

**THE UCL-OXFORD FUTURE VACCINE
MANUFACTURING RESEARCH HUB**

**FEASIBILITY STUDIES FUNDING
CALL OUTLINE
JUNE 2020**



ABOUT THE FUTURE VACCINE MANUFACTURING RESEARCH HUB (VAX-HUB)

The Future Vaccine Manufacturing Research Hub (Vax-Hub) was officially launched in November 2018. This three-year research programme, which is funded by a grant from the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) and managed by the Engineering and Physical Sciences Research Council (EPSRC), aims to ensure uninterrupted and affordable vaccine supply for LMI countries, while addressing a rapid response to epidemic threats. The Hub brings together key academic institutes (UCL, The Jenner Institute at the University of Oxford, Imperial College London, the University of Leeds and the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine) and several industry partners.

Our vision is to make the UK the global centre for integrated discovery through to bioprocess manufacture of next-generation vaccines:

- Health: Ensure that fewer people die from vaccine-preventable diseases through the timely, affordable supply of vaccine, for both routine and emergency scenarios
- Skills: Increase academic, industrial and policy training through secondments, continuing professional development (CPD), Qualified Person training and dissemination events
- Economy: Increase value to the economy through cost savings achieved through decisional tools and cheaper vaccines
- Pipeline: Increase the number of products entering and succeeding in the development pipeline with development tools
- Policy: Shape UK and international policy through continued leadership in vaccine research, user group interactions and manufacturer and funder engagement

More information about Vax-Hub deliverables and research impact can be found on our [website](#).

FUNDING CALL – FEASIBILITY STUDIES

Members* of the Vax-Hub Users Group are invited to submit applications for funding to support feasibility studies. A feasibility study is a project to test or demonstrate research results (experimental methods, analytical techniques, approach etc.) generated on a Vax-Hub related vaccine technology (viral vectored, VLP and conjugated vaccines). Projects must be related to Vax-Hub themes and could address research questions derived from prior academic study or respond to industry identified needs in the manufacture of vaccines.

Eligibility

Only Vax-Hub members* are eligible to apply for platform funding. Proposals may be submitted independently by Hub members and/or are invited from Hub members working in collaboration with Hub academic partners. Organisations that are not currently members of the Hub but would be interested in joining to be able to access funding opportunities and



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other benefits, are invited to contact Dr Naveraj Gill, UCL Strategic Alliance Director naveraj.gill@ucl.ac.uk

*Applications will be accepted from organisations that are in the process of joining the Hub but awards will be made subject to the completion of the required documentation by 27 July 2020.

The minimum value of an award is £75,000 and the maximum that shall be awarded to any single project is £100,000 including VAT (where applicable). There is no minimum duration for a project but all projects must be completed by 31 March 2021. If your proposed project would benefit from an end date beyond 31 March 2021, please outline the expected advantages and additional time required where indicated in the application form. Please note that an extended duration is not guaranteed and additional funds would not be available to cover any additional time granted.

This call document contains the key information pertaining to the application process including the type of project, scope, ambition and impact that applicants are expected to address in their applications.

Briefing Webinar

We will shortly announce the date of a dedicated webinar about the call. Prospective applicants are strongly encouraged to register for the event as it forms an important opportunity to understand more about the call and what is expected. Invitations to register will be circulated soon.

Key dates

Call opens	June 2020
Online briefing webinar	To be announced
Closing time and date for applications	23:59 on 27 July 2020
Projects must end	31 March 2021

Funding Scheme Name	Value	Funding Available	Duration
The UCL-Oxford Future Vaccine Manufacturing Research Hub Feasibility Study Scheme.	Minimum value £75,000 up to a maximum of £100,000 per project, including VAT (where applicable).	A minimum of six projects will be funded.	Projects must be completed by 31 March 2021 or sooner.



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Scope

Vax-Hub is pleased to offer funding to support feasibility studies. Projects are expected to focus on research and development studies that lie within **preparedness, technology readiness, rapid response activity** or that draw on existing insights to test and validate solutions. Projects could draw on or develop current research, for example, that which was funded by the previously advertised Vax-Hub Interaction Voucher scheme or lay the foundations for more substantive future research. **All projects should have outcomes that primarily benefit LMI countries.** Users are expected to provide industry supervision to the project and provide access to the necessary materials, equipment or data.

Proposals may choose to focus on one or more of the following areas:

- VLP vaccines
- Formulation, thermostability
- Glycoconjugated vaccines
- Viral vectored vaccines
- Health economics
- Policy
- Decisional tools (cost of goods, supply chain management, etc.)
- Regulation

ODA Compliance

To ensure that the projects supported by this funding are ODA compliant, all applicants are required to provide details where requested in the application form in response to the following questions:

1. Which country/ countries on the [DAC list](#) will directly benefit from this proposal and are these countries likely to continue to be ODA eligible for the duration of the research?
2. How is your proposal directly and primarily relevant to the development challenges of these countries?
3. How do you expect that the outcome of your proposed activities will promote the economic development and welfare of a country or countries on the [DAC list](#)?

Due diligence requirements for an awarded research grant with an applicant/ partners(s) in a low or middle income country (LMIC)

In line with UCL's Due Diligence policy for overseas research and in adherence to funder requirements, the UCL Faculty of Engineering undertakes full due diligence checks on all active grants with direct financial transaction to organisations based in LMI countries. Prior to transferring an award of up to £100,000 including VAT (where applicable) to support a feasibility study, UCL will therefore carry out due diligence checks on organisations based in LMICs wishing to receive funds. Where it is intended that the awarded funding will not be



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transferred to an LMI country, it will not be necessary for the due diligence checks to be undertaken. However, in such instances, applicants will be required to demonstrate a strong vision of **the pathway to significant beneficial outcomes and impact for low and middle income countries where indicated in the application form.**

Ethical Approval

Applicants should use the Ethical Information section on the application form to demonstrate to reviewers that they have fully considered any ethical issues concerning the material they intend to use, the nature and choice, current public perceptions and attitudes towards the subject matter or research area. Vax-Hub funds must be used in compliance with EPSRC rules on ethics and we will not fund a feasibility study if we believe that there are ethical concerns that have been overlooked or not appropriately accounted for.

Outputs

Outputs are most likely to be in the form of a report, publication, tools, new products/processes/methods or proof of concept. Data is likely to be an important feature of most projects and we recommend that a **data management plan** is put in place to ensure that data is appropriately curated, stored and made available for future research, where feasible.

Requested Resources

The **budget sheet template** should be used to list and describe the resources that are required to undertake the proposed feasibility study. The justification for these resources should also be made clear in the application form.

Specific Exclusions

We do not expect to support proposals that:

- do not align with the vision and aims of the Vax-Hub;
- are unable to tangibly demonstrate outcomes that primarily benefit LMI countries;
- duplicate the [projects](#) undertaken as part of the Vax-Hub Interaction Voucher Scheme.
- fund associated studentships

Equipment

Funding for major equipment in the UK is not available. Consumables under £10,000 including VAT (where applicable) are allowed. Equipment costs for use in and based in LMIC settings may be requested, however, an **additional application process** will be required in order to ensure ODA compliance. Those wishing to request equipment costs for use in and based in LMIC settings should email vaxhub@ucl.ac.uk to obtain a copy of the required questionnaire.

Confidentiality

All projects that are taken forward will be carried out under the terms of the Hub Collaboration Agreement, in compliance with the clauses around Intellectual Property, Confidentiality and Publication (Sections 7-9).

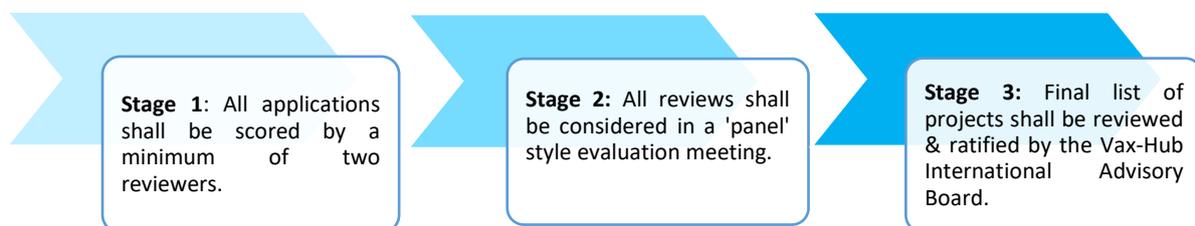
Reporting

Successful applicants will be required to provide updates on progress (if requested) and to comply with mid and end project reporting requirements. Reporting requirements will be provided to successful teams. These shall include commentary on whether aims have been achieved, methods used, data produced, publications or other outputs, other outcomes, impact achieved and planned, problems encountered, and forward plans. **It is a condition of funding that successful applicants must present a webinar about their project for members of the Vax-Hub community.**

Successful teams will also be expected to:

- **Participate in Vax-Hub events, as required.** This may include presentations to the Vax-Hub Users Group or International Advisory Board.
- **Promote the Vax-Hub through Hub and own networks.** The Vax-Hub Project Manager will maintain contact with successful teams in order to receive updates and to ensure that important information and announcements are disseminated widely.

Selection Process



Important note: Vax-Hub reserves the right to reject proposals that are incomplete and that do not meet the requirements highlighted on the checklist before sending them to reviewers. The checklist can be found in the Application Form.

Scoring

In addition to assessing the ethical information, ODA compliance and benefit to LMICs, there are five primary criteria against which all proposals shall be assessed. The key points are shown below. All applications shall be assessed against the same criteria, regardless of the funding amount requested. Reviewers shall assess the size of the request solely in the *Value*

for Money criterion. Proposals shall be scored against each of the five criteria on a scale of 0-3, as follows:

- 0 = sub-criteria not met
- 1 = sub-criteria partially met
- 3 = sub-criteria fully met

Scoring Criteria

Novelty	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describes the problem that is to be investigated, with reference to the evidence base and describes its fit to the aims of the Vax-Hub.</i> • <i>States clearly the aim and objectives of the feasibility study, its level of ambition, novelty, the expected addition to knowledge.</i> • <i>Explains the need for this particular feasibility study and notes why this approach is the most appropriate, and how, if appropriate, it might be scalable.</i>
Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Describes and justifies the research approach/method to be taken, making clear which team members will be responsible for delivery.</i> • <i>States the proposed outputs and expected outcomes from the feasibility study.</i>
Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Justifies why this team is the most appropriate to deliver the feasibility study, with reference to their expertise and track record/s.</i> • <i>The Vax-Hub is committed to equality of opportunity and values diversity and a culture in which inclusion is promoted. Describes how this has been taken into account when planning the feasibility study.</i> • <i>Explains (with a timetable¹ and work package/task structure) how the team will ensure delivery of the feasibility study on time.</i> • <i>Provides an account of the key risks and how these will be managed (including any risks in respect of ethics, data management², and staffing).</i>
Value for money	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Provides a clear justification for all resources requested³.</i> • <i>Explains why the request is appropriate, given the scope and ambition of the feasibility study.</i>

¹ A clear timetable or Gantt chart for the project and the intended progress of the research through the different stages.

² Research data quality and provenance are important. Research data generated must be well-managed by the awardee during the grant period to enable their data to be best exploited for further research.

³ The answers provided in the application form should explain why the resources requested are appropriate, taking into account the nature and complexity of the feasibility study.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> States how the work and team will contribute to the aims of the Hub, making reference to long-term plans for follow-on funding and collaboration.
Impact⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Describes the expected long-term effect of the feasibility study on vaccine manufacturing/research and how this impact could be measured or recognised. Explains the overall approach to industry engagement and/or collaboration, including which people/organisations will be involved and how the team will ensure that this engagement is achieved. Sets out the pathway(s) to impact, including target audience(s) and beneficiaries, how they will be reached and what change is expected.

Submission

- To download an application form and budget sheet template, visit our [platform funding page](#).
- The deadline for submissions is 23:59 on 27 July 2020.
- Submissions must be sent to this email address: vaxhub@ucl.ac.uk

Contact

Please direct enquiries about the call to vaxhub@ucl.ac.uk

⁴ Describes how the potential impacts of the research will be realised.



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