

Note from the Africa Office



Pascoal Mocumbi
EDCTP High Representative

Dear readers,

From the Africa Office I welcome you to this edition of the EDCTP newsletter of the first quarter of 2009. In this edition you will find a call for abstracts for the Fifth EDCTP Forum which has been extended after EDCTP signed an agreement with the journal *Tropical Medicine & International Health* to publish selected abstracts directly after the forum. This will provide an opportunity for researchers including EDCTP grantees and collaborators to publish their work even more widely.

Readers will also find a number of calls that will be open in the coming months including a new call on TB diagnostics. We further bring to the attention of our readers a number of funded projects. Among these is the regional Network of Excellence to build research capacity and conduct clinical trials in Central Africa – Central Africa Network on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria for the conduct of clinical trials (CANTAM).

Other highlights include information on the first annual G-Finder, a survey of global investment into Research and Development of new products for neglected diseases that lists EDCTP as the third largest Public Development Partnership (PDP) funder. The Africa Office that enhances African leadership and ownership of the EDCTP programme also has a job opening for the Director of South-South Cooperation and Head of Africa Office. Readers are also informed about some key meetings that EDCTP officials have attended in the continuing efforts to consolidated partnerships in the fight against the three major poverty related diseases. I wish all our partners renewed vigour in the fight against diseases.

Events

Deadline call for abstracts Fifth EDCTP Forum extended (1 May 2009)

Peer reviewed abstracts to be published in journal *Tropical Medicine & International Health*

The Fifth EDCTP Forum Committee welcomes the submission of abstracts on clinical research on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria for the Fifth EDCTP Forum which will take place from 12 to 14 October 2009 in Arusha, Tanzania.

All accepted abstracts will be presented in roundtable and plenary sessions or as electronic poster. There will be a limited number of bursaries, especially for researchers from Africa.

In addition, the abstracts will be peer reviewed and successful ones published in the journal *Tropical Medicine & International Health*. EDCTP grantees and collaborators are especially encouraged to submit abstracts.



More information on abstract submission and review on the Fifth EDCTP Forum website: www.edctpforum2009.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) 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, click on Newsroom).



EUROPEAN COMMISSION

Supported by the EU DG Research

News about EDCTP Governance

Vacancy: EDCTP Director of South-South Cooperation and Head of Africa Office

EDCTP is seeking candidates for the position of Director of South-South Cooperation and Head of Africa Office.

The Director will:

- Assist and deputise for the Executive Director
- Oversee the day-to-day running of the EDCTP Africa Office in Cape Town, South Africa
- Coordinate the African response and inspiring African co-ownership
- Provide African leadership and stewardship of the EDCTP programme.

The Director of South-South Cooperation and Head of Africa Office will be answerable to the Executive Director and work closely with the EDCTP High Representative. The candidate is required to have among others qualifications in medicine, public health or biological sciences at PhD level or equivalent and at least ten years experience in institutional management.

Conditions of appointment

- A term of office initially for a one-year period with an option for renewal
- Attractive international salary based on qualification and experience
- Position will be based in Cape Town, South Africa.

Closing date for applications: 30 April 2009

For more information please visit www.edctp.org

EDCTP news alerts and RSS

On the EDCTP website, you can now subscribe to the EDCTP Announcements to receive the latest EDCTP news (including calls for proposals on the date that they are launched, press releases, vacancies, events and any other important updates) either as an email alert or as an RSS feed. With these facilities, you will receive EDCTP news as soon as is published, without having to visit the EDCTP website to see if there is any news.



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G-Finder: neglected diseases funding in 2007

The first annual G-Finder, a survey of global investment into Research and Development of new products for neglected diseases, was published on 4 February. The G-finder was coordinated by the Health Policy Division of The George Institute for International Health and was supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

The G-Finder shows funding provided by public, private and philanthropic funders. The statistics of the first report show that in 2007, the European Commission was the third largest public funder, and that EDCTP was the third largest Public Development Partnership (PDP) funder.

Read the full article on www.edctp.org

News about calls and grants

Funded projects

EDCTP is pleased to announce funding of the following projects:

Malaria in Pregnancy: Support of clinical trials, capacity building and networking

Umberto D' Alessandro

Safe and efficacious artemisinin-based combination treatments for African pregnant women with malaria

Feiko ter Kuile

Optimisation of the existing dose and regimen of intermittent preventive treatment with sulfadoxinepyrimethamine for the prevention of malaria in pregnancy in the context of high coverage of insecticide treated nets and highly seasonal malaria transmission

Malaria vaccines: Support of clinical trials, capacity building and networking

Roma Chilengi

Fostering research capacity, networking and project management through phase I-IIB clinical trials of candidate malaria vaccine GMZ2

Capacity Mapping on Ethics

Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED)

Mapping of Ethics review and trial regulatory capacity in sub-Saharan Africa

Networks of Excellence: Support of the establishment of regional Networks of Excellence for conducting clinical trials and provide mentorship programmes in sub-Saharan Africa

Francine Ntumi

Establishment of the Central Africa Network on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria for the conduct of clinical trials (CANTAM).

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 investigational product(s) should be manufactured under Good Manufacturing Practice (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 drawn 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.

Senior Fellowship (for Networks of Excellence)

Through this call, EDCTP intends to identify and support senior researchers capable of building and leading research groups at sub-Saharan African institutions that will be internationally competitive and capable of winning grants from international funding bodies. For this grant scheme EDCTP specifically targets to contribute towards building of sustainable capacity through training and networking with linkage to the EDCTP supported regional Networks of Excellence in sub-Saharan Africa. A maximum of one Senior Fellowship per disease per region will be supported.

Available funds:	€2,400,000
Number of projects to fund:	12
Deadline of application:	1 June 2009

Ethics Review Boards

EDCTP wishes to promote the establishment and strengthening of National Ethics Committees (NEC) and Institutional Review Boards (IRB) that are competent and independent. In countries where NECs do not exist, the local institutional review boards are encouraged to contribute to the formation of a NEC. Where neither NECs nor local IRBs exist, the EDCTP will encourage national recognised institutions or scientists affiliated to an established in-country institution to be contracted to initiate the formation of the NEC.

For details on the calls and how to apply, please consult the relevant call texts on the EDCTP website: www.edctp.org.

Available funds:	€500,000
Number of projects to fund:	10
Deadline for application:	1 June 2009

Joint Programme Activities

The grant aims to fund projects that will identify and strengthen Joint Programme Activities (JPAs) and contribute to the integration of the national programmes of EDCTP Member States on HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis clinical trials within EDCTP scope in sub-Saharan Africa. It aims to enhance the activities of researchers investigating the same topic or disease, reduce duplication of effort and improve collaborations within or between African institutions.

Available funds:	€5,000,000
Deadline of application:	5 June 2009

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.

Focus on EDCTP grantees

Gabon establishes national ethics committee

As the number of health research conducted in sub-Saharan Africa increases, so does the need for improved review of the ethical and scientific rigour of these trials. As we work on increasing the quality of research, we should also work on ensuring the safety of research participants. The recently established National Bioethics Committee of Gabon, which was established with the help of a grant from the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP), is an example of the progress made to safeguard the well-being of African study participants.

The newly formed National Bioethics Committee for research of Gabon currently comprises 19 members that represent the three main Gabonese research institutes (USS Libreville, URM Lambarene and CIRMF Franceville), as well as relevant Gabonese hospitals and ministries. This initiative was



started with the help of an EDCTP grant, training support from the Vienna School of Clinical Research, the Government of the Republic of Gabon and a committed team of Gabonese nationals. Consequently, with complementary support of other partners including WHO, UNESCO, AMANET and the Institut Pasteur of Dakar the Committee was officially established.

Members of the Gabon national ethics committee (with kind permission of VSCR)

More information: www.edctp.org

Focus on EDCTP grantees

CANTAM first African Network of Excellence for clinical trials

The countries of Central Africa have joined forces to enable the region to build research capacity and conduct clinical trials under best practices. CANTAM (Central Africa Network on Tuberculosis, HIV/AIDS and Malaria for the conduct of clinical trials) is the first EDCTP-funded regional Network of Excellence to prepare the region to conduct high-quality clinical trials. It will be supported by a EUR 3 million grant for the

duration of three years. The network includes research institutions and political partners from Cameroon, Congo, Gabon, Tanzania and Germany. It is envisaged that the networks for Eastern, Western and Southern Africa will start their activities later this year.

Read the full article on www.edctp.org

SMAC (malaria) project on Euronews

A television crew from EURONEWS has visited the EDCTP-funded project Artesunate Treatment for Severe Malaria in African Children and produced a 9-minute documentary reflecting the research and its implications. The documentary was broadcast from 12 to 19 February, and will be re-broadcast on World Malaria Day (25 April 2009).

The crew has filmed on a clinical trials site in Lambaréné, Gabon, as well as at the Institut für Tropenmedizin, Tuebingen. The project that is reflected is a clinical trial on Artesunate treatment for severe malaria in African children, an area where there was only limited research being conducted. The documentary is

available online in six different languages (English, French, Italian, German, Spanish, Russian, Portuguese and Arabic) through www.euronews.net (search for 'EDCTP'), or through www.youtube.com (type 'EDCTP' in search box).



Scholarships for MSc Clinical Trials by Distance Learning open for application

Scholarships for the Distance Learning MSc Clinical Trials course (commencing October 2009) developed by the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (LSHTM) with the support of EDCTP and GSK are now open for application. The scholarships cover full tuition fees to study the Distance Learning MSc Clinical Trials course, and a contribution towards local examination centre fees.

The MSc Clinical Trials scholarships are available only to students who are nationals of a Low or Lower Middle Income countries as indicated on: www.worldbank.org. Applicants for the EDCTP scholarships will additionally need to meet the following criteria:

- Be a national of a sub-Saharan African country
- Be employed by a sub-Saharan African institution with EDCTP supported projects and planning to continue working at that institution for at least two years after finishing the course.

Deadline of application: 30 April 2009

Website: www.lshtm.ac.uk/courses and select 'Masters degrees' and then 'Masters Degrees by Distance Learning'

Please note: do not file applications with EDCTP.

Meetings and visits

EDCTP at NEPAD

workshop on harmonisation of drug registration in Africa

From 24 to 26 February, 138 stakeholders participated in a NEPAD workshop organised to invite project proposals for strengthening harmonisation of regulatory functions at regional economic community (REC) level in Africa. During the meeting, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) and the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom expressed their interest to fund projects on harmonisation of drug registration in Africa within a consortium of donors of like-minded organisations and funders such as EDCTP. The regional economic communities represented in the workshop and likely to submit proposals for funding were the Community of Sahel-Saharan States (CEN-SAD), Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), East African Community (EAC), Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC/ECCAS), Southern African Development Community (SADC), Intergovernmental Authority of Development (IGAD) and Arab Maghreb Union (AMU/UMA).

Please read the full article on www.edctp.org

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