

VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

Job Summary

Position: PhD Student (1 post)
Reports to: Project Leader
Work station: Bagamoyo
Apply by: March 07th 2024

Institute overview

Ifakara Health Institute (IHI) is a leading research organization in Africa with a strong track record in developing, testing and validating innovations for health. Driven by a core strategic mandate for research, training and services, the Institute's work now spans a wide spectrum, covering biomedical and ecological sciences, intervention studies, health-systems research and policy translation.

Position Summary

Rift Valley Fever virus (RVFV) is a devastating mosquito-borne pathogen and zoonosis of high-consequence found throughout Africa and parts of the Middle East. As a direct response to lessons learned on the ground during the 2006-2007 East Africa epidemic, the research team based in the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) began the development of a next-generation vaccine candidate using a recently developed reverse genetics system.

This work led to the first rationally designed live-attenuated vaccine candidate for RVFV referred to as "DDVax". Over the past 16 years of pre-clinical development (funded in part by CEPI CfP3i), DDVax has been proven safe and effective in a variety of animal species including multiple rodent species, two healthy adult and pregnant livestock species, and two species of non-human primates. The next step for evaluating the safety and immunogenicity of this candidate vaccine involves conducting Phase I and II trials in an endemic population.

These proposed trials are set to take place within well-established study participant communities near the IHI – Bagamoyo Clinical Trial Facility in Bagamoyo, Tanzania. To explore the feasibility of a vaccine trial and assess the prevalence of RVFV among human, livestock and vectors during the inter-epidemic period, we will employ a comprehensive integrated One Health approach. This entails longitudinal and concurrent sampling of these key populations in areas suitable for study sites to be utilized for Phase I and II clinical trials.

A fully funded PhD studentship commencing in February 2024 is available at our Bagamoyo site. The studentship will be funded through The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI). The studentship will provide the awardee with an opportunity to carry out a PhD project with IHI in collaboration with the UCDAVIS. This work will give access to a high-quality research environment and the supervision by internationally renowned researchers.

Ifakara Branch

Off Mlabani Passage
 P.o. Box 53 Ifakara
 Phone: +255232931572

Dar es Salaam Office

Plot 463, Kiko Avenue, Mikocheni
 P.o. Box 78,373 Dar es Salaam
 Phone: +255222774756

Bagamoyo Branch

Inside District Hospital
 P.o. Box 74 Bagamoyo
 Phone: +255232440065

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Duties and Responsibilities

- She/he will also be responsible for supporting the MSc student working under the same umbrella.
- Supporting, managing, and overseeing the epidemiological and clinical trial studies, aiming at:-
 - (i) Understanding the RVFV prevalence among humans, livestock, and mosquito vectors around the Bagamoyo district where clinical trials will be conducted and,
 - (ii) Evaluating in the phase I & II clinical trials, the safety, immunogenicity, and efficacy of candidate human vaccines against Rift Valley fever disease.

Qualification and Experience

- Holders of Master of Public health, epidemiology, immunology, or microbiology with backgrounds in Medicine (MD).
- More than 3 years clinical research experience, with a strong understanding of vaccine clinical trials in humans.
- She/he is knowledgeable and has skills and ability to work using One Health Approach.
- Not currently enrolled in any other funded PhD programme.
- Excellent communication skills.
- Competent in protocol and proposal development.
- Full time availability to undertake PhD studies from February 2024.
- Publication records on research involving vaccine trials in humans will be an added advantage.

Skills and Competencies

- High motivation for research activities.
- Excellent interpersonal skills and a collaborative management style.
- Capable of building and sustaining relationships with junior and senior professionals.
- Planning and organizing.
- Result oriented.
- Professional attitude to work and clear work ethic.

Remuneration

An attractive and competitive remuneration package will be offered to successful candidates as per IHI salary scales for scientists.

Equal Opportunity

IHI is an equal opportunity employer. We prohibit intentional biases or discrimination and harassment of any kind at the work place and during recruitment. All employment decisions are based solely on job requirements and individual qualifications, and our recruitment process is governed by the labour laws of Tanzania.

Mode of Application

All candidates who meet the above job requirements should send their application letters together with their detailed curriculum vitae (CVs) showing contact addresses including email, telephone/cell phone numbers and copies of academic and professional certificates to the email address below.

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The **deadline** for this application is: **March 07th 2024**. All e-mail application subject lines should read: **PhD Student - RVF DDVaX BAG**.

All applicants **MUST** include in their CVs: A career summary and motivation statement; list of publications and presentations; indicate whether they're currently enrolled in a master's program and provide details (if any); and attach two letters of recommendation for a proposed PhD study.

Human Resources Manager
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