

EDCTP Update

October 2021



Highlights

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- **RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine: EDCTP contributions and next steps**
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Tenth EDCTP Forum

We look back at a successful and fruitful Tenth EDCTP Forum, which was held from 17 to 21 October 2021 virtually from Maputo, Mozambique. The theme, **Equity in research for health**, was the red thread through the sessions and culminated in a [lively debate](#) which once again showed the commitment of all our partners and stakeholders towards this goal.

If you are a registered participant, you can now access the recordings of all the sessions through the [Tenth EDCTP Forum virtual platform](#). The recordings will be available until the end of November 2021. In addition, we invite you to visit the [Forum blog](#) for video's and written reports of selected sessions.

We thank all speakers, sponsors and participants for joining us. We take home all messages of support to the EDCTP programme and look forward to continuing our collaboration!



We are encouraged by the support and appreciation expressed by so many from Mozambique and other African member countries as well as the European Union. It strengthens our efforts to build true and equitable partnerships while we look forward to the successor EDCTP programme.



EDCTP Prizes 2020

EDCTP awarded its prizes for research excellence and the Pascoal Mocumbi Prize at the Tenth EDCTP Forum. The biennial EDCTP Prizes recognise outstanding individuals and research teams from Africa and Europe who have made significant achievements in their research field. Additionally, the awardees will have made major contributions to strengthening clinical research capacity in Africa and supporting South-South and North-South networking.



Dr Pascoal Mocumbi Prize winner: Professor Sir Alimuddin Zumla

Sir Alimuddin (Ali) Zumla is ranked as the world's top communicable diseases expert and has authored 22 medical textbooks and contributed to 800 publications worldwide. Sir Ali Zumla is renowned for his empowerment of African and European scientists.

[Read more »](#)

Outstanding Female Scientist Prize winner: Professor Margaret Gyapong

Professor Margaret Gyapong is interested in research impact and has been a leader in this area bringing together the experiences of research institutions in Africa, Asia and Europe. In 25 years, Prof. Gyapong has risen



through the ranks of the research ladder to become a seasoned and internationally renowned scientist.

[Read more »](#)



Scientific Leadership Prize winner: Professor Graeme Meintjes

Over the past 20 years, Prof. Meintjes has made huge contributions to the improved understanding of HIV-associated tuberculosis, tuberculosis immune reconstitution inflammatory syndrome, and HIV-associated cryptococcal meningitis.

[Read more »](#)



Outstanding Research Team Prize winner: African-European Tuberculosis Consortium (AETBC)

The AETBC consortium is an international multisite group of African and European researchers to investigate the use of host biosignatures for the diagnosis of active TB disease.

[Read more »](#)

Professor Aboulaye Djimdé appointed to EDCTP Association Board

The [General Assembly](#) of the EDCTP Association has appointed Professor Aboulaye Djimdé (Mali) as its sixth EDCTP Association Board member. Prof. Djimdé is currently the Head of the Molecular Epidemiology and Drug Resistance Unit of the Malaria Research and Training Center, University of Science, Techniques and Technologies of Bamako, Mali.

The [EDCTP Board](#) is entrusted with the management of the Association, supervises the Secretariat on behalf of the General Assembly, and is responsible for ensuring that the Association's resources are properly and efficiently managed. Board members are selected from amongst the General Assembly representatives and their deputies and



are appointed by the General Assembly with a tenure of two years, consecutively renewable once. With the appointment of Professor Djimdé, the Board now comprises three African and three European members.

Prof. Abdoulaye Djimdé

RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine: EDCTP contributions and next steps

On 6 October 2021, the World Health Organization (WHO) recommended widespread use of the RTS,S/AS01 (RTS,S) malaria vaccine among children in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA) and in other regions with moderate to high *P. falciparum* malaria transmission. The recommendation is based on results from an ongoing pilot programme in Ghana, Kenya and Malawi that has reached more than 800,000 children since 2019.

EDCTP has supported the development of the RTS,S/AS01 malaria vaccine both directly and indirectly through funding clinical research and capacity strengthening in Mozambique, Tanzania, Kenya, Gabon, Ghana and Burkina Faso. Additionally, several EDCTP2-funded RTS,S/AS01-related projects are currently ongoing on product-focused implementation research

[Read more »](#)

First EDCTP and Africa CDC-supported Epidemiologists and Biostatisticians start their training



First EDCTP and Africa CDC-supported Epidemiologists and Biostatisticians start their training



Fredrick Cyprian Mwita
National Institute for Medical Research, Tanzania



Akili Mwakabhana Mawazo
Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences, Tanzania



Tseyon Tesfaye Tirfu
Haramaya University, Ethiopia



Ilona Kakal
Infectious Diseases Institute, Makerere University, Uganda



Veronica Moshokgo
Sir Kenneth Kaunda Teaching Hospital, Botswana



George Kasera
Ministry of Health, Kenya



Mary Wanja Njoroge
Nairobi County Public Health Office, Kenya



Sarah Nyangu
Center for Infectious Disease Research, Zambia

Supported by the
European Union



EDCTP and Africa CDC are partnering to train 150 epidemiologists and biostatisticians across Africa. The first eight of these "EPI-Biostat Fellows" have now enrolled in their Master's training at the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine. This highly anticipated new training programme will establish an African cohort of epidemiologists and biostatisticians through ten grants supporting institutions in sub-Saharan Africa and Europe that provide Master's degree training in epidemiology and biostatistics as part of Africa CDC's framework for public health workforce development.

[Read more »](#)

Recently signed grants

Career Development Fellowships in poverty-related diseases and child and adolescent health – 2020

- **PHICAMS** | Dr Gerald Mboowa | Pathogen detection in HIV-infected children and adolescents with non-malarial febrile illnesses using metagenomic next-generation sequencing approach in Uganda
 - **AVIR-Study** | Dr Aubin Nanfack | Characterisation of Viral Reservoirs among HIV-1 non-B Vertically Infected Adolescents receiving Antiretroviral Therapy in Cameroon
 - **HIV-LUNG MICROBIOME** | Dr Alex Kayongo | Microbiome fuels Th17 mediated airway inflammation in COPD among HIV-infected individuals
-

Project news

fPCV project kick-off meeting

The fPCV project recently held its kick-off meeting. The acronym fPCV stands for “Determining whether mass campaigns with fractional dose PCV10 would accelerate herd protection against pneumococcal transmission in Sub-Saharan Africa”. The project was funded under the 2020 EDCTP2 call '[Innovative approaches to enhance poverty-related diseases research](#)'.

The kickoff meeting, chaired and based on a presentation by coordinator Dr. Rebecca Grais, was held online and attended by representatives of all consortium members and Trial Steering Committee members. The fPCV project includes 7 different work packages which are spearheaded by different consortium members. In order to ensure that these workstreams are able to complete their objectives, the discussion focused on one of these workstreams, the clinical trial, which forms the basis of the project.

The main goal of this meeting was to introduce Trial Steering Committee members to each other virtually, have a common understanding of the trial and key questions, open the discussion on those key questions, and detail planning of the next steps. In order to keep the milestones and timelines of the project, it was essential to discuss the primary objective to ensure that it was worded appropriately and could then be translated into a relevant and informative analysis. Participants were provided with the draft protocol prior to the discussion.

The next TSC meetings will focus on study progress and the presentation of different work plans.

VL-INNO project kick-off meeting

On 8 October, the EDCTP-funded project ‘Next generation diagnostics and oral treatment for visceral leishmaniasis in Eastern Africa: transforming patient care through innovation’ (VL-INNO) was launched. The consortium is led by Drugs for Neglected Diseases *initiative* (DNDi) and is a partnership between the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND, Switzerland), Instituto de Salud Carlos III (Spain), Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI, Kenya), University of Gondar (Ethiopia), Prins Leopold Instituut voor Tropische Geneeskunde (ITM, Belgium), University of York (United Kingdom), Pharmetheus AB (Sweden) and Spotlab, S.L. (Spain).

Over the next 39 months, the primary objective of this new consortium is to implement proof-of-concept studies for the development of new, orally efficacious and safe treatment

for visceral leishmaniasis (VL) and a new antigen-based rapid diagnostic test for VL, as well as identifying low-invasive biomarkers for test-of-cure in addition to the use of digital technologies and artificial intelligence to improve parasitological diagnosis and quality control.

Core-NB project kick-off meeting

The Core-NB consortium met virtually for the project's kick-off meeting on 12 October. The goal of the 18-month Core-NB project is to generate knowledge about COVID-19 disease epidemiology in the context of low-resource countries with a high burden of tuberculosis and HIV, focusing on Namibia and Botswana. The consortium will document how the virus spreads within susceptible populations in these two countries.

The meeting was chaired by Professor Stefan Niemann, Project Coordinator, from Research Center Borstel (Germany) and Dr Mareli Claassens, Principal Investigator, from the University of Namibia. The consortium also includes Health Poverty Action (the UK) and Victus Global Botswana.

After the welcome address and introduction to the goals of Core-NB by Prof. Niemann and Dr Claassens, the kick-off meeting continued with an introduction by Dr Erika Gaspari, EDCTP Project Officer. This was followed by a short round of introductions by all project partners, who presented their role in the project, and by a rundown of activities planned in the context of the Project and Data Management work package.

The Core-NB project includes two studies that will be conducted sequentially. The first study will follow the WHO protocol for household transmission investigations in the context of COVID-19. It will explore transmission frequency and describe the clinical spectrum of the disease. Samples collected will also serve as the basis for COVID-19 molecular epidemiology and host immunological response. The second study will evaluate the presentation, diagnosis and clinical characteristics of individuals presenting to sentinel health facilities in Namibia and Botswana.

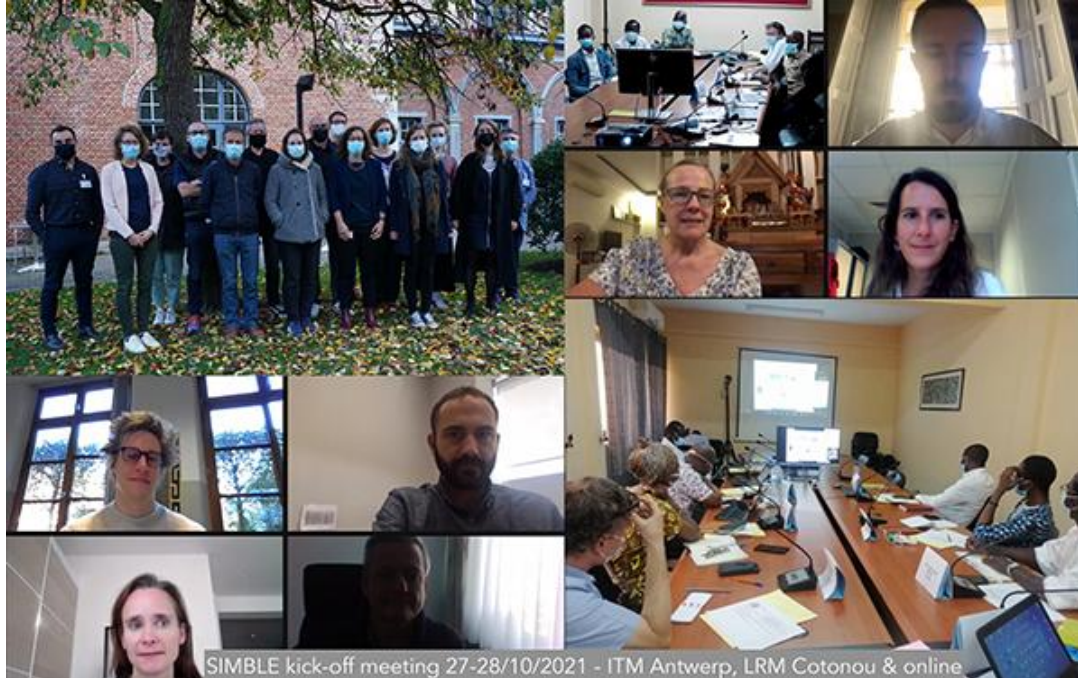
During the kick-off meeting, the consortium made plans for the forthcoming start of patient enrolment, scheduled to start around the turn of the year. Core-NB is a highly collaborative and interdisciplinary project. Another central topic of discussion during the kick-off meeting was how the consortium can ensure a positive lasting societal impact by working closely with local organisations in the communities in Namibia and Botswana.

SIMBLE project kick-off meeting

The SIMBLE kick-off meeting took place on 27 and 28 October both in person at the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITG) in Antwerp, Belgium, and online. The SIMBLE project aims to improve diagnosis and treatment of patients by introducing a simplified blood culture system, the 'Bactinsight' system, which will be adapted and optimised for use in low-resource settings.

The meeting started with a welcome by the coordinator Dr Liselotte Hardy from the ITG and then was followed by introductions of the consortium partners from Belgium, Benin, Burkina Faso, France and Spain and their roles in the project. The 'Bactinsight' blood culture system will be evaluated in field sites in Western Africa and compared to the reference systems already in place. In addition, the project will evaluate the ease-of-use, acceptability, adoptability and performance of this system. A production facility will be installed in Benin to allow for local production of the blood culture bottles.

During the kick-off meeting, the first steering committee meeting was also held and the project website was launched: <https://www.itg.be/e/simble>



First PMAfrica consortium meeting

On 13 and 14 October the PMAfrica consortium held its first annual meeting (PMAfrica: Partnering to develop the next-generation malaria treatments for Africa). The meeting was hosted by Dr Timothy Wells, Chief Scientific Officer of Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV, Switzerland) and PMAfrica Coordinator, together with Mr Jovenal Armando, Administrative Director at the Manhica Health Research Centre (CISM, Mozambique). Ms Jaya Banerji moderated the meeting, and this was attended by all consortium members and representatives from the African Leaders Malaria Alliance (ALMA), the World Health Organisation (WHO) Global Malaria Programme, the Universal Corporation (UCL), the Merck Global Health Institute and EDCTP. The objective of the meeting was to build a collective sense of awareness and ownership among consortium members of the PMAfrica project, its contribution to the global malaria elimination agenda, and the status of the various work packages focusing on three clinical studies, capacity building strengthening and dissemination activities. The full report will be available soon on the [PMAfrica consortium website](#).

PredictTB consortium annual meeting



The Using Biomarkers to Predict TB Treatment Duration (PredictTB) consortium held its annual meeting virtually on 13 and 14 October. The goal of the meeting was to take stock of the project's progress over the last year and make plans for the final nine months ahead.

The rationale of PredictTB is to use data from assays, culture, and PET/CT scans from TB patients in South Africa and China to determine which patients are cured after four months of standard TB treatment which usually lasts for six months. In addition, a point-of-care lateral flow device is being developed to measure immunological markers as additional or replacement stopping criteria.

While on the first day of the meeting the whole consortium gathered, including partners from the United States and China who receive co-funding from the Foundation for the National Institutes of Health (FNIH), the second day focused on the EDCTP-funded part of the project with partners from South Africa, The Netherlands, United Kingdom, Switzerland, and Germany.

The second day was chaired by the Coordinator, Professor Gerhard Walzl of Stellenbosch University, South Africa, and the Project Management work package lead, Dr Claudia Schacht of LINQ, Germany. The meeting began with the two providing an overview of key achievements by the consortium in the last year, followed by a presentation of the EDCTP's tuberculosis-focused project portfolio by Dr Debora Bade, EDCTP Project Officer. The meeting continued with each Work Package Lead providing a rundown of their key activities and achievements to date. One central topic of discussion was the ongoing data analysis carried out in the context of treatment result prediction through microbiological and radiographic biomarkers and the development of a point-of-care lateral flow device to measure immunological markers as treatment stopping criteria. Results will be presented before the project ends in July 2022.

For more information about the project, please visit the [project website](#).

BERC-Luso intensive training on biomedical research and clinical trials



From 12 to 18 September, the intensive internship 'Biomedical Research and Clinical Trials: regulatory and ethical capacity building' took place in Lisbon, at the National Authority for Medicines and Health Products, I.P. (INFARMED) and at the Ethics Committee for Clinical Research (CEIC). The internship was held under Work Package 3 - Training / De praxis of the [BERC-Luso Project](#) (Biomedical Ethics and Regulatory Capacity Building Partnership for Portuguese-Speaking African Countries).

The internship was attended by five teams of 5 trainees from each of the partner countries - Angola, Cape Verde, Guinea-Bissau, Mozambique and São Tomé and Príncipe, with relevant responsibilities in the National Ethics Authorities (ANE) and National Regulatory Authorities (NRA) and was conducted by trainers specialised in ethics regulation and regulatory assessment from INFARMED and CEIC.

Throughout six days of intensive work, participants had the opportunity to get to know in detail the working realities of each of the institutions, experience, their different specificities, functions, duties and responsibilities. Additionally, they had the opportunity to attend an inspection in real time and to perform practical exercises according to the specificities of both institutions (INFARMED and CEIC). Each team was also invited to write a news article at the beginning of the internship and another at the end, with the goal of publishing it in a national journal or on the website of the different national institutions. BERC-Luso has now completed another stage of the project, and the biggest challenge for each country will be to adapt the diverse experiences to their own realities in the area of biomedical research and clinical trials, a challenge that is very dependent on the legislation developed and/or to be developed on the subject and also on the institutions that regulate these areas.

The internship programme also included a visit to two Portuguese institutions with relevance in this area, namely the Instituto Nacional de Saúde Doutor Ricardo Jorge (INSA) and the Instituto de Higiene e Medicina Tropical (IHMT), institutions that have strong relationships with the Portuguese-speaking countries and that proved to be an enormous asset for the complementarity of the internship programme.

Ethics Code continues to thrive

The [Global Code of Conduct for Research in Resource-Poor Settings](#) moves forward into Horizon Europe. The Code was co-developed by the EDCTP and launched in the European Parliament in 2018. Since then it has been adopted by three funders, two foundations, three universities (including the top two African universities, the [University of Cape Town](#) and the [University of the Witwatersrand](#)), and a wide range of individual projects. Further adoptions by funders and universities are in the pipeline but the continued adoption by

the European Commission for Horizon Europe (2021-2027) and the current EDCTP programme is highly encouraging.

The Code has had an excellent reception all over the world, notably for its clarity, brevity and usefulness. Its values of fairness, respect, care and honesty have also sparked interest, including by the media. For instance, a [German national radio programme](#) on colonial thinking in science used the values and articles of the Code to illustrate ongoing challenges. Prof. Schroeder, the coordinator of the [TRUST project](#) and the Lead Author of the Code, is highly grateful that the EDCTP continues to promote the Code in order to achieve more equitable research partnerships between Europe and Africa.

EDCTP Fellows

Mareli Claassens appointed as member of Global Young Academy



EDCTP senior fellow **Dr Mareli Claassens** has been appointed as a member of the [Global Young Academy](#). The Global Young Academy gives a voice to young scientists around the world, and empowers young researchers to lead international, interdisciplinary, and inter-generational dialogue with the goal to make global decision-making evidence-based and inclusive. Dr Claassens has also been accepted as a LEAD fellow at the [Harvard Global Health Institute for 2021-2022](#).

Senior Fellow Roma Chilengi appointed advisor to the president on COVID-19



EDCTP Senior Fellow **Professor Roma Chilengi** of the Centre for Infectious Disease Research in Zambia (CIDRZ) has been appointed as Special Advisor for COVID-19 to President Hakainde Hichilema of Zambia. Prior to his appointment, Prof. Chilengi was CIDRZ Chief Scientific Officer with overall oversight on the multiple research activities at CIDRZ. Over the last ten years, he has led clinical trials in diarrheal diseases, HIV and more recently COVID-19.

[Read more »](#)

Publications

[Trypanosome SL-RNA detection in blood and cerebrospinal fluid to demonstrate active gambiense human African trypanosomiasis infection](#)

PLoS Negl Trop Dis 15(9): e0009739

Ipos Ngay Lukusa, Nick Van Reet, Dieudonné Mumba Ngoyi, Erick Mwamba Miaka, Justin Masumu, Pati Patient Pyana, Wilfried Mutombo, Digas Ngolo, Vincent Kobo, Felix Akwaso, Médard Ilunga, Lewis Kaninda, Sylvain Mutanda, Dieudonné Mpoyi Muamba, Olaf Valverde Mordt, Antoine Tarral, Sandra Rembry, Philippe Büscher, Veerle Lejon

[Global, regional, and national sex-specific burden and control of the HIV epidemic, 1990–2019, for 204 countries and territories: the Global Burden of Diseases Study 2019](#)

Lancet HIV 2021; 8: e633–51

Global Burden of Disease 2019 HIV Collaborators

[No evidence of false-negative *Plasmodium falciparum* rapid diagnostic results in Monrovia, Liberia](#)

Malar J 20, 238 (2021)

Mandella King, Alexander E. George, Pau Cisteró, Christine K. Tarr-Attia, Beatriz Arregui, Senga Omeonga, Haily Chen, Ana Meyer García-Sípido, Adelaida Sarukhan, Quique Bassat, Dawoh Peter Lansana and Alfredo Mayor

Resources



[Collaborative clinical R&D](#)
online



[Clinical research capacity](#)
PDF



[Fellowships](#)
online

EDCTP | Knowledge Hub: Tools and guidance for conducting clinical research

The EDCTP Knowledge Hub is an online platform with resources for researchers conducting clinical research in low-resource settings. The platform's tools are designed to help researchers develop research questions into a protocol, adopt gold-standard clinical data management practices, and support awareness and capacity development around data sharing. The platform is suited to all health research groups and aims to facilitate high-quality clinical research in poverty-related diseases. The EDCTP Knowledge Hub will soon also be available in Portuguese and French.

Visit the [EDCTP Knowledge Hub](#).

EDCTP | Guidelines for grantees - Progress report

EDCTP Guidelines for grantees on how to best use the online progress reporting facility in EDCTPgrants, EDCTP's grant management system. Go to the publication [Online Progress Report in EDCTPgrants – Guidelines for beneficiaries](#).

EDCTP | Template for Grant Agreement Annex 5

Earlier this year, EDCTP published a [Model for the certificate on the financial statements](#) to support grantees in their reporting.

ERUDIT | Planning for Financial Sustainability manual

The "[Planning for Financial Sustainability](#)" manual – is a Guide for Research Ethics Committees (RECs) in Africa, that was developed by [COHRED](#) in consultation with [EthiXPERT](#) and the Committee of Bioethics for Health Research (CBRS), Togo. The guide is designed as a part of the implementation of the EDCTP grant [ERUDIT](#). The guide serves as a resource for anyone responsible for the organisation, implementation and management of RECs. The guide is now also available in [French](#).

Training and funding opportunities

Internship opportunity at the Research Ethics Committee (CEICA) in Zaragoza, Spain - BCA-WA-ETHICS project (Closing date for applications: 5 November 2021)

The main objective of this course is to facilitate the transfer and exchange of knowledge between Spain and West Africa in research ethics committee governance strategies and in the evaluation and monitoring of research projects, particularly from a sex and gender perspective. Candidates from Benin, Senegal and Mali are invited to apply.
[More information](#) (in French)

Online training course on research in global health emergencies available in Portuguese

The Nuffic Council on Bioethics and The Global Health Network have launched a Portuguese version of a free e-learning course on research in global health emergencies. The course covers the core ethical issues that arise when conducting research in global health emergencies, from outbreaks of infectious diseases to natural and human-made disasters. It is based on the report [Research in global health emergencies: ethical issues](#). It is also available in English, French, and Spanish.
[More information](#) (in Portuguese).

Guide to pharmacovigilance in the EU

Dokumeds published the free e-book 'The ultimate guide to pharmacovigilance in the EU'. The guide gives an overview of the EU's legislations on Pharmacovigilance, illustrates the type of information that should be collected and who it should be reported to, and shows the 'best practice' strategies to follow.
[Download the e-book](#)

Upcoming events

2nd Leishmaniasis East African Platform (LEAP) Scientific

Conference | 2-4 November 2021

The LEAP Conference will bring together scientists, researchers, policy makers, public health practitioners and advocates to discuss the state-of-the-art in diagnosis, treatment, prevention, and elimination of leishmaniasis. The conference is hosted by AfriKADIA – a consortium created to find improved treatments and diagnostic tools for visceral leishmaniasis in Eastern Africa.

[Read more »](#)

International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2021) | 14-16 December 2021

The first International Conference on Public Health in Africa (CPHIA 2021) comes at a critical time on the continent and in the world. COVID-19 has strained health systems globally, and with limited access to vaccines in Africa, the pandemic has laid bare deep inequities in access to healthcare and scientific innovations. CPHIA will create a unique platform where African researchers, policymakers and stakeholders can share perspectives and research findings in public health, while ushering in a new era of strengthened scientific collaboration and innovation across the continent. The CPHIA will become an annual conference, hosted by the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention. EDCTP is represented in the Conference's Organising Committee. In addition, EDCTP Executive Director Dr Michael Makanga will speak on the Response to COVID-19 in Africa to Prepare for Future Health Threats.

[Read more »](#)

EDCTP Communications thanks the colleagues who provided information for this Update.

