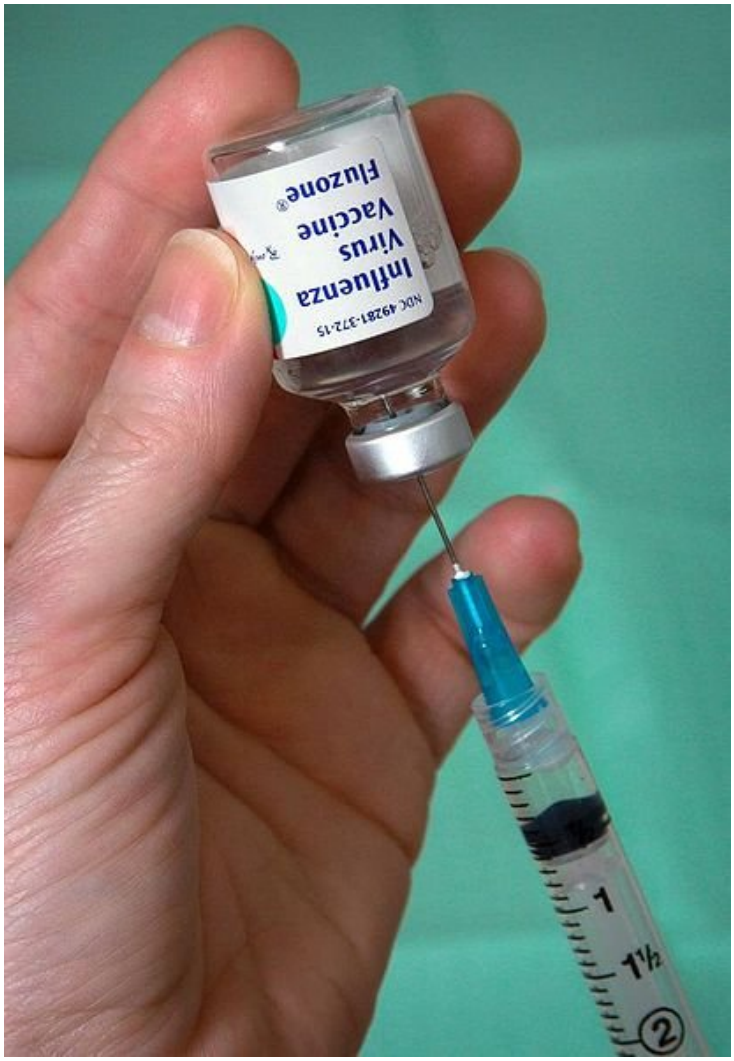
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EU, India engage to develop NextGen Influenza Vaccine

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In total, EUR 30 million (INR 240 crs. approx.) has been earmarked for research and innovation actions, which aim at advancing the efficacy, safety, duration of immunity, and reactivity against an increased breadth of influenza strains. Both the EU and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, have committed EUR 15 million each to fund this joint call.



The European Union (EU) and India has announced that they will engage together on research and innovation to develop a Next Generation Influenza Vaccine to Protect Citizens Worldwide.

In total, EUR 30 million (or approximately INR 240crs.) has been earmarked for research and innovation actions, which aim at advancing the efficacy, safety, duration of immunity, and reactivity against an increased breadth of influenza strains. Both the EU and the Department of Biotechnology (DBT), Government of India, have committed EUR 15 million each to fund this joint call. The EU is funding this call under its programmer for research and innovation 'Horizon 2020' (2014-2020).

These joint efforts also aim to develop cost-effective and affordable influenza vaccine rapidly without compromising quality. Keeping this in mind, the participating consortia need to bring together multi-disciplinary stakeholders representing the complete value chain from Lab to Market including pre-clinical trials and vaccine developers.

The call was launched on 28th August 2018 in the presence of H.E. Mr Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the European Union to India and Dr Renu Swarup, Secretary of the Department of Biotechnology (DBT).

Dr. Renu Swarup, Secretary, Department of Biotechnology, Government of India said "Europe and India have a long and successful tradition of vaccine in both public and private institutions. Both are also home to many of the world's largest vaccine manufacturers. Europe and India are therefore well positioned to take on new challenges in vaccine research and exploit the immense opportunity this joint initiative provides India and EU researchers, academicians and industry to come together and find solutions for the challenges posed by the fast mutating influenza strains".

H.E. Mr. Tomasz Kozlowski, Ambassador of the European Union, said: "This joint call is another demonstration of the increased cooperation between the EU and India as committed by the leaders during the Summit in October 2017. In engaging jointly on this topic, India and the EU are contributing to an important global public health challenge. Improved

influenza vaccines would help the international community to better prepare in the event of an influenza pandemic.”

It is expected that the outcome of the projects will also contribute to the achievement of Sustainable Development Goal 3 to ensure health and well-being for all and boost the Indian National Health Mission. Addressing seasonal flu vaccination is also high on the EU health agenda with the European Commission urging EU Member States to commit to vaccinating 75% of risk groups against seasonal flu each year.

The call will remain open till 16th April 2019. The projects require minimum three applicants from Europe (from three different EU Member States or countries associated to the EU programme Horizon 2020) and minimum three applicants from India. This call is also ‘Open to the World’ and thus applicants from other countries can join the EU-India consortia.

About 100 participants, both from India and Europe, attended the first information event organized in New Delhi on 28th August 2018. This allowed for a better understanding of the call and matchmaking.
The next information sessions will take place in Hyderabad on 30th August, in Bangalore on 24th September and in Pune on 28th September 2018.

This cooperation is another demonstration of the already robust cooperation between the EU and India based on the EU-India Science & Technology Cooperation Agreement concluded in 2001 and renewed in 2015 until 2020. On the mobility grants known as Marie SkÅ?odowska-Curie Actions (MSCAs), which are part of Horizon 2020, India ranks first in terms of number of beneficiaries from third countries followed by China and USA.

At the EU-India Summit in October 2017, it was agreed to upscale the collaborative research through co-funded and joint calls.