



2024 REQUEST FOR APPLICATIONS

Program

The Bridge Project, a collaboration between MIT's Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research (KI) and the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center (DF/HCC) consortium, brings together the expertise of these two organizations to tackle complex translational problems in cancer research. We fund collaborative approaches in translational cancer research led by teams of engineers, cancer scientists, and clinical investigators from these institutions.

Eligibility

- Teams must be composed of at least one Principal Investigator (PI) from MIT and at least one PI from DF/HCC institutions: Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, Boston Children's Hospital, Brigham and Women's Hospital, Dana-Farber Cancer Institute, Massachusetts General Hospital, Harvard Medical School and Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health. Each named applicant must have PI status at their host institution and must meaningfully participate in the project as part of their team. Preference will be given to teams employing unique and highly innovative approaches and technologies.
- Teams may submit proposals focused on any aspect of translational cancer research in any tumor type. Preference will be given to projects addressing significant unmet clinical needs requiring improved or new methods for early detection, more accurate diagnosis, monitoring, treatment, and prevention. A subset of available funding will be awarded with preference for projects focused on drug discovery and development, brain cancer research and/or immunotherapy.
- We further encourage applications in the Expansion category of award types; such teams normally have been funded previously via Traditional or Footbridge awards from the Bridge Project, but this is not required.
- Priority will be given to new teams or previously-funded investigators who have demonstrated an ability to conduct work, spend awards, and submit updates on time

New Eligibility Restrictions for 2024 RFA

- To maintain strong, collaborative teams, no PI should be included on more than 2 Bridge Project applications per cycle, with a maximum of 1 Traditional *or* Expansion, and 1 Footbridge, application
- PIs currently ending the 1st year of a Traditional Award can apply only for Footbridge awards

- PIs with current Footbridge or Expansion Awards, or in the 2nd year of Traditional Award, are welcome to apply as outlined above

Award Types

Footbridge Grants provide \$200,000 (total cost) per team per year, for 1 year. Funding for the project should be allocated evenly (50/50) between MIT and DF/HCC. Footbridge grants allow newly formed teams to obtain necessary preliminary data/proof of concept, to develop cohesion as a true team, and to strengthen future Bridge Project applications that may emerge from this work.

Traditional Bridge Grants provide \$400,000 (total cost) per team per year for up to 2 years (\$800,000 total). Funding for the project should be allocated evenly (50/50) between MIT and DF/HCC. Funding may be requested for up to a two-year period. Renewal at the end of Year 1 is subject to performance review.

Expansion Bridge Grants provide up to \$750,000 (total cost) per team to support the initiation of a Phase I clinical trial or a clinical application. Funding allocations between institutions for Expansion Bridge Grants are decided on a per-project basis. Applications for this award type are particularly encouraged. Expansion projects may be based on research funded previously via Footbridge or Traditional awards, but this is not required.

Submission information

Submit applications to ki-bridge@mit.edu (cc all the involved PIs) by **10 AM Monday, September 16, 2024**. Please see Acceptance of Terms on pages 3 and 4 of this document—by submitting the application, PIs agree to abide by these terms.

Application Format

All materials should be submitted as a **single PDF document**

Use 12-point Calibri, or 11-point Arial font and margins of 0.5 inches or greater

Required components (please follow this order)

- Cover Page with following:
 - Title
 - PI information (name; affiliation; email addresses for PI, assistant, and financial officer)
 - Type of award sought (Expansion, Traditional, or Footbridge)
- Lay Summary: a one-page description of your project, which may be shared with donors (must not contain confidential information)
- Research Proposal (not to exceed 5 pages, including figures and tables):
 - Background and Significance
 - Specific Aims
 - Research Plan
 - 6 Keywords
- NIH Biosketch for each PI—include Part A (Personal Statement)
- Literature Citations

Scope

Research proposal should clearly articulate the following, in the context of translational potential:

- What is the primary unmet medical need you are addressing?
- What approaches do you intend to use and how are they novel?
- What are the anticipated experimental challenges?
- What are the short- and longer-term goals of the research?
- What can be reasonably accomplished within the funding period?
- Describe the proposed PI relationships and interactions clearly. Why is the MIT-DF/HCC pairing critical and how will this be a true team?
- Demonstrate a clear clinical connection. What clinically translatable applications might emerge from this work, now or in the near future?

In-person presentations/Round II Review

Teams that are selected for Round II Review will be notified by Friday, December 13, 2024 and invited to present their proposal in front of the Bridge Project Review Committee. If selected, your team **must** submit a budget (see below) and be able to present (virtually) as a group on the date of the Round II Review, **Thursday, February 6, 2025** in order to be considered for an award.

Budget

For teams advancing to Round II, create detailed budgets for each PI as soon as possible coordinating with the appropriate administrator:

for DF/HCC investigators—Deborah Goff, deborah_goff@dfci.harvard.edu

for KI/MIT investigators—Mary Ellen Acone, meacone@mit.edu

After you have assembled budgets for PIs by institution (recommended by Monday, January 13, 2025), please compile the detailed budget and justification for the entire team (DF/HCC and KI/MIT, together) and send it as a single PDF file to ki-bridge@mit.edu by **10:00 AM Tuesday, January 21, 2025**.

Please note:

- With the exception of Expansion Bridge Grant applications, **the budget must be split evenly (50/50) between MIT and DF/HCC parts of the team**—regardless of the precise number of applicant PIs from either institution.
- You may include full salary/exceed the maximum set by the NIH for postdocs and other personnel.
- Research expenses may include supplies, equipment, and salary and benefits for PIs and other research staff. MIT and DF/HCC will apply different F&A rates according to their established policies. Special indirect cost rules apply to projects supported by gift funds.

Award Information

Awards will be announced by February 17, 2025, for a funding term starting March 1, 2025.

Acceptance of Terms

By submitting an application, each PI agrees to abide by the terms stipulated below.

Term of award and reporting requirements

Expansion Bridge Grant: The award is for the one-year period from March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026. The total cost amount awarded is \$750,000. We recognize that clinical projects may require more than one year to complete, and a no-cost extension may be requested with a detailed progress report by Monday, February 23, 2026. In addition, we will contact each team for a progress update after six months.

Traditional Bridge Grant: The award is for the two-year period from March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2027. The total cost amount awarded is \$800,000. Funding for year 2 is contingent upon successful review of progress in the first year; to this end, a detailed progress report must be submitted by Monday, February 23, 2026. In addition, we will contact each team for progress updates at six-month intervals.

Footbridge Bridge Grant: The award is for the one-year period from March 1, 2025 through February 28, 2026. The total cost amount awarded is \$200,000. We will contact each team for a progress update after six months in addition to the final report.

Progress Reports (in PDF format) must include:

- Submitted manuscripts or links to publications
- IP/invention disclosures/patents
- Conference abstracts
- A list of any additional funding supporting work on the project received through a competitive mechanism, e.g., government grant, foundation support (including postdoctoral fellowships). This information counts toward a challenge gift that helps to fund the Bridge Project program.

Progress will be measured against stated milestones and timelines; for Traditional Bridge grants, Year 2 funding will be contingent upon satisfactory review of the 12-month progress report.

A detailed **final report** must be submitted within 30 days of the approved end date of the project.

Acknowledgements

Bridge funding must be acknowledged in publications, presentations, and invention disclosures:

Preferred acknowledgement text:

“This work was supported by the Bridge Project, a partnership between the Koch Institute for Integrative Cancer Research at MIT and the Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center.”

Condensed version (only where necessary):

“This work was supported by the Koch Institute—Dana-Farber/Harvard Cancer Center Bridge Project.”

Please email ki-bridge@mit.edu when submitting a manuscript, when manuscripts are accepted, and when filing an invention disclosure.

Members of funded teams may be asked to attend or present at Bridge Project-related donor events.

Contact Information

Additional information about the Bridge Project can be found at:

<https://ki.mit.edu/research/bench-to-bedside/bridge>

Please direct questions to ki-bridge@mit.edu or, if appropriate, to the Bridge Project Directors, Tyler Jacks tjacks@mit.edu and James DeCaprio James_DeCaprio@dfci.harvard.edu.