

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



**E D C T P**

## **EDCTP Update**

November 2019

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### Highlights

- **TREATS - spotlight on TB-HIV co-infection**
- **Funding opportunities**

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**World AIDS Day 01 December 2019**



For EDCTP-funded HIV research visit and explore [our public project portal](#).

We are grateful we have the opportunity to contribute to fighting the HIV/AIDS epidemic through the research we fund and express our thanks to all involved, especially to the volunteer-patients and their communities.

On Wednesday 4 December 2019, **EDCTP will contribute to the upcoming ICASA 2019 conference** in Kigali, Rwanda a satellite symposium on 'Milestones, new platforms and strategies for HIV and TB vaccine research - an EDCTP overview'.

The session is chaired by Prof. Tandakha Ndiaye Dieye and Mr Roger Tatoud. This symposium will highlight the specific challenges, opportunities and strategies for developing HIV and TB vaccines. Read more [on the event page](#).

WHO Regional Office for Africa launched a social media campaign, [#TheTeaOnHIV](#), that aims to better inform at least one million adolescents and young people about preventing HIV infection as well as living positively with the virus.



WHO is spilling #TheTeaOnHIV for at least one million young Africans

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## EDCTP's Public project platform improved its search

The EDCTP Public Portal gives access to essential information on all projects funded under the EDCTP2 programme. It publishes data from our grant application and project management system, including the participating organisations and a project summary.

The portal has been upgraded with new search fields and export options, such as as the possibility to search by country, by organisation and filter by role, i.e. coordinator or participant. This is a first step of work in progress.

For example, find all EDCTP2-funded HIV studies. [Please check it out!](#)



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## Save the date! Plan a contribution! - Tenth EDCTP Forum

### EDCTP | Tenth EDCTP Forum | Mozambique, 18-21/10 2020

Save the dates! The Tenth EDCTP Forum will be held at the Joaquim Chissano International Conference Centre in Maputo, Mozambique from 18-21 October 2020.

The [biennial EDCTP Forum](#) provides an international platform for the presentation and discussion of clinical studies for everyone involved in combating poverty-related diseases and the appropriate capacity development and networking activities. The Forum has established itself as a valuable opportunity to develop and reinforce cooperation and synergy among the EDCTP Association stakeholders at various levels including scientific and policy. Scientists involved in EDCTP2-funded projects are particularly encouraged to use this opportunity to share new developments and results from their projects.

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## Dr Ole Olesen appointed Executive Director of EVI

[Dr. Ole Olesen, EDCTP's Director of International Cooperation Europe](#), is leaving EDCTP. He has been appointed as the new Executive Director of the European Vaccine Initiative (EVI), starting the 1st of January 2020. Read more [in the EVI press release](#). EDCTP wishes him much success in his new position.

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## Recent events

### **World Vaccine Congress Europe | Barcelona, Spain | 29-31/10 2019**

The 2019 World Vaccine Congress Europe took place in Barcelona from 29-31 October. Project Officer Dr Johanna Roth represented EDCTP and gave an oral presentation on capacity for vaccine trials in emerging countries from an EDCTP perspective. She also participated in a panel discussion on partnership models for international collaboration among vaccine manufacturers and governments.

Both the talk and the panel discussion were part of the partnership track of the conference, which is meant to bring together different collaborators in the vaccine field including funders, researchers, global SMEs, pharmaceutical partners.

### **EDCTP | Workshop on regional and gender disparities in EDCTP projects | 19-20/11 2019**

EDCTP organised a workshop on 'Enhancing networking among European and African scientists to close regional and gender disparities experienced in EDCTP1- and EDCTP2-funded health research capacity activities in sub-Saharan Africa. It was held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia and hosted by Africa CDC, at the Africa Union Headquarters. Approximately 100 participants took part in the workshop.

EDCTP was represented by Dr Leonardo Simao (High Representative for Africa), Dr Thomas Nyirenda (Strategic Partnerships & Capacity Development Manager) Shingai Machingaidze and Michelle Nderu (Project Officers), Lara Pandya and Ana Lucia Weinberg (Strategic Partnership Officers).



Dr Leonardo Simao presiding

The workshop is a follow-up to an analysis of successful applications for EDCTP funding. This revealed geographical and gender disparities in success rates, with the least number of applications being both received and funded from Central and West Africa. There are also countries in Eastern and Southern Africa with minimal participation (or no participation



yet) including Angola, Burundi, eSwatini (Swaziland), Lesotho, Mauritius and Madagascar, and Namibia. This is particularly visible within the EDCTP fellowship scheme that aims to facilitate career growth and development for Africa-based scientists.

### **European Union | MSCA seminar for African researchers |6-7/11 2019**

On 6 and 7 November a [seminar on Marie Skłodowska-Curie Actions](#) took place in Addis Ababa in the context of the EU-Africa High Level Policy Dialogue on Research and Innovation.

EDCTP participate in this seminar. Project Officer Shingai Machingaidze represented EDCTP in a panel. Eight EDCTP fellows and four junior researchers from the EDCTP-funded networks of excellence attended.

### **EDCTP2 | Fin. and project management training | 19-20/11 and 21-22/11 2019**

Two more EDCTP financial and project management training sessions were held in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania (19-20 November 2019) and Johannesburg, South Africa (21-22 November 2019), respectively.

As usual, EDCTP Director of Finance and Administration, Abdoulie Barry, and the Director of International Cooperation Europe, Dr Ole Olesen, conducted this training for finance and project management staff of EDCTP-funded projects. The main objectives of these workshops are to help participants improve their understanding of:

- key financial management terms and principles
- the internal control and risk management implications of some of the decisions they take
- the importance of putting in place sound financial management systems

and to equip participants with skills and knowledge to effectively and efficiently manage collaborative projects with multiple international collaborators.





### **TESA II | Annual meeting 2019 | Windhoek, Namibia**

TESA II - the EDCTP-funded network of excellence '[Trials of Excellence in Southern Africa](#)' held its annual meeting in Windhoek, Namibia. The meeting took place at the University of Namibia, one of the partners in the network.

Trials of Excellence in Southern Africa (TESA) network was launched in 2009. At this stage, nine institutions from six different countries from Southern Africa were part of this consortium the aim of which was to create a framework for collaboration, capacity building and training among member institutions. Currently, TESA II, incorporating thirteen institutions from eight Southern African and four European countries, aims to strengthen clinical research capacities in Southern Africa, as well as to increase North-South and South- South networks among member institutions.

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## **Recently signed projects**

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

- **PROTID** | Coordinator: Dr Reinout van Crevel | Randomised controlled trial of preventive treatment of latent tuberculosis infection in patients with diabetes mellitus
- **VITALITY** | Coordinator Prof Rashida Ferrand | Vitamin D for adolescents with HIV to reduce musculoskeletal morbidity and immunopathology: an individually randomised, double-blinded, placebo-controlled trial

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

- **DIAGMAL** | Coordinator: Dr Henk Schallig | Phase III evaluation of an innovative simple molecular test for the diagnosis of malaria in different endemic and health settings in sub-Saharan Africa
- **SeroSelectTB** | Coordinator: Prof. Carol Holm-Hansen | Evaluation of the feasibility, accuracy, and effect of a rapid point-of-care serological triage test for active TB (SeroSelectTB) in high burden, HIV-endemic African settings: a multi-centre, parallel-group, randomised, controlled trial

### [Career development fellowships - 2018](#)

- **KILGORIS** | Fellow: Dr Andrew Ekii Obuku | Association of early immune response with virological control in acute/early and following HIV-1 infection
- **NeutroTB** | Fellow: Dr Elouise Kroon | Neutrophils as effector cells in resistance to infection by Mycobacterium tuberculosis in HIV-infected persons

### [EDCTP Senior Fellowships - 2018](#)

- **KSHV/HIV morbidity** | Fellow: Dr Georgia Schafer | Characterisation of Kaposi's sarcoma-associated herpes virus (KSHV)-driven pathologies and disease outcome in human immunodeficiency virus (HIV)-infected patients

### [Ethics and regulatory capacities - 2018](#)

- **BRECOR** | Coordinator: Dr Jean-Baptiste Mazarati | Building the regulatory and ethics capacities of Rwanda

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## TREATS - spotlight on TB-HIV co-infection

The [TREATS consortium](#) held its 2nd annual meeting in Livingstone, Zambia on 8-10 October 2019. Its project - 'Tuberculosis Reduction through Expanded Anti-retroviral Treatment and Screening' - was developed to address the TB-HIV co-infection burden.

TB and HIV are the leading infectious causes of death worldwide - in 2018 1.5 million people died from TB. For people living with HIV, TB is the most significant co-infection; 40 percent of HIV deaths in 2017 were due to TB.

The TREATS clinical study is conducted in 14 communities in Zambia and South Africa and evaluates whether a 'universal test and treat' strategy is similarly successful in reducing the prevalence and incidence of TB. The approach was developed in the [PopART study](#) (Population Effects of Antiretroviral Therapy to Reduce HIV Transmission) in the same communities. The TREATS project also aims to raise awareness of TB and HIV through community engagement and linking anyone who tested positive for TB or HIV to immediate treatment.

The 2nd annual meeting of TREATS was attended by 45 investigators, including representatives from the Ministry of Health in Zambia, Department of Health in South Africa and WHO Global TB Programme. The investigators presented the completion of the TB prevalence study in 14 communities in Zambia and South Africa in young people aged 15-24.



Results showed that overall, tuberculosis infection was 44%, being 33.0% in Zambia and 62.4% in South Africa. Gender and HIV status were not associated with TB infection in either country. In Zambia, prevalent TB infection was associated with age and being a household contact. In contrast, in South Africa, prevalent TB infection was only associated with being a household contact. In conclusion, prevalence of TB infection in this young population was high. TB infection increased with being a household contact in both countries, and with age in Zambia. The consortium presented these findings at the 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health launches in India in October 2019.

The project is led and coordinated by Prof. Helen Ayles of the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine (London, UK) and [Zambart](#) (Lusaka, Zambia). It is conducted in collaboration with partners from France, Germany, Netherlands, South Africa, United Kingdom, and Zambia, including Imperial College London, Zambart, KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation, Sheffield University, the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease (The Union), Health Systems Trust, Delft Imaging Systems and QIAGEN. Dr Montserrat Blázquez Domingo, EDCTP Senior project officer, took part in the meeting.



TREATS team (Photo courtesy of the consortium)

The total value of the TREATS project is EUR 26.3 million. EUR 12.9 million project is granted under the EDCTP2 programme which is supported by the European Union under Horizon 2020, its Framework Programme for Research and Innovation. The project is co-funded by Presidents Emergency Fund for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the National Institutes of Health (NIAID and NIMH), the International Initiative for Impact evaluation (3ie), the Evidence for HIV Prevention in Southern Africa, Department for International Development (UK) and the Swedish International Development Agency in collaboration, the Medical Research Council (UK), the company Qiagen GMBH, and the company Delft Imaging Systems BV.

*By Montserrat Blázquez Domingo*

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## Projects

### **REMIND | HIV treatment adherence | November 2019**

PhD student Kennedy Michael Ngowi supervised by EDCTP Fellow Dr Marion Sumari-de Boer won the award for best abstract (Track B: Clinical Science, Treatment and Care) at ICASA 2019. The title of the abstract is 'Real Time Medication Monitoring improves virological outcome among People Living with HIV on Antiretroviral Treatment in Moshi, Tanzania'. More information [on the ICASA 2019 website](#)

Dr Marion Sumari-de Boer is an EDCTP Career Development Fellow, based at the Kilimanjaro Christian Medical Centre in Moshi, Tanzania, who conducts a study on the 'Effect of reminder cues and tailored feedback on adherence to antiretroviral drug treatment among HIV-positive individuals in the Kilimanjaro region, Tanzania' (REMIND).

More information on the [EDCTP Alumni network platform](#)

### **STOP | Second consortium meeting, Ethiopia | 25-26/10 2019**

The STOP (Stopping Transmission Of intestinal Parasites) consortium held its second annual meeting in Ethiopia from 25-26 October 2019. See for [a short report here](#). The website of ISGlobal published an interesting article on the history of ivermectin was published: [Adelaida Sarukhan: 'Ivermectin: From Soil to Worms, and Beyond'](#).

STOP is an EDCTP-funded project that unites five European and three sub-Saharan institutions with one aim: "to find a more effective treatment against all species of intestinal worms, also called soil-transmitted helminths. The team proposes to add ivermectin to the current recommended treatment (albendazole monotherapy), and combine both drugs in a single tablet, suitable for all age groups (known as a fixed dose co-formulation)".

### **IGORCADIA | Capacity building in Liberia: final results | 25/11 2019**

On November 25th, Cristina Muñoz, project manager of [IGORCADIA](#), presented to ISGlobal students and researchers the key results and lessons of the project, aimed at strengthening capacities to diagnose infectious diseases in Liberia. The project, funded by EDCTP, was led by ISGlobal, an institution supported by "la Caixa", in collaboration with the Saint Joseph Catholic Hospital de Monrovia and the Fundación Juan Ciudad. Read the [blog post in the ISGlobal website](#).

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## Funding opportunities: EDCTP

### **Open EDCTP calls for proposals**

The following EDCTP Calls for proposals are still open for applications.

[Clinical Research and Product Development Fellowships \(CRDF\) - Joint call with WHO/TDR, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases 2019](#)

Open to application: 30 October 2019

Deadline for application: 28 February 2020

[Vaccines against Lassa virus disease - Joint call with the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations \(CEPI\)](#)

Open to application: 02 November 2019

Deadline for application: 07 April 2020

[Senior Fellowships Plus](#)

Open to application: 06 November 2019  
Deadline for application: 18 February 2020

Please note | The EDCTP website offers guidance for grant application: a page with FAQs on Calls and a Guidance page with [Templates, guides and policies](#).

The following calls have closed

- [Strategic actions supporting large-scale clinical trials \(RIA\)](#)
- [New drugs and vaccines for priority pathogens in antimicrobial resistance \(RIA\)](#)
- [Ethics and regulatory capacities \(CSA\)](#)
- [Career Development fellowships 2019 \(TMA\)](#) Novartis will sponsor 5 EDCTP Career Development Fellowships under this 2019 call on the topic of mother and child health and interaction of communicable and non-communicable diseases. Read more [about this sponsorship](#)
- [Preparatory Fellowships 2019 - in collaboration with the Africa Research Excellence Fund](#)
- [Clinical Research and Product Development Fellowships \(CRDF\) - Joint call with WHO/TDR 2019](#)

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## Resources

### EU-Africa Global Health Partnership

Collection of media references to EDCTP and its successor programme:

- Maria Da Graça Carvalho | Viewpoint: We must embrace innovation to beat AIDS Working with countries in Africa, the EU has fostered innovation that is making an important contribution to the fight against AIDS. To build on this, the new Africa-EU partnership now taking shape needs more ambitious goals [ScienceBusiness 28/11/2019](#)
- Ffion Storer Jones: In conversation with Jens Geier (MEP) [www.DSW.org](http://www.DSW.org), [25/10/2019](#)
- Richard L. Hudson: Commission weighs reform of its big R&D partnership projects Draft EU paper targets cash flow and other financial problems in its Horizon 2020 'Joint Undertakings' involving multiple companies, universities and governments [ScienceBusiness, 24/10/2019](#);
- Gina Dowding (MEP): Why Europe needs more ambition on climate, research, innovation [Euractive, 02/10/2019](#)  
"...Moving away from a donor approach towards a partnership based on recognition of Africa's research excellence and potential for innovation. A current example of such a collaboration is the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership, which spearheaded EU and African efforts on health. Its successor, the proposed EU-Africa Global Health Partnership, should continue these important efforts."
- Éanna Kelly: Viewpoint: Our global health partnership is delivering. Now it needs further backing - "The EU-Africa clinical research scheme is promoting deep

collaboration and leading to improved treatments", says director Michael Makanga. "It should be bigger and better in Horizon Europe" - [Science Business, 01/08/2019](#)

- José Inácio Faria: Global health research - a chance for Moedas to shape his legacy [Euractive, 20/09/2019](#)
- Cecile Vernant: Horizon Europe - A global health prescription for the EU. [Euractive, 17/07/2019](#)

### Other publications

- Éanna Kelly: 'Global R&D collaboration more vital than ever, survey finds New Science|Business poll reveals growing appetite for global research partnerships but finds persistent funding and legal barriers can stand in the way'. [ScienceBusiness, 26/11/2019](#)
- IMI research gets cited at double the global average rate

Report shows rise in performance, with IMI research cited 60% more than EU average and twice as much as the rest of the world.

[www.IMI.org](http://www.IMI.org) 27/11/2019

NB See also results for [similar Thomson Reuters analysis of EDCTP-funded research](#). International research collaboration clearly pays off.

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## Upcoming events

### **ICASA 2019 | Intern. Conf. on AIDS and STIs in Africa | 2-7/12 2019**

The 20th ICASA conference is the biggest HIV/AIDS conference in Africa. ICASA2019 will be held in Kigali, Rwanda from 2-7 December 2019. The conference theme "AIDS Free Africa - Innovation, Community, and Political Leadership". "It engages all stakeholders in the Post-SDG Framework, where sustainability of the response in reaching 90, 90, 90 will not be possible if human rights are not a key priority". Abstract submission was extended to 9 August 2019.

[More on the ICASA website.](#)

EDCTP will contribute a satellite symposium on to the conference. [See the events page.](#)

### **Wellcome | Optimmunize conference | 19-21/02 2020**

The Optimmunize - Improving the beneficial effects of vaccines' conference, will be held for the first time at the Wellcome Genome Campus, Hinxton, Cambridge, United Kingdom), an focus on research into the broader effects of vaccines on the immune system, and how the use of vaccines may be optimized if these effects are taken into account. It brings together the most excellent speakers from all over the world, at the forefront of this new avenue of research. [More information here.](#)

### **World Health Summit | Regional Meeting in Kampala, Uganda | 27-28 /04 2020**

The first World Health Summit Regional Meeting in Africa will take place in Kampala, Uganda from 27-28 April, 2020. The World Health Summit Regional Meeting 2020 will be hosted and organized by Makerere University in partnership with the Government of Uganda.



The central themes of the Regional Meeting 2020 include: The Health of the African Youth, Advancing Technology for Health in Africa, Infectious Diseases and Global Health Security, Stemming the Tide of Non-Communicable Diseases in Low-and Middle-Income Countries, Inter-Sectoral Action for Health.

[More information here](#)

**AAS | Call for Abstracts - Evidence Leaders Conference | Deadline: 31/12 2019**

"The African Academy of Sciences (AAS) and the African Institute for Development Policy (AFIDEP) will convene an Evidence Leaders Africa Conference on 27th - 28th July 2020, Nairobi Kenya.

The conference is part of an ongoing initiative, the Evidence Leaders in Africa (ELA) project funded by the Hewlett Foundation. ELA seeks to expand and fortify evidence-informed decision making (EIDM) leadership in Africa. The ELA conference targets AAS Fellows, Affiliates, and grantees undertaking research in East and West Africa to provide a platform for sharing lessons in evidence-informed decision making practices across Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) sectors in Africa.

The key purpose of the conference is to promote EIDM and contribute to the development of evidence-informed policy, efficient and effective implementation of policies and programmes as well as learning to accelerate the development of all STI sectors in Africa."

[More information here](#)

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

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