

Press Release

The Hague, 20 February 2009.

CANTAM first African Network of Excellence for clinical trials

The countries of Central Africa have joined forces to enable the region to build research capacity and conduct clinical trials under best practices. CANTAM (Central Africa Network on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria for the conduct of clinical trials) is the first EDCTP-funded regional Network of Excellence to prepare the region to conduct high-quality clinical trials. It will be supported by a EUR 3 million grant for the duration of three years. The network includes research institutions and political partners from Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Tanzania and Germany. It is envisaged that the networks for Eastern, Western and Southern Africa will start their activities later this year.

The number of clinical trials on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria conducted in Africa is increasing sharply and is expected to further increase in the coming years. The question is whether the countries of sub-Saharan Africa have sufficient clinical trials centres that are well equipped and staffed to ensure that these trials are conducted according to internationally acceptable standards.

EDCTP therefore set up a grant programme to fund regional Networks of Excellence, in which clinical trial centres from various African countries in Central, Eastern, Southern and Western Africa are interlinked at regional level, so that they can complement each other in building capacity to design and conduct large multi-centre clinical trials on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria and other related diseases. Ultimately, the four networks will also work in collaboration and complement each other.

About CANTAM

The Central Africa Network on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria for the Conduct of Clinical Trials (CANTAM) is the first network that will start on a regional level to develop capacities in the areas of good clinical and laboratory practice (GCP and GLP), data management, quality control, and ethics among others. As project coordinator, the Multilateral Initiative on Malaria Secretariat Coordinator will be working hand in hand with participating research institutions in Central Africa, with guidance and political goodwill from the OCEAC. The network includes the following partner institutions:

- Cameroon - University of Buea, University of Yaoundé, Centre International de Référence Chantal Biya, and the Organisation de Coordination pour la lutte Contre les Endémies en Afrique Centrale (OCEAC)
- Congo - University Marie Ngouabi and Centre d'Etudes des Ressources Végétales
- Gabon - The Medical Research Unit of the Albert Schweitzer Hospital
- Tanzania - Multilateral Initiative on Malaria
- Germany - The University of Tübingen.

About EDCTP

EDCTP aims through research integration to accelerate the development of new or improved drugs, vaccines, diagnostics and microbicides against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis, with a focus on phase II and III clinical trials in sub-Saharan Africa. EDCTP supports integrated multicentre projects which



combine clinical trials, capacity building and networking. The aim of integrating these three activities is to develop the capacity to conduct clinical trials in sub-Saharan Africa in a sustainable way. EDCTP is currently part of the European Commission's Sixth Framework Programme (FP6) for research and technological development, the European Union's main instrument for funding research in Europe. The basis of EDCTP is partnership. It unites 14 participating European Union (EU) Member States plus Norway and Switzerland with sub-Saharan African countries. The partnership helps EU Member States to integrate and coordinate their own national research and development programmes and form partnerships with their African counterparts.

Note to the editor:

For more information please contact

EDCTP

Ilona van den Brink, Communications Officer

Tel: +31 70 349 44 22

Email: brink@edctp.org