

## Executive Director's note

It gives me great pleasure to unveil the current issue of EDCTP Newsletter. Like all previous newsletters it is packed with news and information of all kind to all our stakeholders. As usual there is a summary of current calls and the recently awarded projects. There is also information on the EDCTP site visit to Benin and various meetings attended by EDCTP personnel, particularly in Africa. These include participation at the Forty-eighth ECSA Health Conference and a visit to WHO/AFRO Regional Headquarters where EDCTP explored how its Network of Excellence funded projects could interact and add synergy to the WHO/AFRO proposed Centres of Excellence.

There is an update on the coming EDCTP Fifth Forum that will be held in October in Arusha, Tanzania. Together with the forum is the announcement of EDCTP Awards that will be given to honour achievements of individuals working on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. I strongly encourage each and everyone to send names of the possible candidates for selection to receive these prestigious awards. There is also information on the EDCTP 2008 annual report that is now available. Electronic copies can be downloaded from our website and if preferred hard copies may be posted on request.

I wish all stakeholders enjoyable reading.

## Events

### Fifth EDCTP Forum: programme additions and sponsorships

**The Fifth EDCTP Forum (12 to 14 October in Arusha, Tanzania) will take place in just over 3 months. The Forum is the only major conference in Africa on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria. It presents a unique opportunity to share reports on ongoing clinical trials, exchange ideas, and establish or reinforce collaborations.**

#### Satellite meetings

In addition to the main programme there will be two satellite meetings:

On Tuesday 13 October, a workshop on *Ownership of research outcomes in sub-Saharan Africa* will take place. This meeting is co-organised by EDCTP and the Netherlands-African Partnership for Capacity Development and Clinical Interventions Against Poverty-related diseases (NACCAP). The workshop will address issues related to protection of intellectual property and outcomes of research conducted by African researchers and institutions.

On Wednesday 14 October there will be a workshop on *Universal Standards for Clinical Trials in Practice* organised by the "Switching the Poles" Clinical Research Network. The workshop will address challenges of setting and implementing appropriate standards in externally funded clinical research projects carried out in resource-constrained settings.



More information on the satellite meetings: [www.edctpforum2009.org](http://www.edctpforum2009.org) (see Programme section)

#### Sponsorships

EDCTP encourages its partners to get involved in the Forum and many have already confirmed their participation. For those not yet involved, there are many ways to join. One of the ways to support the Forum and to raise the corporate profile during the Forum is to sponsor the event. Sponsorships that have been confirmed by EDCTP Member States are from Belgium, France, Germany, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland and the United Kingdom. Other sponsors to date include AERAS Global TB Vaccine Foundation, CONRAD, International Partnership for Microbicides (IPM) and Novartis Pharma AG.

**If you wish to receive the print format, please subscribe to the Forum newsletter through [forum@edctp.org](mailto:forum@edctp.org)**

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The EDCTP Newsletter is available in three languages namely English, French and Portuguese. It is available in electronic format on our website ([www.edctp.org](http://www.edctp.org)) and in print in English for distribution mainly in sub-Saharan Africa.



Persons who wish to receive the print format should subscribe on the website ([www.edctp.org](http://www.edctp.org), click on Newsroom).



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Supported by the EU DG Research

## Events

### EDCTP Awards for Outstanding African Scientists open for nomination

EDCTP is inviting nominations for the 2009 EDCTP Awards for outstanding African scientists. The awards are open to anyone working in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria within the scope of the EDCTP programme of clinical trials, capacity development, and networking. The awards will be presented at the Fifth EDCTP Forum in Arusha, Tanzania on 12 to 14 October 2009.

The awards comprises certificates of recognition and a cash prize of 10,000 Euros for one junior scientist (under 30 years old) and 20,000 Euros for one senior scientist and aims to encourage research by supporting activities such as short study periods at other institutions, data collection or facilitation of travel for attendance of pertinent conferences or meetings.

#### Nominations: criteria and procedure

Selection of candidates for the award will be based on the following criteria:

##### Senior awards

- Innovation and Intellectual Property
- Evidence of capacity building or mentorship
- Relevance, level of contribution and impact of research
- Publications in reputable scientific journals and books
- Advocacy for health relevant to EDCTP programme.

##### Junior awards (young scientists ≤ 30 years old)

- Innovation and Intellectual Property
- Relevance, level of contribution and impact of research
- Publications in reputable scientific journals and books
- Advocacy for health relevant to EDCTP programme
- Career progression.

Applicants are requested to complete the online nomination form. The completed nomination form should be sent to the EDCTP Secretariat before Monday 31 August 2009 through [award@edctp.org](mailto:award@edctp.org). Please include 'EDCTP award 2009' in the subject line of your email. Please note: a maximum of one nomination per award category will be accepted from nominating individual.

### Calls open for application

#### TB Diagnostics

Clinical trials, capacity building and networking in new and improved diagnostics for tuberculosis (TB)

#### Purpose of the call

The purpose of this call is to develop simpler, cheaper and more accurate TB diagnostic tool(s). The research product(s) should be manufactured under Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP). Priority will be given but not limited to products that can be deployed at the Point of Care (POC).

Available funds	€8,000,000*
Number of projects to fund	2-4
Deadline of application:	24 July 2009

\* We expect the EDCTP contribution of €8,000,000 to be matched by at least an equivalent amount of cofunding from the European Member States and possibly further contributions from third parties.

#### Who can apply?

Participants in a proposal must be from at least two publicly funded institutions from the EDCTP EEIG Member States and at least two sub-Saharan African institutions. Preference will be given to proposals where the project coordinator is a sub-Saharan African national based in Africa.

## News about EDCTP Governance

### ENNP elect new chair and vice-chairs

At the ENNP meeting of 11 June Dirk van der Roost (Belgium), former ENNP Vice-Chairperson, was elected as the new Chairperson to succeed Laura Brum. Rafael de Andrés Medina (Spain) and Isabella Beretta (Switzerland) were elected Vice-Chairpersons.

We extend our thanks and appreciation to Laura Brum (former Chairperson) and Claudia Herok (former Vice-Chairperson, who will stay on as a member of the ENNP) for their commitment to integration of European research on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.

### Annual report 2008



EDCTP is pleased to present its annual report for 2008. The past year was a remarkable year as the results of our strategy for integrated projects became very much visible. Eight large integrated projects were signed in the areas of HIV vaccines, mother-to-child transmission of HIV and malaria in pregnancy. The Partnership grew as there was again a significant increase of both EDCTP Member State funding and contributions from third parties. In addition, the average number of Member States collaborating in EDCTP-funded clinical trials grew, while 71% of EDCTP-funded projects were led by African project coordinators based in sub-Saharan Africa. These are encouraging trends which underline the integration of EU research on PRDs, while encouraging African leadership in the fight against these diseases in the region.

The annual report is available in three languages: English (full report) and French and Portuguese (both in summary), and available on the website [www.edctp.org](http://www.edctp.org). If you wish to receive a printed version please send your request to [info@edctp.org](mailto:info@edctp.org).

## News about calls and grants

### Funded projects

EDCTP is pleased to announce funding of the following projects:

#### Support of clinical studies, capacity building and networking for HIV/AIDS Microbicides

#### Characterisation of novel microbicide safety biomarkers in East and South Africa

Project Coordinator: Dr Kishor Mandaliya  
 Theme: HIV microbicides  
 Partners: Kenya, South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania, Belgium, Netherlands, United Kingdom  
 Budget: €3,994,112 (€2,688,595 EDCTP)  
 Duration of project: April 2009 – April 2012

#### Support of clinical trials, capacity building and networking in tuberculosis vaccines development

#### A Multicentre Phase II Trial of a New TB Vaccine in African Infants

Project Coordinator: Prof. Gregory Hussey  
 Theme: Tuberculosis (vaccines)  
 Partners: South Africa, Kenya, Mozambique, Uganda,

United States, Sweden, Netherlands, Switzerland, Austria, Belgium  
 Budget: €7,654,869 (€3,367,254 EDCTP)  
 Duration of project: May 2009 – April 2014

#### Support of phase I, II and III clinical trials on new drugs and improved drug combinations for the treatment of tuberculosis

#### Rapid evaluation of high-dose rifampicin and other rifamycins in tuberculosis

Project Coordinator: Dr Martin Boeree  
 Theme: Tuberculosis  
 Partners: Netherlands, United Kingdom, Tanzania, South Africa, Uganda, Switzerland  
 Budget: €9,247,087 (€4,991,080)  
 Duration of project: June 2009 – June 2014

#### Evaluation of a novel TB drug to shorten and simplify TB treatment

Project Coordinator: Prof. Michael Hoelscher  
 Target disease: Tuberculosis  
 Partners: Germany, United Kingdom, South Africa, Tanzania, Gabon, Zambia, United States

Budget: €10,746,074 (€4,846,309 EDCTP)  
 Duration of project: June 2009 – June 2014

#### Identification and Strengthening of Joint Programme Activities

#### To develop a clinical trial management and support infrastructure at the College of Medicine, Blantyre, Malawi

Project Coordinator: Prof. Exnevia Gomo  
 Theme: HIV/AIDS  
 Partners: Malawi, Austria, United Kingdom, Netherlands  
 Budget: €299,241  
 Duration of project: April 2009 – April 2012

#### Implementation and standardization of *in vitro* Plasmodium falciparum culture for resistance phenotyping and immune-mediated growth inhibition testing

Project Coordinator: Dr Benjamin Mordmüller  
 Theme: Malaria  
 Partners: Germany, Gabon, Netherlands  
 Budget: €299,918  
 Duration of project: March 2009 – March 2012

### Call for Experts

EDCTP invites applications from individuals wishing to serve on the EDCTP Scientific Review Committee (SRC) or as External Reviewers (ER) on the following subjects:

- Clinical trials for the diseases HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis
- Postgraduate training awards
- Capacity building grants including ethics and establishment of Networks of Excellence.

### Final round Joint Programme Activities ended 5 June 2009

On 5 June 2009, the third and final round of the Joint Programme Activities (JPA) call ended. The JPA call has been an open-ended call with 6-monthly deadlines, which would be open until either December 2009 or until the available funding is allocated. As there will be insufficient funds for any further applications after the upcoming June deadline, this call will be closed.

### TB-HIV stakeholder meeting

On 19 May 2009 EDCTP held a stakeholder meeting on optimisation of HIV treatment and HIV-TB co-infection which was hosted by Portugal at the Centro Científico e Cultural de Macau in Lisbon. The aim of the meeting was for stakeholders to guide EDCTP on a strategy for funding new integrated projects in HIV treatment and its related major infections with an emphasis on HIV-TB co-infections. Among those who spoke at the meeting was the former President of Portugal, Dr Jorge Sampaio, who is also United Nations Special Envoy to Stop TB, and Dr Ligia Amancio, the Vice President of Portugal's Ministry of Science, Technology, and Higher Education (Fundação para a Ciência e a Tecnologia or FCT), opened the one-day meeting. The meeting was chaired by Prof. Emilia Valadas of University of Portugal.

During the meeting 41 representatives from the scientific community, policy makers, industry and EDCTP constituencies identified and prioritised potential products in the pipeline and discussed on the funding procedure.

The participants recommended EDCTP launch an open call on this subject soon. Prof. Charles Mgone, the Executive Director of EDCTP informed participants that EDCTP had reserved 5 million euros for this call and was expecting equal or more matching funds from European Member States and third parties.

**For details on the calls and how to apply, please consult the relevant call texts on the EDCTP website: [www.edctp.org](http://www.edctp.org).**

## Focus on EDCTP grantees

### Abdoulaye Djimdé receives Award of best Pharmacist of the Francophone world

The National Academy of Pharmacy of France has awarded Dr Abdoulaye Djimdé its "Prix de la Pharmacie Francophone". Dr Djimdé is a research scientist from the Malaria Research and Training Center (MRTC), University of Bamako, and Malian EDCTP Senior Fellow. The prize is in recognition of his outstanding contribution within the Francophone community. The Award was presented to Dr Djimdé in the context of the World Health Assembly on 17 May 2009 in Geneva.

In this instance, the academy was impressed by Dr Djimdé's research activities which started in the late 1990s with interviewing traditional healers on local remedies used to treat jaundice, botanically characterising one commonly used plant, making crude extracts and testing the toxicology on rats and its pharmacological properties on guinea pigs. Today, Dr Djimdé is known as one of the world experts in the molecular characterisation of malaria parasite resistance to antimalarials. He leads a team of 12 young Malian scientists

and has co-authored 38 publications some of which are in reknown peer reviewed journals such as The New England Journal of Medicine, Nature, Nature Genetics, The Lancet, Journal of Infectious Diseases and International Journal of Parasitology.

In his acceptance speech, Dr Djimdé acknowledged the contribution of the whole team of the MRTC, the People and the Government of Mali. He also thanked several Institutions including EDCTP, the USA National Institutes of Health, TDR, MIM/TDR, Howard Hughes Medical Institution and the IAEA for their support to his research.



**Dr Jean Paul Chiron, Secretary General of the National Academy of Pharmacy of France (left) extends award to Dr Abdoulaye Djimdé (right). In the middle: Dr Djimdé's wife Mama Assa Diba-Djimdé**

### Fisher folk study involves those that are most affected by HIV/AIDS

The challenges to HIV/AIDS research are great, and potentially even more so when the research is conducted in developing countries where more than 95% of the 7,500 daily new infections occur. Reaching and involving those that are most affected is one major challenge. Currently, about 2000 fishermen in Uganda and Malawi, until now considered a 'hard to reach'

research population, are being enrolled in a Fisher folk study; a joint collaboration led and managed by the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) and supported by the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative (IAVI) and the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP).

The current study involves the fishermen communities based around the shores of Lake Victoria in Uganda and on the shores of Lake Malawi in Malawi. It has two major goals. The first is to map the prevalence and ways in which HIV spreads throughout these mobile communities. This information provides critical guidelines on how to best prevent the spread of HIV and AIDS. Second, the study will also evaluate the strain of HIV circulating among these populations to ensure that vaccines in development correspond with the viruses prevalent in these communities. The study will also look at the early-stage immune responses observed in individuals who become HIV-infected during the study, information that could provide important clues for vaccine design.

Pontiano Kaleebu, Assistant Director of the Uganda Virus Research Institute (UVRI) and coordinator of the Fisher folk study addresses the issue: "We are proud to be working with local organizations in Uganda and Malawi to gain a better understanding of HIV and AIDS in fishing communities and develop an approach to engage them in AIDS vaccine research."



**'Talking Boat' - HIV prevention message targeting fishermen (IAVI/ Vanessa Vick)**

## Meetings and visits

### EDCTP at the 48th ECSA-HC Conference

From 16 to 20 March the East, Central and Southern African Health Community (ECSA-HC) held its 48th Conference of Health Ministers in Swaziland. The theme of the conference was "Strengthening Health Systems to Achieve the Millennium Development Goals". The Conference was attended by Ministers of Health, Permanent Secretaries, Directors of Health, Programme Managers and bilateral partners to review regional health priorities and identify areas of collaboration. EDCTP's High Representative Dr Pascoal Mocumbi presented the experiences and expectations from the EDCTP programme under the conference sub-theme "Action-Oriented Research for Health Planning and Decision-making".

The main recommendations from the session were that research or data collection should be initiated and driven by African countries. Leadership and enabling structures like ethics bodies should be in-built; and where such expertise existed within the ECSA region they should be recognised and be best used. Member states were asked to rely on evidence driven policies and that potential misuse and non-use of research findings should be recognised and addressed accordingly.

#### About ECSA-HC

ECSA-HC is an inter-governmental regional organisation which was established in 1974 with the mandate to promote and encourage efficiency and relevance in the provision of health services in East, Central and Southern Africa member states. Currently ECSA comprises of 10 member states (Kenya, Lesotho, Malawi, Mauritius, Seychelles, Swaziland, Tanzania, Uganda, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).

### EDCTP strengthens collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Africa (WHO AFRO)

From 12 to 13 May 2009 a team from EDCTP comprising two secretariat staff and the Chairperson of the Developing Countries Coordinating Committee (DCCC) met with officials at the Regional Office of WHO in Africa based in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo. During this meeting participants from EDCTP and WHO explored ways of strengthening their collaboration in sub-Saharan Africa.

On the first day the EDCTP team conducted technical meetings with WHO's Director of Programmes, the Director for Control of Communicable Diseases, the Director of AIDS, TB and malaria (ATM) cluster and key staff working in these units. On the second day the team finished the visit to WHO/AFRO by meeting with Dr Louis Sambo, the Regional Director of WHO AFRO. There was mutual agreement to strengthen collaboration and avoid duplication of efforts between WHO and EDCTP.

The areas of collaboration discussed during the two days included capacity building, stimulation and support of African researchers, support for ethics and regulatory bodies, support for the Clinical Trials Registry, improved information sharing and exploration of integration of functions of planned WHO Centres of Excellence with those of the EDCTP funded Networks of Excellence.

WHO/AFRO has representation on the (DCCC): an independent advisory body of prominent African scientists and health professionals. From 2009 the WHO/AFRO representative on DCCC will be Dr Issa Sanou who is the Regional Adviser for the Information, Evidence and Research (IER) unit in AFRO. He replaces Dr Landry Bide who served on the committee from 2008.



Left to right: Prof. Bartholomew Akanmori (Medical Officer WHO AFRO), Dr Lusamba-Dikassa (Director of Programmes, WHO AFRO), Prof. Charles Mgone (Executive Director, EDCTP) and Dr Andrew Kitua (Chairperson, DCCC)

## Site visit Benin



**EDCTP Delegation meets with members of the Benin National Ethics Committee**

On 25 to 29 May 2009, EDCTP conducted a site visit in Benin. Site visits are an important means for advocacy, data collection, and technical assessment of sites that are involved in EDCTP-funded projects. EDCTP had meetings with the scientists and management of the Faculty of Health Sciences at the University of Abomey Calavi in Cotonou, project coordinators and their teams, as well as Beninese Government Ministers and other senior officials. The Ministry of Health and the University of Abomey Calavi are involved in the following EDCTP supported projects:

### **Evaluation of alternative antimalarial drugs to sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine for intermittent preventive treatment in pregnancy (IPTp) in the context of insecticide treated nets**

Project coordinator: Prof. Clara Menéndez Santos  
Principal investigator, Benin: Prof. Achille Massougboji

### **Support project for the establishment and the strengthening of the Benin National Ethic Committee**

Project coordinator: Dr Roch Appolinaire Hounghinin  
Collaborator: Dr Raouf A. Ossen

Additionally, in order to encourage future collaborations EDCTP visited the National Tuberculosis Control Centre in Lazaret, the Cotonou HIV Treatment Centre, the Cotonou Entomology Research Centre (CREC), the Regional Public Health Training Centre (IRSP) in Ouidah and potential patient recruitment centres at Tori, Allada, Sekou and Attogon.

The EDCTP team had separate meetings with among others the Minister of Health, Honourable Prof. Issifou Takpara (Minister of Research and Higher Education), Honourable Francois Abiola (Former Minister of Health and current President of Global Fund for Benin), Prof. Dorothee Kinde-Gazard; Prof. Benjamin Fayomi (Director for the Applied Biomedical Sciences Institute (ISBA)), Prof. Achille Massougboji (Head of Department of Parasitology, University of Abomey Calavi), Prof. Martin Akagbeto (Director CREC), Prof. Ernest Nounawon (Director of Research in Health), Prof. Léodégal Bazira (Director IRSP), Mr Jean Barbé (Head of Social Good Governance Section of the European Union Delegation in Cotonou, Benin).

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