

PICK4Kids–VEDA STAR AWARDS

Advancing Innovation, Access and Equity in Precision Oncology for Childhood Cancer

Endorsed by the Pediatric Hematology Oncology (PHO) Chapter of IAP | Supported and funded by Veda Star Foundation

Each Award carries an Award Grant of ₹5,00,000

The PICK4Kids–Veda STAR Awards encourage innovative, collaborative and impactful initiatives that advance precision oncology and improve care and outcomes for children with cancer. The three categories represent complementary steps in translating precision oncology into meaningful patient benefit.

1. MOLECULAR INNOVATION AWARD

Creating and validating what is possible

The Molecular Innovation Award supports novel or emerging molecular approaches that address an important unmet need in childhood cancer and related disorders. It recognizes scientific or technological innovation with the potential to improve diagnosis, molecular classification, risk assessment, treatment selection, response monitoring or prediction of relapse. The emphasis is not simply on using advanced molecular technology, but on addressing a new and clinically relevant question with a credible pathway towards improving childhood cancer care.

Award Grant	₹5,00,000
Essence	A new molecular idea or application that could change how we understand, diagnose, monitor or treat childhood cancer.
Core Principle	INNOVATE → VALIDATE → TRANSLATE
Illustrative example	Evaluation and validation of circulating tumour DNA (ctDNA) for molecular monitoring in children with cancer , exploring its role in disease burden, treatment response or recurrence risk.

❑ **Will not be considered:** Routine NGS or molecular testing; descriptive profiling without an innovative research question; routine diagnostic services; simple retrospective reporting of molecular alterations; or replication of an established approach without meaningful scientific or clinical advancement.

[Application Submission Details](#)

[Checklist](#)

2. PRECISION ACCESS PARTNERSHIP AWARD

Making precision oncology accessible, affordable and scalable

The Precision Access Partnership Award recognizes meaningful partnerships between pediatric oncology and diagnostic laboratories, molecular diagnostic companies, biotechnology companies, technology providers or other relevant industry partners that translate clinically relevant advances in precision oncology into affordable, quality-assured and scalable access for children with cancer. Development of a new molecular technology is not essential; the emphasis is on overcoming practical barriers that prevent wider implementation. The partnership should contribute beyond routine commercial provision of a diagnostic service.

Award Grant	₹5,00,000
Essence	A meaningful partnership that makes clinically relevant precision oncology more affordable, accessible and sustainable.
Core Principle	PARTNER → BUILD CAPACITY → IMPLEMENT → SCALE
Illustrative example	A diagnostic laboratory partnership implementing a quality-assured, affordable pediatric tumour molecular testing pathway with reduced costs, standardized interpretation, training and sample-access pathways across multiple centres.

❑ **Will not be considered:** Routine commercial testing; product promotion; sponsorship alone; simple discounts without a sustainable access model; provision of an existing test without capacity building or measurable expansion of access; or projects without a substantive pediatric oncology partnership.

[Application Submission Details](#)

[Checklist](#)

3. EQUITY IN PRECISION MEDICINE AWARD

Ensuring that no child is left behind

The Equity in Precision Medicine Award recognizes initiatives that identify and meaningfully address disparities in access to precision oncology for children with cancer. It focuses not simply on whether precision oncology is available, but on which children are still unable to benefit and why. Projects should identify a clearly defined underserved population or inequity related to geography, socioeconomic circumstances, healthcare infrastructure, referral pathways, specialist expertise or other systemic barriers, and implement a purposeful intervention to overcome that gap.

Award Grant	₹5,00,000
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Essence	Identifying who is being left behind and creating a sustainable solution that enables those children to benefit from precision medicine.
Core Principle	IDENTIFY THE GAP → REMOVE THE BARRIER → REACH → INCLUDE
Illustrative example	A collaborative programme for children from geographically underserved centres that establishes a structured referral, navigation and virtual molecular tumour-board pathway linking them to appropriate molecular testing, expert interpretation and treatment recommendations.

❑ **Will not be considered:** One-time financial assistance to individual patients; isolated sponsorship of molecular tests; routine charity; awareness programmes without measurable improvement in access; or initiatives that do not identify a specific equity gap and demonstrate how it will be addressed.

[Application Submission Details](#)

[Checklist](#)

COMMON Essential ELIGIBILITY PRINCIPLES

- **PHO membership is essential.** Every application must include at least one current PHO Life / associate member in good standing with a meaningful and substantive role in the proposed project.
- ***PHO Member wherever is mentioned means Life / Associate member.** All Allied and non-PHO members should collaborate with PHO life / associate member for valid application
- **Multidisciplinary collaboration is encouraged.** PHO members may collaborate with appropriate scientific, laboratory, industry, healthcare, academic, patient-support, public-health or other relevant partners according to the Award category. [To know more](#)
- **Applications initiated by non-PHO partners are welcome.** The applicant must identify and establish meaningful collaboration with a PHO member in good standing before submission.
- **Collaboration must be substantive.** Merely adding a PHO member's name to satisfy eligibility is insufficient; the application must clearly define the PHO member's contribution.
- **Maximum of two categories.** An applicant may apply in no more than two Award categories in the same cycle. Separate category-specific applications are required, and the same or substantially identical project cannot receive more than one STAR Award in the same cycle.

ADDITIONAL REQUIREMENTS FOR NON-PHO AND INDUSTRY / ORGANIZATIONAL PARTNERS

- **Non-PHO partner credibility.** Any non-PHO individual or organization undertaking a substantive project role must provide sufficient information to establish relevant expertise, professional standing and capacity to deliver the proposed work.
- **Organizational credentials.** Where applicable, provide the full legal/organizational name, registered address, website, authorized contact person, registration/CIN details, and relevant accreditation or certification.
- **Defined responsibility.** The application must specify each external partner's role, deliverables, resources/services, timelines, and any financial or in-kind contribution.
- **Letter of Commitment.** A substantive external organization must provide an authorized Letter of Collaboration/Commitment confirming participation, responsibilities, deliverables and contributions.
- **Conflict of interest.** Relevant financial, commercial or other interests related to the proposed test, technology, product or service must be disclosed.
- **Partner accountability.** Each collaborating organization remains responsible for the activities, personnel, regulatory compliance, quality requirements and deliverables undertaken by it. Participation of a PHO member does not transfer the legal, regulatory or professional responsibilities of an external partner to the PHO member, PHO Chapter, PICK4Kids or Veda Star Foundation.

Additional requirement for the Precision Access Partnership Award: the industry/laboratory/technology partner is a core partner and must demonstrate relevant experience and applicable registrations/accreditations. Routine commercial provision of testing, sponsorship or product promotion alone will not constitute an eligible partnership.

CATEGORY-SPECIFIC ELIGIBILITY AT A GLANCE

MOLECULAR INNOVATION	PRECISION ACCESS PARTNERSHIP	EQUITY IN PRECISION MEDICINE
• At least one current PHO Chapter member in good standing with a substantive role. • Principal applicant may be a PHO member or an eligible scientist, pathologist, geneticist, bioinformatician, researcher or other relevant professional. • If the principal applicant is non-PHO, a PHO member must be identified before submission and have a meaningful clinical/scientific role. • External laboratories/technology partners are optional; where substantive, credentials, role, applicable accreditation and commitment letter are required. • Project must be directly relevant to childhood cancer/related disorders and involve genuine molecular innovation with a pathway to clinical translation.	• At least one current PHO Chapter member in good standing with a substantive clinical role. • Mandatory meaningful partnership with a diagnostic laboratory, molecular diagnostic/biotechnology company, technology provider or other relevant industry partner. • The industry/laboratory partner must provide legal/organizational details, authorized representative, relevant experience and applicable accreditation/certification. • Roles, deliverables, financial/in-kind contributions and commercial interests must be declared, with an authorized Letter of Commitment. • Partnership must go beyond routine commercial testing and demonstrate affordability, access, capacity building and/or scalable implementation for childhood cancer.	• At least one current PHO Chapter member in good standing with a substantive role in identifying the equity gap, implementation and/or evaluation. • Eligible collaborators may include healthcare institutions, patient-support organizations, foundations, civil-society/public-health bodies, philanthropic partners or other relevant stakeholders. • A substantive organizational partner should provide credentials, authorized representative and Letter of Collaboration/Commitment. • Application must identify a specific underserved population or measurable equity gap and propose an intervention designed to close that gap.

Due diligence: PICK4KidsFoundation and Veda Star Foundation reserve the right to request additional documentation regarding the credentials, institutional standing, accreditation, regulatory status or conflicts of interest of any applicant or collaborating partner before final selection or release of the Award Grant.