

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Q. What is MTRAC?

A. In 2012, the Michigan Strategic Fund approved and created, with program oversight by the Michigan Economic Development Corporation (MEDC), the Michigan Translational Research and Commercialization (MTRAC) program to provide grant funding to eligible applicants. Its objective is to accelerate the transfer of technologies from Michigan's institutions of higher education to the private sector for commercialization of competitive edge technologies. The MTRAC statewide program expands the originally created MTRAC program by designating innovation hubs across the state and broadening the application for translational research to all institutions of higher education, nonprofit research centers and hospital systems.

Q. Why was MTRAC created?

A. MTRAC was created to accelerate technology transfer from Michigan's institutions of higher education; assist in the development of Michigan-based start-up companies; create jobs; facilitate investment to these companies; and to license technology to Michigan companies.

Q. Which universities are involved in MTRAC?

A. As of April 26, 2016, all institutions of higher education across Michigan are eligible to participate in the MTRAC program. Prior to this date, MTRAC was operational at the University of Michigan, Michigan State University, Michigan Technological University and Wayne State University.

Q. Why is MTRAC expanding to a statewide program?

A. Establishing MTRAC as a statewide program will allow for greater collaboration with industry partners, institutions of higher education, nonprofit research centers and hospital systems across the state as it relates to advancing competitive edge technologies and bio economy technologies into commercial applications. Ultimately, this will help increase the number of start-ups, jobs, industry licenses and investment for Michigan.

Q. What is an innovation hub?

A. An innovation hub provides expertise in one of the following technology focus areas: bio medical, life sciences, advanced transportation, ag bio, and advanced materials. Each innovation hub will have in place an oversight committee comprised of industry experts, entrepreneurs and venture capital professionals with expertise in their respective technology focus areas. Each innovation hub will be supported by a commercialization program director that provides program oversight, commercialization training opportunities and project mentorship.

Q. What is the role of the oversight committee?

A. The oversight committee, comprised of industry experts, entrepreneurs and venture capital professionals with expertise in their respective technology focus areas, review proposals submitted into the programs, provide feedback, vote to invite applicants to an in-person presentation and vote to fund proposals that have the highest potential for commercial application. The oversight committee will also provide commercialization expertise on technology milestones as well as mentor projects as needed.

Q. What is the role of institutions of higher education, nonprofit research centers and hospital systems in the MTRAC statewide program?

A. An applicant from an institution of higher education, nonprofit research center or hospital system into an MTRAC program within an innovation hub can apply to a respective program to request funding for their translational research project during an open RFP cycle. An applicant will provide a minimum of a 1:1 match of funds along with appointing a project manager to mentor projects, interact with the commercialization program director of the respective innovation hub, interact with their local partners to support the projects, and provide required reporting to the innovation hub on the project success.

Q. What impact has MTRAC had to date?

A. As of April 2016, MTRAC has reviewed more than 255 proposals, funded 79 projects, helped develop 13 start-up companies, created 33 jobs, secured \$21.4 million in follow-on funding, and licensed technologies to three Michigan companies.