

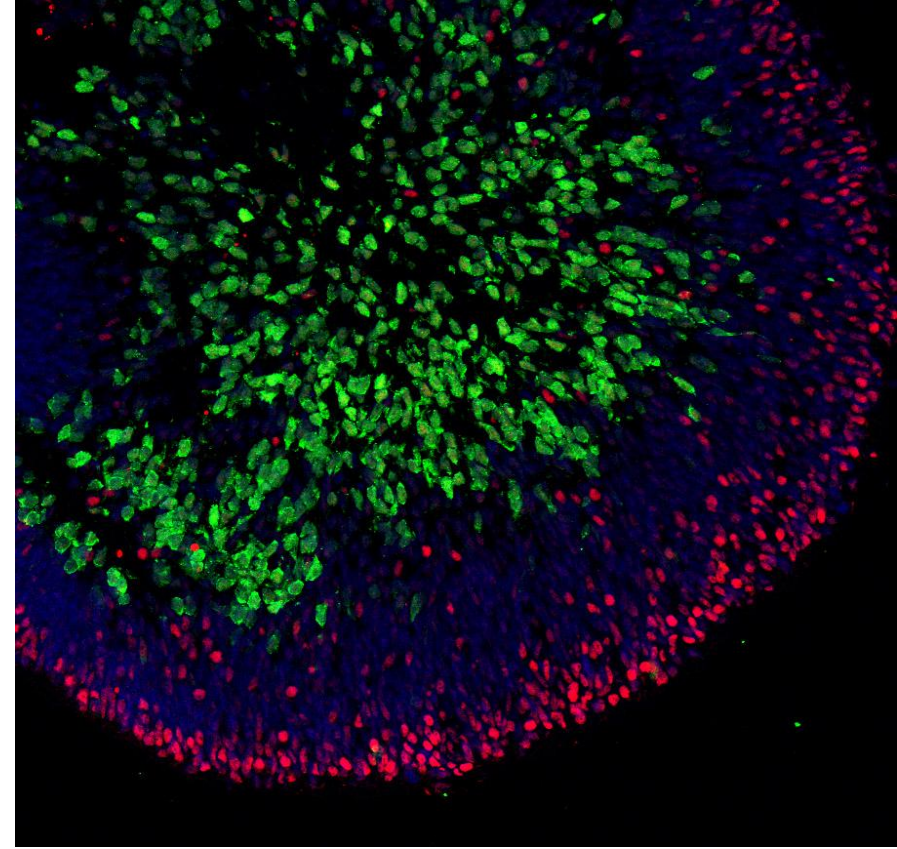
# Non-Animal Technologies Network (NAT-Net) Research Pillar Competitive Grant Scheme

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**NAT-Net Research Pillar Working Group**

Online Briefing

12:00 PM – 13:00 PM AEST - 13 Aug 2025



*Image:* Retinal Organoid generated from human induced pluripotent stem cells.  
*Credit:* Dr Anai Gonzalez Cordero, Stem Cell Medicine Group.





**'Building strong relationships for Aboriginal health research and innovation in NSW'**

Artist: Carissa Paglino

Ministry of Health are hosting this meeting today from the traditional lands of the Cammeraygal people of the Eora nation.

We acknowledge the Traditional Custodians of the various lands on which we are all meeting today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating.

I'd like to pay my respects to Elders past, present and emerging and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of Australia.

# Online Briefing Agenda

**Please note:** this meeting will be **recorded** and may be published online.

Start	Agenda Item	Presented by
12:00	Welcome and Acknowledgement of Country	Esther Pronker, PhD <i>NAT-Net Coordinator</i>
12:10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• NAT-Net Research Pillar Competitive Grant Scheme</li><li>• Objective and Goals</li></ul>	Esther Pronker, PhD
12:20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Eligible Areas of Research</li><li>• Selection Criteria</li></ul>	Esther Pronker, PhD
12:30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Application and Selection Process</li><li>• Expression of Interest and Full Application</li></ul>	Esther Pronker, PhD
12:50	Questions and Answer Session	NAT-Net Panel
13:00	Meeting closes	

# Non-Animal Technologies Network (NAT-Net)

NAT-Net as the umbrella network to coordinate state and national capacity across a diverse range of new non-animal technologies.

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In July 2024, NSW Government **invested \$4.5 million** to reduce and replace animals in medical research.

These funds are being used to establish a statewide network.

**First initiative of its kind** in NSW, positioning NSW as a leader in humane and innovative research.

## NAT-Net Key Goals

- Facilitate collaboration to overcome fragmentation.
- Accelerate the development and use innovations and novel technologies.
- Provide networking opportunities to its members.
- Promote dialogue between the various stakeholders including academic, industry, regulatory and government sectors.



# NAT-Net Research Pillar Competitive Grant Scheme

The NAT-Net Research Pillar Competitive Grant Scheme is made possible by funding from NSW Health and is administered by the University of NSW (UNSW).

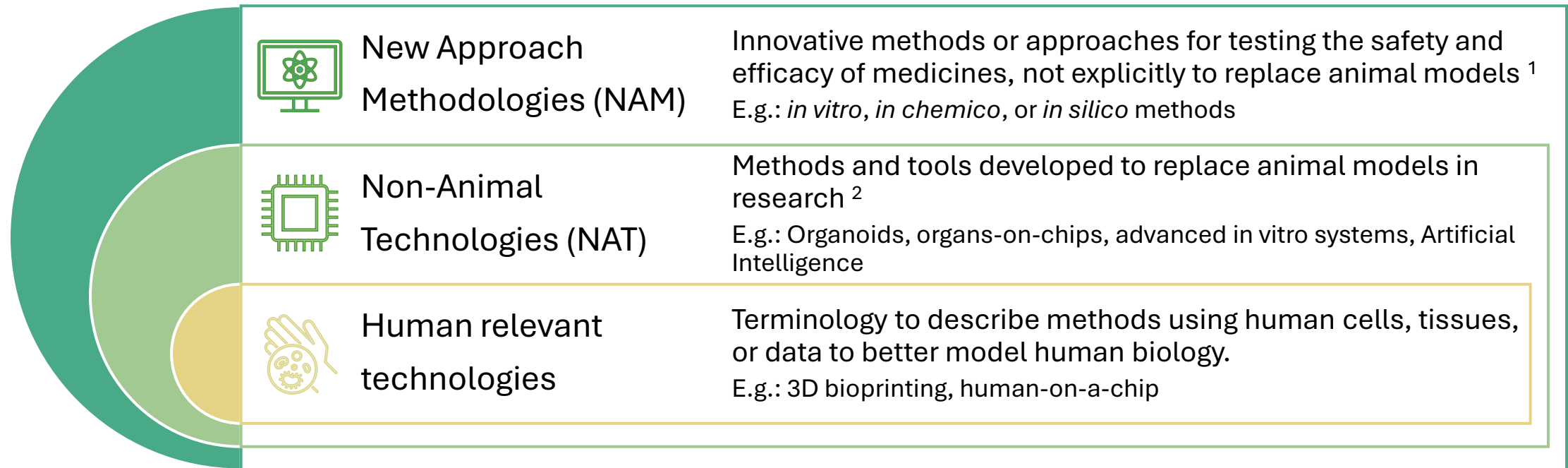
- Under this competitive grant scheme, up to \$600,000 is available to fund three project grants of **\$200,000 each for 24-months** starting March 2026.
- Host organisations may submit a **maximum of two** applications each.
- Includes a **minimum of two** eligible research institutions in the collaboration, one of which is based in NSW.
- Includes one **NSW-based early-mid career researcher** (EMCR) as Chief Investigator.
- include **no more than 8** Chief Investigators.

## NAT-Net Grant Scheme Objectives

- Fund research that makes groundbreaking discoveries in the field of medicine and health while developing and promoting alternative methods to animal use in research.
- Encourage research collaboration, leadership, and capability building in the non-animal technologies NSW research environment.
- Foster research excellence and increase the number of outstanding non-animal technologies researchers in NSW.
- Drive the development of high-quality, innovative non-animal technologies research in NSW.

# Eligible Areas of Research: Complex *In Vitro* Models

CiVMs combine cell types from multiple organs (cardiovascular, neuronal, epithelial) to better replicate human disease where other technologies or other approaches are also a requirement to be brought in.



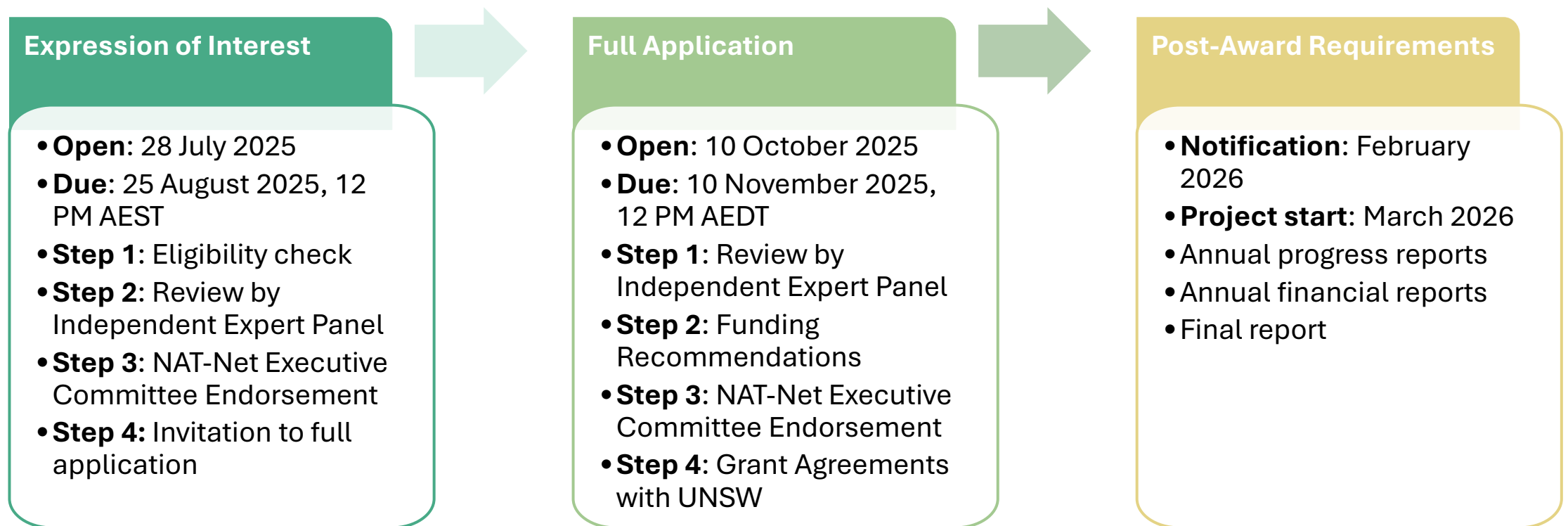
**Excluded** are incremental improvements to an existing approach or technology.

# Selection Criteria

Criteria	Expression of Interest (EOI) Stage	Full Application Stage	Weight
<b>Research Plan Feasibility</b>	Evaluate the feasibility of the proposed research project, based on a high-level overview of the research plan, including objectives, research question, methodology, study design and data analysis plan.	Evaluating the feasibility of the proposed research project based on a detailed project plan, methodology, risk management, value for money and resource allocation to ensure the project is achievable and well-supported.	50%
<b>Impact and Innovation</b>	Assess the novelty and transformative potential of the proposed research or technology, emphasizing innovation beyond incremental improvements and alignment with NAT-Net mission. Focussed on driving discovery and innovation in use of NATs/complex in vitro models and bringing added value/utility to existing models through use of technology (e.g. Bioengineering, computational, AI, and others).	Detailed evidence supporting novelty, creativity, and potential for breakthrough outcomes, including how the innovation integrates with or advances non-animal technology methods.	25%
<b>Collaboration</b>	Applicants should demonstrate how collaboration enhances the project's reach, relevance, and translational potential within research sectors, aligned with NAT-Net mission.	Evaluate the depth and effectiveness of collaboration, the governance and partnership structures, and the demonstrated or projected impact on health practice, policy, or technology adoption consistent with the NAT-Net mission.	25%

# Application and Selection Process

The application and selection process consists of two stages: Expression of Interest (EOI) and Full Application.



Grant guidelines available online: <https://www.unsw.to/NATNetGrantScheme>



# Top Questions Received via Email

Can NAT-Net proposals include an international partner?

NAT-Net recognises that interstate and international partners will strengthen collaborations and support success with future national funding opportunities and supports their inclusion. Collaborators external to NSW are expected to cover the cost of their participation in the collaboration.

*Source: Page 5, "Funding Conditions and Exclusions"*

Does the project need to be led by a CIA that is an EMCR (<10 years)?

Research funded through a NAT-Net Research Pillar Competitive Grant must include one NSW-based early-mid career researcher (EMCR) as Chief Investigator (CI)

*Source: Page 3, "Call for Applications"*

# Top Questions Received via Email (Cont.)

Full Application,  
Section F – Budget:  
“Please note that service  
delivery costs, including  
staffing, will not be funded.”

NSW Health research funds cannot be used to offset the cost of NSW Health services. For example; in developing a personalised organoid to check for the effectiveness of a gene therapy for a variant of unknown significance, applicants can not use the research budget for the consultations or clinic visits with the patient as these as service delivery costs.

*Source: Full Application Form, Section F*

Please confirm if “Other  
Authorised Signatory” is  
excepted for ALL signatures  
within the certification  
section?

Institutional sign-off at EOI stage simply acknowledges support for the proposed collaboration and agreement to consider participation should the project be invited to submit a full application. Final institutional approval, including budget sign-off, will occur during the full application stage. It is encouraged to view this initial sign-off as an in-principle endorsement, subject to detailed review at the next stage.

# Thank you for your time.

To ensure NAT-Net best serves those working in the non-animal technologies space, we invite you to **join the network** and share your views.

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[medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/nat-net/](https://medicalresearch.nsw.gov.au/nat-net/)



**Contact us:**

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NAT-Net Coordinator

Take the survey!

