

## Frequently asked questions (Mentee)

### 1. What is the BioSaarthi program and its salient features?

BioSaarthi is an initiative of BIRAC designed to provide global expert mentorship and strategic guidance to biotech startups and faculty entrepreneurs across India. The program is overseen by the Make in India PMU at BIRAC of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). Under this initiative, each mentee company or entrepreneur will be paired with 1–2 expert mentors to achieve pre-defined outcomes within a 6-month period. Experienced executive mentors will guide the mentee company towards achieving these goals. Virtual meetings, facilitated by a program administrator, will ensure consistent engagement between the mentor and the mentee.

### 2. What will be the eligibility criteria for a mentee?

Any biotech-based Startup/SME at proof-of-concept (PoC) stage, i.e. TRL 3 or above and BRIC-affiliated faculty entrepreneurs are eligible to apply.

### 3. I have a partner in my company, can he also join for the virtual meetings with the mentor?

From the mentee side, the meetings can be attended by the management team members but each meeting must be attended by the founder (and/or a cofounder).

### 4. My startup is not incubated at any BRIC institute campus, am I still eligible to apply?

Yes, interested biotech startup at PoC stage or later is eligible to apply.

### 5. I am a faculty/scientist/research scholar/PG student/ undergraduate student with an innovation idea, can I apply?

No, ideation stage startups are not eligible to apply.

### 6. Will I receive any financial assistance to physically meet my mentor?

There will be no financial assistance provided to the mentee and the mentor under the program. However, there will be a chance for the successful mentors to visit India during Global Bio-India, BRIC conclave, etc. Return ticket would be provided from their city to a city in India where the mentee is located.

### 7. Can I give preference for a specific mentor?

No, the mentor-mentee match will be curated by the program administration based on the characteristic criteria provided by the mentor, the startup stage, their domain and the projected 6 months goals of the mentee.

### 8. If I apply, do I need to give royalty/equity to the mentor at any stage of the program?

No, a mentor will voluntarily guide a mentee. The mentee is not required to give any equity/royalty to the mentor. However, the mentee company may choose to engage the mentor(s) directly under a consulting or other contract if more time and effort

than the one meeting a month is deemed useful. The mentee company should advise the BioSaarthi administrative contact prior to any such planned change in arrangement. BioSaarthi can also provide templates and guidance for such consulting, advisory or board engagements if so desired by the mentee company.

**9. What age of startup is considered eligible to apply?**

PoC and above stages of Startups are eligible to apply for the BioSaarthi program.

**10. How do I apply for the program?**

Applications will be invited for 6-monthly cohorts through the BIRAC website, BioSaarthi and other web links.

**11. What will be the evaluation criteria for selection of a mentee?**

The selection of a mentee company will be based on the following criteria:

- a) Innovation: Novelty and uniqueness of the idea or technology
- b) Team Strength: Expertise, experience, and capability of the founding team
- c) Commercial Potential: Market viability and business feasibility
- d) Scalability: Potential for growth and expansion.
- e) Program Fit: Alignment with the objectives and structure of the mentoring program.

Information would be deduced from the submitted information by the applicant mentee.

**12. Is the information shared by me with the program admin or the mentor kept confidential?**

All mentors have signed an agreement to keep all mentee proprietary information confidential. However, suppose the mentee wishes to disclose specific proprietary information and protect that disclosure. In that case, the mentee company may request the mentors to sign an additional non-disclosure agreement between the mentee company and the mentor.

**13. Can I change my mentor?**

Based on a mutual agreement with the mentor, a mentee can request a change of mentor after the first meeting. This will be allowed only once during the program.

**14. Can more than one mentor guide me?**

One mentee will be guided by one to two mentors.

**15. What happens if my company fails to meet the outcomes?**

The goals/outcomes are defined by the mentee before the beginning of the program to allow the mentee to lead the discussion in a structured manner. It is anticipated that mentee companies will make progress towards their goals and as part of program feedback at the end of 6 months, the mentee and mentor can declare the reason for not being able to achieve the desired goals.

**16. I am a mentee who have already achieved the projected outcomes, do I have the option to exit the program before the 6 months window?**

A mentee is free to leave the program anytime. However, it will be advisable to upgrade the goals/ outcomes with the mentor's guidance and achieve the most in the given time frame.

**17. Being a mentee in the BioSaarthi program, am I entitled for any funding support from the government?**

No, the BioSaarthi program does not provide any direct funding support.

**18. As a mentee in the BioSaarthi program, how can I leverage the BIRAC and BRIC ecosystems?**

As a selected mentee, you can take advantage of the following opportunities:

- BRIC institution support: Mentees can connect with a scientist\* from a BRIC institution (<https://www.bric.nic.in/people-scientific-ibric/>).
- SAHAJ portal: Mentees can access the facilities listed on the SAHAJ portal (<https://dbtepromis.nic.in/frminstrumentusability.aspx>).
- BIRAC's Facilities Network: Mentees can access equipment, infrastructure and incubation facilities# established by BIRAC in the country ([https://www.birac.nic.in/birac\\_facility\\_network\\_e\\_portal.php](https://www.birac.nic.in/birac_facility_network_e_portal.php)).

*\*BRIC scientist engagement would be voluntary, on mutual convenience and no fee basis.*

*#Institutional charges applicable.*

**19. What are my primary responsibilities as a mentee?**

As a mentee, you are expected to attend all the meetings and issue meeting minutes/action items at the end of each meeting as a follow-up to the mentors.

**20. What will be my terms of engagement with the mentor post the mentorship program? Are there any restrictions/obligations?**

There are no restrictions on terms of engagement post the program.

**21. If I achieve my milestones before the 6 months window, could I add further any relevant bottleneck that I need assistance with?**

Yes, the mentee, with the guidance of the mentor, can choose to change or upgrade their milestones.