

## Frequently asked questions (Mentor)

### 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 criteria for the mentors?

Global diaspora from overseas with proven success and experience in relevant areas can volunteer to participate. Additionally, a mentor should be able to commit 60 – 90 minutes for a monthly meeting with the mentee company over a period of 6 months (min of 6 meetings with mentee).

### 3. What incentives will be offered to the mentors?

The BioSaarthi program requires voluntary participation of the mentor. To acknowledge the contribution, mentors shall be felicitated with a certificate to recognize their affiliation with this prestigious BioSaarthi program. Networking opportunities among mentors may be organized once a year.

### 4. What will be the duration of the program?

Each cohort will be of 6 months duration.

### 5. What kind of startups will be provided mentorship?

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. Mentees must also have a minimum financial runway of 9 months.

### 6. What will be the criteria for matching a specific mentor with a mentee?

A program administrator shall facilitate the engagement of a mentor with the mentee. The match will be based on the specific expertise of the mentors and the project requirements and goals given by the mentee at the time of enrollment.

### 7. Can mentors choose their mentee?

Normally, the mentor-mentee match will be created by the program administration but special request can be considered in certain circumstances.

### 8. Who will provide administrative support to the program?

The program will be hosted by DBT-BIRAC. BRIC institutions can extend project specific technical support if needed on request basis as per their institutional norms.

**9. Will the mentor have an option to invest in the mentee's company?**

During the six-month BioSaarthi program, the mentor-mentee engagement will exclude any equity-based or financial transactions or investment decisions. However, after the program concludes, the mentor and the mentee shall be free to enter into any mutual agreement. Any changes in the arrangement if mutually desired before completion of the 6 months program, should be communicated to administrator contact and must be approved.

**10. I am a mentor in the BioSaarthi program, am I entitled for any advisory shares in my mentee's company?**

No, this is a volunteering activity and does not entitle the mentor for any advisory shares in the mentees company.

**11. What happens if the company fails to meet its projected outcomes?**

Failure to meet the projected outcomes will not affect any party. 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.

**12. Is there a system setup to provide feedback about the company?**

Yes, a feedback form will be filled by the mentor and the mentee after each meeting. At 3 months point, the feedback note will be sent to the mentors and the mentee.

**13. What will be the frequency of the mentor-mentee meetings?**

There will be 6 meetings of mentor-mentee scheduled over 6 months in this program.

**14. What happens if a mentor or a mentee misses a scheduled meeting?**

If a mentor/ mentee misses a meeting, an immediate follow-up will be done by the program admin to reschedule it. If two meetings are knowingly missed in a row, the missing mentor or mentee will be removed from the program.

**15. How do I volunteer as a mentor in the Bio-Saarthi program?**

A mentor can directly write to the program admin via the provided email ID on website (<https://biosaarthi.org/>) to express their interest in participation. The mentor may submit a brief profile, their availability, area of expertise along with other relevant details.

**16. If our mentor-mentee cohort do not resonate well, can I change my mentee?**

Yes, a mentor or a mentee can mutually request a change after the first meeting, only once during the program.

**17. At a given time, how many mentees can I advise?**

In a given 6-month period, a mentor can advise not more than two mentees.

**18. How many mentors will be advising a single company?**

One to two mentors will be advising a single company.

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

As a mentor, you are expected to attend all the meetings and guide the mentee to achieve their 6-month target goals or outcomes.

**20. How will my contribution to the program be accessed?**

The program is based on voluntary participation and regular 360-degree feedback from the mentee and the mentor shall be obtained. However, to recognize the guidance, the achievements of the mentee company shall be used as the yardstick by a mentor. Additionally, high-performing startups may be featured in appropriate business and social platforms.