# Sylvester Innovates Fund (SIF)
# Biomedical Competition RFP

**Mission Statement:**
The Sylvester Innovates Fund (SIF) Biomedical Competition is designed to accelerate promising translational cancer research projects towards critical value inflection and accretion, catalyzing research commercialization at Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. Funded projects are expected to lead to the generation of new intellectual property, technology licensing, and start-up company formation.

**Funding Levels:**
Technology Pilot Funding
- Support for a research proposal that is expected to enable the development of a new technology (platform, product) that ultimately results in new Intellectual Property (IP)
- Research must be completed within 1 year
- $200,000 maximum

Acceleration Funding
- Support for a research proposal with existing IP, whereby funding enables the generation of key pre-clinical data that ultimately increases the likelihood of a licensing event (out-license, NewCo formation)
- Research must be completed within 2 years
- $200,000-$500,000

**Eligibility:**
- Principal Investigator (PI) must be a Sylvester faculty member.
- For Technology Pilot Funding, there are no prerequisite requirements for invention disclosure and/or existing IP.
- For Acceleration Funding, an invention disclosure must have been submitted to and favorably reviewed for IP potential by the UM Office of Technology Transfer (OTT) at least 60 days prior to the application deadline.
- Grant recipients are invited to submit a follow-on proposal upon the completion of the funded research plan and will be automatically reviewed as finalists during the follow-on grant proposal review.
- Prior to submission, applicants are strongly encouraged to schedule a meeting with the SIF team (dhorsegrant@med.miami.edu)

**Application Terms and Budget Guidelines:**
- The PI must be actively involved in leading and overseeing the research project.
- Experiments performed at Contract Research Organizations (CRO) are allowed.
- Any and all IP and background information must be assigned to the University of Miami per the UM Policy on Innovations, IP and Technology Transfer (https://innovation.miami.edu/_assets/pdf/FS_IP_Policy_20160330.pdf)

- An interim progress report must be submitted every 6 months to the SIF.
- A final progress report must be submitted 30 days after the conclusion of the SIF funding and the PI may be asked to present the final results to the SIF board.
- Funding is to be used for performing experiments; no salary support for PIs, travel expenses, publication charges, or equipment purchases are allowed.

**Application Process**

- RFP is issued with letter of intent (LOI) due on August 5, 2025.
- LOIs are filtered down for selecting top candidates to submit a full proposal.
- Finalists are notified; full proposal with detailed budget is due on TBD.
- Applicant will be assigned 1-2 reviewers from the SIF board and will meet for 45 minutes within the coming 2 weeks, by TBD.
- SIF board convenes to review all finalist applications within 2 weeks.
- Applicants will be notified of final decision no later than TBD.

**Proposal Format**

- LOI and research proposal must be submitted in Adobe Acrobat format using Calibri size 11 font on 8 ½ x 11" paper size, 1" margins, single spacing, line breaks between paragraphs and left alignment.
- Application should be emailed as a single PDF file to sylvesterinnovates@med.miami.edu with the subject line "SIF Full Proposal".
- Research proposal has a 4-page limit (Technology Pilot) or 5-page limit (Acceleration), not including References, GANNT Chart, or Impact Chart.

**Application Selection Criteria**

Each application will be assessed through a critical independent review process by the SIF board, which is comprised of leaders from the biopharma and life sciences venture capital sector. Notable selection criteria include, but are not limited to, the following:

- Quality of unmet patient need in the disease(s) of interest
- Impact of the proposed research and solution on disease outcome
- Significant market need and opportunity
- Clearly delineated scientific competitive advantage (e.g., how are others attacking this problem?)
- Commercial competitive advantage (e.g., what companies are attacking this same problem, and how differentiated is your solution?)
- High degree of scientific quality and rigor
- High degree of scientific innovation and novelty
- Quality of de-risking data for the proposal
- Likelihood of success for achieving the suggested aims / milestones
- Clear description of the experimental roadmap with one clearly stated technical milestones, which if successful, will significantly increase the likelihood of commercialization success
- Potential for generation and/or strengthening of intellectual property

- Evidence of preliminary commercial interest (e.g., discussions with biotech, pharma, investors)
    - In order to protect Intellectual Property, please work with OTT to put Confidential Disclosure Agreements in place if you have any plans to discuss your technology with parties external to the University.

**SIF Contacts**

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# Letter of Intent Template

**Project Choice (please specify):**

- Technology Pilot funding
- Acceleration funding

**Narrative (1-3) sentences)**

- Brief intro to the technology, what you're proposing to do and the big

**Summary (200 words)**

- Snapshot overview of the unmet need, what the technology is, why it's innovative, how it solves the problem, and the commercial opportunity

**Technology (200 words)**

- Describe the scientific background, technology and disease area you're working on in more detail.
- If you're proposing to make a drug, what kind of modality is it (small molecule, antibody, autologous cell therapy, etc.), for what disease target, with what preliminary data?
- If it's a new platform technology and/or a new method to enable a new therapeutic future opportunity (uncovering new biology, ability to develop new chemistry), what rationale is there for the method being meaningful and what Proof of Concept data exists today?

**Commercialization Plan (2-3 sentences)**

- Describe what the commercialization goal is for this research to leave the institution via out- licensing and/or a NewCo formation, and specifically what portion of this plan does your proposed research plan cover?

**Intellectual Property (2 sentences)**

- Describe the current state of the IP and technology transfer interaction (who do you work with, if you are working with someone).
- Have you filed an invention disclosure?
- Provisional patent application filed? Non-provisional or PCT application filed?

# RFP Application Template

| | |
|---|---|
| • **RFP Issued** | **June 18, 2025** |
| • **LOI Due** | **August 8, 2025** |
| • **Finalists notified for full submission** | **August 29, 2025** |
| • **Full submission due** | **September 26, 2025** |
| • **Therapeutics Pitch Day - Applicant meeting with assigned SIF advisors for Q&A** | **TBD** |
| • **Applicants notified of funding decision** | **TBD** |

## 1st Page: Cover Page

Name:
Email:
Title:
Department, Room #:
Phone:
Project Title:
Funds Requested:

Please indicate the project proposal:
__ Technology Pilot Grant
__ Acceleration Grant
Has this project been submitted before? Y / N
Is this a follow-on request for a previously funded SIF project? Y / N

Briefly describe the project, goals, value driver(s), and potential for commercialization. **(400 words max)**

| |
|---|
| Executive Summary: |

PI Signature: _____

**Background & Significance.**

Page limits**:**

| | Technology Pilot | Acceleration |
|---|---|---|
| Cover | 1 page | 1 page |
| Sections I – V | 2 pages | 3 pages |
| Team and Budget | 1 page | 1 page |

I. Unmet Clinical Need:

- What is the unmet clinical need?
- Who and how many are affected each year (i.e., what is the patient population)?
- Summarize the clinical need in 1-2 sentences. Example: “There is a clinical need for the development of a low-cost, rapid influenza test that can reduce unnecessary diagnostic testing, decrease inappropriate antibiotic use, and reduce the duration of treatment during hospitalization compared to currently available solutions.”

II. Standard of Care and Currently Available Solutions:

- What is the current standard of care?
- What are 2-3 other solutions available today or in development that are intended to impact the same clinical need? What stage of development are they at?
- Who is administering the current standard of care? (e.g., surgeon, pathologist, breast cancer specialist, clinical nurse, etc.)

III. Your Proposed Solution:

- Problem statement – what is the specific problem you are addressing, and why does it need to be addressed both from a clinical and commercial standpoint?
- What is the end product? How does it address the unmet clinical need?
- Is it a new product or an improvement of existing products?
- Who is the end user of your product? Who will prescribe/administer the product if it is a drug, or who will be the user if it is a device, diagnostic, software, or method?
- How will your solution be better than the current gold standard? How is it novel? How much better is it? How do you know that the user cares about this feature?
- Will it replace an existing product in the market? Will it alter the established clinical practice model for your indication?
- Is it a platform technology? What is the first application you will focus on?
- If there are additional future applications, list briefly within one sentence, even if your proposal is not geared towards those future applications.
- Please complete the clinical and commercial impact chart in the Supplementary Material

IV. Preliminary Results / Research Plan

- Describe your specific research and the stage of the technology / product.
- Describe how it fits within the problem statement you previously described
- Include any preliminary results and data that demonstrate the feasibility of your solution
- Briefly outline the work you are proposing to do as specific aims and why this work is the clear solution for the problem
- Clearly describe technical and business milestones to be achieved (this must also be depicted in an included Gannt chart, as found in Supplementary Material)

V. Intellectual Property and Commercialization

- Provide a brief overview of the state of the IP affairs? E.g., invention disclosure filed, pending PCT conversion filed, etc.
- Describe what is the expected outcome on the IP package, if any, from the funding
- Provide commentary, if any, on pharma / biotech / investors whom you've discussed your project with and feedback to date
- Provide commentary on your future commercialization interests for the technology (out-licensing, NewCo formation, etc.)

**Final Page: Team & Budget**

Team

- Please provide name, institutional affiliation, title and role (e.g., PI, Co-PI, collaborator, etc.) of all team members expected to play a role in this project
- 1-2 sentences on each team member's experience relevant to this project and the work they will perform.

Budget

- Provide a detailed budget justification and cost for supplies needed to achieve research aims
- Experiments are allowed to be performed at a contract research organization (CRO). Provide costs and descriptions for these services and names of CROs who will provide the service.
- Reminder – no salary support for PIs or equipment purchases are allowed

Note: Research proposal has a 4-page limit (Technology Pilot) or 5-page limit (Acceleration), not including GANNT Chart or Impact Chart, cited references do ***not count*** towards the page limit and should be added as an additional page if needed.

# SUPPLEMENTARY MATERIAL

Example Milestone Gannt Chart:

| | Objectives | Expected execution/completion timeframe | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | 2025 | | | 2025 | | | 2025-2026 | | | 2026 | | |
| A | **Research Plan Specific Aims** | Jul | Aug | Sep | Oct | Nov | Dec | Jan | Feb | Mar | Apr | May | Jun |
| 1 | **AIM 1: Example - Synthesis, Toxicity and in vivo PK of …** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.1 | Sub Task (Synthesize, purify and characterize …) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.2 | Sub Task (Determine max tolerable single and multiple dose) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1.3 | Sub Task (Perform PK study at max tolerable dose) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | **AIM 2: Example - Small Animal Studies** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.1 | Experiment A | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2.2 | Experiment B | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | **AIM 3: Example - Prototype Development (e.g.)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.1 | Sub Task (sign agreement with design firm) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.2 | Sub Task (develop 3 designs) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3.3 | Sub Task (Test 3 designs for mechanical strength) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | **AIM 4: Example - Test Prototype in Patients (n=30)** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.1 | Sub Task (Patient Recruitment) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4.2 | Sub Task (Test prototype in humans) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| B | **IP/Commercialization Strategy** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Goal 1: IP/Commercialization meeting (e.g.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Goal 2: Provisional patent filing (e.g.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Goal 3: Identify 5 potential commercial partners (e.g.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Goal 4: Complete analysis of market and competition (e.g.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 5 | Goal 5: Contact potential licensees (e.g.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| C | **Follow on Funding Plan** | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 1 | Create & Finalize Follow-on Funding Plan | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 2 | Apply for additional grant(s) (A, B, C) (e.g.) | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 3 | Engage Commercial partner | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 4 | Sub Task | | | | | | | | | | | | |

Example clinical and commercialization impact chart:

| | **Proposed Product/Solution** | **Current Gold Standard** |
|---|---|---|
| **What is the proposed end product/solution? (Describe in one line)** | Example 1: Peptide drug for drug resistant colon cancer<br>Example 2: Imaging device to detect tumor margins during lumpectomy<br>Example 3: Genome sequencing software | What is current gold standard treatment? The gold standard can be a drug, use of a device, use of a diagnostic, use of software, a procedure or simply a method. |
| **What is the market size (how many people are afflicted each year?)** | Example: # of colon cancer patients whose tumors are drug-resistant<br>Example 2: # of lumpectomy surgeries (NOT the # of breast cancer patients)<br>Example 3: # of tests that are currently done or would be done with your products | |
| **Who will be prescribing (drugs) or using (devices/diagnostics/software) the proposed end product?** | Example: breast cancer specialist, clinical research nurse, gastroenterologist, surgeon, physical therapist, pathologist, interventional cardiologist etc. | Who is currently using/prescribing the gold standard. Example: surgeon, pathologist, interventional radiologist. |
| **Who are the competitors?** | List the emerging research at other academic institutions as well as the emerging and established companies that are working on solving the same problem. Even if they are using an entirely different method/compound/technology that is not similar to yours, if they are solving or trying to solve the same clinical problem that you are trying to solve, you should list the names of the investigators and companies. | List the methods/treatments/devices/diagnostics that are currently available but may not be first line treatment. |
| **List in this square 5 distinguishing characteristics of your end product (Examples might include shape, viscosity, quantity or dosing frequency, delivery method, accuracy, sensitivity/specificity, size, % of patients called back for repeat surgery):** | List how your solution is performing on these characteristics:<br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5. | List how the current gold standard is performing on these characteristics:<br>1.<br>2.<br>3.<br>4.<br>5. |
| **What does the current gold standard do and how can your product do it better?** | How can your product do it better? | What does the current gold standard do? |