



**E D C T P**

## **EDCTP Update**

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### Highlights

- **Prof. Gita Ramjee passed away on 31 March 2020**
- **MIMVac: a €20 million programme for malaria vaccines**
- **World TB Day: EDCTP investments rise to €228 million**

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### **Professor Gita Ramjee passed away on 31 March 2020**

Yesterday, Professor Gita Ramjee, Chief Scientific Officer of the Aurum Institute in South Africa, passed away due to complications of a COVID-19 infection. Many in the EDCTP General Assembly, the Scientific Advisory Committee and the Secretariat worked with and knew her well. We are sad and shocked by this loss.

Dr Michael Makanga: "We have lost a long serving member of our Scientific Advisory Committee and a dear and formidable colleague in the fight against infectious diseases. Prof. Gita Ramjee sadly succumbed to COVID-19, one more victim of this ravaging pandemic. This is a very heavy loss to the global scientific community and South Africa. We extend our sincere condolences to her family. May her soul rest in peace."

Prof. Ramjee was a world-renowned scientist, known for her contribution to the fight against the HIV epidemic in South Africa and globally, focussed on HIV prevention solutions for women. She published more than 200 research articles.

At the opening ceremony of the Ninth Forum in Lisbon, EDCTP awarded its 2018 Prize for Outstanding Female Scientist to Prof. Gita Ramjee, at the time Chief Specialist Scientist and Director of the HIV Prevention Research Unit of the South African Medical Research Council, Durban, South Africa.

She was lauded for her extensive experience in HIV prevention methods for women and her investigations of women-initiated HIV prevention options. She conducted large-scale trials of antiretroviral-based oral and topical prophylaxis. Her excellence in clinical research and capacity building had brought her the Life Time achievement award in HIV prevention by a panel of international peers. She was also a recipient of the South African MRC Gold Award given for scientific excellence.



Prof. Gita Ramjee at the award ceremony 2018.

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Heads-up | 2020 Calls for proposals to be published on 03 April

On Friday 03 April 2020, EDCTP will publish its seven 2020 Calls for proposals to support clinical research on poverty-related diseases and clinical research capacity development in sub-Saharan Africa. The calls represent a total investment of more than €80 million.

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## Tenth EDCTP Forum postponed until October 2021

The Coronavirus pandemic forced many countries and academic institutions around the world to put a strict ban on travel for participation in international meetings out of concern for public and individual health.

EDCTP shares this concern and has decided to postpone its Tenth Forum planned for 18-21 October 2020 until next year.

EDCTP has rescheduled the Forum to take place in the same venue in Maputo, Mozambique from 17-20 October 2021.

More information on new registration, abstract submission and possible changes in the programme will be provided later.

More on the [EDCTP Forums](#)

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## EDCTP 2020 Prizes: nomination deadline extended

In accordance with the postponement of the tenth EDCTP Forum until 17-20 October 2021, the deadline for the nomination of candidates for the EDCTP Prizes 2020 will be extended until 30 October 2020.

The tenth Forum is the stage for the award ceremonies of the 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](#)

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## World TB Day 2020: EDCTP TB investment rises to €228 million

The first EDCTP programme (2003-2015) committed €65.6 million to research on TB and TB-HIV co-infection. It made a significant contribution to the WHO-recommended TB control strategy, it mobilised European and African funding for TB-related research and generated important evidence on TB diagnostics and treatment regimens supporting policy changes.

Under its second programme (2014-2024), EDCTP is funding 62 TB research projects, with a total funding of €162.4 million to date, across the full array of interventions: diagnostics and case management, treatment and implementation, preventive vaccines. Vulnerable groups are included and co-infections are addressed.

[More information about our portfolio in the World TB Day message](#)



Tuberculosis - one step further

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## Recent events

### **AIGHD/WHO/EDCTP | TB Vaccine Roadmap Consensus Meeting | 03-04/03 2020**

The Amsterdam Institute for Global Health and Development (AIGHD) in close collaboration with the World Health Organization (WHO) and EDCTP, organised a TB stakeholder meeting in Amsterdam on 3-4 March 2020.

EDCTP funded this meeting as part of its support for TB vaccine development. The Roadmap will define what clinical development, key capacities and policy and access measures would be required to deliver TB vaccines and ensure their public health benefit.

[Read more](#)

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## Recently signed projects

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

- **META TRIAL** | Coordinator: Prof. Shabbar Jaffar | Preventing and delaying the development of diabetes in Africa: a randomised placebo-controlled double-blind phase III trial of metformin in HIV-infected persons with pre-diabetes

### **[Mobilisation of research funds in case of public health emergencies - 2018](#)**

- **PEAU-EBOV-RDC** | Coordinator: Prof. Eric Delaporte | Prise en charge améliorée de maladie à virus Ebola en situation d'urgence en République Démocratique du Congo

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

- **BLOCKRABIES** | Coordinator: Prof. Jacob Zinsstag | Blockchain high-coverage rabies post-exposure prophylaxis to achieve zero human rabies deaths in Africa

### Career development fellowships - 2018

- **MPiMP** | Fellow: Dr Caroline Kijogi | Macrophage polarisation in placental malaria pathogenesis

### EDCTP Senior Fellowships - 2018

- **RCB-DHAPQ-SMC** | Fellow: Dr Karim Traore | Research capacity building by RCB-DHAP-SMC clinical trial in school-aged children in Mali
- **InDEX** | Fellow: Dr Nesri Padayatchi | The individualised multi-/extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis treatment strategy study

### EDCTP-AREF Preparatory Fellowships - 2017

- **MTB-SA-NGS-TZ** | Fellow: Dr Abubakar Shaaban Hoza | Mining into the Mycobacterium tuberculosis complex and Staphylococcus aureus circulating genotypes and their resistance profiles in resource-limited settings of Tanzania

### Ethics and regulatory capacities - 2018

- **SERCLe** | Coordinator: Mr Andy Leather | Strengthening ethics and regulatory capacity in Sierra Leone
- **SPaRCS** | Coordinator: Dr Hazel Bradley | Strengthening pharmacovigilance and regulatory capacities in four Southern African countries

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## TESA network reaches out to Lusophone countries

TESA II, the EDCTP-funded regional network of excellence - Trials of Excellence for Southern Africa - aims to support regional networking in sub-Saharan Africa and with Europe in order to build and strengthen regional, national, institutional and individual capacities to conduct clinical trials according to international standards.

TESA is coordinated by Dr. Eusebio Macete, Director of the Health Research Centre of Manhica (CISM) in Maputo, Mozambique, with partners from Angola, Botswana, France, Malawi, Namibia, Netherlands, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, United Kingdom, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

The network comprises institutions at different levels of development and research capacity and works across various languages. It considers upgrading and involving the Lusophone countries in the African research area of particular importance. A formal relationship has been established with Angola and Cape Verde.

### **Angola**

Angola is a TESA network member and, based on this partnership, a delegation of the Angolan Health Research Centre (CISA) visited Manhica in April and May 2018. Participants familiarised themselves with the CISM research platform and research activities in general and with technical and management topics. A follow-up visit took place in February 2020 when a team from CISM visited CISA. The Manhica team comprised grant managers, demographers, researchers and CISM management.

Several presentations and workshops were held with the aim to strengthen and develop the institutional capacity of CISA with topics such as the diarrhoeal research area, demography and

public health of Mozambique and Angola, and advocacy for national research on population dynamics and its implications for health in Angola.



TESA - CISA and CISM teams at the INIS in Angola

Moreover, the TESA coordinator also had high-level meetings at the Ministry of Health, the Faculty of Medicine, the National Malaria Control Programme and with WHO office representatives. All partners were very receptive regarding collaboration with Mozambique and, for example, with Namibia on malaria across borders.

### **Cape Verde**

This week of intense South-South collaboration activities included also a visit to Cape Verde. The Manhiça team organised a seminar on malaria entomology, which was attended not only by staff of the National Research Institute but also other health workers in the malaria field.

This was followed by a meeting with the Minister of Health and the National Director of Public Health in which the EDCTP programme and South-South collaboration were emphasised. The government response was positive and open to a more sustainable exchange. Up to this point, the Spanish International Agency for Cooperation and Development has been supporting all activities. Both parties committed to continue the collaboration under other programmes.

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## **MIMVac: a €21.5 million programme researching malaria vaccines**

The MIMVaC-Africa consortium kicked off its ambitious programme of clinical studies for developing effective malaria vaccines during an online meeting on 31 March 2020. The online meeting replaced the initially planned face-face meeting in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso, on 23-24 March 2020.

Coordinator Dr Sodiomon Sirima: "I am delighted that the MIMVaC-Africa programme is starting its practical implementation phase. I am confident that we will be able to deliver one or more malaria vaccine candidates at the end of this programme and therefore pave the way for a larger phase III efficacy trial".

MIMVaC- Africa is a multilateral initiative to support the clinical development of effective malaria vaccine candidates in Africa. The consortium comprises ten organisations in Africa, Europe and Asia. The consortium is coordinated from the Groupe de Recherche Action en Santé (GRAS), Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso. Partner organisations are in Gabon, Germany, Japan, Luxembourg, Mozambique, the Netherlands, Tanzania, and the United Kingdom.

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 will leverage the recently developed capacity to apply the controlled human malaria infection (CHMI) challenge model during the first two years of the project to rapidly test and compare the vaccine candidates in Europe and Africa. The most promising candidates will be downselected for the field efficacy trials in Africa.

The MIMVaC-Africa programme will also strengthen translational vaccine development platform capabilities in African research sites, reinforce the clinical trial infrastructure and contribute to the development of immunological assay capacity in the trial sites.

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## Projects

### **PAMAfrica | €44 million investment in next generation antimalarials | 03/03 2020**

EDCTP granted the PAMAfrica research consortium €21.9 million over a five-year period; MMV, Novartis and other partners will provide an additional €22 million.

The PAMAfrica project, which will adopt a portfolio approach, aims to develop new medicines for both severe and uncomplicated malaria, designed to combat emerging artemisinin resistance. It will include the development of the first new malaria treatment for babies under 5kg, a new fast-acting medicine for the treatment of severe malaria, and new combinations to treat drug-resistant uncomplicated malaria.

Read the [press release](#)

### **CANTAM | Interview with Prof. Francine Ntoumi | 03/03 2020**

In relation to World Women's Day 2020, the German global health NGO DSW [published an interview](#) with Professor Francine Ntoumi, who coordinates one of the four EDCTP-funded regional networks of excellence, i.e. CANTAM II - Central Africa Clinical Research Network. See also the [CANTAM website](#)

### **ShigOraVax | First study registration | March 2020**

The ShigOraVax project (grant identifier RIA2018V-2308) just registered its first clinical study (a non-interventional surveillance study) in [clinicaltrials.gov](#). The ShigOraVax project (Early clinical development of an oral Shigella vaccine through phase II study in Africa) is coordinated by Dr Hilde Depraetere ([European Vaccine Initiative](#), Germany) with partners in Burkina Faso, India, the Netherlands, Sweden, and Zambia.

[Project website](#)

### **DiTECT-HAT | Third annual project meeting | 10-12/03 2020**

The principal investigators and PhD students of the DiTECT-HAT project held their third consortium meeting at the Institute of Tropical Medicine in Antwerp, Belgium from 10-12 March 2020. The Guinean National Sleeping Sickness Control Program, Institut Pierre Richet (Côte d'Ivoire), CIRDES (Burkina Faso), INRB (RD Congo), IRD (France), ITM (Belgium) and ULIV (UK & Kenya) presented their respective progress, made a planning to complete and analyse the results during their last project year, and planned in detail the timing and topics of their joint publications. The PhD students also followed a 2-day initiation on cost-effectiveness analysis.

So far, DiTECT-HAT tested ten thousand persons for sleeping sickness at peripheral health centres and hospitals, while almost nine thousand were tested during door-to-door visits. Eighty (80) sleeping sickness patients have been diagnosed. The diagnostic performance of the different tests will be evaluated using latent class analysis, and the cost-effectiveness of different algorithms for each country will be



determined. As was underlined by a representative of WHO during the meeting, the results of DiTECT-HAT will contribute to approval of adapted diagnostic algorithms for sleeping sickness, including future simplified case management strategies, and enable improved disease surveillance as well as validation of the sleeping sickness elimination status.



DiTECT-HAT - Participants of the Third Annual meeting in Antwerp

More information on DiTECT-HAT on the [project website](#) and in the [EDCTP portfolio](#).

### **MMVC | Third annual meeting | 11-12/03 2020**

The MMVC consortium held its third annual meeting in Dakar, Senegal on 11-12 March 2020. The aim of the 'Multi-Stage Malaria Vaccine Consortium' (MMVC) project is to develop the first multi-stage vaccine for malaria designed to target all four stages of the *P. falciparum* parasite's life cycle. This highly ambitious project encompasses a series of tightly coordinated lead-in trials building towards a phase IIb efficacy trial. Since its inception in 2018, a number of trials have been initiated.



Despite the challenges experienced due to COVID-19 travel restrictions, the meeting was a success with active participation both from the room and remotely. Preliminary results of active trials were shared and discussed including highly promising results obtained with the pre-erythrocytic candidate R21/Matrix-M. In addition, the team from Bobo Dioulasso presented an ongoing massive body of work to determine transmission rates in Burkina Faso villages to prepare for later intervention using a transmission blocking vaccine. The three PhD students selected to take part in research projects within MMVC each gave an excellent presentation on their study objectives and work plan.

More information about the MMVC project: [ERA-Learn project page](#) and EDCTP portfolio presentation: [A four-strike vaccine against malaria](#)

### **PAVIA | Annual meeting | 16-20/03 2020**

The pharmacovigilance consortium PAVIA (Pharmacovigilance Africa) held its annual meeting from 16 to 20 March in Ezulwini, Eswatini. PAVIA aims to strengthen pharmacovigilance in Africa. The project is funded by EDCTP and focuses on MDR-TB drugs.

[Project website](#)

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## **EDCTP Resources**

### **Added value of EDCTP to Europe and Africa**

EDCTP published updated brochures with data on the '2 project portfolio can now be explored online.

[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 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.

### **Pan-African Clinical Trials Alliance**

Report on the EDCTP - Pan-African Clinical Trials Alliance Workshop '[Towards consolidation of clinical trial regulation, oversight and registration in Africa](#)'. (Johannesburg, South Africa, 19-20 March 2019).

### **Public Portal of EDCTP2 grants**

The [EDCTP public project portal](#) which offers an overview of key data on all EDCTP grants has been improved. The portal has been 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.

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## **Funding opportunities**

### **EDCTP**

All EDCTP 2020 calls for proposals will be published on Friday 03 April 2020.

The emergency call will open the same day, all other calls will open on 10 April 2020.

The following EDCTP Call for proposals is still open for applications.

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

Deadline for application: 07 May 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](#).

### **Other opportunities**

#### **MRC | Applied Global Health Research Board | Deadline 07/04 2020**

The MRC (United Kingdom) has launched a new research funding Board and invites applications. The new Board will fund global health research that is embedded within local contexts in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Proposals should focus on ideas that will have real world practical application to improve health. Proposals are encouraged to be multidisciplinary. Principal Investigators in LMICs can apply directly to the Board without the need for a UK partner. Applications led by UK PIs must include LMIC co-applicants and be founded upon genuine equitable partnerships.

[More information](#)

#### **Wellcome Trust | International Master's Fellowships | Deadline 14/04 2020**

This scheme offers nationals of low- and middle-income countries the opportunity to receive training at Master's degree level. Who can apply?

- you are a national of a low- or middle-income country;
- your proposed research focuses on a health priority in a low- or middle-income country;
- you have sponsorship from an eligible host organisation in a low- or middle-income country.

[More information](#)

#### **RSTMH | Small Grants programme | Deadline 15/04 2020**

This [annual Small Grants scheme](#) (up to £5,000) of the Royal Society of Tropical Medicine and Hygiene aims "to enable early career researchers and global health professionals in the field of tropical medicine or global health to undertake clinical or scientific research or fieldwork, as stand-alone projects or distinct

elements within a larger project."

**Deadline for applications: 15/04 2020**

### **IMI | IMI2 - Call 20 | Deadline 21/04 2020**

On 22 January, IMI launched IMI2 - Call 20 with funding opportunities in cancer, tuberculosis, vaccines, psoriatic arthritis and drugs based on proteins. The Call has a total budget of EUR 273 million.

[More information](#)

### **ISGlobal | 2 Master's Fellowship schemes | deadline 05/04 and 14/04 2020**

Students from sub-Saharan Africa can now apply to the ISGlobal scholarship programme to pursue the [Master in Global Health and, for the first time, the Master in Clinical Research: International Health Track, for the 2020-2021 period](#). These scholarships cover the total of the tuition fees and the university taxes required for a complete registration programme.

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## Upcoming events

### **POSTPONED World Health Summit | 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 organised by the 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](#)

### **Rwanda | Kigali Summit on Malaria and NTDs | 25/06 2020**

The "Kigali Summit on Malaria & NTDs" was announced on 28 January 2020. The high-level global summit is taking place on 25 June 2020 and is hosted by the government of Rwanda. The meeting takes place on the eve of the Commonwealth Heads of Government meeting 2020.

[Read more on the RBM website](#)

### **6th Global Forum on TB Vaccines | 20-22/04 2021**

The Working Group on New TB Vaccines, IAVI, and the Tuberculosis Vaccine Initiative in partnership with the Institute of Pharmacology and Structural Biology (CNRS-University Toulouse III-Paul Sabatier) and the Federal University of Toulouse Midi-Pyrénées, organised the 6th Global Forum on TB Vaccines which will be held in Toulouse, France, from 20-22 April 2021,

The Global Forum on TB Vaccines is the world's largest gathering of stakeholders striving to develop new vaccines to prevent TB.

[More information here](#)

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