

Terms of Reference

Malaria Vaccine Alliance (MalVax Alliance) Working Groups

Accelerating research and development of next-generation malaria vaccines

Version	3.0 — Final
Date	13 July 2026
Applies to	All MalVax Alliance Technical Working Groups
Review and amendment	This document is reviewed at least annually by the MalVax Executive Committee in consultation with the Advisory Group. Amendments may be proposed by any WG member and submitted in writing for consideration. Any substantive changes are shared with WG members and the Advisory Group before adoption.

1. Introduction

This document sets out the Terms of Reference (TOR) governing the Technical Working Groups (WGs) of the Malaria Vaccine Alliance (MalVax Alliance), including WG leadership, members, and the support available. As an ‘umbrella’ TOR, it applies across all MalVax WGs and provides a shared framework within which each WG operates. Individual WG mandates, technical scopes of work, and deliverables are set out in separate annexes to this document.

2. Background

Recent consultations¹ across the malaria vaccine community have highlighted opportunities to address persistent challenges slowing the development of improved next-generation malaria vaccines. The areas identified include increasing coordination, greater alignment in clinical trial designs, support and improve comparability of data, and support increased clarity and evidence for regulatory pathways. Stakeholders agreed that an impartial and objective mechanism could help improve community alignment, accelerate and facilitate decision-making during product development, and help guide and accelerate the next phase of next-generation malaria vaccine innovation.

Building on this momentum, funding has now been secured to establish the MalVax Alliance in 2026. A small **Executive Committee**,² supported by a small **Support Unit**³, leads the design of an inclusive, community-driven Alliance and an **Advisory Group** (“MalVax Advisory Group” or “MalVax AG”) serves as a ‘sounding board’, providing regular input and guidance for consideration by the Executive Committee to support early priority setting and governance design. This arrangement will be in place until a more permanent governance structure is installed in early 2027.

A group of technical **MalVax Working Groups** composed of leading international experts will be the ‘technical engines’ of the MalVax Alliance, advancing coordination and driving key outputs around

¹ See notes from 2024 and 2025 Stakeholder Engagement Meetings held at ASTMH.

² MalVax Executive Committee members: Simon Draper, Melissa Penny, Katharine Collins

³ [Bridges to Development](#) has been engaged to serve in this capacity 2026 to mid-2027.

targeted and priority topics relevant to the next-generation malaria vaccine research and development (R&D).

The **MalVax Alliance community** encompasses all individuals and organisations with an interest in advancing malaria vaccine development. This includes those with defined roles within the above working structure as well as the broader community of researchers, vaccine developers, funders, regulators, public health practitioners, and other stakeholders who engage with the MalVax Alliance's activities and outputs without a formally designated role. The latter group is referred to throughout these Terms of Reference as the 'broader MalVax Alliance community.'

The MalVax Alliance is not a legal entity. It operates as a community-led initiative coordinated by the MalVax Support Unit on behalf of the Executive Committee. References in this document to the '**MalVax Alliance**' refer to this collective arrangement — the Executive Committee, Advisory Group, Working Groups, and broader community acting in pursuit of the Alliance's shared mission.

3. Purpose

The purpose of the MalVax Working Groups is to address the most pressing barriers to next-generation malaria vaccine research and development, such as those identified through the 2024 and 2025 ASTMH consultations, and to produce practical outputs that serve the broader malaria vaccine R&D community to accelerate vaccine development and decision-makings. WGs are **community-led, product-agnostic, and accountable to the MalVax Alliance as a whole.**

4. Establishment

MalVax WGs are established by the MalVax Executive Committee, in consultation with the MalVax Advisory Group, based on needs identified through community engagement. Each WG is established with:

- **A defined technical scope and initial set of deliverables** (set out in the individual WG Annex);
- **Named Co-Chairs** approved by the Executive Committee. Co-Chairs serve an initial term of 24 months renewable by mutual agreement;
- **An initial list of suggested members** for finalization by the Co-Chairs in consultation with the Executive Committee (and AG as needed) to serve an initial term of 24 months;
- **A time-limited mandate**, reviewed at least annually, to ensure the WG technical focus remains relevant and aligned to the MalVax Alliance mission to accelerate malaria vaccine development.

New WGs may be proposed by community members and are considered by the Executive Committee in consultation with the Advisory Group. A proposal should include a rationale, draft scope of work, and suggested initial deliverables.

5. Role and Objectives

Each Working Group seeks to ensure that its outputs are built through a transparent and inclusive process, reflecting the needs of stakeholders across, e.g. research, endemic country institutions, industry, funders, regulatory bodies, and policy organisations.

Each WG is responsible for:

- **Addressing specific technical barriers** identified by the community and prioritised by the Executive Committee, Advisory Group, and WG members;
- **Producing practical, community-relevant outputs** per agreed timelines;
- **Operating in a manner that is** inclusive, transparent, and product-agnostic;
- **Contributing to, and drawing on** the work of other MalVax WGs where relevant;
- **Communicating progress** to the MalVax Executive Committee, Advisory Group and broader MalVax Alliance community on a regular basis.

WGs are not decision-making bodies. They produce recommendations, outputs, and evidence to support a broad range of decision-making needs facing the wider community of next-generation malaria vaccine research and development, including those related to scientific R&D, policy, funding and regulatory pathways.

6. Deliverables, reporting and communications

At establishment, each Working Group agrees to an initial set of deliverables and expected dissemination timeframes. These are set out in a **Technical Scope of Work** (see Annexes) and are updated each year (or as needed).

Expected outputs may include:

- **Consensus statements or recommendations;**
- **Guidance, standards or protocols**, including in response to requests from teams developing vaccine candidates;
- **Technical reports, white papers, or manuscripts** for publication in open access journals;
- **Presentations** at the MalVax Scientific Conference and other community forums;
- **Input to regulatory evidence and submissions or WHO policy processes** and consultations.

Outputs are produced in the name of the MalVax Alliance and the Working Group collectively. The dissemination plan for WG outputs is developed by the WG and agreed with the Executive Committee. Progress is reported throughout the year at a cadence appropriate to each WG, with semi-annual updates typically shared with the Advisory Group and presented at the MalVax Scientific Conference.

To the extent practicable, draft WG outputs are circulated for comment within the broader MalVax Alliance community before finalization. Final outputs are made publicly available at no charge, including through MalVax communications platforms such as the MalVax website.

Individual authorship of publications follows standard academic conventions and agreed by all WG members. All outputs should acknowledge the MalVax Alliance.

In communications, WG members are asked to ensure that public statements, presentations, or representations made in the context of their WG role are consistent with agreed MalVax Alliance positions. Where members are uncertain whether a communication reflects MalVax Alliance consensus, they are encouraged to seek guidance from the WG Chair (or Co-Chairs) or Executive Committee prior to dissemination. Members should not represent personal views as those of the MalVax Alliance or the WG without prior agreement.

7. Membership

Working Groups are composed of individuals drawn from across the MalVax Alliance community and can be suggested by current WG members, Advisory Group, and/or Executive Committee.

Membership size may vary depending on the technical scope and needs of each WG, but groups are typically kept to a maximum of 25-30 members, but maybe smaller, to promote meaningful engagement, focused discussion, and individual accountability. WG membership is open to individuals from across the malaria vaccine R&D ecosystem and is not restricted by vaccine type or approach as WGs are product-agnostic.

Selection of WG members is agreed jointly by the Executive Committee and the WG Co-Chairs based on relevant expertise, commitment to active participation, and contribution to overall WG diversity. Membership of each WG is reviewed periodically to reflect its evolving technical focus. To the extent possible, the selection process aims to ensure:

- **Representation from diverse and relevant stakeholders** — e.g. research, industry, funders, policy bodies, regulatory agencies, and endemic country institutions;
- **Demonstrated interest** in contributing actively to the WG's technical scope;
- **Geographic and institutional diversity**, with meaningful representation from malaria-endemic countries;
- **A mix of expertise** including scientific, programmatic, and implementation perspectives;
- **Gender balance.**

To express interest in **joining a WG**, expressions of interest may be submitted to the MalVax Support Unit or WG Co-Chairs.

Membership terms are **24 months, renewable**. The role requires approximately 5-7 hours per month, with the potential of a two-day meeting each. Participation is personal and members may not delegate their role to another individual. Members are expected to:

- **Attend** at least two-thirds of scheduled WG meetings
- **Contribute** to drafting and reviewing outputs
- **Engage** constructively and in the spirit of community benefit
- **Disclose** any conflicts of interest relevant to WG activities⁴

Members who are unable to maintain active participation may be asked to transition to an observer role, or may be asked to step down, and a replacement appointed.

8. Leadership and accountability

Each Working Group is typically led by **two Co-Chairs**, appointed by the Executive Committee. Co-Chairs are expected to:

- **Represent** the breadth and diversity of the WG membership
- **Chair** WG meetings and drive delivery of agreed outputs
- **Serve** as the primary point of contact between the WG and the Executive Committee

⁴ The process for this will be detailed in a brief Conflict of Interest policy to be developed by the Executive Committee in Q3 2026.

- **Organize the WG members** into sub-teams with lead focal points as needed to ensure efficient delivery
- **Ensure active engagement with other WGs** and the broader community
- **Report on progress** against agreed outputs and timelines at Advisory Group meetings

Co-Chair appointments are for an **initial term of 24 months**, renewable by mutual agreement with the Executive Committee. The leadership role requires approximately 6-8 hours per month. Where a Co-Chair is unable to continue, the Executive Committee identifies a replacement.

WGs are accountable to the MalVax Alliance community, not only to the Executive Committee. To ensure this, WG progress updates are shared regularly per agreed timelines with the Advisory Group and broader MalVax Alliance.

9. Meetings

Working Groups meet regularly throughout the year, with frequency determined by the Co-Chairs in consultation with members. WGs typically meet virtually on a monthly basis (or twice monthly if needed). It is anticipated WGs will hold at least one in-person meeting or workshop per year, leveraging the MalVax Scientific Conference or other relevant meetings as appropriate.

Meetings are:

- **Scheduled in advance**, with agendas circulated at least five working days prior
- **Recorded and/or minuted**, with notes shared with all members within five working days
- **Have at least one Co-Chair present** and a minimum of one-third of members participating

10. Cross-Working Group interaction

To ensure MalVax Working Groups engage collaboratively across specific topics, each WG is expected to actively support and engage with the work of other WGs. In practice, this means:

- **Co-Chairs from across all WGs meet jointly at least quarterly** to identify interdependencies, discuss scopes of work, and share progress
- **WG outputs are shared with other WGs for comment** prior to finalisation
- **Where work overlaps, WG Co-Chairs discuss how best to avoid duplication** and organise joint work as needed
- **Each WG will identify a named liaison** responsible for cross-WG coordination

11. Available Support

The MalVax Working Groups receive secretariat and coordination support from the MalVax Support Unit.⁵ This includes:

- **Scheduling** and administrative coordination for meetings
- **Setting meeting agendas** in advance with Co-Chairs and targeted support developing materials ahead of meetings

⁵ These support arrangements to be reviewed once the WGs are more established and early operational experience can inform future planning.

- **Preparing meeting notes** and documentation to support tracking of discussions and follow-up actions
- **Facilitation of cross-WG communication**
- **Support for community consultations** on draft outputs

In addition, to help advance delivery of outputs, the WG Co-Chairs may request targeted and short-term support from independent technical resources (e.g., consultants).

For example, such resources could be accessed for:

- **Conducting a systematic literature review**
- **Developing drafts of a paper** for submission to a peer-reviewed journal on the state of the field and medium-term priorities, and/or
- **Consolidating first drafts of consensus materials** for the WG members to elaborate upon and eventually endorse.

Should this support be requested, the Support Unit drafts TOR in close consultation with the WG Co-Chairs. The TOR clearly defines the deliverables, time period, and qualifications needed to help identify and select individuals to provide short-term support to the WG.

For any other types of financial support, for example to cover expenses related to convening a WG in-person meeting, WG Co-Chairs may submit such a request via the Support Unit for discussion with the Executive Committee.

12. Confidentiality and Use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Working Group members may have access to sensitive information during the establishment of the MalVax Alliance and are expected to treat all discussions, draft materials, and internal documents as confidential unless explicitly designated for wider sharing. Members are expected to participate respectfully, contribute constructively, and support an inclusive process that values diverse perspectives and product-agnostic approaches to malaria vaccine development.

Members are requested to not use AI for document review nor to upload WG documents to an AI/LLM as part of WG activities. AI should be limited to discrete, targeted uses and only through accounts which treat queries and uploaded data as confidential such as through a paid account (i.e. data is not shared publicly or used for model training).

13. Conflicts of Interest

The people best placed to contribute to MalVax Alliance WGs often have active interests in the field. Holding a conflict of interest does not prevent you from participating. What matters is that conflicts are visible, so others can understand the context behind comments and recommendations.

All WG members are expected to disclose any real or perceived conflicts of interest relevant to WG activities, including financial interests, institutional affiliations, or involvement in competing initiatives. Disclosures are made to the Co-Chairs at the point of joining and updated whenever circumstances change.⁴

In most cases, declared conflicts simply sit on the record and members participate as normal. Where a specific decision or recommendation intersects directly with a declared interest, the WG Co-Chairs

or the Executive Committee may ask a member to step back from that part of the discussion or be recused from the decision.

14. Dissolution

The decision to dissolve a MalVax Working Group is taken by the Executive Committee. Before deciding to discontinue a WG, the Executive Committee will consult with the relevant Co-Chairs and the Advisory Group.

A WG may be considered for dissolution when the WG:

- completes the objectives as set out in its Technical Scope and no further work is identified, or its scope is no longer relevant;
- has been absorbed into another WG, restructured, or is better served through a different mechanism;
- has been unable to convene members, or make substantive progress over an extended period, and efforts to address this have been unsuccessful; or

The Executive Committee, in consultation with the Advisory Group may also close or dissolve a WG where doing so better serves the evolving needs and priorities of the MalVax Alliance.

Upon dissolution, the Executive Committee will work with the WG Co-Chairs and Support Unit to ensure that all outputs, recommendations, or ongoing workstreams are appropriately documented and, where relevant, transitioned to another body or archived for the record.

15. Working Group Annexes

Individual technical scopes and initial deliverables for each Working Group are set out in separate annexes to this document:

- **Annex A:** Clinical Trial Design & Endpoints
- **Annex B:** Assays and Immune Correlates
- **Annex C:** Modelling

Each annex sets out the WG's specific mandate, initial deliverables, intended timeline, and any WG-specific operating arrangements not covered by this umbrella TOR.