whole project who will have responsibility of managing the grant funding and will make decisions with regards to the project.

¹ Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) and Statistical Office of the European Communities (Eurostat), "Oslo Manual 2018: Guidelines for Collecting, Reporting and Using Data on Innovation", Fourth Edition, Paris, 2018