ANTI-VeC African Anopheles Symbiont Survey

APPLICATION GUIDANCE

This document provides information to applicants for this scheme.

TIMESCALES ARE LISTED BELOW:

- **31st March 2021**: Application deadline
- **30th April 2021**: Application outcome

1. **Summary of ANTI-VeC Call**

ANTI-VeC is a Vector-borne Disease Network set up with GCRF funds awarded to the University of Glasgow, in partnership with Imperial College London. The ANTI-VeC Network focuses on the development of genetic / symbiont vector control strategies and related fields. The Network provides an opportunity to stimulate new lines of research and new collaborations, increase interactions in these emerging fields, share experiences / expertise and expand links between leading researchers in the field.

The discovery of Microsporidia MB in Anopheles arabiensis / gambiae, and that these symbionts can completely block transmission of Plasmodium falciparum\(^1\), provides opportunities for developing novel integrated malaria control approaches. The funding aims to undertake a survey of Microsporidia MB diversity and prevalence in An. gambiae s.l. and An. funestus populations across Africa. For this purpose small grants will be awarded for screening Anopheles colonies and field-collected samples (both larvae and adults) using PCR/qPCR assays for Microsporidia MB, using standardised methodologies. Collections at regular intervals would cover at least two seasons and different larval site ecotypes, with temperature and rainfall to be recorded from collection sites. Microsporidia MB strain diversity patterns will then be determined by genome sequencing at KEMRI-Wellcome in Kenya (the costs of which will be covered separately). Genome analysis training will be available for participants if needed. In addition to the investigation of Microsporidia MB prevalence and diversity, applicants may propose additional experiments investigating the biology of Microsporidia MB.

Areas of potential interest include (but are not limited to):

a) Colonization of lines potentially novel Microsporidia MB strains to confirm vertical transmission and / or other characteristics.

b) Interactions with other symbionts (e.g. Wolbachia) or intestinal microbiome

2. Funding

The ANTI-VeC Network announce a call for applications for projects up to the maximum value of £40,000 each, for up to 12 months duration. Funding has been made available by the Open Philanthropy Project.

Further information on this can be found on our website www.anti-vec.net

3. Eligibility

Funding is available to ANTI-VeC network members. Applicants must apply to become a network member if not already one. Membership is open to all those with an interest in the field and the network is free-of-charge to join via the ANTI-VeC website: https://www.gla.ac.uk/research/az/antivec/join/

Principal Investigators: the application must be led by an Africa-based Principal Investigator with a contract that lasts at least up to the proposed end date of the project.

Early Career Researchers (ECR) are encouraged to apply.

Principal Investigators must be resident in the country in sub-Saharan Africa specified on the application form for the duration of the proposed project and must be based in a recognised higher education institution, or in a ‘not-for profit’ research intensive organisation which can demonstrate compliance with the following:

- Research Capacity and Capability: in-house capacity in terms of staff and infrastructure to support and lead excellent research programmes.
- Governance and Financial Stability: robust assurance around managing and accounting for grant funding, demonstrate good governance and control functions including policies and approaches to control risk and mitigate fraud and corruption.

Early career researchers must be able to demonstrate that they have:

- a track record of excellent research
- the support of their institution
- the resources and facilities to conduct the project

Co-Investigators: these are not required to be Africa-based. Otherwise, all Co-Investigators must satisfy the same criteria (outlined above) as Principal Investigators.

1) UK Co-Investigators

UK-based Early Career Researchers can also be Co-Investigators with the oversight of an eligible UK PI. Early Career Researchers must satisfy the same criteria (outlined above) as Africa-based ECRs, i.e., demonstrating that they have:

- a track record of excellent research
• the support of their institution
• the resources and facilities to conduct the project

2) Non-LMIC international Co-Investigators

Non-LMIC international applicants can be Co-Investigators.

Partners/Collaborators: researchers or others not eligible to be Co-Investigators may be included in proposals as Project Partners or Collaborators. Neither Project Partners nor other Collaborators are eligible to receive funding.

Project Partners or other Collaborators may be based in universities or other institutions, or independent researchers. They may also be potential users of research outcomes, including commercial organisations.

Value of grant: The total amount requested (100% FEC for LMIC) must not exceed £40,000. Non-LMICs are eligible to request the costs in the table below, and will be expected to have matched funding for the remaining costs.

Please note that the awards are cash limited. Therefore, the application budget should make an allowance for future inflationary increases. Awards are not subject to indexation.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Investigators/Organisations</th>
<th>Funding awarded by ANTI-VeC</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>LMIC investigators</strong></td>
<td>100% of the Directly Incurred costs, in addition to a contribution towards Indirect and Estates costs.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>This should be calculated as 20% of the LMIC partner’s Directly Incurred costs.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>UK investigators</strong></td>
<td>80% of FEC.</td>
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<td>UK components should be costed on the basis of full economic cost (FEC).</td>
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<td>If awarded, funding will be provided on the basis of 80% of FEC.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-LMIC international investigators</strong></td>
<td>100% of Directly Incurred costs only. No indirect costs will be provided.</td>
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Eligible Costs

The following costs can be requested:

- Staff costs
- Small equipment items under £2k
- Consumables
- Indirect costs

Ineligible Costs

The following costs cannot be requested:

- PhD fees (including stipends)
- Equipment over £2k (access to qPCR cyclers must already be available)
- Costs incurred by industrial partners

Any questions for clarification about eligibility should be directed to the Network Manager, Michelle Connolly, at: Michelle.Connolly@glasgow.ac.uk

Applicants are encouraged to contact the Network to discuss ideas in advance. The Network Director and Network Manager may also be able to suggest potential collaborators.

4. Application Process

Applicants should complete the African Anopheles Symbiont Survey Application Form available on the ANTI-VeC Network website.

The following information will be required to complete the application form:

1. Project title (maximum 150 words)
2. Summary (maximum 300 words)
3. Proposed Project Start Date
4. Project Duration
5. Investigator details (Name, contact details, relevant experience, and hours per week on project for Principal Investigator and Co-Investigators)
6. Description of the Proposed project (maximum 1000 words)
7. Project Budget
8. Justification of Resources (maximum 300 words). The budget requested must be fully justified. Please note that there may be a challenge process on value for money, which may result in the actual funding offered being less than the amount requested.
9. Project Partners/Collaborators
10. Ethical Concerns
11. Applicants should also submit the following attachments with the full application form:
   - CVs including recent relevant publications for all collaborators (up to 2 sides of A4 per person)
   - Letter of Support from Research Group Leader for applications involving early career researchers (either as Principal Investigator or Co-Investigator)
   - Letters of Support from Project Partners/Collaborators, where appropriate, confirming the availability of the necessary facilities, resources, and infrastructure in a project-specific letter of support (up to 2 sides of A4 per partner)
12. Applicants should identify the following named contacts for all organisations on the application form requesting funds, to assist with:
   - Contract review and award acceptance (per partner)
   - Finance claim for cost reimbursement / Due Diligence checks (per partner)
The closing date for African Anopheles Symbiont Survey applications is:

31st March 2021

The application form and associated documents must be submitted by email in PDF format to:

Michelle Connolly, Network Manager, at: anti-vec-network@glasgow.ac.uk

All applications will be acknowledged within 5 working days.

5. Review Process

All applications received in the funding round will be initially assessed on the fit to aims and scope before evaluation by the ANTI-VeC Network Executive Committee (NEC) and wider Network Management Committee (NMC), as required. Applications which meet the fit to aims and scope will be taken forward for competitive assessment. External reviewers may also be approached for additional expertise. Where there is a conflict of interest with any applicants submitting applications, committee members will not review that particular proposal.

Examples of a conflict of interest include:

- Employed by the same institution as the applicant(s)
- Actively involved in research collaborations with the applicant(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)

6. Assessment Criteria

Members of the Network Management Board will assess applications according to:

- Fit to aims & scope
- Relevant track record of the applicants
- Value for money (total funding requested reflects the scale of the project)
7. Notification of Review Results

Final decision will be made by the Network Management Board by 30th April 2021.

Informal award notifications will be issued to successful applicants by the Network Manager after this date.

Unsuccessful applicants will be informed promptly, and the Network Manager may provide summary feedback if available.

8. Post Award Administration

**Due Diligence**
- University of Glasgow will undertake due diligence (DD) checks on organisations where DD has not been previously carried out, or, where it is not up to date.
- DD template will be issued to the named contacts provided on the application form.
- Payment terms are quarterly in arrears. If LMIC partners require advance payments, please contact the Network Manager promptly.

**Collaboration Agreement**
- University of Glasgow will issue a collaboration agreement confirming the funding awarded and terms and conditions.
- Collaboration agreement will be sent to the investigators and identified contacts at the PI and Co-I organisations for review and acceptance.

**Grant**
- Grants may not start until the collaboration agreement has been fully executed.
- Actual start date to be confirmed to Network Manager at: Michelle.Connolly@glasgow.ac.uk / anti-vec-network@glasgow.ac.uk

**Reporting**
- Partners to claim University of Glasgow quarterly in arrears.
- Narrative progress reports to be submitted by the Principal Investigator half way through and at end date of the project (within 2 months of the end date).
8.1 Reimbursement Guidance

- Evidence of actual expenditure such as receipts and invoices must be kept by the organisation as they may be required for possible future audits.
- The University of Glasgow’s normal policy is to pay based on an invoice, quarterly in arrears, with evidence of actual expenditure. Payment will be based on actual expenditure up to the value agreed in the collaboration agreement.
- Any underspend on grants will be retained by ANTI-VeC.
- Payments will be made in GBP. Therefore, the organisation must have an account which accepts GBP payments. If the bank account does not accept GBP payment, details of a “passthrough bank” known as intermediary bank, must be provided.
- Please note there are bank charges associated with international money transfers.
- Any expense deemed excessive or unreasonable by the ANTI-VeC Team will not be paid.

9. Publicity and Data Protection

Successful projects will be listed on the ANTI-VeC website and in other publicity, with the public summary outlining the work proposed.

10. Contact

If you have any questions regarding the application process, please contact:

Michelle Connolly
ANTI-VeC Network Manager
MRC - University of Glasgow Centre for Virus Research (CVR)
Institute of Infection, Immunity and Inflammation
College of Medical, Veterinary and Life Sciences (MVLS)
University of Glasgow
Henry Wellcome Building
Garscube Campus
464 Bearsden Road
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E: Michelle.Connolly@glasgow.ac.uk / anti-vec-network@glasgow.ac.uk
ANTI-VeC Website: www.anti-vec.net | ANTI-VeC Twitter: @AntiVec