

EDCTP Update is a monthly newsletter from the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership.



E D C T P

EDCTP Update

April 2020

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Highlights

- **World Malaria Day 2020 in times of COVID-19**
- **EDCTP 2020 Calls for proposals open**
- **Training African epidemiologists and biostatisticians**

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World Malaria Day 2020

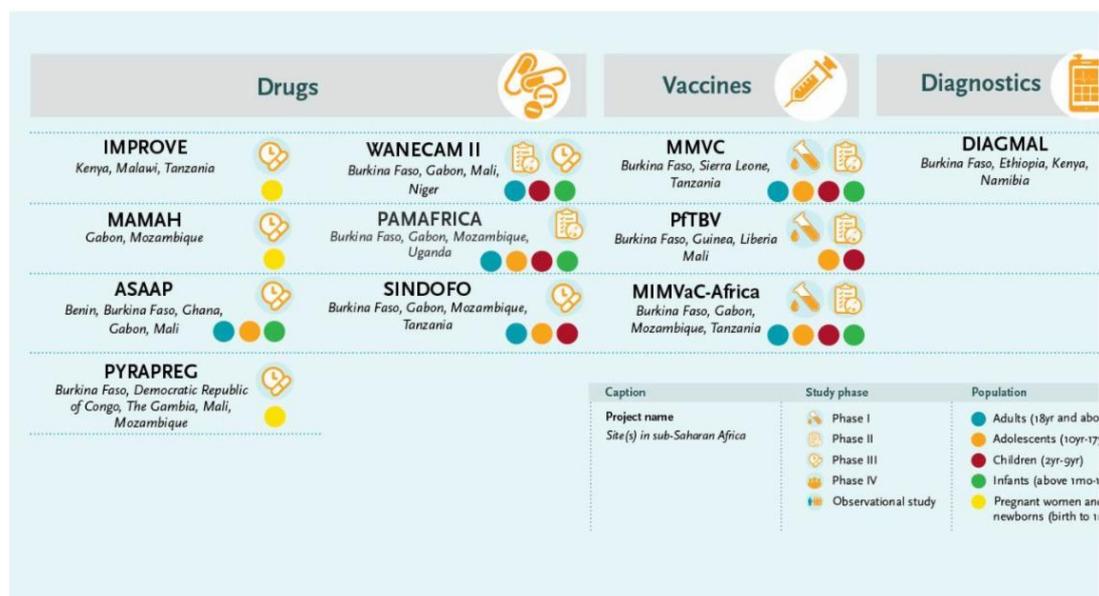
On World Malaria Day 2020, the fight against malaria is facing stalled progress and a disruptive pandemic while the road to malaria eradication is still long and complex. This World Malaria Day is a call to keep malaria on the political agenda and for everyone involved to take ownership: "Zero malaria starts with me".

In its [World malaria report 2019](#), the World Health Organization (WHO) concludes that progress in malaria control has almost come to a halt. Over the period 2014-2018, the number of new infections did not decline and as many people died from malaria in 2018 as in the year before.

The progress made earlier is currently threatened by the disruption caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. WHO urges countries to ensure the continuity of malaria services and [to adapt malaria interventions to the pandemic response](#).

Ahead of World Malaria Day 2020, WHO released an [important report on reinforcing the global malaria eradication strategy to get back on target](#). Eradication of malaria needs to stay on the global agenda.

Dr Michael Makanga, EDCTP Executive Director: "EDCTP fully supports and embraces the WHO vision of a world free of malaria. To achieve this long-term and multifaceted objective, research and development for new and improved transformative tools aimed for use in an integrated and multidisciplinary manner is essential. EDCTP has already supported this R&D agenda with investments in clinical malaria research of almost €134 million."



[Read more about EDCTP's investments and projects](#)

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Malaria portfolio studies: MIMVac-Africa and PAMAFRICA

The **MIMVaC-Africa consortium** has commenced its ambitious programme of clinical studies for developing effective malaria vaccines during an online meeting on 31 March 2020. The multilateral initiative will support the clinical development of effective malaria vaccine candidates in Africa. EDCTP awarded a grant of more than €11,9 million: the participating institutions will contribute €9.6 million to conduct clinical trials on a portfolio of five malaria vaccine candidates.

The consortium comprises ten organisations based in Africa, Europe and Asia. The consortium is coordinated by the Groupe de Recherche Action en Santé (GRAS), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Partner organisations are based in Gabon, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom.

The new **PAMAFRICA** research consortium led by Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV) received an EDCTP grant of €21.9 million. The grant is to be matched by funding from MMV, Novartis and partners. The consortium includes seven research organisations from Burkina Faso, Gabon, Germany, Mozambique, Spain and Uganda. In addition to Novartis, other pharmaceutical company partners may join the consortium.

Over a period of 5 years, PAMAFRICA will develop a portfolio of projects including new treatments for malaria in the most-at-risk populations, including babies, patients with severe

malaria, and those with drug-resistant infections. Clinical trial capabilities in Africa will also be strengthened.

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EDCTP and Africa CDC collaborate to train epidemiologists

EDCTP and the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (Africa CDC) collaborate on a call for proposals which aims to establish an African cohort of epidemiologists. The call budget is €5 million. Support will go to institutions in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe which provide master's degree training in epidemiology and biostatistics, as part of Africa CDC's framework for public health workforce development.

Dr John Nkengasong, Director of Africa CDC: "*The EDCTP-Africa CDC Fellowship will serve as a key milestone in supporting the efforts of Africa CDC to strengthen the public health workforce in Africa, and we at Africa CDC are delighted to be leading the initiative.*"

Read joint press release: [EDCTP and Africa CDC collaborate to develop capacity for outbreak and epidemic response in sub-Saharan Africa](#)

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2020 Calls for proposals open - Deadlines in July and August

Currently, the following EDCTP 2020 Calls for proposals are open with various deadlines for application in July and August 2020

[Ethics and regulatory capacities](#) (CSA2020ERC)

Call budget: €2.5 million / Expected number of grants: 6-8
Open date: 10 April 2020 / Deadline: 16 July 2020

This call for proposals aims to support sub-Saharan African countries to establish and/or develop robust national medicines regulatory systems and capacities for ethical review of clinical research and use of medicinal products and technologies in humans.

[EDCTP Regional Networks](#) (CSA2020NoE)

Call budget: €18 million / Expected number of grants: 4
Open date: 10 April 2020 / Deadline: 23 July 2020

EDCTP has funded four regional networks, defined geographically as Southern, Eastern, Western, and Central Africa. The purpose of this Call for Proposals is to provide continued funding to EDCTP Regional Networks that have demonstrated significant progress towards achieving the pre-defined deliverables set out in the 2015 call.

[Capacity development for disease outbreak and epidemic response in sub-Saharan Africa, in collaboration with Africa CDC](#) (CSA2020E)

Call budget: €5 million / Expected number of grants: 7-10 grants
Opening date: 10 April 2020 / Deadline: 30 July 2020

This call for proposals aims to establish an African cohort of epidemiologists. Support will be given to institutions in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe that provide master's training in epidemiology and biostatistics, as part of the Africa CDC's framework for public health workforce development.

[Career Development Fellowships in poverty-related diseases and child and adolescent health](#) (TMA2020CDF)

Call budget: €3.75 million / Expected number of grants: 16-25
Open date: 10 April 2020 / Deadline: 05 August 2020

The purpose of this call for proposals is to support early- to mid-career researchers ("fellows") by providing them with opportunities to train and develop their clinical research skills. Fondation Botnar and Novartis will contribute to the call budget for successful proposals regarding child and adolescent health.

[Innovative approaches to enhance poverty-related diseases research](#) (RIA2020I)

Call budget: €23.4 million / Expected number of grants: 5-15
Open date: 10 April 2020 / Deadline: 13 August 2020

This call for proposals aims to fund a number of small- to medium-scale clinical trials and/or clinical research studies that can deliver proof-of-concept or validation of smart, highly innovative technologies or concepts to prevent, treat or diagnose PRDs in sub-Saharan Africa. The call is strictly aimed at supporting novel innovations.

[Strategic actions to maximise the impact of research on reducing disease burden, in collaboration with development cooperation initiatives](#) (RIA2020S)

Call budget: €23.4 million / Expected number of grants: 5-15
Open date: 10 April 2020 / Deadline: 13 August 2020

The purpose of this call for proposals is to support distinct strategic actions which are part of a large-scale programme of development cooperation actions. Projects should focus on research to maximise the uptake of products and health interventions in sub-Saharan Africa.

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Recent events



ESSENCE | Annual meeting | 27/04 2020

ESSENCE held its annual members meeting on 27 April 2020. ESSENCE on Health Research is a funders initiative hosted by WHO/TDR that brings donors together to identify synergies and increase the value of resources and action for health research.

The meeting focused on the 'Importance of Research Capacity for Our Time'. The meeting was an opportunity for members to discuss trends, gaps and opportunities in health research capacity in low- and middle-income countries in the context of COVID-19. EDCTP Strategic Partnerships Officer, Ana Lúcia Weinberg, participated in the meeting on behalf of EDCTP.

Members also discussed global health issues and priorities that ESSENCE should focus on. Updates were given by various working groups including on the progress on Review of Investments and Implementation Research.

More about [ESSENCE on WHO webpages](#)

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Recently signed grants

[Advances in product development for effective prevention, treatment and management of co-infections and co-morbidities - 2018](#)

- **5FC HIV-Crypto** | Coordinator: Dr Isabela Ribeiro | Improved flucytosine formulation for the treatment of meningitis in advanced HIV disease

[Capacity development to facilitate delivery and uptake of new or improved medical interventions in African health systems - 2018](#)

- **ADAM** | Coordinator: Dr Pedro Aide | Malaria mass and focal drug administration to advance malaria elimination in Mozambique: accelerating programmatic implementation and policy translation

[Diagnostic tools for poverty-related diseases - 2018](#)

- **ERASE-TB** | Coordinator: Dr Norbert Heinrich | Early risk assessment in TB contacts by new diagnostic tests

[EDCTP Senior Fellowships - 2018](#)

- **H3TB** | Fellow: Dr Mareli Claassens | Hotspots, households and hospitals: targeted drug-resistant tuberculosis case finding in Namibia

[EDCTP-AREF Preparatory Fellowships - 2017](#)

- **PKP-GRIFTB** | Fellow: Assoc. Professor Hamdan Abualbasher | How does pharmacogenomics affect the pharmacokinetics of first-line anti-tuberculosis drugs in pulmonary tuberculosis-susceptible and MDR-TB patients in Sudan?

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Projects

IMPROVE | Recruitment and follow-up completed | April 2020

The IMPROVE study (IPTp with dihydroartemisinin-piperazine and azithromycin for malaria, sexually transmitted and reproductive tract infections in pregnancy in high sulphadoxine-pyrimethamine resistance areas in Kenya, Malawi, and Tanzania) completed recruitment in September 2019, i.e. all pregnant women (HIV-negative) have delivered and, the last infant follow-up was completed early April 2020. [For more detailed info see EDCTP's news item for World Malaria Day 2020.](#)

ShigOraVax | Ethics approval | April 2020

The project ShigOraVax (Early clinical development of an oral Shigella vaccine through phase II study in Africa) received ethical approval to conduct an epidemiological study to estimate the baseline burden of Shigella in Zambia and Burkina Faso. This baseline study is also registered: [NCT04312906 at clinicaltrials.gov](#) More at the [project website](#).

ETEC Vaccine Efficacy | Recruitment | 2020

The ETEC Vaccine Efficacy project (grant identifier: RIA2017S-2024) comprises field studies of an oral whole-cell ETEC vaccine candidate in African toddlers and children. The studies are to assess efficacy and set parameters for pivotal phase III trials. Currently, the consortium led by Mr Björn Sjöstrand (Scandinavian Biopharma Holding AB, Solna, Sweden) and with partners from Finland, Sweden, United Kingdom, and Zambia, is recruiting the last (third) cohort, i.e. children between 6-9 months. The studies are [registered at PACTR](#).

ETEC ETVAX | Kick-off meeting | 31/03 2020

The ETEC ETVAX - the First ETEC Vaccine - study (EDCTP grant identifier: RIA2018V-2309) held its kick-off meeting remotely on March 31 2020 with representatives from all partners in the project. The project is led by the consortium led by Mr Björn Sjöstrand (Scandinavian Biopharma Holding AB, Solna, Sweden) and with partners from Finland, Sweden, and Zambia.

PEP4LEP | Project newsletter | April 2020

The PREP4LEP study (EDCTP grant identifier: RIA2017NIM-1839) is coordinated by Ms. Liesbeth Mieras (Nederlandse Stichting voor Leprabestrijding (NLR), Amsterdam, the Netherlands, with partners from Ethiopia, Germany, Mozambique, the Netherlands, and Tanzania. The implementation trial in Mozambique Ethiopia and Tanzania is evaluating 'Chemoprophylaxis for leprosy: comparing the effectiveness and feasibility of a skin camp intervention to a health centre-based intervention'. More in [the April 2020 Newsletter](#)

PREV_PKDL | 2nd Annual meeting | 31/03 2020

The PREV_PKDL held its second annual meeting via a three-hour teleconference on 31 March 2020. The consortium conducts a study for the 'Clinical development of a therapeutic vaccine for prevention of post-kala azar dermal leishmaniasis". The consortium is led by Dr Sophie Houard (European Vaccine Initiative, Germany) with partners from Ethiopia, Kenya, Sudan, Uganda, and United Kingdom.

During the meeting, partners presented achievements of the second year of the project. These included progress in the preparation of the LEISH3 clinical trial to evaluate safety and efficacy of therapeutic vaccine ChAd63-KH for prevention of post kala azar dermal leishmaniasis (PKDL). Moreover, a status update was given for the research studies to conduct in-depth analysis of the immune set point at cure from VL in patients living in Sudan, Ethiopia, Uganda and Kenya. These studies are registered on [clinicaltrials.gov](#) under NCT04342715).

See also [the project website](#).

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EDCTP Fellows

The EDCTP Fellowships scheme is intended to support outstanding African scientist at various levels in their careers and to foster African research leadership. This item celebrates the latest achievements of some of the fellows as an illustration of research capacity development in sub-Saharan Africa.

Dr Clifford Banda (PENETRATE - TMA2017CDF-1897)

A [WWARN news article published online on 23 April 2020](#) shows how Dr Banda is using the WWARN malaria toolkit for his EDCTP-funded project PENETRATE (a sub-study of the IMPROVE DDI project). The article highlights how open access and sharing of resources can be helpful in setting up trials and, subsequently, the

generation of standardised data which can easily be shared. Data sharing is important to address key questions, e.g. in specific understudied populations such as pregnant women.

Dr Laurent Dembélé (HypnoBio - TMA2017CDF-1892)

Dr Dembélé is first author of the article [Quantitative Proteomic Analysis of Simian Primary Hepatocytes Reveals Candidate Molecular Markers for Permissiveness to Relapsing Malaria *Plasmodium cynomolgi*](#) published in open access in *Proteomics* on 24 August 2019. The described work was mainly funded by the [Novartis Institute for Tropical Diseases](#). EDCTP funding was used to complete the data analysis.

Dr Dzedzom de Souza (TMA2015CDF976)

EDCTP congratulates former EDCTP Career Development Fellow Dr Dzedzom de Souza who received a grant from DFID (United Kingdom). The findings of his previous EDCTP-funded research (TMA2015CDF976) contributed to the underpinning of his awarded proposal. The title of the new project is 'Strategies for the ENdgame: Targeting Infections among Non-compliers in the Elimination of Lymphatic filariasis' (SENTINEL). The project runs from October 2019 to March 2021.

Prof Nicaise Ndembi (former Senior Fellow)

Former EDCTP Senior Fellow [Dr Nicaise Ndembi](#) was awarded a NIH/NIAID R01 grant of US\$5 million on 27 April 2020. He collaborates with several members of the EDCTP Alumni Network HIV Working Group: Dr Joseph Fokam, Dr Deogratius Ssemwanga and Dr Cissy Kityo. His new project INPIRE studies 'Impact of Non-B HIV-1 Subtype on second line Protease Inhibitor Regimens in Africa' runs from 01 May 2020 until 30 April 2025.

Prof. Jean Nachega

Former EDCTP Senior Fellow Prof. Jean Nachega is one of the authors of the article '[Limiting the spread of COVID-19 in Africa: one size mitigation strategies do not fit all countries](#)' published in *The Lancet* on 28 April 2020).

See for an overview of EDCTP current and former fellows the [EDCTP Alumni Network platform](#)



EDCTP Resources and news

EDCTP successor programme

The global health organisation DSW published a position paper on the EDCTP successor programme: [EDCTP3 Position paper - Call for a dedicated R&I instrument for diseases of poverty under FP9: building on the success of EDCTP](#). The paper is supported by 15 global health and product development partnerships.

African research capacity

Prof. Moses John Bockarie (EDCTP Director of International Cooperation for Africa and Head of Africa Office) published on 08 April 2020 an article illustrating '[How Africa has developed its scientific research capabilities](#)', especially its advances in research preparedness for emergencies. The well-received article was published in *The Conversation* and as a [blog post at the GAVI website](#).

RESOURCES

Added value of EDCTP to Europe and Africa

EDCTP published two short updated brochures on the role of EDCTP in Europe and Africa

[The added value of EDCTP to Africa](#) brochure shows how EDCTP contributes to the process of achievement of the African Union; the creation and retention of a new generation of African scientists; the strengthening and harmonisation of enablers of high-quality and ethical clinical research; and the provision of safe medical interventions.

[The added value of EDCTP to Europe](#) brochure shows how EDCTP contributes to delivering on EU commitments to tackle global challenges; enabling greater scale and scope in the European Research Area; boosting scientific excellence and Europe's global competitiveness in research and innovation; and developing the evidence base for national and international policy-making.

EDCTP online project portfolio

The vast majority of the [EDCTP2 project portfolio can now be explored online](#). The portfolio offers short summaries of EDCTP-funded projects with a focus on the challenge addressed and the impact aimed for.

The portfolio contains the Collaborative R&D projects 2014-2019 (RIA grants; [also published separately as PDF](#)) and the Fellowship studies 2014-2019 (TMA grants; [also published separately as PDF](#)).

The ethics and regulatory projects 2014-2019 will be added in a few months. The portfolio will be updated with future new grants.

Public Portal of EDCTP2 grants

The [EDCTP public project portal](#) offers a more technical overview of key data on all EDCTP grants. The portal was upgraded with new search fields and export options, such as the possibility to search by country, by organisation and filter by role, i.e. coordinator or participant.

EDCTP NEWS

- Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the **Tenth EDCTP Forum** has been rescheduled to take place in Maputo, Mozambique, in the same venue from 17-20 October 2021.
- The period to submit nominations for the **EDCTP 2020 Prizes** has been extended until October 2020. The prizes will be awarded at the Tenth Forum in October 2021.

Four EDCTP 2020 Prizes:

- Scientific Leadership Prize - €10,000
- Outstanding Female Scientist Prize - €20,000
- Outstanding Research Team Prize - €50,000
- Dr Pascoal Mocumbi Prize - €50,000

[More information about the EDCTP Prizes](#)

- End of May 2020, two virtual **Scientific Review Committee meetings** will be organised to evaluate the proposals for two 2019 calls: 1) Strategic actions on product-related implementation research 2019; 2) Paediatric drug formulations for poverty-related diseases.
- In accordance with **government social distancing measures** regarding the COVID-19 pandemic, EDCTP staff based in The Hague (the Netherlands) and Cape Town (South Africa) are working from home until further notice.

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Funding opportunities

EDCTP funding opportunities above or [here](#)

Other opportunities

AAS/Royal Society | FLAIR Fellowships | Deadline 27/05 2020

The African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and the Royal Society, supported by the Global Challenges Research Fund (GCRF) offer the FLAIR fellowships. The [Future Leaders - African Independent Research \(FLAIR\) Fellowships](#) are for African early-career researchers who have the potential to become leaders in their field. These fellowships provide the opportunity to build an independent research career in a sub-Saharan African institution and to undertake cutting-edge scientific research that will address global challenges facing developing countries.

DAAD | one-year research grants | Deadline 31/10 2020

The [German Academic Exchange Service \(DAAD\) offers one-year research grants to foreign doctoral candidates](#) and young academics and scientists with an opportunity to carry out research and continue their education in Germany. There are funding programmes for various qualification phases and stages in a career. The grants also promote the exchange of experience and networking amongst colleagues. The primary aim of this programme is to promote research projects within the context of doctoral programmes.

DAAD | Research Grants - Doctoral Progr. in Germany | Deadline 31/10 2020

DAAD research grants provide young foreign academics and scientists with an opportunity to carry out research and continue their education in Germany. There are funding programmes for various qualification phases and stages in a career. The grants also promote the exchange of experience and networking amongst colleagues. [The aim of this grant programme is to support doctoral projects in Germany.](#)

DAAD | Research Stays in Germany | Deadline 31/10 2020

DAAD grants provide foreign academics and scientists with an opportunity to carry out research and continue their education in Germany. There are funding programmes for various qualification phases and stages in a career. The aim of this particular programme is to support [short-term research stays](#) and thus promote the exchange of experience and networking amongst colleagues.

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Upcoming events

IAS | AIDS 2020 | 06-10/07 2020

The International AIDS Society organises the 23rd International AIDS Conference AIDS2020 as a virtual conference. [Register at reduced rates](#)

IAS | virtual COVID-19 conference | 10-11/07 2020

The International AIDS Society (IAS) will host a virtual **COVID-19 Conference** on breaking COVID-19 research, policy analysis and frontline experience. The conference will take place on 10-11 July 2020, concluding AIDS 2020. [Register for free](#)

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