

Press Release

The Hague, 17 July 2007

European Commission concludes mid-term review of EDCTP

The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) welcomes the report of the independent expert group commissioned by the European Commission (EC) to review its operation. The view of the expert group is that EDCTP constitutes a true partnership between Europe and Africa in medical research and fulfils its primary mission to improve health on the African continent by strengthening the local research base as well as linking European scientists and institutions in the fight against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis.

EDCTP acknowledges the initial difficulties it faced as the first programme under Article 169, which aims at integrating Member States' national programmes into a joint programme to work together in synergy with developing countries and allow EC cofunding. There were no ground rules in place so EDCTP with the Commission had to develop a *modus operandi* as the programme took shape. We welcome the report's commendation of the contribution of Professor Mgone (the new Executive Director) in accelerating the delivery of the programme activities.

Professor Charles Mgone said "We are pleased to note the Review Panel commends EDCTP on recent advances in governance and administration. The report also concluded that the Developing Countries Coordinating Committee, the European Network of National Programmes and the Partnership Board (scientific advisory board) are now very effective."

"We agree with most of the recommendations and are pleased to be able to say that the majority of them are already in place or being implemented. EDCTP already has an agreed strategy for increasing delivery by focusing on clinical trials as the core of its activities. We are also strengthening our efforts in capacity development and networking as the means of ensuring delivery, with a strong emphasis on African involvement and leadership. Our aim is to secure sustainable outcomes."

EDCTP embraces the synergy of integrating national programmes and working together with like-minded organisations, including private industry, public-private partnerships, product development partnerships and philanthropic organisations.

The review report provides EDCTP with guidance which will enable current progress to gather pace and pave the way to further development of the partnership between Africa and the Member States as a successful basis for future funding.

EDCTP has over the last six months held 9 stakeholder meetings which have yielded targeted calls for proposals. Calls on malaria vaccines, tuberculosis vaccines and senior fellowships were launched in July and can be found on the EDCTP website – <http://www.edctp.org> while calls on malaria treatment, malaria in pregnancy, tuberculosis treatment, networks of excellence for conducting clinical trials, and support of ethics review committees will be launched in August 2007.

About EDCTP

With the overall goal to reduce poverty in developing countries by improving the health of the populations, the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) aims through European research integration and in partnership with African countries to develop new clinical interventions to fight HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. EDCTP represents a new partnership between European countries and African partners based on Article 169 of the European Treaty and is supported by the European Commission and the participating Member States. This will establish a genuine partnership with the research communities in African countries and support the strengthening of the individual and institutional capacities in Africa.

Note to the editor:

Article 169:

In implementing the multiannual framework programme the Community may make provision, in agreement with the Member States concerned, for participation in research and development programmes undertaken by several Member States, including participation in the structures created for the execution of those programmes.

The independent expert group:

- Dr Adetokunbo O. Lucas – former Director of WHO Tropical diseases research programme
- Wim Van Velzen (Chair) – former MEP, involved in various research organisations
- Allyson Pollock – director of the Centre for International Public Health Policy, University of Edinburgh
- Jean Stéphenne – President and General Manager of GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals
- Fernand Sauer (Rapporteur) – former Executive Director of the European Medicines Agency.

The report:

The full report is available from: <http://www.edctp.org>

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Photos are available on the EDCTP website: <http://www.edctp.org/Press-Kit.194.0.html>.