The Alabama Drug Discovery Alliance (ADDA)
Pilot Grants in Drug Discovery and Development - Call for Pre-Proposals

Deadline Pre-Proposals: Monday December 12, 2016 – 12 Noon

The ADDA – a joint initiative between Southern Research, UAB School of Medicine, the Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Center for Clinical and Translational Science – plans to fund up to 2 pilot grants for $50,000 per year for up to 2 years, with funding of Year 2 dependent upon progress made in Year 1.

Funds can be utilized for various aspects of drug discovery and development for any human disease, including - but not limited to - assay development for high-throughput screening, molecular modeling and medicinal chemistry efforts, or proof of concept studies in animals with newly discovered lead molecules.

Only small molecule-directed efforts are eligible for funding at this time.

Please note that the following topics are beyond the scope of the solicitation and will not be considered:
- Target identification
- Target validation, without an accompanying proposal to discover new therapeutic molecules that manipulate said target
- Development of compounds for which other parties own the Intellectual Property (IP), or for which no IP can be reasonably developed

The process by which awardees will be selected consists of two tiers:
1) A PI (or multiple PIs) submit(s) a pre-proposal with a maximum of 2 pages (see below) that will be reviewed by a scientific panel with expertise in various aspects of target validation and drug discovery.
2) After review, an invitation with instructions for a full proposal (maximum of 9 pages) will be sent to select PIs. Full proposals will be reviewed by a minimum of three scientific experts and the UAB Bill L. Harbert Institute for Innovation and Entrepreneurship; the ADDA Advisory Board will select the final proposals based on these reviews and the ADDA portfolio.

If needed, access to Southern Research’s expertise and resources is therefore facilitated (e.g., high-throughput screening, medicinal chemistry, pharmacokinetic evaluation and toxicity studies). Following selection and award, a multi-disciplinary team, consisting of members with
relevant expertise, including cell biology, pharmacology, medicinal chemistry, HTS assay development as well as clinical knowledge will be assembled for all projects. This team will help fine tune and finalize a compound progression pathway and guide the project through the drug discovery and development pipeline.

All UAB faculty and Southern Research investigators are eligible to apply, irrespective of affiliation or rank.

Submit your pre-proposal package as a single PDF before the deadline (Monday December 12 – 12 Noon) to adda@uab.edu. The package should include:

1. A cover letter with the name(s) of the PI(s) and affiliation
2. Principal Investigator(s)’s NIH biosketch
3. Answers to the questions listed below, with a maximum of 2 pages

PIs that will be invited for a full proposal will be notified by December 19, with the deadline for a full proposal on February 13, 2017; start date of the award will be April 1, 2017. For any questions, contact the ADDA Associate Director, Maaike Everts, PhD, at 934-2973 or maaike@uab.edu.

Items to be addressed, point by point, with a maximum of 2 pages:

1. Title of the project
2. Identify at what stage your drug discovery/development project is:
   - HTS assay development and/or screening
   - Lead optimization/medicinal chemistry
   - Proof of concept in animal models
   - If other, please describe
3. Provide a description of the pathway or protein you propose to target and/or any compounds you have developed. For a target, make sure to describe the validation done to date (e.g. biochemical, cell-based and/or animal data; biomarkers in patient samples, etc); make sure to highlight the significance of your target or compounds. For example, how does it address an unmet medical need? How is this approach different from existing therapies, or competitors’ strategies?
4. Summarize a potential research plan to achieve a lead candidate or IND-ready compound;
   - If high-throughput screening is needed, describe the (to be) developed assay;
   - Describe additional independent assays that can be used to confirm activity of identified active compounds, either in vitro or in vivo;
5. Reference List (not included in the page count)