REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

Commercial Opportunities for Neuroprotection and Neuroregeneration in Multiple Sclerosis

The National Multiple Sclerosis Society is committed to being a driving force of MS research and treatment to stop disease progression, restore function, and end MS forever.

As part of its commitment to addressing the needs of individuals affected by progressive forms of MS, the Society invites proposals from commercial organizations to establish research partnerships with Fast Forward, LLC to accelerate and support development of therapeutic strategies for protecting the nervous system from damage (neuroprotection) and ways to repair the nervous system to restore function.

Summary
The purpose of this request for proposals (RFP) is to fund and facilitate translation of important research findings and accelerate new drug candidates in neuroprotection and repair to enable clinical evaluation. Participants will be selected to enter this competitive process based on their alignment with the goals of this funding round. If selected, applicants will be provided with a template for completing the application and a set of document requests to enable Fast Forward to conduct a due diligence and a review of the opportunity. Complete applications will undergo review by a review panel comprised of National MS Society staff as well as external research and business advisors.

Priority areas for this program include but are not limited to:

- Novel target validation studies, specifically those which aim to provide clinical relevance and whose hypothesis can be tested
- Development and testing of high throughput screening assays
- Testing of candidate compounds in relevant animal models for preclinical proof of concept
- Optimization of compounds to produce candidates suitable for preclinical development
- ADME, toxicology, pharmacokinetics, pharmacodynamics on candidate compounds and IND filing
- Proof of mechanism clinical trials
- Early Clinical development

Collaborations:
Academic/Industry collaboration proposals are encouraged from submitting companies.

Mechanisms of support:
Fast Forward provides funding to U.S. and non-U.S. commercial organizations. Funding averages $500,000 and must be justified based on the scientific and development work plan. For large
programs or clinical trials where the true cost may exceed the overall program budget limitations, Fast Forward requires co-funding with another funding agency or funding in syndicate with other investors.

Submission guidelines:
Inquiries with Fast Forward staff are required to determine alignment of a proposal with Fast Forward’s priorities prior to due diligence. Submission of a preliminary proposal may be required. Only those programs found to have suitable scientific merit and commercial development feasibility will be invited into full proposal review. Companies invited into full review will have until February 13th, 2015 to submit all documents required. Companies will undergo full evaluation by Fast Forward’s Scientific and Business Advisory Committee (SBAC) and only selected companies will advance to the next stage to participate by telephone with the Fast Forward SBAC for a pitch and Q&A in March 2015.

Fast Forward will review proposals/companies on the basis of the following criteria:

A. Scientific Considerations:
- Rationale: Does the proposal address an important aspect of the RFP and does it have compelling commercial potential to lead to a marketable product?
- Innovation: Is the proposal original and innovative? Does the project challenge existing paradigms or clinical practice or address an innovative hypothesis, novel target or critical barrier to progress in the field? Does the project develop or employ novel concepts, approaches, methodologies, tools or technologies for this area? Does the proposal address an unmet medical need?
- Research Team: Are the lead investigator and collaborators qualified and well-suited to carry out the proposed research program?
- Scientific Plan: Is there proof of concept for the proposed hypothesis? If not, what is the rationale for successful outcome? Is the plan sufficiently developed and appropriate to the project? Are the specific aims clearly defined? Are milestones and go-no decision points articulated? Are the milestones and timeline realistic?
- Environment: Is the research environment appropriate and likely to contribute to the success of the proposed research program? Does the environment foster collaborative arrangements that may support the proposed research activities? Is the research environment compliant with appropriate rules and regulations for conducting animal studies?
- Budget: Is the proposed budget reasonable and justified relative to the proposed research?

B. Commercial Considerations:
- Commercial Feasibility: Does the proposal define a potential path from lab to clinic? What are key milestones that would support the proposed path?
- Therapeutic Strategy (if applicable): Does the proposed therapeutic approach address unmet needs relative to existing alternatives/therapies for treatment of MS? Is the strategy feasible and appropriate to MS?
- Development Potential: Is there a development path that enables the drug candidate to advance through preclinical and/or clinical development?
- Intellectual Property: Has the applicant secured its intellectual property? If not, is it in the process of securing its intellectual property?
- Funding by Third Parties: Has the proposed program been funded by other parties

Companies that do not advance to the next stage of the review process and that are not selected for funding will receive a summary of comments provided by the Fast Forward SBAC.

All recommendations of the Fast Forward SBAC are final. Funding decisions will be made by the Fast Forward Board of Managers and will be based on the recommendations of Fast Forward’s SBAC. Companies will be notified of final funding recommendations in late spring 2015. Each award will be provided pursuant to a Sponsored Research Agreement between recipients and Fast Forward and anticipated funding would begin shortly thereafter. Applicants who are selected for funding will be provided with a collaboration agreement covering project support through Fast Forward and terms of intellectual property and revenue sharing.

**Inquiries:**
Companies are encouraged to contact Fast Forward for clarification of any issues or questions regarding this invitation.

Please direct inquiries to Maya Merrell, Director, Business and Partnership Development at maya.merrell@fastforward.org, or at 212-476-0443.

Applications will be accepted from January 5th through February 13th, 2015.