

Genvira

‘You need IP protection to get value for your research’

Jiahu Wang’s company — Genvira Biosciences Inc. — specializes in building viral vectors through genetic engineering. These viral vectors are the vehicles that transport therapies to sites of disease in the human body to ultimately treat them.

“We use our viral vectors to carry therapeutic cargoes,” Wang says. “It’s one of the most efficient ways to treat cancer and other genetic diseases and immune disorders.”

Genvira builds its viral vectors using machine-learning artificial intelligence.

“We’re the engineers who take away the unnecessary or pathogenic sequences, but leave what is good about the viruses,” Wang says.

In addition to cancers, the company is currently looking at treating eye diseases with its technology. Other genetic diseases and immune disorders will come in the future.

At this point, the company is a “contract research organization” and as such, it has struggled to move ahead because it’s always being asked to share its intellectual property (IP) by would-be partners and collaborators. Without IP protection, Genvira was hesitant to do so. But now that it has three patents, the company can extend its service offerings, engage in collaborations, and even license its technology.

“We used to spend a lot of time building trust between potential partners; the IP protection allows us to move forward and confidently share, knowing that our IP remains protected,” he says. “This can forward the science because the trust factor is now inherent.”

With the help of ElevateIP, Genvira is now working on more patents. Wang says that as a startup, there are always cash flow problems and resource limitations and that the program, which has supported in funding the IP process, has been extremely helpful.



Wang says that as with most technology companies, Genvira’s value is in its IP.

“We are protecting many, many years of research,” he says. “Without IP protection, we can’t leverage this. With IP protection, we can get a licensing deal and that allows us to use those funds to stay ahead. We need IP protection to get value for our research.”

He says without the program, he would have had hard choices to make — either focus on growth and risk IP theft or focus on IP protection. The program nullified that hard decision.

“Without the support of ElevateIP and Invest Ottawa, we would have had to remove resources from our research program and maybe even staff,” he says. “Every penny we spend we have to earn. For years, we couldn’t protect our IP because we had to build our labs and infrastructure.”

Invest Ottawa was pleased to be able to assist.

“For life science companies like Genvira, IP protection is essential to their growth and success,” says Madison Fisher, Manager, Intellectual Property at Invest Ottawa. “Programs like ElevateIP are essential for supporting companies at this stage. We’re excited to see what’s next for them.”

Invest Ottawa is an ElevateIP Recipient: a national program of Innovation, Science and Economic Development in Canada, leading in intellectual property support for startups in Ontario.



Genvira at a glance

Founded: 2019

Employees: 10

Raised: \$400,000 in pre-seed round of financing; now working on raising \$6 million.

Highlights: Genvira has an AI model that allows it to design products in record time and the first one is in clinical trial. The company is now raising funds to complete a clinical trial leading to a fast-track approval with the FDA for use with diseases that don't currently have a cure.

Future plans: Create clinical products that can show good efficacy against a variety of conditions.

ElevateIP Recipient, a program of



Innovation, Science and
Economic Development Canada

Innovation, Sciences et
Développement économique Canada



Jiahu Wang

Founder and President, Genvira



Why ElevateIP

Entrepreneurs have ideas — lots of them — but they don't always know how best to protect those ideas. ElevateIP provides the tools startups need to understand, manage and leverage their intellectual property.