VIVO Biobank Applicant Guidelines

1 – Application Process

Sample feasibility check

Prior to submitting a VIVO Biobank Application Form, check the availability of the type and number of samples required for your study via email (enquiries@VIVOBiobank.org).

Application Form and supporting documents

The VIVO Biobank Application Form can be downloaded from the VIVO Biobank website (www.vivobiobank.org) or provided on request and completed electronically. Please note, there are no application deadlines; applications will be processed as soon as they are received.

Completed application forms must be submitted with the following documents:

- Curriculum Vitae(s)
- Grant Award Letter - Confirming funding for the study, if available
- Grant Award or External Review Feedback, if available
- Documentation of regulatory approval for any animal experiments - If applicable

Please note, it is not acceptable to complete the application form by referring to a pre-existing grant application attached to your application. All boxes on the application form must be completed.

If you are an applicant from outside the UK, you must also provide evidence that your project has local governance and ethics approval in place before applying to access samples from the VIVO Biobank. Please note these documents must be in English.

Completed application forms

Once the application is completed, please send it along with all supporting documents to enquiries@VIVOBiobank.org.

Upon receipt of a VIVO Biobank Application Form, it is initially screened for completeness and relevant supporting documents. Any obvious problems or omissions with the application are notified to the applicant as soon as possible.

2 – Review Process

Review

All applications will be reviewed by the Sample and Data Access Committee (SDAC). Full details of the process and the committee can be accessed here (hyperlink to SDAC page). If further information is required questions will be passed on through the Research Coordinator from the SDAC to the applicant, and in exceptional circumstances the applicant may be asked to attend one of the regular SDAC meetings to answer more technical questions.

If your study has been approved for funding by a national/international grant funding body or organisation and has been reviewed by an external panel of experts then this feedback will be considered alongside your application by the SDAC.

If funding for the project is part of a programme grant, this will not be considered as having been eternally reviewed, unless the reviews are submitted which specifically relate to the project detailed in the application.

Please note, applications which are not currently funded or funded by soft monies, or local charitable funds, and have not been reviewed by external experts, will be sent for external review.

3 – Approval Process Outcome

After completion of the application review process, you will be notified of the outcome which can be one of the following categories:

- Approved
- Provisional Approval subject to satisfactory response to SDAC questions/comments
- Not Approved

VIVO Biobank projects (designated **YY VIVO XX**) will run for a maximum of 5 years. After the initial period, a submission for extension must be submitted to the SDAC for approval. At this point a new VIVO application will need to be submitted and a new VIVO Biobank Project reference issued.

4 – Research Ethics Committee (REC) Approval

If you are a UK based researcher and your project has been approved by the SDAC then it will not require further submission to a REC, if the project fulfils all the following criteria:

- The research is restricted to the prevention, detection, diagnosis, treatment and pathophysiology of cancers of children, teenagers and young adults.
- The application has been reviewed and granted scientific approval by the SDAC.
- The research will only use samples for which written consent has been obtained from patients and/or parents/guardians for storage and use of these samples for research purposes, existing holdings registered with the VIVO Biobank (formerly CCLG Tissue Bank) or legacy sample collections stored for research and deposited in the VIVO Biobank with REC approval.
- No patient identifiable information will be released to researchers.
- The research does not influence individual patient healthcare. If research results in the incidental finding of a result with possible clinical significance the best course of action will be passed to the healthcare professional team in charge of the patient's care, by the SDAC Chair after consultation with the SDAC.

If your project does not fulfil all the above criteria, then you will need to obtain separate Health Research Authority (HRA) REC approval, in order to access samples from the VIVO Biobank.

5 – Sample Release

Once you have been granted SDAC approval for your study a Material Transfer Agreement (MTA) will be issued to you to sign off along with all relevant parties and/or collaborators.

- Upon receipt of the fully signed MTA, the Biobank team will issue a request to the Central Bank (Newcastle Biobank / UK Bio-Centre depending on sample type) and/or to centres to release the samples requested.
- The researcher is responsible for the costs of packaging and transporting the samples.
- Additional services requested will be charged to the researcher.
- Samples will be dispatched by the Central Bank Team and/or by pathology staff in centres, who will contact you directly to arrange the transport of samples.
- Paraffin embedded tissue generally resides within centres. If paraffin embedded tissue is requested, centres may not release the whole block. In this case, unstained sections on slides and/or curls in tubes may be requested for release.

6 – Remaining Samples

At the end of each research project, investigators are required to log any samples and sample derivatives surplus to their requirements. This information is to be sent to the Sample and Data Access Committee who will decide if it should be made available for future research projects, returned to the original centres (paraffin blocks), or if it should be destroyed.

Further studies would require a separate submission to SDAC

7 – Annual Progress and End of Study reports

Annual progress reports for all studies must be completed and provided to the VIVO Biobank on a yearly basis. Failure to submit annual progress reports will disqualify a researcher from further access to samples from the Bank. Upon completion of the study an End of Study report must be completed.

8 – Publication Policy

All researchers who access samples from the VIVO Biobank are expected to publish their results in peer-reviewed scientific/medical journals, including negative results, if possible. Details of publications, posters and presentations arising from approved studies must be listed in annual and end of study reports.

For studies where VIVO samples are used, the VIVO Biobank should be acknowledged in publication as follows:

"Samples and data used in this study were provided by VIVO Biobank funded by Cancer Research UK & Blood Cancer UK (Grant no. CRCPSC-Dec21\100003). Samples were released under VIVO project number YY VIVO XX."

This VIVO project number(s) should be included in every publication, poster, and presentation.

9 – Application Process Summary

1 Search for Suitable Samples

Check if suitable samples are available for your study by contacting the VIVO Biobank team at enquiries@VIVOBiobank.org

2 Complete your Application Form

Complete the VIVO Application Form electronically, referring to the 'VIVO Biobank Applicant Guidelines' document and liaising with your VIVO Biobank contact if you have any questions

3 Submit

Submit your application form and supporting evidence to enquiries@VIVOBiobank.org

4 SDAC Review

Your application will be reviewed by the SDAC and you will be contacted if there are any questions/comments that require clarification

5 Decision

Your VIVO Biobank contact will let you know the outcome of your application within three weeks of submission (unless otherwise specified)

6 Material Transfer Agreement

If your application is successful, a Material Transfer Agreement will be drafted and sent to you and your legal representative for signing

7 Sample Release

Once the MTA is in place, samples will be picked out and a courier will be organised between the sending and receiving site

8 Annual Report / End of Study Report

Annual Reports are filed on a yearly basis throughout the life of the project. An End of Study Report is filed upon completion of the project.