



## **BioSaarthi - Global mentoring of Biotech Startups**

Navigation of biotech Startups for accelerated growth through international expert mentorship and strategic guidance

### **Program Guidelines**

**Version 1.0: August 2025**



**Biotechnology Industry Research and Assistance Council  
Central Public Sector Enterprise (CPSE)  
Department of Biotechnology (DBT)  
Ministry of Science and Technology,  
Government of India**

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## 1. About:

BioSaarthi is a BIRAC initiative designed to provide biotech startups and faculty entrepreneurs access to global expert mentorship and strategic guidance. The program is overseen by the Make in India PMU, BIRAC, setup by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT). Through this program, selected mentees will receive structured, one-on-one virtual mentorship from experienced executive mentors with extensive international experience in product development and commercialization.

### 1.1 Purpose of the initiative

BioSaarthi program is positioned to empower BIRAC's startup ecosystem with international expertise in novel product development. The Indian Biotech ecosystem has been growing rapidly, with India's BioEconomy reaching USD 165.7 billion in 2024. In alignment with the Government of India's vision for Viksit Bharat 2047, India's BioE3 policy (Biotechnology for Economy, Environment and Employment) has been introduced to provide advanced infrastructure, policy support, and fiscal incentives. Building on this momentum, the BioSaarthi program is aimed at enabling startups and innovators to receive high-quality mentorship from global experts, equipping them with the strategic insights needed to scale their technologies and enhance India's position in the global biotechnology landscape.

### 1.2 Support and Resources

BioSaarthi affiliates can harness the institutional strength of the Biotechnology Research and Innovation Council (BRIC) institutes of DBT. The BioSaarthi mentees can choose to work with a BRIC institute scientist whose expertise can help them advance their innovation. The engagement of the BRIC institute scientist will be voluntary, on a mutual convenience and no fee basis. The BioSaarthi admin team can facilitate the interaction between the Mentee and the scientist. The mentees can access DBT-SAHAJ infrastructure and BIRAC's facilities network by paying the applicable institutional charges. ABLE, a non-profit biotech industry association, supports the BioSaarthi initiative. Other stakeholders and enablers from India and overseas may also join.

### 1.3 Expected outcomes

BioSaarthi mentees will receive personalized mentorship from international experts in the field. These senior professional experts have volunteered to share their invaluable knowledge and product development experience. BioSaarthi mentors would likely bring along their global networks and deep insights from mature biotech ecosystems, which can be harnessed to support India's biotech ecosystem.

BioSaarthi initiative would cultivate a vibrant, cross-border community of biotech professionals. This would also provide a channel for the Indian diaspora to integrate with the ecosystem. This collaborative network will foster knowledge exchange, capacity building, and business development. Over time, BioSaarthi is expected to not

only contribute to India's biotech ecosystem but also contribute to the global biotechnology sector through cutting-edge innovation, enhanced talent development, and increased economic impact. In the future, the program may evolve to enable reciprocal mentorship sought by international mentees to benefit from India's ability of affordable and cost-effective innovation, which is a matter of global interest.

## 2. Program structure

The BioSaarthi program will offer a 6-month mentorship opportunity. The program will have three components.

### 2.1 Onboarding of Mentees and Mentors

**Mentees:** A call for applications will be announced to invite mentees using the BIRAC website, BioSaarthi and other web links. Applicants are required to provide details about their technology, innovation, business, and specify measurable and clearly defined goals for which they seek mentorship.

An evaluation committee of experts having representatives from the BioSaarthi mentor pool, BRIC, BIRAC's program division and others, will assess the submitted information in applications for the following criteria:

- a) Innovation and IP status
- b) Team Strength
- c) Commercial Potential
- d) Scalability
- e) Program Fit

Based on the recommendations of the evaluation committee, the Mentees will be shortlisted into two categories "Best-in-Class" or "First-in-Class" innovations, and the program division will do the initial match-making with prospective mentors. Each mentee will be matched with 1-2 mentor(s) to offer complementary perspectives and holistic guidance. A one-page profile submitted by the selected mentees (as per template, Annexure) will be circulated to matched mentors for review. Once the mentor-mentee match is finalized, the BioSaarthi mentees will move to the engagement phase.

**Mentors:** Mentors are onboarded through nomination and by invitation. Interested professionals may express their interest to join via the BioSaarthi website (<https://biosaarthi.org/>) or through email ([connect@biosaarthi.org](mailto:connect@biosaarthi.org)). Existing mentors are also encouraged to nominate peers.

The BioSaarthi team will review prospective mentor profiles for relevant experience and career stage. Senior executives preferably with 10+ years of experience in product development and commercialization shall be shortlisted for the program. Following an orientation, mentors whose expertise, time commitment, and interests align with the

objectives of the BioSaarthi program will be onboarded. All mentors will sign an undertaking for their commitment for the program (Annexures).

## 2.2 Engagement

During the 6-month engagement period, the BioSaarthi admin team will coordinate monthly virtual meetings between mentors and mentees. A minimum of one meeting per month is expected for each mentor-mentee group. After the initial meeting, if either party wishes to request a change in pairing, a one-time reassignment may be made upon mutual agreement. Such a change is allowed only once.

To ensure effective mentorship:

- A brief feedback form will be shared with both mentors and mentees after each meeting
- If a mentor or mentee misses a scheduled meeting, the admin team can promptly follow up and reschedule
- Repeated absences (more than one consecutive missed meeting) can result in removal from the program

## 2.3 Review and closure

The BioSaarthi team will collect final feedback from participants and assess the impact at the cohort level. Findings and outcomes will be shared with key stakeholders. At the end of the six-month period, mentors and mentees may independently decide whether to continue their association.

# 3. Eligibility criteria

## 3.1 Mentees

The BioSaarthi program is open to India's biotech startups/SMEs and to BRIC-affiliated faculty entrepreneurs. The following eligibility conditions apply:

Mandatory Requirements:

- Startups/SMEs must have 51% or more Indian ownership.
- Startups must be at the proof-of-concept (PoC) stage i.e. TRL 3 or more.
- Faculty entrepreneurs from only BRIC institutes would be allowed initially\*.
- Applicants must demonstrate availability of a minimum financial runway of nine months.

It is desirous for the applicant to have:

- Granted patent(s) or a relevant publication supporting the innovation.
- Minimum funding raised: ₹3.5 Cr total, including at least ₹2 Cr from private sources.

- Initial signs of commercial traction.
- Startups can be affiliated with a BRIC institute or any other recognized incubator/institute.

*\*This program can be expanded to other institutions later based on the periodic review and stakeholders feedback.*

### **3.2 Mentors**

BioSaarthi mentors are senior executives/CXOs with demonstrated international industry experience in product development, pre-clinical, clinical development and commercialization. The area of expertise may represent Cell and Gene Therapy, Oncology, Rare diseases, Metabolic disorders, Autoimmune disorder, Vaccines, Antibody, Synthetic Biology, AI in Biotech, CMC, Genomics, Fermentation, Bioprocesses, Diagnostics, Medtech, Fund-raising, IP, Regulations, etc. Mentors are invited to join the program on a nomination or invitation-only basis.

## **4. Roles and Responsibilities**

### **4.1 Mentees**

BioSaarthi mentees are expected to actively participate in the mentorship process and fulfill the following responsibilities:

- Allocate at least one hour each month for mentor meetings.
- Where applicable, attend meetings with top management team members.
- Join meetings on time. Under unavoidable circumstances requiring any changes in schedule, inform both the mentor(s) and the BioSaarthi admin team in advance.
- Share a clear agenda with the mentor(s) ahead of each meeting.
- Circulate action items after each meeting and provide detailed follow-up in the subsequent session.
- Provide timely feedback when requested.
- In case, mentee and mentor(s) mutually decide to change the nature of this non-pecuniary relationship during the engagement period of BioSaarthi, the admin team must be informed.

### **4.2 Mentors**

BioSaarthi mentors are expected to provide consistent guidance and uphold the following responsibilities:

- Allocate at least one hour each month for mentorship meetings.
- Join meetings punctually. Under unavoidable circumstances requiring any changes in schedule, inform the mentee and the BioSaarthi admin team in advance.

- c) Monitor progress toward the mentee's stated goals, offering strategic guidance while respecting that final decisions rest with the mentee.
- d) Provide timely feedback when requested.
- e) In case, mentor and mentee(s) mutually decide to change the nature of this non-pecuniary relationship during the engagement period of BioSaarthi, the admin team must be informed.

## 5. Correspondence

- For any queries, please contact at [connect@biosaarthi.org](mailto:connect@biosaarthi.org) .
- For FAQs and additional information, visit the official website:  
<https://biosaarthi.org/>
- All official communication will be sent to the email address provided by the mentee in the application form. BioSaarthi organizers shall not be responsible for any communication failure due to incorrect or inactive email addresses.

## 6. Acknowledgement

BioSaarthi affiliates are encouraged to acknowledge the BioSaarthi platform where relevant/ as appropriate.

## 7. Annexures

## **Undertaking template for Mentees**

### **Letter head of Mentee Startup**

**Date:**

### **WHOMSOEVER IT MAY CONCERN**

I, [Full Name of Mentee], [Position/Role], [name of the company] (hereinafter to be referred to as the “Company”) hereby provide this Undertaking in regard to my commitment to the guidance and mentorship process outlined in the documents related to BioSaarthi program.

- Commitment to Attend Meetings:** I hereby undertake to attend all scheduled meetings, discussions, and sessions as part of the mentorship program, including any rescheduled meetings due to unforeseen circumstances. These meetings are critical for the development and success of the mentorship process, and I agree to prioritize my participation in them.
- Time Dedication for Sessions:** I undertake to allocate sufficient and uninterrupted time for all mentorship sessions and activities, as mutually agreed upon between me and my mentor(s), [Mentor's Full Name/Organization]. I understand that these sessions may involve discussions, activities, feedback, and other forms of guidance, and I commit to giving them due attention and effort.
- Active Engagement:** I acknowledge the importance of actively engaging and participating in the sessions. This includes, but is not limited to, preparing for each meeting, asking relevant questions, providing honest feedback, and adhering to the agreed-upon timelines for tasks or projects.
- Adherence to Program Schedule:** I agree to abide by the established schedule and timelines for the program and notify [Mentor's Name/Organization] promptly in case of any unavoidable conflicts that may prevent my participation in any session. I understand that consistent attendance and timely participation are essential for the effective progression of the mentorship.
- Acknowledgement of Responsibilities:** I understand that failure to attend meetings or dedicate the necessary time to the sessions may affect the quality of the mentorship process, and I acknowledge my responsibility to make the necessary time and effort to

benefit from this opportunity. This undertaking is entered into voluntarily, and I assure my commitment to fulfilling the terms mentioned above throughout the duration of the mentorship program.

6. **Acknowledgement of Team Involvement:** I understand that the program encourages the involvement of the key management team or co-founders of the company, and I will make efforts to include them in mentorship sessions and relevant activities.
7. **Acknowledgement of BIRAC's Support:** The company hereby acknowledges and express its sincere gratitude for the invaluable support and guidance provided by the BIRAC. The company recognizes that BIRAC has facilitated an opportunity to provide its expertise to the company and connects with the experts from eminent organizations, fostering an environment for growth, Knowledge exchange and professional development under BioSaarthi program. The Company agrees to acknowledge the support of BIRAC in any form of its promotion, marketing or publication related to its business, including but not limited to websites, social media platforms, or other public communications. Further, for the purpose of acknowledgement of BIRAC assistance, the HD logo of BIRAC can be downloaded from the official website of BIRAC and same can be used after its written approval.

<b>For Company</b>	
Signatures: Name: Designation: Director Address:	Signatures: Name: Designation: Director Address:
<b>Company Common Seal</b>	

## **Undertaking template for Mentors**

### **UNDERTAKING FOR NON-DISCLOSURE**

Whereas the Biotechnology Industry Research Assistance Council (“BIRAC”), a Section 8 not-for-profit, Schedule B, Public Sector Enterprise, set up by the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, having its office at 5<sup>th</sup> Floor, NSIC Business Park, NSIC Bhawan, Okhla Industrial Estate, New Delhi – 110020 has launched a scheme called the BioSaarthi Program (hereafter called ‘Scheme’) under which BIRAC has invited the Expert to provide an overall business and product for a period of time to specific mentees selected from the Indian Biotech/Life Science companies and entrepreneurs who have applied to this Scheme of BIRAC.

**WHEREAS** I, [NAME] -, with address at \_\_\_\_\_ (hereinafter referred to as “Expert/ Mentor”) the Expert, am desirous of offering my services on a voluntary, pro bono to help applicants/mentees in the Scheme progress their projects towards commercial success;

#### **1) Definition :**

##### **a) Confidential Information**

“Confidential Information” means all information (whether in oral, written or electronic form) relating to the minutia of research and development proposals, other proposals/ applications, presentations, Intellectual Property stated in the concerned proposals, due diligence reports, in-house analysis reports and Freedom to operate reports, information on business and finances of the applicant organisations, proposed technology or intended inventions, proposed business plan/ title/ objectives, budgets and strategies, minutes of the meeting(s) or other agnate materials including any notes or summaries derived from those materials of the Disclosing Party and confidential information received by the Disclosing Party from applicants, but excludes any information that:

- was lawfully in the possession of the Recipient before receiving it from the Disclosing Party.
- is provided in good faith to the Recipient by a third party without breaching any rights of the Disclosing Party or any other party.
- is or becomes generally available through public domain.
- is independently developed by the Recipient without use of the disclosed Confidential Information.
- is required by public authority, by law or decree.

**I, the expert/mentor agree to abide by the following code of conduct:-**

1. Keeping confidentiality of the Confidential Information of the disclosing party is important to commercial success of the applicants and I understand that disclosure of the Confidential Information or use of such information for mentor's or another parties personal gain is not acceptable behaviour under the nurturing role I will play as advisor or mentor.
2. I shall take reasonable measures to protect the secrecy of and avoid disclosure and unauthorized use of the Confidential Information of the disclosing party including discussion of the Confidential Information in any public forum which includes formal and informal discussion/lectures/publications/any other funding committee.
3. I shall not disclose any confidential information unless and until such information is made publicly available by the Mentee itself.
4. I agree that upon the completion of the tenure/purpose of the engagement, whichever is earlier, I shall return or destroy all materials containing Confidential information, including any copies thereof, within 30 days.
5. I will immediately report specific conflict of interest that is discovered or that emerges during the mentorship period to the administrator of the BioSaarthi program ([connect@biosaarthi.org](mailto:connect@biosaarthi.org)) and to the applicant/ mentee at the earliest possible instance of such potential conflict of interest.
6. If the mentor and the assigned applicant/mentee wish to change this voluntary and non-pecuniary relationship enabled in the BioSaarthi program Scheme with exchange of investment or equity or other remuneration, the mentor shall first inform the administrator at [connect@biosaarthi.org](mailto:connect@biosaarthi.org) before taking the next step to change the mentor/mentee relationship.

I agree to honour the above code of conduct and to conduct myself with professional integrity with respect for the applicants'/mentees confidential information, their efforts and goals:

**Signed by:**

**Name:**

**Date:**

## Mentee Profile Template

### Mentee/Startup Name

City, Country

### 1. Company Information

- Company Name:
- Incorporation Year:
- Website:
- Company Stage (Idea / PoC / Prototype / Early Market / Scale-up):
- Sector Focus (e.g., MedTech, AgriBio, Bioinformatics, etc.):
- Brief Description (max 3 lines):  
*A short description of what the startup does and the problem it solves.*

### 2. Founder/Team Information

- **Founder(s):**
  - Name:
  - Role (e.g., CEO, CSO):
  - Educational Background:
  - Previous Experience (if relevant):
- **Team Size:**

### 3. Innovation & IP

- **Core Technology / Innovation:**  
*Brief explanation of the core solution, platform, or product.*
- **IP Status:**  
Filed / Granted Patents (if any):

### 3. Milestones Achieved

*Include most relevant progress indicators or achievements justifying claimed TRL.*

#### Indicators:

- ....
- ....
- ...

### 5. Primary Mentorship Need(s):

## Mentor profile template

### Mentor Name City, Country

**Background & Expertise:** PhD in Molecular Biology with 20+ years in drug discovery and diagnostics. Former CSO at XYZ Biotech with extensive experience in early-stage innovation and commercialization.

Profile Photo

**Core Domains of Expertise:** Diagnostics

**Areas of Interest (Thematic Focus):**

- Oncology, small molecules, and autoimmune disorders
- IP strategy for early-stage startups
- Scale-up and commercialization of cell therapy products

**Mentorship Stage Preference:**

- Ideation to Late-stage



### Mentee application form

## BioSaarthi - Mentee Application Form

Welcome to the BioSaarthi – Global Mentoring Program for Biotech Startups! This program is a BIRAC initiative designed to support biotech entrepreneurs by connecting them with top international executives from the industry who have experience in product development. BioSaarthi pool of mentors consists of selected volunteers who are willing to contribute to India's biotech growth story.

Please fill out this application form carefully with accurate details, as the details provided by you will be used for selection. Also, the given information will help us understand your startup and match you with the right mentor(s). Each mentee shall be connected with 1-2 mentors. Selected mentees will receive structured online mentorship for six months. We look forward to supporting your journey!

**\* Indicates essential field**

1. Applicant type\*:

- a. Startup
- b. Faculty entrepreneur

**A. Startup Information:**

2. Startup Name\*:

3. Year of incorporation\*:

4. Contact details:

a. Founder Name(s) and Designation\*:

Contact Email\*:

Phone\*:

b. Co-founder Name and Designation:

Contact Email:

Phone:

5. Company website\*:

6. LinkedIn URL:

7. Registered Address\*: .....city, state

8. Name and address of the affiliated incubation centre, if any:

9. Upload the latest CVs of Founder & Co-founder(s) with qualifications and experience (1-3 pages each, PDF format only) \*:

10. Team members and their roles, experience (upto 5)\*:

**A. Faculty Entrepreneur Information:**

1. Name\*:

2. Email\*:

3. Phone\*:

4. Departmental/institutional website:
5. Name of the affiliated BRIC institution\*:
6. Address\*:
7. Upload the latest CV with qualifications and experience (1-3 pages, PDF format only)\*:
8. Future plan:
  - a. Out-licensing
  - b. Incorporate a Startup
  - c. Others, please specify \_\_\_\_\_

## **B. Innovation overview**

1. Unmet need being addressed (max 50 words) \*
2. USP of the product/technology (max 100 words)\*
3. Product Sector (Mark only one)\*
  - a. Medical Device
  - b. Pharmaceutical (Small Molecule)
  - c. Biopharma (Biologics)
  - d. Diagnostics
  - e. Cell and Gene Therapy
  - f. Industrial Biotech
  - g. Bio-AI/IT/Services
  - h. Other, please specify\_\_\_\_\_
4. Upload product/concept picture here (JPG/JPEG format only)
5. Current Technology Readiness Level (TRL) of your innovation/product\* (dropdown box). [Click here for reference guide](#)
  - a. TRL 3
  - b. TRL 4
  - c. TRL 5
  - d. TRL 6
  - e. TRL 7
  - f. TRL 8
  - g. TRL 9
6. Upload supporting data for the following (PDF format only):
  - a. highest TRL stage achieved\*
  - b. Proof of Concept (PoC)\*
7. Do you have any publications related to your innovation? \*
  - a. Yes
  - b. No

If yes, please provide the reference(s) or link(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
or upload PDF:

8. Status of Intellectual Property (IP) related to your innovation? \*

- a) Filed/ granted
- b) Not filed

If yes, please upload a supporting document (PDF format only):

### C. Business overview

1. Financial runway availability for the next 9 months\*?

- a) Yes
- b) No

2. Details of funding raised so far (specify amount in INR):

- c) Private funding: \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Government funding: \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Awards/Competitions: \_\_\_\_\_
- f) Total funding received to date: \_\_\_\_\_

3. Have you achieved any commercial traction so far? \*

- a) Yes
- b) No

4. If yes, please upload a write-up with brief details (Max 700 words- eg. Business model, revenue, pilot results, etc.). PDF format only.

5. Business expansion in overseas market \*

- a) Already present
- b) Planned
- c) Not applicable

### D. Mentorship Needs & Expectations

1. Overall Objective \*

2. Three key goals for the next 6 months where onboarding in the BioSaarthi program can make a difference.

Please provide specific and measurable details for each goal. Refer to Mentorship Areas for guidance. \*

3. Provide 5-7 keywords relating to mentorship requirements for your project to help us assign a suitable BioSaarthi mentor\*

4. Under the BioSaarthi program, selected mentees will have the privilege to get connected to a BRIC institution/Scientist and leverage their technical expertise and resources for advancing their innovation.

BRIC institutions & Scientist

Which BRIC institution & Scientist (if any) best aligns to support your project's current requirements?

## FAQ Guidelines

### 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. For details please check the program guidelines.

#### 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<sup>#</sup> 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.

## 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.