**VALIDATE ECR Career Development Network - Application Template**

The VALIDATE Network aims to accelerate vaccine research and development for three groups of complex intracellular pathogens that cause diseases significant to low and middle-income countries (LMICs): *Mycobacteria, Leishmania spp,* and *Burkholderia pseudomallei.* VALIDATE also aims to facilitate Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and career progression amongst its members.

VALIDATE recognises the challenges faced by post-doctoral and early PI researchers trying to progress their careers. As part of VALIDATE’s aim to encourage and support career progression amongst members, especially Early Career Researchers (ECRs), and to help address inequality in scientific career progression, we have created a two-year long ECR Career Development Network programme for VALIDATE members who identify as female or non-binary.

This ECDN call is for a second cohort, after the success in 2022-2024 of our first ECDN Programme (see our [website](https://www.validate-network.org/career-development-network) for details of this programme).

The ECDN programme will bring together ~20 ECR scientists into an engaged sub-group of VALIDATE, and provide:

* An engaged, connected network of Early Career Researchers, all wanting to develop their careers
* Extra support to accelerate your research career including:
	+ Group mentoring by a senior scientist
	+ Monthly virtual talks and workshops on topics helpful to your career progression (these alternate between an ‘Inspiring Careers’ talk by a senior scientist role model about their career path and their tips/advice to ECRs (giving you a great chance to meet and network with them, and to learn from them), and training courses e.g. leadership, career planning, learning to say no)
	+ Peer-support via accountability groups and programme events
	+ Individual career coaching by a qualified coach
	+ Opportunities to network and form new collaborations with each other

In addition, the ECDN cohort members will be invited to attend the 2024 VALIDATE Annual Meeting on 15-17 July 2024, where we will have a face-to-face ECDN kick-off meeting so the members can all meet each other. Your travel costs for this would be funded by VALIDATE (so please hold these dates in your diary).

**Applicants must:**

1. Be an Associate or (early PI) Investigator member of VALIDATE (please note that Associate members will be prioritized)
2. Be working on research directly related to vaccine development for VALIDATE’s focus pathogens (any aspect of research that will accelerate development of an efficacious vaccine is eligible, including biological, physical and social sciences, and humanities)
3. Identify as female or non-binary

Successful applicants joining the programme will be expected to commit fully to engaging with all programme activities from July 2024 - June 2026, and to engaging with other members of the ECR Career Development Network. We estimate the programme will take a commitment of 1-3 hours per month, for 24 months. *Any members who do not fully participate will be released from the programme.*

All successful applicants will be expected to complete short reports during their two-year programme, for inclusion in Network outcomes and publicity (these may be anonymised and shared with our funders or in VALIDATE publicity).

To apply to join this programme, please submit this application form, along with the requested additional documents, **as a single pdf** by 4pm (UK time) on the closing date to our Network Management Team at VALIDATE@ndm.ox.ac.uk. Do address any queries about your application to the VALIDATE team at the same address.

**What our 2022-2024 ECDN Cohort had to say about the ECDN Programme:**

* + “ECDN has been amazing for career development… I already feel that my personal development and career progression have been positively impacted by this program and I can see future collaborations and possible job opportunities developing from this network.”
	+ “The ECDN has provided me with several opportunities to attend workshops which focusses on my professional development (time management, grant writing and communication workshops). The life coaching sessions have helped me to implement time management and priority strategy. As an active member I make use of mentoring sessions and group meetings to foster relationships with other ECRs focussed on vaccine development. The ECDN also provided me with an opportunity to attend the CTVD meeting [which] was a great opportunity to introduce myself to other vaccine researchers.”
* “Being part of the ECDN benefited me in terms of networking and confidence in my abilities. Coming from a laboratory far from the global north, in a country with a significant technological backwardness and little English language education, I see my inclusion in this program as a great opportunity to connect.”
	+ “I have really enjoyed being part of the ECDN – I feel like firstly it has given me a huge confidence boost – especially after having maternity leave and COVID, there were times where I felt I wasn’t making much progress but to be part of the network validates that I have something to offer to the field.”
	+ “I learned a lot about how to better teach my students by broadening the perspective of our relationship, such as how to guide them in a positive way and strike a balance between being efficient and emphatic at the same time.”
	+ “[ECDN] helped me in connecting with researchers working in my field… Knowledge sharing, troubleshooting and possible future collaboration are some of the other benefits of ECDN.”

**Application Form**

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| **1. Applicant Details**  |
| Name |  |
| Job title |  |
| Organisation (that your job is held at) |  |
| Country |  |
| Email |  |
| Telephone |  |
| Nationality |  |
| Please confirm your VALIDATE Network membership: | VALIDATE Associate [ ] Early PI VALIDATE Investigator [ ]   |
| For this call applicants must identify as female or non-binary. Please confirm you identify your gender as: | Female [ ] Non-binary [ ]   |

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| **2. Career** - please outline your career to date and your career aspirations (max 1000 words)  |
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| **3. Opportunity** – please describe why you would like to join this programme and how you feel it will benefit your career (max 1000 words) |
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| **4. What are the main things that you believe are holding you back in your career?**  |
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| **5. What training opportunities (including workshop topics) would you like included in the programme?**  |
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| **6. As part of the programme, you will be invited to join the VALIDATE 2024 Annual Meeting** on 15-17 July 2024, where we will have a face-to-face ECDN kick-off meeting so the members can all meet each other. Your travel costs for this would be funded by VALIDATE. Please confirm whether you would plan to join the Annual Meeting in-person: |
| I would be interested in attending the VALIDATE 2024 Annual Meeting in-person [ ] I would be interested in attending the VALIDATE 2024 Annual Meeting virtually [ ] I am not interested in attending the VALIDATE 2024 Annual Meeting & ECDN kick-off meeting [ ] I cannot attend the VALIDATE 2024 Annual Meeting/ECDN kick-off meeting due to other commitments [ ]  |

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| **7. Data Protection**Programme participants will be listed on the VALIDATE website, and will be put in contact with each other – please confirm your consent for us to share your name on our website, and for us to share your email address with the other programme participants |
| *Please tick all that apply:*I am happy for VALIDATE to list my name on the VALIDATE website ECDN page [ ] I am happy for VALIDATE to share my email address with the other programme participants [ ] I am NOT happy for my name/ email address to be shared in this way [ ]  |

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| **8. Required additional documents** – please include the following with your application: |
| CV (2 page) and publications list (1 page) [ ] Letter of Support from your current Research Group Leader / line manager [ ]  |

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| **9. Signature** – please sign and date this form before submission |
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