

International Veterinary Vaccinology Network (IVVN) Pump-Priming Grant Application Guidance Notes

Summary

The International Veterinary Vaccinology Network (IVVN) aims to promote vaccine research and development against livestock pathogens that cause diseases significant to low-and-middle income countries (LMICs). The remit of the IVVN includes all species that are of agricultural significance in LMICs including (but not limited to) poultry, aquaculture, ruminants and swine with an emphasis on molecular and cellular biology work relevant to vaccine development. Key aims of the IVVN are to bring together partners from academia, industry and other sectors, and to form partnerships between researchers based in the UK and LMICs.

Grants are available for pump-priming projects of up to £100,000 (at 100% fEC), via competitive application to the Network Management Board (NMB). Projects should run for a maximum of 12 months and should produce sufficient pilot data to enable a larger grant application to be submitted to relevant funding agencies. IVVN pump-priming funding is available to IVVN members, and applications from members who are Early Career Researchers (defined as not on a permanent contract/usually ineligible to apply for standard United Kingdom Research Councils' (RCUK) response-mode funding as a PI or Co-PI) and/or based in LMICs and/or female researchers and/or based in industry are particularly welcome. All applications must include IVVN members from at least two different research organisations, and the lead applicant (principal investigator) must be based in the UK or LMIC. All projects must also contain a UK-based applicant. The parameters on which applications will be judged include:

- 1 - *The relevance of the scientific challenge being addressed*; the primary criteria is that a key bottleneck to vaccine development is being addressed
- 2 - *The significance of the potential outcome of the project*; considered in terms of direct applications and as a transferable model to other veterinary species or human vaccinology.
- 3 - *Feasibility of study*; likelihood that the stated objectives of the proposals will be achieved.
- 4 - *Dependency on Network interactions to conduct the study*; demonstration that the collaborative team will provide complementary expertise to surmount challenges that individual members working in isolation cannot.
- 5 - *Innovation*; how using IVVN collaborations is allowing novel approaches to dealing with the identified challenge to be formulated.
- 6 - *Opportunities for securing subsequent funding*; the potential output of the proposal must be sufficient to permit subsequent funding submissions to be made.

All awardees will be required to submit narrative and financial reports halfway through and at the end of the project. Awarded project titles, a non-confidential lay summary and project outcomes, will be included in Network outcomes and publicity.

For helpful guidance on structuring your application please see the Guidance Note on applying for Official Development Assistance: <https://www.ukri.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/10/UKRI-271020-GCRFODAGuidance.pdf>

Details

Funding eligibility

Applicants: Funding is for IVVN members only. IVVN Members based at academic institutes, governmental organisations, non-governmental organisations and industry in the UK or LMICs are eligible to apply for funding. IVVN Members based at academic institutes, governmental organisations, non-governmental organisation and industry in other countries are eligible to be partners on an application with a UK or LMIC-based lead applicant. Applications including Early Career Researchers must include a letter of support from their Research Group Leader. All applications for funding must be accompanied by letters of support from EACH investigator's head of research organisation (or similar). Network membership is free and you can apply here (<http://intvetvacnet.co.uk/>).

Subsidy Control

IVVN Awards must be managed within the Minimum Financial Assistance (MFA) provision within the Subsidy Control Act 2022.

The MFA is a financial threshold providing that no successful applicant can receive more than £315,000 over the applicable period. The applicable period is:

- the elapsed part of the current financial year (i.e., from 1 April 2024); and
- the two financial years immediately preceding the current financial year.

For the purposes of the MFA, the successful applicant should take each of the following into account during the current and previous two financial years:

- MFA;
- Services of Public Economic Interest (SPEI) assistance;
- aid given under the EU State aid de minimis regulations either before the end of the implementation period of 31 December 2020 or after this date, if by virtue of the Northern Ireland Protocol; and
- subsidies given as small amounts of financial assistance (SAFA) under Articles 364(4) or 365(3) of the UK-EU Trade and Cooperation Agreement after the end of the implementation period but prior to 4 January 2023, being the date upon which section 36 of the Subsidy Control Act 2022 came into effect.

The responsibility for managing compliance with the Subsidy Control Act 2022 will reside with the individual organisations being supported through the IVVN. The successful applicant must ensure at all times that the IVVN award funding awarded to them is compliant with the Subsidy Control Act 2022. The Lead Applicant and each Co-Applicant must sign the Subsidy Control Notification forming Appendix 1 of the Application Form.

Advice should be sought from the finance and legal teams within your organisation as they should be able to check their records and find out whether sums of more than £315,000 have been awarded to you from UK public bodies during the last three financial years. This will determine whether it can be awarded under MFA.

This declaration will apply to all institutions and companies who receive funding from IVVN irrespective of where they are based. The application form gives examples of who can sign the declaration on behalf of your organisation.

It is important that you check the position with your financial and/or legal teams before signing the declaration as a false declaration may result in your organisation being required to repay the funding received from IVVN.

As part of the Award Letter, the University shall issue the successful applicants with a MFA confirmation which shall confirm that the subsidy is given as MFA, the date on which it is given, and the gross value amount of the assistance being provided through the IVVN award.

What can be applied for?

Activities supported: all projects must be within the scope of the IVVN network and its remit. Further information on this can be found on our website.

Activities not supported: research outside the IVVN objectives and remit; projects from non-members of IVVN; PhD projects; projects without collaboration between two or more research organisations who are IVVN members; projects where the lead applicant is not based at an organisation in the UK or LMIC; projects without a UK-based applicant. Applicants cannot apply for funding for equipment which has a value of greater than £10,000.

Value of grant: up to £100,000 (at 100% fEC). Please note, successful UK applicants will be awarded 80% fEC (with UK applicants expected to have matched funding for the remaining 20% of costs). All other applicants, including those based in LMICs and industry, will be awarded 100% of project costs. Applicants based in LMICs can include a budget for overheads up to 20% of the value of Direct Costs. Applicants based in non-LMICs, excluding UK applicants, can only apply for Direct Costs.

LMIC funding: to be considered for the LMIC funding level you must be resident in an LMIC country and working at a LMIC-based research organisation. A list of LMIC countries can be found here: <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2024-25-flows.pdf>.

Please note, there has been a change to the ODA status of China and India, please e-mail IVVN@roslin.ed.ac.uk if you are an applicant based in China or India to discuss eligibility.

Other Sources of Funding: All applicants and co-applicants should provide details of the source of any other public funding supporting the activities on their application.

Application process

Calls with associated information will be advertised on the IVVN website and IVVN members will also receive an e-mail notifying them of when new calls are made.

The application form and associated documents must be submitted via e-mail by 9am BST on the closing date specified on the IVVN website to the IVVN at IVVN@roslin.ed.ac.uk. You will receive acknowledgement of your application within two working days of submission. Applications received after the deadline will not be considered.

Review

All applications received in a call go to the IVVN Network Management Group (NMG: NMB, director and co-director) for initial assessment and assignment of reviewers (details of NMG membership is available on the IVVN website). If ineligible for funding, the application will be returned to the research organisation. Reviews for each proposal will be completed by two members of the NMG and an external expert, and scored according to a standard protocol (details of which are available on the IVVN website). NMG members and external experts will be excluded from review and subsequent 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 which will be approved at a review meeting of the NMG (with a quorum of 5 NMB members together with the director and co-director required to approve funding). The external advisory group (EAG) will have access and oversight of the review process of funding applications to ensure transparency, fairness and consistency.

All information submitted is held in strictest confidence; all NMG and EAG members have signed a confidentiality agreement as a requirement of their participation.

Notification of Review Results

Successful projects will be sent award letters confirming the funds available and for awardees to sign confirming agreement to IVVN terms and conditions. Projects must start within 3 months of the date of the award letter (actual start date must be confirmed with the Network Manager), so it is advised that any contractual issues between collaborators are discussed prior to grant submission and resolved promptly upon award.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed promptly and the Network Manager may pass on specific feedback on request if available.

Post-award Administration

The University of Edinburgh will issue to the awardees a grant award letter with terms and conditions attached. Projects may not start until the awardees have signed and returned the award letter to the Network Manager.

Before a project can start, projects must consider whether a collaboration agreement is required for the project. If required, collaboration agreements must be in place before the project starts.

Funds must be spent as detailed on the application. Awardees are required to submit scientific and financial reports halfway through and at the end of the project. These reports must be submitted to the Network Manager before the grant funds will be released. Payment is generally made in arrears to the awardee's research organisation. However, alternative arrangements may be agreed. Payment will be for actual expenditure up to the value agreed in the original award letter. As previously stated, successful UK applicants will be awarded 80% (with UK applicants expected to have matched funding for the remaining 20% of costs) and at 100% for all other applicants, including those based in LMICs and industry.

The receipts must be kept by the awardees institution as they may be required for possible future audits. The awardees must follow standard accounting procedures for financial accounts. Any underspend on grants will be retained/reclaimed by the IVVN.

Awardees are encouraged to submit project results for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, or as a case-study. A non-confidential brief summary of the project's outcomes, taken from the final report submitted by the awardee, will be published on the IVVN website and in other relevant publicity. Awardees may be requested to provide details of the data generated by IVVN funds, if deemed necessary to validate the allocation and expenditure of IVVN funds.

Data Protection and Publicity

The University of Edinburgh is committed to protecting and respecting your privacy. Our privacy notice for the IVVN Network is found at <https://www.intvetvacnet.co.uk/catalyst-funding/privacy-statement> and sets out the basis on which any personal data we collect from you, and that you provide to us, will be processed by us. Please read the privacy notice carefully to understand the University of Edinburgh's views and practices regarding your personal data and how we will treat it. Successful projects, along with awardee details, will be listed on the IVVN website and in other relevant publicity, with a non-confidential lay summary outlining the work proposed.

The University of Edinburgh will use information provided in the application for processing the application, the grant award, and for payment, maintenance and review of the grant. Copies of applications will also be made available to the IVVN NMG and EAG who will use information provided for reviewing the proposal and for post-award administration. The University of Edinburgh, through the IVVN, may choose to publish details of awards, awardees, and information about successful projects and, in due course, project outcomes. IVVN funding for the pump priming fund is derived from a MRC award, therefore to meet the RCUK obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on the RCUK's 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 awards may be requested to attend and contribute to MRC events within relevant areas at the request of the MRC.

Use of Animals

IVVN supports the principles of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction and Refinement). Awardees 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 RGC3 (Research Governance) of the RCUK Terms and Conditions.

<http://www.nc3rs.org.uk/responsibility-use-animals-bioscience-research>

<https://www.ukri.org/publications/terms-and-conditions-for-research-grants/>

The provisions of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 must be observed. All IVVN awards made by the University of Edinburgh are made on the absolute condition that all work is regulated by relevant national legislation and that approval has been gained following appropriate ethical review and cost/benefit analysis of animal use. 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.

<https://www.nc3rs.org.uk/non-human-primate-accommodation-care-and-use>

Use of Human Samples or Data

All research involving human participants should be undertaken in accordance with MRC policies and guidance available from

<https://www.ukri.org/who-we-are/mrc/our-policies-and-standards/ethics/>

These include:

- Good research practice: Principles and guidelines;
- Medical research involving adults who cannot consent (2007);
- Involving children in research (2021);
- Human tissue and biological samples for use in research (2014);
- Using information about people in health research (2018)

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, it is recommended 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.

<https://www.ukri.org/councils/esrc/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics-guidance/>

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. The safeguarding of participants is particularly important and we would draw your attention to the requirements of the Equality Act 2010, Modern Slavery Act 2015 and relevant child protection legislation.

Awardees 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, local national guidelines and international best practice must be followed. All legal requirements for the import/export of biological materials must be adhered to.

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:

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/gmo/acgm/acgmcomp/>.

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.

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/biosafety/infection.htm>

<http://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/web09.pdf>

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/pubns/misc208.pdf>

Conflict of Interest

Examples of a conflict of interest include:

- Employed by the same research organisation as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicants(s)
- Working closely with the applicant(s), or the Principal Investigator or other investigator(s) for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely together in the last 4 years
- Holding a current position on the governing body of or an honorary position within the research organisation of the applicant(s)
- In receipt of personal remuneration in excess of £5000 per annum from the applicant's research organisation
- Personal/family relationship with the Principal Investigator or other investigators
- Hostile relationship with or direct competitor of the applicant or the Principal Investigator or other investigators.

Useful Resources

IVVN website: <http://intvetvaccnet.co.uk/>

Previously funded IVVN pump-priming grants: <https://www.intvetvaccnet.co.uk/catalyst-funding/pump-priming-grants/funded-pump-priming-grants>

UK Government information on ODA strategic objectives:

[Official Development Assistance \(ODA\) - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](http://www.gov.uk)

List of LMIC countries (all countries in this list are LMIC): <https://www.oecd.org/dac/financing-sustainable-development/development-finance-standards/DAC-List-of-ODA-Recipients-for-reporting-2024-25-flows.pdf>