



Press release – Start of VHFMoDRAD project for the development of Rapid and Multiplex Point-of-Care for diagnosis of Viral Haemorrhagic Fever diseases

The project VHFMoDRAD (Viral Haemorrhagic Fever: Modern Approaches for developing bedside Rapid Diagnostics) is officially launched in Paris, France on 21st of January 2019.

Coordinated by Prof. Ali Mirazimi at Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten), the project aims to develop and deliver rapid and point-of-care (POC) single/multiplex diagnostic tools that will significantly increase capacity to handle outbreaks with Filoviruses and other viral hemorrhagic fever diseases in Africa. The project is supported by the EU's research and innovation programme and CEPHEID Europe SAS through the Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI). Two companies and consortium partners, Coris Bioconcept and RD Biotech, will also provide financial support to the project.

VHFMoDRAD is part of IMI's EBOLA+ programme that was launched in 2014 to respond to the Ebola epidemic by accelerating all aspects of vaccine development and diagnostics.

VHFMoDRAD is built on the achievements of the previously funded IMI EBOLA+ project EbolaMoDRAD, also coordinated by Prof. Ali Mirazimi at Public Health Agency of Sweden (Folkhälsomyndigheten), which ended in 2018. EbolaMoDRAD successfully advanced developments on rapid diagnostics for the Ebola virus.

VHFMoDRAD will bring the results of EbolaMoDRAD to the next level thanks to a multidisciplinary research consortium drawn from key European and African research organisations, a large company (Cepheid) and European SMEs. The project will not only concentrate on Ebola but also several other hemorrhagic fever viruses, thus enabling professionals in an epidemic setting to rapidly diagnose patients whose symptoms of such viruses can be very similar.

VHFMoDRAD will achieve the project aims by developing rapid molecular and serological single/multiplex detection methods that will be validated in the field. A capacity building programme will also be implemented through training activities targeting professionals in the West African region. The project also plans to support the transfer of the production capacity for diagnostic tools to project partner Institut Pasteur Dakar, Senegal to enable the local production of POC tests. The project results will be exploited and disseminated to the scientific community, public health bodies, NGOs and outbreak management teams.

Pierre Meulien, IMI Executive Director, said: 'Viral haemorrhagic fever diseases, such as Ebola, remain a major threat to public health, as demonstrated by the current outbreak in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. We urgently need diagnostic tests that can rapidly identify those who have the disease. I am confident that by bringing together experts from the public and private sectors and Europe and Africa, VHFMoDRAD will make progress in this important area.'

For Ali Mirazimi, project coordinator at Public Health Agency of Sweden: "This project will contribute to a better preparedness for diagnosis of highly pathogenic viral diseases. In addition, this project will contribute to capacity building in Africa".

The project began on the 1st of January 2019 and will end on the 31st of December 2022.



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Project consortium

- Folkhälsomyndigheten (FoHM), Sweden
- Inserm Transfert (IT), France
- University of Stirling (UoS), United Kingdom
- Department of Health, Public Health England (DH-PHE), United Kingdom
- CorisBioConcept SPRL (CORIS), Belgium
- Institut national de la Santé et de la recherche médicale (INSERM), France
- University of Copenhagen (UCPH), Denmark
- Istituto Nazionale per le Malattie Infettive "L. Spallanzani" I.R.C.C.S (INMI), Italy
- Institut Pasteur de Dakar (IPD), Senegal
- RD-Biotech (RD-B), France
- CEPHEID, France
- Aix-Marseille University (AMU), France
- Emergency (EMR) Italy

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About IMI

The Innovative Medicines Initiative (IMI) is working to improve health by speeding up the development of and patient access to, innovative medicines, particularly in areas where there is an unmet medical or social need. It does this by facilitating collaboration between the key players involved in healthcare research, including universities, the pharmaceutical and other industries, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs), patient organisations and medicines regulators.

IMI is a partnership between the European Union and the European pharmaceutical industry, represented by the European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). It has a budget of €3.3 billion for the period 2014-2020. Half of this comes from the EU's research and innovation programme, Horizon 2020. The other half comes from large companies, mostly from the pharmaceutical sector. These do not receive any EU funding, but contribute to the projects 'in kind', for example by donating their researchers' time or providing access to research facilities or resources.

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