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FAILSAFE Applications Guidance

A principal aim of the FAILSAFE Network is to accelerate research and innovation to combat antifungal resistance (AFR), with 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 seed-corn projects (up to £75k), mid-range projects (£75,000k- £350,000) and larger projects (exceptionally up to £1million) that support innovative R&D mitigating the consequences of AFR with tangible products and solutions. The final decision on the number of smaller/larger projects to be supported will be made on the quality of the proposals received and how closely they are aligned with themes of the programme (see below).

FAILSAFE reserves the right to take a portfolio approach to projects, to ensure as many themes as possible are addressed. All projects will need to consider access and affordability in LMIC settings, how their research will be developed and employed at point of care.

Typically, projects will be expected to last up to 12 months in duration, or exceptionally longer (up to 24 months) with strong justification. Funding awarded will be as follows:

- Seed-corn projects – up to £75,000. UK academic institutions funded at 100% Direct Costs only, other institutions at 100% FEC
- Mid-range and Larger projects – from £75,000k up to £1 Million. UK academic institutions funded at 80% FEC, other institutions at 100% FEC

The purpose of these project funds is to promote new collaborations, in particular involving and/or for the benefit of **LMIC countries**, resulting in the preliminary data necessary to attract further, more substantial, funding leading to long-lasting and beneficial partnerships that address the problem of antifungal resistance. Applications from early career researchers are encouraged.

Membership of the FAILSAFE Network is a prerequisite when applying for these funds. The lead applicant is required to be a member of the network, and it is strongly encouraged that all co-applicants are also members (for free membership apply [here](#)). Applications will be scored according to their 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 no later than 01 December 2024, with funds available from 01 November 2024.

Applications should be made using the application form available on the website (or Expression of Interest form for mid-size and larger projects in the first instance) and, in addition to the points raised above, projects will be prioritised against the following criteria (equally weighted):

- Projects that advance the ability to tackle the global challenge of antifungal resistance (AFR)



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- 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 funding).
- The generation of novel partnerships between research and industry partners worldwide
- The generation of novel LMIC-LMIC and [LMIC-HIC](#) partnerships.
- Projects that involve partnerships between diverse network members, particularly those that include partners from LMICs and industry.
- 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).
- Projects that target exploratory, pre-clinical and clinical transitional bottlenecks.
- Projects that develop tangible products and solutions with the aim of developing new preventative and therapeutic approaches.
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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). For projects over £75,000, additional reporting will be required in line with milestone targets and proposed aligned payments. FAILSAFE 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* *see footnote* – 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 FAILSAFE@exeter.ac.uk

Details

1. Funding eligibility

1.1. Applicants: Lead applicants must be members of the FAILSAFE Network (for free membership apply [here](#)), with co-applicants strongly encouraged to apply. Applications that are LMIC led and/or involve LMIC co-applicants, industry led and/or involve industry co-applicants, Early Career Researchers (ECR) led and/or involve ECR co-applicants are particularly encouraged.

1.2. Value of grant: Project awards will be within one of these three categories:

- Seed-corn funding (up to £75k)
- Mid-range funding (£75,000k - £350,000)



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- Larger project funding (£350,00 - £1million in exceptional circumstances)

Funding will typically cover a maximum 12-month period for the duration of projects, however, exceptionally, we will consider funding larger projects for a longer period (this level of funding 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, for academic institutions based in the UK FAILSAFE will award funding at 100% direct costs only for seed—corn projects (up to £75 k). Mid-range and larger projects will be funded at 80% FEC for academic institutions based in the UK (with the remaining 20% contribution to FEC to be covered by their institution) For all other institutions, including applicants based in industry and [LMIC](#) countries all projects will be funded at 100% fEC (the list of LMIC countries is subject to change by the [OECD](#)).

1.3. LMIC funding: Research must be LMIC-relevant. A list of LMIC countries can be found [here](#); all listed countries are eligible but please note that the list of LMIC countries is subject to change by the [OECD](#).

1.4. Scope/activities supported: All projects must be within the scope of the FAILSAFE Network and its remit (further information on this can be found on our [website](#)). 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**). Total duration of the project must not exceed 12 months (exceptions apply) and all projects must start no later than 01 December 2024, with funds available from 01 November 2024.

1.5. Activities not supported: Research outside the FAILSAFE objectives and remit; research that will not deliver outputs/outcomes that are primarily of benefit to LMICs; research that does not target antifungal resistance; projects from non-members of FAILSAFE; PhD studentships; large equipment purchase (over £5,000); projects without collaboration between two or more institutions;

2. Application process

All successful awards will be subject to the acceptance of our non-negotiable Terms and Conditions* see footnote - 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.

This will be FAILSAFE's first round of project funding. The current application timeline can be found on our web page [here](#). There are two routes for applications:

- 1) For seed-corn funding (up to £75,000) please complete the application form as directed. Seed-corn projects do not need to fill in the Expression of Interest form.
- 2) For mid-size projects (£75,000 - £350,000) and larger projects (£350,000+) only please complete an Expression of Interest (EoI) form first by the deadline on **16 June 2024** and await a response from FAILSAFE prior to full application stage. This will enable FAILSAFE to check eligibility against criteria, request relevant further information, and gauge if the proposed funding is appropriate before the application stage progresses.



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Please adhere to the word limits where stated. Ensure you complete all sections and make clear the importance and impact of your project to tackling antifungal resistance, how the research will deliver outputs/outcomes that will primarily be of benefit to LMICs, how the project aligns to addressing the global AFR challenge 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 requirement to complete the Due Diligence Questionnaire is mandatory.

The application form and supporting documents must be submitted by email by the closing date to the FAILSAFE Admin Team at FAILSAFE@exeter.ac.uk. You will receive acknowledgement of your application within seven working days.

3. Application Review

The current application timeline can be found on our web page [here](#).

All applications received will go to the FAILSAFE Grant Peer Review Panel (GPRP) for competitive assessment. GPRP members will review and score applications using a standard template. Applications will be scored according to their 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, industry based and/or an early career researcher are strongly encouraged in this round of funding) and strategic impact for the Network (20%, including research impact and routes to further funding). A list of GPRP members is available [here](#). GPRP members do not input into discussions about an application where they have a conflict of interest (see below for details on conflicts of interest). GPRP members may co-opt external members if required. Following review of all applications, a ranked list will be used to select applications for funding. Quorum for the review meeting is the GPRP Chair plus 5; the GPRP 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 GPRP members have signed a confidentiality agreement as a requirement of their committee participation.

4. Conflict of Interest

Examples of a conflict of interest include GPRP 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).



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5. Notification of Review Results

Successful projects will be sent award letters confirming the funds available within 3 weeks of the GPRP decision. Funding in this round will be available from **01 November 2024** and all projects must start within 1 month of the proposed start date provided on the application form but no later than **01 December 2024**. To comply with the strict timelines, it is advised that any contractual requirements/issues between partners are discussed prior to grant submission.

Notifications of award will be made no later than **30 September 2024**.

All successful awards will be subject to the acceptance of our non-negotiable Terms and Conditions* see footnote - 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 FAILSAFE Admin Team may pass on specific feedback if available.

6. Post-award Administration

The University of Exeter will issue an award letter contract with the non-negotiable [Terms and Conditions of Award](#) * *see footnote* 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 FAILSAFE Admin Team at FAILSAFE@exeter.ac.uk.

Before a project can start, as well as ensuring the [Terms and Conditions of Award](#)* *see footnote* 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 in 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) – a reporting template will be supplied. These mandatory reports must be submitted to the FAILSAFE Admin Team before the grant funds will be released.

Payment will be made as follows:

- Seed-corn projects: 50% at project initiation (once the actual project start date has been confirmed to us), 30% on approval of the midpoint interim project report, 20% on approval of the end of project report (all reports are mandatory).
- Mid-size and larger projects: A starting amount will be decided based on individual applications. Subsequent payments will be made upon the achievement of stated milestones, as well as approval of the mandatory reports.

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 ** *see footnote*.



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FAILSAFE 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 must be returned to FAILSAFE. Awardees are encouraged to submit their project's results for publication in a peer-reviewed journal, or as a case-study, adhering to open access requirements as set out in the Terms and Conditions of Award.

A non-confidential brief lay summary of the project's outcomes, taken from the final report, will be published on the FAILSAFE website and in other publicity in accordance with our [Privacy Policy](#).

7. Publicising Outputs and Data Protection

Successful projects will be listed on the FAILSAFE 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 funds awarded by the UK Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) as part of the Global AMR Innovation Fund (GAMRIF), through the MRC CMM FAILSAFE project at the University of Exeter, in accordance with the Terms and Conditions of Award.

Copies of applications will be made available to the FAILSAFE [GPRP](#) who will use information provided for reviewing the proposal and post-award administration. GPRP members may co-opt external members if required. FAILSAFE may choose to publish further non-confidential details of awards, awardees, and information about successful projects, in accordance with our Privacy Policy.

FAILSAFE's core funding comes from the DHSC, so to meet the DHSC's obligations for public accountability and the dissemination of information, non-confidential details of awards may also be made available on the DHSC and other publicly available databases, and in reports, documents and mailing lists.

8. Use of Human Samples or Data

FAILSAFE expects all research involving human participants to be undertaken in accordance with UKRI policies and guidance available from <https://www.ukri.org/publications/mrc-guidance-for-applicants/ethics-and-approvals/#section-using-human-samples->. 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.



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In the case of social science research, FAILSAFE 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. The lead applicant is responsible for ensuring that co-applicants adhere to all relevant ethics requirements.

9. Use of Animals

FAILSAFE 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. If the research involves the use of animals (rodents, rabbits, sheep, goats, pigs, cattle xenopus) overseas, rather than in the UK, you should also complete the appropriate additional questions on the use of [species] [overseas' forms](#), and submit it with your application.

The standards and principles of the Animals (Scientific Procedures) Act 1986 must be observed. All FAILSAFE 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. The lead applicant is responsible for ensuring that co-applicants adhere to all relevant ethics requirements.

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



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Research organisations accommodating projects involving the use of dangerous pathogens must comply with appropriate local and national regulations and safeguarding.

12. Useful Resources

- FAILSAFE [documents and guidance](#)
- FAILSAFE [Terms and Conditions of Award](#)
- [List of LMIC countries](#) (all countries listed count as LMIC) ** This list is subject to update by the OECD
- NIHR and UK Government information on [Official Development Assistance \(ODA\) Guidance](#)