Stanford Alliance for Innovative Medicines (AIM) – Spring 2020 Call for Letters of Intent

The Stanford Alliance for Innovative Medicines (Stanford AIM) is seeking Letters of Intent (LOIs) for target-driven drug discovery proposals from Stanford faculty. Stanford AIM was launched in summer 2017 as a new partnership with Takeda to accelerate the translation of research discoveries at Stanford into next-generation therapies of all modalities. Stanford AIM brings Stanford and Takeda scientists into close collaboration to share ideas, knowhow, and technical acumen. Stanford faculty projects selected to participate in the program will benefit from access to industry drug development know-how and in-kind use of robust industry research functionalities such as medicinal chemistry, high-throughput screening, pharmacokinetics, or safety/toxicity profiling. Stanford will retain all intellectual property from Stanford AIM-supported research and Takeda scientists will get the chance to participate in cutting edge research at one of the nation's top research universities.

The ideal project for Stanford AIM will have a compelling therapeutic rationale, an identified protein target that is amenable to therapeutic intervention, and sufficient evidence to support the rationale for a drug discovery effort. It is essential that the LOI identifies a novel target or a novel approach to a known target with a distinct advantage over existing approaches to that target. Stanford AIM is open to all therapeutic areas and modalities with an emphasis on small molecule or protein therapeutics at this time. The goal of Stanford AIM is to advance selected faculty projects through proof-of-concept in animals by leveraging in-kind access to discovery and preclinical development capabilities through Takeda.

Eligibility
All Stanford faculty with PI eligibility are welcome to apply.

Selection Process
Stanford AIM uses a two-phase process to select projects for support. The first phase is a letter of intent (LOI) submission. Submitted LOIs will be reviewed internally within Stanford to ensure that the proposal demonstrates a direct path to therapeutic development and for novelty. A Takeda representative will then review only the title of submitted LOIs to eliminate proposals with potential internal Takeda program conflicts. A Review Committee, consisting of an equal number of Stanford faculty and Takeda scientists, will review the remaining LOIs. The Review Committee will select a short list of LOIs for invitation to submit a full proposal. The full proposal will include full rationale, work plans, budgets, resourcing, and success criteria. Full proposals will be developed by the Stanford investigator with Takeda participation. The Review Committee will rank and recommend full proposals for support to the Stanford AIM Board. The number of projects selected for entry in to AIM will depend on available resources from Takeda and Stanford. AIM anticipates selecting 1–2 projects through the current call for proposals.

Application Guidelines
Applications for the Spring 2020 call for LOIs are due by 5 pm PT, Friday June 19, 2020.
LOIs do not need to be submitted to the PI’s contract and grants officer in OSR or RMG for approval. All application materials must be submitted through the online application portal: https://chemh.stanford.edu/stanford-aim-spring-2020-call-letters-intent

The LOI applications are approximately 2 pages in length and require the following elements and attachments:

(1) Applicant Information - Provide contact information as well as NIH-style biosketches for the PI and collaborators.

(2) Descriptive Title - Will be used for Takeda Overlapping Project Assessment. Example: Selective small molecule inhibitor of the HDAC3 to treat type 2 diabetes mellitus

(3) Goal of Project (50 words)

(4) Application Summary (150 words) - Please provide a high-level description of the project that highlights the biological process/molecule(s) that will be targeted. Describe the medical need the project will address and how it will impact clinical practice and patient outcomes if successful. Emphasize what is novel about the approach.

(5) Technical Summary (800 words) - This summary should describe the technology in greater detail than above. Please describe the scientific background, disease target, unmet need for the therapeutic agent, and competitive technologies. Please include a discussion of available data to support the proposed target and its key role in modulation of disease. Describe briefly the proposed approach for lead identification and validation. Include assays that address confirmation of the hit/lead compound’s activity, including alternative biological systems (secondary assays), and selectivity. If there are specific materials used in the project that may be challenging to generate, acquire, or handle, please list them here along with how you anticipate overcoming these obstacles. Please include a biomarker strategy if you anticipate one. Please describe anticipated Takeda resources and input integral to completing the research plan.

(6) References – You may include citations for up to five relevant publications.

(7) Figure (1 page max) – You may upload a 1 page PDF containing relevant figure(s), but this is optional. Please ensure that your file is a reasonable size (<2MB) or it will not be viewable by the review committee.

(8) Has this project been disclosed to the Stanford Office of Technology and Licensing? Yes/No. If yes, provide summary of existing intellectual property.

Support Provided
Takeda will provide discovery and preclinical development capabilities, resources and expertise. The specific resource commitments for each project will be developed as part of the full proposal development process and ultimately determined by the Stanford AIM Board. It is anticipated that most selected projects will receive in-kind support for ~18 months. Stanford faculty will be responsible for supporting any Stanford PI effort, relevant laboratory personnel effort, as well as any research costs for collaboration activities carried out at Stanford. To help defray collaboration costs incurred at Stanford, Stanford projects selected for entry into AIM can request up to $75k in research support from Stanford ChEM-H as part of the full proposal budget.
Intellectual Property
Stanford owns all project intellectual property (IP) and data generated through a Stanford AIM projects, whether invented by Stanford or Takeda. For additional information on how general inventions, background IP, knowhow, and licensing are handled in the Stanford AIM program, please contact the program through the email below.

Questions and Contact Info
FAQs can be found at the following location - https://chemh.stanford.edu/programs/stanford-aim/faqs
Further questions can be sent to the following email address - stanfordaim_info@stanford.edu