Projects will be scored from **0-9 (0=lowest; 9=highest)** based on their potential for transition from discovery research to translational development through preliminary work or feasibility studies. Please refer to the ‘**What are the panel looking for?’ hints under each section of the case for support form** when completing your application.

**Panel scores and definitions**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Score** | **Score definitions** |
| **9** | The application is **exceptional**; it **very strongly** meets all of the assessment criteria to the highest standard. The panel agrees that it is difficult to articulate how the application could be improved. |
| **8** | The application is **outstanding**; it very **strongly** meets all of the assessment criteria. |
| **7** | The application is **excellent**; it **strongly** meets all of the assessment criteria. |
| **6** | The application is **very good**; it meets the assessment criteria **well but with some minor weaknesses**/limitations. |
| **5** | The application is **good**; it meets the assessment criteria well but with **some clear weaknesses/limitations**. |
| **4** | The application is **adequate**; it meets the assessment criteria but with clear weaknesses/limitations. |
| **3** | The application is **weak**; it meets the assessment criteria but with **significant weaknesses**/limitations. |
| **2** | The application is **poor**; it meets the assessment criteria but has **major weaknesses**/limitations. |
| **1** | The application is **unsatisfactory**; it **does not meet one or more of the assessment criteria**. |
| **0** | The application is **unsatisfactory**; it **does not meet any** of the assessment criteria. |

**Reviewers are asked to consider the following criteria when assessing your project(s):**

* **Strength of rationale and quality of science**

Objective and Approach: Is the proposed approach an effective way of meeting the plan’s objectives and is it based on a good scientific rationale? How innovative is the plan, or is it a tried and tested approach? Is the preliminary data promising and robust?

* **Unmet medical need**

Is there a clear clinical impact and unmet need? If the need is not significant now, will it become so in the future? Would meeting this need significantly reduce disease burden and/or provide a valuable commercial opportunity and/or alleviate an important development bottleneck?

* **Project planning and execution**

Project Plan: Does the plan propose reasonable go/no-go milestones? Do the milestones follow the SMART principle? Are the milestone timings appropriate and are the success criteria necessary and sufficient to judge progression? Are the proposed probabilities of milestones being met reasonable?

Project and Risk Management: Do the applicants have or likely will have the necessary project management experience to deliver the plan? Has the individual or group established a high-quality track record in the field? Does the applicant have the relevant team/expertise in place to deliver the proposed milestones?

Resource requirements, deliverability and Environment: Has the team identified and secured reasonable access to necessary resources/skills? Has the applicant recognised appropriate stakeholders (such as industry partners and key academic collaborators) to contribute in propelling the translational activity of the project? Is the budget realistic for the scale and complexity of the project? Have the applicants set out a clear and reasonable case for the requested levels of staffing and overall resources?

* **Future commercial opportunity or potential clinical, societal or global health impact**

Competition and market: Have the applicant identified the key competing solutions and their status or are they aware of other similar or complementary research underway elsewhere? Has the applicant identified the key competitive advantages/USPs of their proposed solution? Is the cost higher than for competing solutions? Have safety and tolerability been considered? How likely is it that the proposed solution, if achieved, would be widely adopted?

* **IP position**

Intellectual Property**:** Is there an appropriate intellectual property strategy in place to optimise the chances of downstream funding/partnering and ultimate exploitation? Is the research academic-led where industry is involved?

* **Downstream project planning/support:**

Likelihood of developing a full proposalto be submitted to the MRC DPFS award scheme, or similar follow-on funding schemes, within the required timescale and budget.

Does the applicant have a clear plan towards clinical impact /commercialisation following completion of MLSTF?

**It is highly recommended that you watch the following training videos before applying:**

* [Tips for MLSTF Applicants](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/tips-for-mlstf-applicants)
* [The Winning Translational Grant Application: What the Reviewers are looking for?](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/panel-discussion-the-winning-translational-grant-application-what-the-reviewers-are-looking-for)
* [Entrepreneur in Residence Masterclass Series 2022](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/entrepreneurship-masterclass)
* [Intellectual Property](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/intellectual-property)

**Confidential and non-confidential lay summary**

Please refer to the following sources to produce a clear, succinct and impactful lay summary:

* <https://www.nihr.ac.uk/documents/plain-english-summaries/27363>
* <https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/tips-for-mlstf-applicants>

**Case for support form**

**SECTION 1.1: Scientific Justification and Project Developmental Plans**

**What are the panel looking for?**

Please use this section to include additional information that is not already in the confidential/ non confidential summary

Please use this section to include scientific background information and justification such as:

The unmet clinical need of your proposed project,

Background data and progress to date,

MLSTF project objectives, milestones, go/no-go success criteria and proposed end-point outcomes.

Next steps in the development plans post MLSTF

You will need to append the following as separate PDFs:

Supporting data and information (figures / tables) (1 page maximum)

* A comprehensive Gantt chart on the milestones and timeline of your project (1 page maximum, see link to an example at the end of this form)

**Additional TRO training resources:**

* [The Milestone Mindset in a Translational Funding Application](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/the-milestone-mindset-in-a-translational-funding-application)

**SECTION 1.2: Please list the key risks to delivering the project**

**What are the panel looking for?**

Please list the risks from

* Based on the likelihood of occurring during the course of the project (Unlikely-highly likely)
* What their impact would be on the successful completion of the project. (Low, moderate, High)
* How will these risks be managed? What mitigation plans will be in place?

**SECTION 1.3: To be completed if your project involves significant use of AI**

**What are the panel looking for?**

Significant use of AI in an MLSTF project refers to the integration of artificial intelligence as a core enabling technology that fundamentally shapes the project’s functionality, development, and value proposition. Use of AI in the project is therefore not only an add-on feature but a major technique that drives the project’s capabilities, automation, decision-making, or user experience.

Please provide the following information:

* A clear intended use statement, as well as the target users and the anticipated benefits.
* Description of the data used for training the AI technology and for its operational delivery.
* Description of the AI tools and methods intended for this proposal. Specifying its model architecture.
* Clarity on whether any part of your code is related to any 3rd-party code and what permissions for use might apply.
* You will be expected to clarify some technical details for the AI use:
  + How did you structure your training, testing, and validation process? What strategies did you use to prevent overfitting in your model?
  + Can you elaborate on methods such as cross-validation, the use of hold-out datasets, or external validation techniques?
  + Additionally, which input features or variables are most influential in driving your model’s predictions?
* An outline of any innovative elements in the AI aspect of your proposal.

**SECTION 2: Competitiveness of the approach**

|  |
| --- |
| **What are the panel looking for?**  Please include a discussion around market competition such as;   1. Will the proposed research offer significant advantages over current methodologies and which are the main competitive solutions? 2. Academic and industry solutions should be considered for this discussion   **Additional TRO training resources:**   * [Understanding the market size and opportunity of your technology](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/trs23-market-size-and-opportunity) |

**SECTION 3: Industry engagement**

**What are the panel looking for?**

* Please use this section to elaborate if you already have an industrial collaborator on board? If so, please give details here including their contribution in your project. Please also elaborate if there is a research collaboration in place.
* If there are discussions taking place already with industry, please elaborate the details here including what sort of interest have they shown if any?
* Have you had any involvement with a University of Oxford spinout company, such as holding a position, equity, or other interests? If so, you are required to submit a declaration of an appropriate conflict management plan to enable a thorough governance review.

**SECTION 4: Regulatory management**

**What are the panel looking for?**

Have you consulted with the appropriate regulatory body/ies (e.g. MHRA) or another relevant regulatory expert?

If so, please summarise the outcome of the discussions; if not, please summarise why this is not necessary at this stage

**Additional TRO training resources:**

* [Effective Regulatory Strategies](https://www.medsci.ox.ac.uk/for-staff/resources/translational-research-office/news-training-events/effective-regulatory-strategies)

**SECTION 5: Data Management Plan**

**If you have ticked ‘Yes’, please state**:

How will you manage and share data collected or acquired through the proposed research? Please elaborate on data anonymisation and access management in this section.

Please provide a data management plan which should clearly detail how you will comply with the University’s published [**data management policies**,](https://researchdata.ox.ac.uk/data-management-plans)

**SECTION 6: Justification for support**

**What are the panel looking for?**

What resources (models, equipment, infrastructure, expertise) are needed to undertake the proposed project?

Why is the MLSTF scheme an appropriate scheme for your proposal?

**SECTION 7: Sources of matched funding**

**What are the panel looking for?**

Please provide examples of sources that could include: Industry cash or in-kind, internal/external awarded grants, Departmental support.