BactiVac Catalyst Project Applications Guidance

Summary

A principal aim of the BactiVac Network is to accelerate the development and progression of vaccines against bacterial pathogens, particularly those that are of direct relevance to low and middle-income countries (LMICs).

To achieve this aim we have funding available to support grants for pump-priming projects. These will typically be for a **maximum of £50,000** of funding and usually **run for 6 months**. <u>EXCEPTIONALLY</u>, we will consider projects up to a value of £100,000 for a period of up to 12 months for which a strong justification for support is provided. Funding awarded will be at 80% fEC for academic institutions in the UK and at 100% fEC for other institutions. The purpose of these catalyst funds is to promote new collaborations, in particular involving **LMIC partners**, resulting in the preliminary data necessary to attract further, more substantial, funding leading to long-lasting and beneficial partnerships that grow bacterial vaccinology.

Membership of the BactiVac Network is a prerequisite when applying for these funds, with at least one member of the partnership being based in the UK (for free membership apply here). Applications will be scored according to the scientific merit (60%, including quality of the project and research people & environment), facilitation of cross-network collaborations (20%, especially involving LMIC partners) and strategic impact for the Network (20%, including research impact and routes to further funding).

Please note that all projects in this round must start by <u>no later than 01 November 2020</u>

Applications should be made using the application form available on the website and, in addition to the points raised above, projects will be prioritised against the following criteria (equally weighted):

- The generation of novel partnerships between UK and LMIC partners (applications where the lead applicant is LMIC based are strongly encouraged in this round of catalyst funding)
- The generation of novel partnerships between UK and industry partners
- Projects that involve partnerships between diverse network members, particularly those that include partners from LMICs and industry
- Projects that target the exploratory to pre-clinical and clinical transitional bottlenecks
- Projects that advance the ability to tackle the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through the development of vaccines to bacterial pathogens
- Projects that demonstrate a clear plan as to how the partnership will grow and be competitive for further funding – EXCEPTIONALLY, well-defined short-term projects will be considered
- Projects that demonstrate that research governance is already in place (e.g. collaboration agreements / intellectual property (IP) considerations).

All awardees will be required to submit narrative and financial reports at the project mid and end points (e.g. 3 and 6 months for a 6 month project). BactiVac will publish non-confidential information relating to successful Projects on our website – please refer to our Privacy Policy.

All successful awards will be subject to the acceptance of our non-negotiable Terms and Conditions – we would encourage all applicants to discuss these with the relevant departments in their institution at an early stage to avoid delays in award acceptance and initiation of the projects.

Please refer to our Frequently Asked Questions for further information.

Queries regarding the application process should be sent to bactivac@contacts.bham.ac.uk or by telephone on +44 121 414 6973.

Details

1. Funding eligibility

1.1. **Applicants:** Funding is available for BactiVac Network members only (for free membership apply [here](#)). Proposals must include a minimum of two BactiVac Network members from different institutes, with one member of the partnership being based in the UK. Applications that are LMIC led and/or involve LMIC co-applicants are particularly encouraged.

1.2. **Value of grant:** each catalyst project award will typically be for a **maximum of £50,000** of funding over a **maximum 6 month period**. **Exceptionally**, we will consider funding projects up to a value of £100,000 over a period of up to 12 months (this level of funding/duration will require a strong case within the 'Resource Justification' section of the application form). Projects should be costed on a full economic cost (fEC) basis. Please note, BactiVac will award funding at 80% fEC for academic institutions based in the UK (with the remaining 20% of their project costs match funded by their institution) and at 100% fEC for all other institutions, including applicants based in industry and [LMIC](#) countries.

1.3. **LMIC funding:** to be considered 'LMIC' you must be based for your work in an LMIC country. A list of LMIC countries can be found [here](#); all listed countries are eligible.

1.4. **Scope/activities supported:** all projects must be within the scope of the BactiVac Network and its remit (further information on this can be found on our [website](#)). We are also interested in funding projects that advance the ability to tackle the global challenge of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) through the development of vaccines to bacterial pathogens. Further details about priority pathogen lists and reports can be found [here](#). Eligible costs include direct salaries (costed on a fEC basis, as described above), consumables, animal purchase & housing, sample shipment. Some travel costs for visits between collaborators are allowed if justifiable; costs stated must be reasonable and via economy class only. VAT is allowable when applicable. Costs must be in Great British Pounds (GBP). Total project funding requested must not exceed the maximum value allowed (see **section 1.2**).

1.5. **Activities not supported:** research outside the BactiVac objectives and remit; research that will not deliver outputs/outcomes that are primarily of benefit to LMICs; projects from non-members of BactiVac; PhD studentships; large equipment purchase (over £10,000); projects without collaboration between two or more institutes; Principal Investigator (PI) and co-applicant project supervision costs.

2. Application process

This will be BactiVac's fourth round of catalyst project funding (details of projects funded in previous rounds can be seen [here](#)). [Complete the application form](#) as directed on the form itself, adhering to the word limit where stated. Ensure you complete all sections, and make clear the importance and impact of your project to the acceleration of vaccines against bacterial pathogens, how the research will deliver outputs/outcomes that will primarily be of benefit to LMICs, how the project aligns to addressing the global AMR challenge (if applicable) and your future plans to secure follow on funding to take your research forward. Make sure you attach all the required supporting documents (listed at the end of the application form).

The application form and supporting documents must be submitted by email by the closing date to the BactiVac Admin Team at bactivac@contacts.bham.ac.uk. You will receive acknowledgement of your application within two working days.

3. Application Review

All applications received in the funding round will go to the BactiVac Network Management Oversight Board (NMOB) for competitive assessment. NMOB members will review and score applications using a standard template. Applications will be scored according to the scientific merit (60%, including quality of the project and research people & environment), facilitation of cross- network collaborations (20%, especially with LMIC partners - applications where the lead applicant is LMIC based are strongly encouraged in this round of catalyst funding) and strategic impact for the Network (20%, including research impact and routes to further funding). A list of NMOB members is available here. NMOB members do not input into discussions about an application where they have a conflict of interest (see below for details on conflicts of interest). Following review of all applications, a ranked list will be used to select applications for funding. Quorum for the review meeting is the NMOB Chair plus 5; the NMOB Chair will accept written reviews from members who cannot attend the meeting.

All information submitted is held in strictest confidence and will be retained in accordance with our Privacy Policy; all NMOB members have signed a confidentiality agreement as a requirement of their Board participation.

4. Conflict of Interest

Examples of a conflict of interest include NMOB members that are:

- Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicants(s)
- Working closely with the applicant(s), for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely in the last 4 years
- Holding a current position on the governing body of or an honorary position within the institution(s) of the applicant(s)
- In receipt of personal remuneration in excess of £5,000 per annum from the applicant's organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s).

5. Notification of Review Results

Successful projects will be sent award letters confirming the funds available within 3 weeks of the NMOB decision. Projects must start within 1 month of the proposed start date provided on the application form and **no later than the 01 November 2020 in this round of funding**, so it is advised that any contractual issues between partners are discussed prior to grant submission.

All successful awards will be subject to the acceptance of our non-negotiable Terms and Conditions – we would encourage all applicants to discuss these with the relevant departments in their institution at an early stage to avoid delays in award acceptance and initiation of the project.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed as soon as possible and the BactiVac Admin Team may pass on specific feedback if available.

6. Post-award Administration

The University of Birmingham will issue an award letter contract with the non-negotiable Terms and Conditions for the awardee; projects may not start until this contract has been fully executed and applicants are given 1 month to return the signed documentation. Projects must start within 1 month of the proposed start date on the application and the actual start date must be confirmed to the BactiVac Admin team on bactivac@contacts.bham.ac.uk.

Before a project can start, as well as ensuring the Terms and Conditions of Award have been brought to the attention of the relevant department within your institution, applicants must consider whether a collaboration agreement is required for the project. If required, collaboration agreements must be in place before the project starts. As stated in the criteria listed in the summary section above, projects which already have these in place will be looked at favourably during the review process.

Funds must be spent as detailed on the application. Awardees are required to submit a short narrative and financial reports at the project mid and end points (e.g. 3 and 6 months for a 6 month project). These reports must be submitted to the BactiVac Admin Team before the grant funds will be released. Payment will usually be made as follows: 50% at project initiation (once the actual project start date has been confirmed to us), 30% on approval of the midpoint project report, 20% on approval of the end of project report. Payment will be for actual expenditure up to the value agreed in the original award letter. Funding will be awarded at 80% fEC for academic institutions based in the UK (with the remaining 20% of their project costs match funded by their institution) and at 100% fEC for all other institutions, including applicants based in industry and LMIC countries.

BactiVac does not require receipts to be submitted but these **must** be kept by the host institution as they may be required for future audits. The awardee's host institution must follow their standard procedures for financial accounts. Any underspend on grants will be retained by BactiVac.

Awardees are encouraged to submit their project's results for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, or as a case-study. A non-confidential brief lay summary of the project's outcomes, taken from the final report, will be published on the BactiVac website and in other publicity in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

7. Publicising outputs and Data Protection

Successful catalyst projects will be listed on the BactiVac website and in other promotional literature, with a non-confidential abstract outlining the work proposed, as well as updates with regard to information provided within the interim and final reports. All information will be used in accordance with our Privacy Policy, which also includes details of our document retention policy.

Any publications, outputs or downstream funding must acknowledge the catalyst funds awarded through BactiVac, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Award.

Copies of applications will be made available to the BactiVac NMOB who will use information provided for reviewing the proposal and post-award administration. BactiVac may choose to publish further non-confidential details of awards, awardees, and information about successful projects, in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

BactiVac's core funding comes from the MRC, so to meet the Research Councils' obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on the Research Councils' websites and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists. The MRC will use this information for research related activities, including but not limited to, statistical analysis in relation to the evaluation of MRC funding, study of trends and policy and strategy studies. Recipients of catalyst awards may be required to attend and contribute to MRC events within relevant areas at the request of the MRC.

8. Use of Human Samples or Data

BactiVac expects all research involving human participants to be undertaken in accordance with MRC policies and guidance available from http://www.mrc.ac.uk/research/policies-and-guidance- for-researchers/#ethics. These include:

- Good Research Practice (2012);
- Medical research involving adults who cannot consent (2007);
- Medical Research Involving Children (2004);
- Human Tissue and Biological Samples for Use in Research (2014);
- Personal Information in Medical Research (2000).

Independent Research Ethics Committee approval is required for research that involves human participants (whether patients or healthy volunteers) or records. Such approval is also required for certain studies of human tissues.

In the case of social science research, BactiVac recommends that award holders follow the ESRC Framework for Research Ethics (revised 2015) which highlights the responsibility of the research organisation for ensuring that the research is subject to appropriate ethics review.

Research involving human participants in developing societies presents specific ethical challenges and the MRC guidelines Research Involving Human Participants in Developing Societies must be followed.

Award holders whose research involves the removal, use or storage of human tissue as specified in the relevant legislation must:

- comply with the appropriate legislation, i.e. the Human Tissue Act 2004 and/or the Human Tissue (Scotland) Act 2006
- follow the relevant standards and Codes of Practice issued by the Human Tissue Authority (HTA) (the MRC Regulatory Support Centre has summarised these)
- follow the MRC guidance detailed in Human Tissue and Biological Samples for Use in medical Research (2014).

For research taking place outside the UK, in addition to UK guidelines local national guidelines and international best practice must be followed. All legal requirements for the import/export of biological materials must be adhered to.

9. Use of Animals

BactiVac supports the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement). Award holders are expected to abide by the core principles set out in the cross-funder guidance 'Responsibility in the use of animals in bioscience research: Expectations of the major research councils and charitable funding bodies' and GC2 of the RCUK Terms and Conditions.

The standards and principles of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 must be observed. All BactiVac awards are made on the absolute condition that no work that is controlled by the Act will begin until the necessary licences have been obtained from the Home Office (or equivalent body if work is outside the UK). When animals are purchased from commercial suppliers, in-country suppliers should be used wherever possible, to minimise the risk of suffering during transport. All research involving non-human primates must comply with the NC3Rs Guidelines: Primate accommodation, care and use.

10.Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)

National regulations and international best practice must be followed. Researchers who carry out genetic modification should be familiar with the legislative requirements and with the [Scientific Advisory Committee on Genetic Modification (Contained Use) guidance](#).

11.Dangerous Pathogens

Research organisations accommodating projects involving the use of dangerous pathogens must comply with the safeguards recommended by the UK Advisory Committee on Dangerous Pathogens in their guidance ['Infection at work: controlling the risk'](#), ['Biological Agents: the principles, design and operation of containment in a level 4 facility'](#) and ['Biological agents: Managing the risks in laboratories and healthcare premises'](#), as well as local national regulations.

12.Useful Resources

UK Government information on Overseas Development Agency (ODA) strategic objectives: [Official Development Assistance (ODA)](#)

[List of LMIC countries (all listed countries count as LMIC)](#)

Further details and useful resources related to [AMR, including priority pathogen lists and reports](#)

BactiVac [Catalyst Funding – Project Applications Frequently Asked Questions](#)

BactiVac [Privacy Policy](#)

BactiVac [Terms and Conditions of Award](#)