



EDCTP NEWSLETTER

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EDCTP

The power of sharing science

Even more and better

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New at www.edctp.org

Public versions of the agendas, minutes and summaries of decisions of our Board, General Assembly and Scientific Advisory Committee are now available at www.edctp.org. Go to the "Get to know us" tab to access specific information about the work of each body.

Access to information on our funded projects is also available via our new *EDCTPgrants Public Portal*.

Forum 19-21 September 2018



Save the date!

Ninth EDCTP Forum 2018
Clinical research and sustainable development in sub-Saharan Africa: the impact of North-South partnerships

When: 17-21 September 2018

Where: Lisbon, Portugal

Who: Scientists, policy makers, funders and global health partners in the field of clinical research and development for poverty-related diseases

The EDCTP Forum is hosted by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology and will take place at the Calouste Gulbenkian Foundation.

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European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)

Esteemed stakeholders,

In the spirit of European-African partnership, we have started alternating the hosting of our biennial Forums. I would like to encourage you all to participate in the Ninth EDCTP Forum that will take place in Lisbon, Portugal from 17 to 21 September 2018. The Forum offers many opportunities to forge future research collaborations globally and discuss the work currently at hand. I hope to welcome you in great numbers and in particular I strongly encourage young researchers to seize this opportunity to present their work in progress.

Nigeria, represented by the Federal Ministry of Health, Department of Health Planning, Research and Statistics, joined the EDCTP Association as a member country in September 2017. I am very optimistic that more African and European countries will apply for EDCTP membership in 2018 and that the existing members will strengthen their political and financial commitments to the Association. The EDCTP teams based in South Africa and the Netherlands together with the EDCTP High Representatives in Africa and Europe play an important role in this advocacy as well as in developing collaborations with African and European initiatives and organisations.

One very good result mentioned is the collaboration with WHO-AFRO and TDR on a call for implementation research. This call contributes to one of our main objectives, i.e.



Dr Michael Makanga
Executive Director

the development of African research capacity. Allow me also to single out the heart-warming start of the EDCTP Alumni Network in Johannesburg, South Africa on 3 and 4 October 2017. More than 70 former and current EDCTP Fellows came to the meeting. They immediately took ownership of the idea and enthusiastically explored its possibilities.

Co-infections and co-morbidities contribute to accelerated and complicated disease progression and result in increased mortality and morbidity. They present unique challenges in diagnosis, treatment and prevention. Several items touch upon this important public health problem, including an item on the pertinent EDCTP stakeholder meeting held on 13 September 2017. A report will be published next month.

In concluding, I would like to mention that the EDCTP Participating States in Africa and Europe have already started consultations and discussions on the future direction of the organization after 2020 from the perspective of the EDCTP Association. With a long-term perspective, let us assure a strong position of EDCTP in the future by doing even more and better than expected. I am confident that EDCTP, its grantees and all its stakeholders are aware of the importance of the opportunities ahead.

Dr Michael Makanga
Executive Director

Supported by the EU



Co-infections and non-communicable disease co-morbidities

Co-infections and co-morbidities represent an important public health problem in many areas due to accelerated and/or complicated disease progression, resulting in increased mortality and morbidity and presenting unique challenges in diagnosis, treatment and prevention.

Evidence from research on co-infections and co-morbidities is urgently needed to inform the development and optimisation of new or existing treatments, diagnosis and prevention. EDCTP has responded by identifying this as a priority research area, and has supported a symposium, stakeholder meeting and call for proposal in this area.

EDCTP stakeholder meeting on co-infections and co-morbidities

An EDCTP Stakeholder meeting on co-infections and co-morbidities was held in The Hague, The Netherlands, on 13 September 2017. Participants included 52 representatives from academic and research institutions, funding agencies, product development partnerships, industry and international organisations, as well as members of EDCTP staff. The meeting was co-chaired by Dr Maryline Bonnet (Institute of Research for Development, France) and Prof. John Gyapong (University of Health and Allied Sciences, Ghana).

The four key objectives of the meeting were: (1) to review the research landscape, including the key clinical research questions and barriers to progress in sub-Saharan Africa; (2) to discuss the available interventions and products in development; (3) to reach out to stakeholders in this field with a view to collaboration on future EDCTP activities; and (4) to identify priority areas in terms of disease, research and interventions, both in the short and medium term.

The meeting report will be published on the EDCTP website in November 2017.

GSK and EDCTP agree on Fellowships to study co-morbidities

The pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline (GSK London, UK) and EDCTP have signed a memorandum of understanding to support research projects on poverty-related infectious disease (PRD) and non-communicable disease (NCD) co-morbidities. The two organisations will contribute equally towards a joint call for proposals in 2017 that is expected to support 5-8 senior fellowships in sub-Saharan Africa with a focus on co-morbidities.

This call represents the first dedicated initiative by EDCTP to help address the increasing burden of NCDs in sub-Saharan Africa. Furthermore, the memorandum is the first bi-lateral agreement between EDCTP and a major pharmaceutical company during the implementation of the second EDCTP programme. In September, the agreement was signed for GSK by Dr Michael Strange, Vice President & Head of Africa NCD Open Lab and Dr Simon Chell, Scientific Director of Africa NCD Open Lab, and by Dr Michael Makanga, Executive Director and Dr Ole Olesen, Director of North-North Cooperation for EDCTP.

EDCTP-ANRS symposium at IAS 2017: co-infections and HIV

EDCTP sponsored a well-attended symposium on 26 July at the International AIDS Society 2017 conference in Paris on “Co-infections associated with high mortality in severely immunocompromised HIV patients”. The symposium, which was held in partnership with ANRS (French National Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis), attracted approximately 70 attendees, including researchers from the public and private sectors, clinicians, social scientists, other funders, and public health experts.

According to WHO statistics (2015), a high percentage of people in low-income countries is affected by multiple pathogens. The emergence of the AIDS epidemic has fuelled the incidence of TB, especially in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA), where the burden of HIV-associated TB is highest. Significant efforts and investments have been made in improving diagnostic, prognostic and treatment approaches for TB. However, not all HIV-related co-infections have received sufficient attention. Despite significant strides in HIV management, opportunistic infections (many of which are on the WHO list of neglected tropical diseases) are still a frequent cause of mortality in immunosuppressed HIV-positive individuals in SSA. Due in part to the highly immunocompromised status of these patients, these co-infections can result in unique diagnostic and treatment challenges.

The presentations and discussion focused on the themes of: development of quantitative diagnostics; advances in efficacious, low toxicity treatments; and implementation of treatment algorithms to reduce mortality. Several EDCTP and/or ANRS-funded projects were highlighted: DREAMM (Angela Loyse), AMBITION-cm (Joseph Jarvis), STATIS (François-Xavier Blanc) and TRIP (Sayoki Mfinanga).

Brief introductions to EDCTP and ANRS were given by Christy Comeaux (Project Officer, EDCTP) and François Dabis, who was recently appointed as director of ANRS.



Open calls for proposals

Ethics and regulatory capacities

Call budget:	€2.5 M
Expected number of grants:	6–8
Funding level:	Up to 100% of eligible costs
Procedure:	Single-stage application
Opening date:	3 August 2017
Deadline:	21 November 2017

Career Development Fellowships

Call budget:	€2.5 M
Expected number of grants:	17–19
Funding level:	Up to 100% of eligible costs
Procedure:	Single-stage application
Opening date:	3 August 2017
Deadline:	21 November 2017

EDCTP-TDR Clinical Research and Development Fellowships

Call budget:	€1.5 M
Expected number of grants:	up to 15
Funding level:	Up to 100% of eligible costs
Procedure:	Single-stage application
Opening date:	9 November 2017
Deadline:	8 February 2018

Newly signed grants

ISoRes

Career Development Fellow: *Dr Deogratius Ssemwanga. Immunological selection of recombinants following HIV-1 superinfection. Uganda National Health Research Organisation (UNHRO), Entebbe, Uganda*

Starting date:	1 August 2017
Duration:	36 months
Grant amount:	€148,848
Grant agreement:	TMA-2015-CDF-982

UCE

Career Development Fellow: *Dr Humphrey Kariuki Njaanake. Urinary Cytokine ELISA: a tool for assessing urinary tract pathology in Schistosoma haematobium infections. University of Nairobi (UoN), Nairobi, Kenya*

Starting date:	1 August 2017
Duration:	36 months
Grant amount:	€149,646
Grant agreement:	TMA-2015-CDF-995

HIVDR

Senior Fellowship: *Dr Immaculate Nankya. Low frequent HIV drug resistant polymorphisms in infants born to HIV-seropositive mothers: implications on response to therapy. Joint Clinical Research Center (JCRC), Kampala, Uganda*

Starting date:	1 September 2017
Duration:	60 months
Grant amount:	€395,823.55
Grant agreement:	TMA-2015-SF-1037

Planned calls for proposals

Senior Fellowships

Call budget:	€3 M
Expected number of grants:	6–7
Funding level:	Up to 100% of eligible costs
Procedure:	Single-stage application
Opening date:	3 November 2017
Close date:	2 February 2018

EDCTP-GSK Senior Fellowships for co-morbidities between poverty-related diseases (PRDs) and non-communicable diseases (NCDs)

Call budget:	€3 M
Expected number of grants:	5–8
Maximum funding:	€500,000
Funding level:	Up to 100% of eligible costs
Opening date:	3 November 2017
Deadline:	2 February 2018

More information about calls for proposals is available at www.edctp.org
To apply, visit www.edctppgrants.org

TESAII

Network of Excellence. Trials of Excellence in Southern Africa II
Coordinator: *Fundação Manhiça (FM-CISM), Maputo, Mozambique*

Starting date:	1 September 2017
Duration:	36 months
Grant amount:	€2,999,966.25
Grant agreement:	1051 TESAII EDCTP-RegNet2015

EACCR2

Network of Excellence. Eastern Africa Consortium for Clinical Research 2
Coordinator: *Uganda National Health Research Organisation (UNHRO), Entebbe, Uganda*

Starting date:	1 September 2017
Duration:	36 months
Grant amount:	€2,999,566.64
Grant agreement:	1104 EACCR2 EDCTP-RegNet2015

WANETAM

Network of Excellence. West African Network for TB AIDS and Malaria
Coordinator: *Réseau Africain de Recherche sur le SIDA/Institut de Recherche en Santé, de Surveillance Epidémiologique et de Formations (RARS/IRESSEF), Dakar Senegal*

Starting date:	1 September 2017
Duration:	36 months
Grant amount:	€3,000,000
Grant agreement:	1049 WANETAM EDCTP-RegNet2015

Partnerships with African initiatives

EDCTP is strengthening working relationships with a number of key regional partners in the African health and development sectors, including the World Health Organization - Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, African Network for Drugs and Innovation (ANDi), and the Alliance for Accelerating Excellence in Science in Africa (AESAs). Through these relationships, EDCTP aims to align its investments in common work areas in order to leverage its support to countries and institutions. Moreover, it aims for synergy in its engagements with the African Union and WHO-AFRO.

Earlier, in June 2017, EDCTP signed a cooperative agreement with NEPAD to pilot joint activities focusing on the optimisation of regulatory systems, the development of technical expertise in clinical trials authorization (CTA) and safety surveillance/pharmacovigilance (PV). EDCTP will work with partners such as NEPAD, the Gates Foundation, and the African Vaccine Regulatory Forum (AVAREF) of WHO-AFRO to further strengthen regulatory and ethics activities in the region.

In July 2017, Dr Thomas Nyirenda, EDCTP South-South Networking and Capacity Development Manager, participated in the 2nd Annual Meeting of the Developing Excellence in Leadership, Training and Science Initiative (DELTAS) Africa programme in Accra, Ghana. DELTAS is funded by the Wellcome Trust and managed by AESA. The aim of the DELTAS Africa initiative is to improve health in Africa through research driven by the most urgent regional challenges. Dr Nyirenda continued the discussions with the funders on creating synergies with the EDCTP capacity development activities in Africa.

In August 2017, the EDCTP High Representative South, Dr Leonardo Simão, and Prof. Moses Bockarie, EDCTP Director of South-South Cooperation and Head of Africa Office, visited Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, to meet with Her Excellency Mrs Amira El Fadil, AU Commissioner for Social Affairs. In the dis-



Photo: Dr Leonardo Simão and Prof. Moses Bockarie meet with Her Excellency Mrs Amira El Fadil

ussion of the contribution of EDCTP activities to the AU's Agenda 2063, Mrs El Fadil reiterated the AU's commitment to EDCTP activities and its participation in the GA meetings.

Early September, Prof. Bockarie visited Brazzaville, Republic of the Congo to participate in the 31st Meeting of the African Advisory Committee for Health Research and Development (AACHRD). This multidisciplinary, multi-sectorial body advises the Regional Director of WHO-AFRO on health research, policies, and development strategies. He presented EDCTP activities and discussed the possibility of enhanced collaboration between WHO-AFRO and EDCTP. During the meeting, the joint WHO-AFRO/TDR/EDCTP Small Grants Scheme call was announced.

Following the AACHRD meeting, Prof. Bockarie met with Dr Matshidiso Moite (WHO-AFRO Regional Director) and members of her team. EDCTP and WHO-AFRO committed to exploring the possibility of signing a cooperation agreement outlining areas for joint activities. EDCTP will organise a high level meeting at the WHO-AFRO Regional Committee meeting in Dakar, Senegal, in 2018.

Also in September, Dr Nyirenda participated in the 3rd Technical and Steering Committee Meetings of AVAREF which were held at WHO-AFRO head office in Brazzaville, Congo, continuing EDCTP's commitment to partnership as exemplified by the June cooperative agreement with NEPAD.

The next EU research & innovation programme

In the context of the Horizon 2020 Interim Evaluation, an independent High-Level Group of experts chaired by Pascal Lamy, former EU trade Commissioner and Director General of the World Trade Organisation, put forward its strategic recommendations on how to maximise the impact of EU's future investment in research and innovation (R&I).

The report—LAB – FAB – APP—Investing in the European future we want— recommends that research and innovation be prioritised in EU and national budgets. It also calls for better alignment of national programmes—both between nations and with the EU programme—using the same evaluation processes and implementation rules for national funding, and progressively leading to similar procedures governing R&I initiatives across Europe. It furthermore recommends that Framework Programme 9 should receive a budget of at least €120bn and maintain a three-pillar structure, encompassing science and skills; innovation and competitiveness; and global challenges (defined with reference to the UN Sustainable Development Goals).

The report was presented during the high-level conference “Research & Innovation—shaping our future“, held in Brussels, Belgium on 3 July. The conference, hosted by Carlos Moedas, European Commissioner for Research, Science and Innovation, brought together more than 700 stakeholders, including researchers, innovators and policy-makers from EU institutions and EU member states. Dominika Jajkovic, Monitoring & Evaluation Officer, represented EDCTP at the event.

EDCTP workshop for grantees from West and Central Africa

EDCTP organised a financial and project management training workshop at the Institut de Recherche en Santé, de Surveillance Epidémiologique et de Formation (IRESSEF) in Dakar, Senegal, 19–21 September 2017. The training is part of EDCTP activities under its 2017 workplan. Sixty eight participants from EDCTP-funded beneficiaries in 14 countries in West and Central Africa attended the workshop. The main objective of this three-day workshop was to provide training on relevant H2020 financial management, auditing and project management rules.

The participants were welcomed at the opening session by Prof. Souleyman Mboup, President of IRESSEF. The three-day training was facilitated by EDCTP staff: Mr Abdou Barry, Director of Finance and Administration, Dr Ole Olesen, Director of North-North Cooperation, Ms Neodia Flores, Grants Finance Assistant, and Mr Jean Marie Vianney Habarugira, Project Officer.

Research capacity development

Strengthening clinical research capacity

Dr Michael Makanga, EDCTP's Executive Director, was invited to speak at an international workshop organised by the UK Academy of Sciences in London in July 2017. He presented the EDCTP funding approach to strengthening clinical research capacity in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) during a session which also included Dr Suzanne Candy (Academy of Medical Sciences), Prof. Mike Turner (Wellcome Trust), Dr Juliet Addo (GSK Africa NCD Open Lab) and Prof. Trudie Lang (University of Oxford).

Various groups from Africa, Asia and the Americas discussed in regard to their respective regions, clinical research capacity gaps; barriers, challenges and successes; as well as opportunities and collaborations to address these gaps. The participants concluded that clinical research capacity in LMICs could be improved by strengthening:

1. Clinical research mentoring at the institutional and individual level
2. Academy networks to support learning and opportunities
3. Support for LMICs to define their own clinical research agendas
4. National and regional networks
5. Health research funding from national governments
6. Research advocacy and diplomacy to demonstrate the impact of clinical research
7. Career pathways for clinical researchers in LMICs
(based on information from The Academy of Medical Sciences)

EDCTP was very pleased to receive positive feedback from attendees on its role in supporting research in sub-Saharan Africa, and is continuing its commitment to capacity development through its Alumni Network for current and former fellows (see below).

WHO-AFRO 67th conference for health ministers

The annual meeting of the health ministers from the 47 countries in the WHO-AFRO region took place in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe from 28 August to 1 September 2017. At this high-profile WHO-AFRO Regional Committee meeting a range of strategies and actions is discussed to tackle public health challenges specific for the region. EDCTP was represented at the meeting by its High Representative South, Dr Leonardo Simão, EDCTP Executive Director Dr Michael Makanga, and EDCTP South-South Networking and Capacity Development Manager Dr Thomas Nyirenda.

In its report, the Regional Committee acknowledged the importance of national regulatory authorities and ethics committees. EDCTP was pleased with this alignment as it continues to invest in projects which support the capacity development of ethical and regulatory bodies. Every year it publishes a call for proposals on this topic. The current call is open until 21 November.

WHO-AFRO-TDR-EDCTP funding for implementation research

A new partnership has been formed between EDCTP, TDR (the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases), and the World Health Organization's Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO) in recognition of a mutual interest in strengthening the capacity for health research in African countries. Collaboration between these three partners has been realised through a recently launched call "Joint WHO-AFRO/TDR/EDCTP Small Grants Scheme for implementation research on infectious diseases of poverty", managed by WHO-AFRO, which will close on 30 November 2017.

This call signifies a commitment by the funders to increasing the level of implementation research in order to deliver high quality and cost-efficient health care solutions to people in resource-poor settings. Whilst EDCTP and TDR already have a long-established partnership in research capacity development, this is the first time that EDCTP and WHO-AFRO are collaborating on a joint

initiative. This reflects the expansion of the second EDCTP programme as a true European-African partnership and the extension of its scope to product-focused implementation research including African research capacity development in this area.

WHO-AFRO is managing the implementation of the call, with TDR contributing up to US\$150,000 and EDCTP up to €300,000, provided by the German Federal Ministry of Education and Research (BMBF), the Medical Research Council (United Kingdom) and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency. As such, this small grants scheme represents a joint initiative between these three European countries, and demonstrates EDCTP's role in promoting the coordination and alignment of national research programmes and activities on poverty-related diseases—one of the key objectives of the EDCTP2 programme.

For more information on this call, please visit the [TDR grants webpage](#).



Photo: EDCTP Alumni Network launch event participants

EDCTP Alumni Network on its way

More than 70 former and current EDCTP Fellows came to Johannesburg, South Africa to launch the EDCTP Alumni Network on 3 and 4 October. They were joined by representatives of the EU delegation to South Africa, the Department of Science and Technology (South Africa), the New Partnership for Africa's Development (NEPAD) Agency, the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Africa (WHO-AFRO) and Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (WHO TDR), African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM), as well as representatives of the EDCTP Strategic Advisory Committee (SAC) and the Regional Networks of Excellence.

The EDCTP comprehensive fellowship scheme supports individual researchers in sub-Saharan Africa and promotes career development as well as scientific leadership and excellence. During the first and second programmes of EDCTP (up to and including 2016), 102 fellowships have been awarded. The EDCTP Alumni Network will provide a mechanism to facilitate networking between the fellows as well as for assessing the impact of EDCTP investments in fellowships.

The main objective of the two-day workshop was to introduce the Fellows to an online interactive platform which will enable the growing number of EDCTP Fellows to learn more about completed and active projects and network with each other. The platform will include discussion forums and a dynamic map for easy identification of fellows by country, type of fellowship, or disease area, among other features.

Participants shared their views on their fellowship journey and mentorship experience, and expressed their ideas on how best to make the Alumni Network productive for the fellows. Attendees also heard about other relevant EDCTP activities and explored potential interaction with the current EDCTP-supported regional networks and disease specific consortia, as well as various regional and global partners.



Photo: The NIMR delegation and EDCTP Africa Office staff

Advocating for EDCTP membership

Early in 2017, EDCTP initiated an advocacy drive to engage four African countries—Angola, Ethiopia, Kenya and Nigeria—to create awareness of the added value of membership of the EDCTP Association. Participation of countries with diverse epidemiological profiles is also important for EDCTP in setting its research agenda. For example, Angola is among the countries recently affected by re-emerging epidemics of yellow fever, leishmaniasis is most common in Ethiopia and Kenya, while Nigeria has the highest burden of neglected infectious diseases in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr Leonardo Simão, EDCTP High Representative South, and Prof. Moses Bockarie, EDCTP Director of South-South Cooperation and Head of Africa Office, visited senior government officials and research leaders in all four countries. Angola was visited in May 2017 (see the July Newsletter). In June 2017, a delegation from the Nigerian Institute of Medical Research (NIMR) visited the EDCTP Africa Office during a study tour of the South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC) in Cape Town.

The Nigerian party was led by NIMR Director General, Prof. Babatunde L. Salako. Prior to the study tour, the EDCTP Africa Office had worked closely with the Delegation of the European Union to the Federal Republic of Nigeria and ECOWAS, through Dr Anthony Ayeke (EU Programme Manager, Health, Nutrition and Resilience Section) and Prof. Salako to inspire the Federal Ministry of Health to increase engagement with EDCTP through membership of the EDCTP Association.

In July, Dr Simão and Prof. Bockarie visited Nairobi, Kenya, for meetings with national stakeholders in health research, including the Ministry of Health, the National Research Fund (NRF), the Kenya Medical Research Institute, and the National Commission for Science, Technology and Innovation (NACOSTI). Discussions were held with Dr George A. Ombakho (Director of Research Management and Development, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology); Dr Charles M Nzioka (Director, Department of Clinical Research, Ministry of Health); Dr Jemimah Onsare (Acting CEO, NRF); Dr Salome Guchu (Acting CEO, Kenya National Innovation Agency); and Dr Moses Rugut (Director General, NACOSTI).

Ethiopia was visited in August 2017. Dr Simão and Prof. Bockarie met with His Excellency Dr Kebede Worku, State Minister of Health; Dr Daniel Burssa (Chief of Staff, Ministry of Health and Head of the Office of the State Minister at the Federal Ministry of Health); and Dr Taye Tolera Balcha (Director General, Armauer Hansen Research Institute), to inform them of the potential benefits of Ethiopian membership of the EDCTP Association.

In September, the EDCTP Association welcomed Nigeria as a new member, while there are very positive indications that Angola, Ethiopia and Kenya are considering various membership options.

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