HIC-VAC Public Engagement Application Guidance

Summary

The HIC-Vac Network aims to support, develop and advocate the use of Human Infection Challenge (HIC) to improve understanding about infections and the diseases they cause, leading to better vaccines and treatments with high global impact. Our network will enable open sharing of knowledge and expertise, using network resources to increase HIC use in the UK and in Lower and Middle Income Countries (LMIC), disseminating best practice, enhancing training and fostering new collaborative studies relevant to high-impact pathogens.

The aim of HIC-VAC's public engagement grants is to fund innovative and creative projects that improve the public's awareness and understanding of controlled human infection studies, build trust in them, and probe risk perceptions. Projects may focus on but are not limited to: (short-) films or podcasts, theatre plays, exhibits or installations, development of information materials (brochures, mobile apps), workshops, and events such as science festivals. HIC-Vac values high-impact projects whether they reach out to a wide target audience or to a specific group of stakeholders.

Public engagement awards are available for projects of up to £15,000 (please give 100% FEC in application, but projects will be awarded at 80% unless to an LMIC Institution – see below), via competitive application to the Network Management Board (NMB). Projects must be completed by May 30th 2021.

Awards are open to all HIC-Vac Network members, but projects must have the support and supervision of a HIC-Vac Investigator (PI). We particularly welcome applications from Early Career Researchers. Activities in/for LMICs and/or with LMIC participation are particularly encouraged, as will methods to engage diverse/underserved communities. If the project is not based in the UK, we strongly encourage the participation of a UK partner in the project.

The public engagement grants will be advertised to members of the network via email and our website, clarifying eligibility and timelines. Applications will be screened for eligibility by the Network Manager, suitable applications will undergo a committee review.

All awardees will be required to submit a final narrative and assessment report at the end of the project.

Awarded projects, with non-confidential abstracts, will be included in Network outcomes and publicity. All awardees must agree to present their work at a HIC-Vac meeting if requested.

Please submit your application form and associated documents by 5pm British Summer Time on the closing date to the Network Manager, Emma Smith, e.smith@imperial.ac.uk. Please see further details below about this award, and on how to apply. Do contact Emma with any further queries.

Details

Funding eligibility

Applicants: Funding is for all HIC-Vac Network members. If the applicant is an associate or affiliate member, they must have the support and supervision of a HIC-Vac Investigator (documented as a letter or email). Members based at academic institutes, governmental organisations, and non-governmental organisations are all eligible.

Network membership is free and you can apply by emailing e.smith@imperial.ac.uk for an application form or downloading one from our website https://www.hic-vac.org/members/become-a-member.

Applications for projects in/for LMIC and/or with LMIC participation are encouraged and will be funded at 100% FEC. To be considered for the LMIC funding level, you must work at an institution in an LMIC country and project funds must be sent and spent there. This list **excludes** institutions that receive core funding from developed countries (including MRC Unit The Gambia at LSHTM, MRC/UVRI & LSHTM Uganda Research Unit, Africa Health Research Institute (AHRI), Oxford University Clinical Research Unit (OUCRU), Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU), KEMRI|Wellcome Trust Research Programme (KWTRP), Malawi-Liverpool-Wellcome Trust Clinical Research Programme (MLW)). A list of LMIC countries can be found here: http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm.

Value of grant: up to £15,000 (at 100% FEC). All projects will be awarded 80% of costs (except LMIC-based applicants who will receive 100%, see above for definition).

Project duration: The project duration can be chosen by the applicant. However, all projects must finish by the 30th of May 2021.

Activities supported: all projects must be within the scope of the HIC-Vac network and its strategic objectives to enable, enhance and extend human infection challenge studies https://www.hic-vac.org/about-us.

Eligible costs include directly incurred costs only. Staff costs (including Investigator time) are ineligible. Travel costs are allowed if justifiable; costs must be reasonable and via economy class only. VAT is allowable. Costs must be in Great British Pounds (GBP). Total costs must not exceed a maximum of £15,000 for the project. HIC-Vac grants follow UKRI and MRC terms and conditions https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/.

Application process
The application form should be completed in full. It is important that deliverables and evaluation metrics are specified in the description of the Proposed Project because at the end you must report progress against these items. A brief CV and publication list is required from the applicant, along with a letter of support from the head of department and a letter of support from a HIC-Vac Investigator if the applicant is not at this level.

Please submit your application as a single PDF – you can use https://www.pdfmerge.com/ or similar to merge all your attachments into one document.

The application form and associated documents must be submitted by email by 5pm BST on the closing date to the Network Manager, Emma Smith, at e.smith@imperial.ac.uk. You will receive acknowledgement of your application within three (3) working days.

Review
All submitted applications that have passed a formal eligibility check by the Network Manager are presented to reviewers from the HIC-Vac Network Management Board and potential external reviewers including the Independent Scientific Advisory Board (ISAB), for competitive assessment. HIC-Vac evaluators review and score applications using a standard template.

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Applications will be assessed on the following criteria:
1) projected reach and impact (10 points)
2) creativity (5 points)
3) methods to maximise diversity and inclusiveness in activities (5 points)
4) clarity of proposal and objectives (5 points)

Evaluators will not review an application where they have a conflict of interest (see below for details on conflicts of interest). Applicants are encouraged to identify any persons on the HIC-Vac NMB with whom there is a conflict of interest.

Following review of all applications, a ranked list will be used to select applications for funding.

Notification of Review Results
All applicants will be informed immediately after funding decisions have been made. Successful candidates will be sent a letter agreement confirming the funds available.

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

Post-award Administration
Imperial College London will issue a simple award letter to the lead applicant. The awardee (institution) will sign a letter agreement confirming the funding, project duration and terms and conditions. Projects can start as soon as the grants are awarded – early start dates are encouraged. All projects must finish by the 30th of May 2021.

Funds must be spent as detailed on the application. Awardees are required to submit narrative and assessment reports at the end of the project. Payment is made in arrears to the awardee's Institute and all invoices must be received within 4 weeks of the project ending or by June 30th 2021 (whichever is first). If you have problems with payments in arrears, please contact Emma e.smith@imperial.ac.uk. Payment will be for actual expenditure up to the value agreed in the original award letter.

HIC-Vac does not require receipts to be submitted but these **must** be kept by the host institution as they may be required for possible future audits. The grantee's host institution must follow their standard procedures for financial accounts.

Any underspend on grants will be retained by HIC-Vac.

All work arising from this grant must acknowledge the funding source as follows:

"This work was supported by HIC-Vac, a GCRF Network in Vaccines Research and Development which was co-funded by the MRC and BBSRC and is part of the EDCTP2 programme supported by the European Union."

Publicity and Data Protection
Successful projects will be listed on the HIC-Vac website and in other publicity material, with a non-confidential abstract outlining the work proposed. Copies of applications will be made available to the HIC-Vac NMB and ISAB who will use information provided for reviewing the proposal and post-award

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administration. HIC-Vac may choose to publish details of awards, awardees, and information about successful projects.

All 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 pump-priming awards may be required to attend and contribute to MRC events within relevant areas at the request of the MRC.

Use of Human Samples or Data

In the case of social science research, HIC-Vac 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. Any personal data must be handled is accordance with The General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018 https://mrc.ukri.org/research/facilities-and-resources-for-researchers/regulatory-support-centre/gdpr-resources/.

For research taking place outside the UK, local national guidelines and international best practice must be followed.

Conflict of Interest

Examples of a conflict of interest include:
- Working closely with the applicant(s), for example as a co-author or PhD Supervisor, or has worked closely in the last 4 years
- Personal/family relationship with the applicant(s)

Useful Resources

UK Government information on ODA strategic objectives:
https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/official-development-assistance-oda--2

List of LMIC countries: http://www.oecd.org/dac/stats/daclist.htm

UKRI terms and conditions: https://www.ukri.org/funding/information-for-award-holders/grant-terms-and-conditions/

Resources for public engagement https://www.publicengagement.ac.uk/resources

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