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CEPI grants $14.1M to Bharat Biotech, IVI for advancing Chikungunya vaccine

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For vaccine manufacturing and clinical development of a two-dose live-inactivated vaccine (BBV87) against Chikungunya



CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, in collaboration with Ind-CEPI, has announced a new partnering agreement with a consortium comprising Bharat Biotech (BBIL) and the International Vaccine Institute (IVI) to advance the development of a Chikungunya vaccine.

CEPI will fund the consortium with up to $14.1 million for vaccine manufacturing and clinical development of a two-dose live-inactivated vaccine (BBV87) against Chikungunya. This grant is supported by the European Union's (EU's) Horizon 2020 programme through an existing framework partnership agreement with CEPI.

The consortium will be further supported with a grant of up to $2 million from the Indian Government'sInd-CEPI initiative which will fund the set-up of GMP manufacturing facilities for the vaccine in India, and the subsequent manufacture of clinical trial materials.

In addition to manufacturing, the partnering agreement will finance a multi-centre Phase 2/3 adaptive clinical trial to be conducted by IVI in Colombia, Panama and Thailand which will provide crucial data about the safety and immunogenicity of the vaccine candidate.

The partnership will build on BBIL's experience of developing and supplying affordable vaccines, and WHO prequalification procedures, to ensure affordable access to the vaccine in countries where Chikungunya is endemic, in line with CEPI's core commitment to equitable access.

The investment is part of CEPI's third call for proposals which was launched in January 2019. Since the launch of this call, over $80 million of CEPI core funding has been committed to three Chikungunya vaccine candidates and two Rift Valley Fever vaccine candidates.

BBIL's BBV87 vaccine is an inactivated whole virion vaccine based on a strain derived from an East, Central, South African (ECSA) genotype. The vaccine has completed standard pre-clinical studies, and an optimum immune response was elicited by the adjuvanted vaccine in phase 1 clinical trials in India. Inactivated virions technology has a safety profile which potentially makes this vaccine accessible to special populations, such as the immunocompromised and pregnant women, that some other technologies cannot reach.

Dr. Krishna Ella, Chairman and Managing Director of Bharat Biotech said, "We are immensely proud to be part of this esteemed alliance to bring to the world a safe and effective solution against the debilitating Chikungunya infection. At Bharat Biotech, we have always been at the forefront of innovation while developing vaccines for neglected diseases such as Typhoid and re-emerging epidemics such as Zika, H1N1 and Japanese Encephalitis. We are hopeful that with accelerated clinical development in endemic countries, the candidate CHIK vaccine will be successful. "We are witnessing that today's neglected diseases are susceptible to become tomorrow's pandemics and with this collaboration we have the opportunity to tackle them proactively," he added.