

INSTITUTO DE MEDICINA MOLECULAR JOÃO LOBO ANTUNES

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Jury Meeting Minute

Reference of Fellowship IMM/BII/27-2023

Instituto de Medicina Molecular João Lobo Antunes (IMM) opened a call for one Initiation Research Fellowship for a PhD student under the project ***“Whole-organism vaccines against *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* malaria with enhanced efficacy and scope*”** with the funding support from ***“la Caixa” Banking Foundation***.

The ad was published at EURAXESS Portugal Portal on 20th of December 2023 and also disseminated in IMM website. The call was opened from 21st of December 2023 until 5th of January 2024 and during which the following applicant applied:

- ✓ Aiswarya Mohan
- ✓ Bárbara Rodrigues
- ✓ Diana Moita
- ✓ Joana Soares

On the 8 January 2024 the jury composed by Miguel Prudêncio (IMM), Diana Fontinha (IMM) and Helena Nunes-Cabaço (IMM) met to analyze the application documents (Motivation Letter, Detailed CV and MSc degree certificate) in accordance with the Work Plan and Profile transcribed below:

Work Plan and Goals: *The fellow will be responsible for the evaluation of whole-sporozoite candidates for vaccination against malaria, including their infectivity, molecular characterization and immunogenicity. Among other tasks, the fellow will be involved in the:*

- a) *Immunofluorescence analysis of heterologously expressed Plasmodium antigens.*
- b) *Immunization of rodents with whole-sporozoite malaria vaccine candidates.*
- c) *Assessment of cellular and humoral immune responses to vaccination.*
- d) *Candidate selection for downstream pre-clinical and clinical evaluation.*

Candidate's Profile:

- *MSc degree holder in Microbiology or related areas.*
- *Accreditation for animal experimentation (FELASA B or equivalent) (mandatory).*
- *Experience in malaria research, backed by publications in this field (mandatory).*
- *Experience in whole-sporozoite vaccination against malaria.*
- *Proficiency in flow cytometry-based assessment of cellular immunity (mandatory).*
- *Experience in ELISA and IFAT experimental methods.*
- *Excellent knowledge of immunofluorescence microscopy and quantitative real-time PCR techniques.*
- *Excellent command of the English language.*
- *Excellent presentation skills.*
- *Good interpersonal skills.*
- *Proactivity, scientific independence and critical thinking skills.*
- *The international experience of the candidates, although not a determining criterion for selection, will be valued.*

Necessary Documents for Applications: *Motivation Letter, Detailed CV and MSc degree certificate. The non-compliance with these requirements determines the immediate rejection of the application. In case the applicant does not have yet the required degree certificate, a declaration of honor stating the conclusion of the necessary qualifications for the purposes of this process will be accepted and must be sent by the end date of the call.*

Selection Method: CV and Motivation Letter (65%); **Phase 2:** Interview (35%). Only the candidates who obtained a score equal or higher than 45% in Phase 1 will be selected for an Interview.

CV (40%)

The analysis of the CV took in consideration the following criteria:

- MSc degree holder in Microbiology or related areas (5%);
- Accreditation for animal experimentation (FELASA B or equivalent) (5%);
- Experience in malaria research, backed by publications in this field (7.5%);
- Experience in whole-sporozoite vaccination against malaria (5%);
- Proficiency in flow cytometry-based assessment of cellular immunity (7.5%);
- Experience in ELISA and IFAT experimental methods (5%);
- Excellent knowledge of immunofluorescence microscopy and quantitative real-time PCR techniques (5%).

Motivation Letter (25%)

The analysis of the CV took in consideration the following criteria:

- Background and written communication (10%);
- Interest and motivation to perform the activities described (15%).

The analysis and discrimination of the admitted candidate's classification in the first phase of this process are presented in Annex I.

Interview (35%)

Following the First Phase evaluation, only 1 applicant, Diana Moita, obtained a score equal or higher than 45%. The applicant was interviewed on 9 January 2024.


Based on the interview, the jury intended to assess the following criteria:

- Evidence of relevant knowledge for the position (15%);
- Enthusiasm, commitment and interest in proposed project (15%);
- Communication skills (5%).

The analysis and discrimination of the admitted candidate's classification in the second phase and total classification in both phases of this process are presented in Annex II.

At this stage, the selected candidate is the one with the highest score: Diana Moita


Lisbon, 9 January 2024



Miguel Prudêncio (iMM)



Diana Fontinha (iMM)



Helena Nunes-Cabaço (iMM)

ANNEX I - EVALUATION: Fellowship Reference IMM/BII/27-2023

Applicant	CV (40%)							Motivation Letter (25%)		Total	Justification
	MSc degree holder in Microbiology or related areas (5%)	Accreditation for animal experimentation (FELASA B or equivalent) (5%)	Experience in malaria research, backed by publications in this field (7.5%)	Experience in whole-sporozoite vaccination against malaria (5%)	Proficiency in flow cytometry-based assessment of cellular immunity (7.5%)	Experience in ELISA and IFAT experimental methods (5%)	Excellent knowledge of immunofluorescence microscopy and quantitative real-time PCR techniques (5%)	Background and written communication (10%)	Interest and motivation to perform the activities described (15%)		
Aiswarya Mohan	5	0	2,5	0	0	0	2,5	6,5	10	26,5	The candidate has an MSc in Microbiology from the Central University of Tamil Nadu, India. She has limited experience in malaria research but no publications in this field or any specific expertise in whole-sporozoite vaccination against this disease. She presents experience in PCR techniques but no evidence of experience of animal experimentation, flow cytometry, immune assessment or immunofluorescence microscopy techniques. Her letter conveys motivation for the work carried out in the host lab, but she appears to be applying for a PhD position, which is not the purpose of the present call.
Bárbara Rodrigues	5	0	0	0	0	0	2,5	5	5	17,5	The candidate has an MSc in Biotechnology from Faculdade de Ciências e Tecnologia da Universidade Nova de Lisboa. She presents no experience in malaria and no evidence of experience in any of the required experimental methods besides qRT-PCR. The candidate presents a poorly written and very general Motivation Letter that does not convey her reasons for specifically applying for this position or her interest in the specific activities to be performed.
Diana Moita	5	5	7,5	5	7,5	1,5	3	8,5	12,5	55,5	The candidate has an MSc in Biochemistry for Health. She is fully certified to carry out animal experimentation and has a vast experience in malaria research, including whole-sporozoite vaccination, illustrated by 12 publications, including 4 as first author. She also presents significant experience in nearly all the techniques required for this position. Her Letter of Motivation shows that the candidate has the adequate background for the position and conveys an high interest in the tasks to be performed.
Joana Soares	5	5	0	0	5	4	3,5	8,5	10	41	The candidate has an MSc in Biotechnology from Universidade da Beira Interior and research experience acquired at i3S, Porto. She is licensed to perform animal experimentation and, although she does not have experience in malaria research, she demonstrates experience in several of the techniques required for the present position. Her Motivation Letter is adequately written but could provide greater detail regarding the candidate's interest in the specific tasks proposed.

ANEXO I

ANNEX II - EVALUATION: Fellowship Reference IMM/BII/27-2023

Applicant	Interview (35%)			Total Phase 1	Total Phase 2	Total Phase 1 + Phase 2	Justification
	Evidence of relevant knowledge for the position (15%)	Enthusiasm, commitment and interest in proposed project (15%)	Communication skills (5%)				
Diana Moita	15	13,5	4,5	55,5	33	88,5	The candidate displayed extremely significant background knowledge of the field of study the position pertains to. She also conveyed high interest in the project and offered evidence of her commitment to the proposed research. She displayed excellent communication skills in English language.

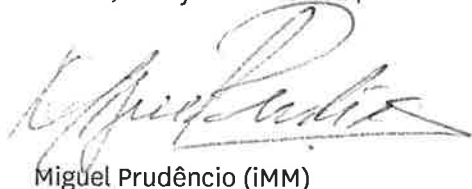


Declaração de inexistência de conflito de interesses (CDI)

Os membros do júri do Concurso para Atribuição de 1 (uma) Bolsa de Investigação, Ref.^a IMM/BII/27-2023, aberto ao abrigo do projeto ***“Whole-organism vaccines against *P. falciparum* and *P. vivax* malaria with enhanced efficacy and scope”***, vêm por este meio declarar que não se encontram em situação de conflito de interesses que os impeça de participar no respetivo processo de seleção e atribuição de bolsa.

Declaram também manter a confidencialidade ao longo do processo de avaliação.

Lisboa, 8 de janeiro de 2024



Miguel Prudêncio (IMM)



Diana Fontinha (IMM)



Helena Nunes-Cabaço (iMM)

