

“The time is now” – making the vaccine to eradicate Malaria

- *BioNTech announces project to develop the first mRNA-based prophylactic Malaria vaccine, and the set-up of manufacturing infrastructures in Africa Success of COVID19 vaccines creates global opportunity for the fight against Malaria*
- *EU Malaria Fund successfully funded variety of malaria projects and will enter post-investment period*

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During the first year of the pandemic, governments globally have invested about € 100 bn in the development and procurement of vaccines against COVID-19. This financial effort, scientific rigor and the regulatory support by many authorities and experts led to the deployment of four EMA-approved well-tolerated and effective vaccines within less than 12 month – a record time, considering that it normally takes on average 5 to 10 years to develop a vaccine.

Today, BioNTech SE (“BioNTech”) announced the start of its Malaria project which aims at the development of a safe and highly effective malaria vaccine and the implementation of sustainable vaccine supply solutions on the African continent. The company’s project is part of a programme by the kENUP Foundation to accelerating the eradication of Malaria. BioNTech aims to develop a safe and highly effective mRNA vaccine with durable protective immunity for prevention of malaria and disease associated mortality. To this end, BioNTech will assess multiple vaccine candidates featuring known Malaria targets such as the circumsporozoite protein (CSP), as well as new antigens discovered in the pre-clinical research phase. The most promising mRNA vaccine candidates will be selected for clinical development. The start of the clinical trial for the first vaccine candidate is planned for 2022.

revising the investment strategy for Malaria

With this novel need to develop a large project on a now proven technology platform, the **EU Malaria Fund** has successfully accomplished its mission earlier than expected. Therefore, on June 30, 2021, its investment period has ended. By then, the Fund has successfully initiated more than two dozen of novel scientific approaches to the fight of Malaria, financed three innovative companies under this scheme and is in negotiations with another three companies.

Important investments made by the Fund include the initiation of a mOMV Malaria vaccine candidate by Achilles sRL, the provision of critical funding to Sanaria Inc.’ PfSPZ programme, Deutsche Malaria GmbH’s re-purposing of an antibiotic as a potential amendment to the current standard of care in light of increasing resistances.

The EU Malaria Fund aims to conclude all investments already in concrete negotiations (with positive decision of IDC) and disburse those to the companies (in case all Venture Loan contracts were signed timely and the preconditions for disbursements are fulfilled) prior to September 30, 2021. Thereafter, it will service the investment portfolio until the end of the post-investment phase period. Accordingly, the Fund's governance will for the most part remain intact. No additional funding and investments will be made by the Fund, and it will thus not call upon further disbursements from its investors. The EU Malaria Fund's Investment Decision Committee (IDC) will be dissolved, while the Scientific Advisory Council (SAC) with its nine distinguished members will serve as eradicateMalaria's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) as of July 1, 2021.

kENUP Foundation is introducing the EU Malaria Fund's portfolio companies to relevant third parties in support of their future financing needs. Investments related to the manufacturing of current, and especially next-generation anti-malarials in Sub-Saharan Africa will be pursued in coordination with Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV).

Investitionsbank Berlin (IBB) will continue to act as the Fund's Monitor and provide management services to the EU Malaria Fund.

The European Commission and the EIB were the major contributor to the Fund through the InnovFin EU programme funded by EU Horizon 2020 and jointly managed by the European Commission and the EIB. Part of the project was supported by the European Fund of Strategic Investments, the financial pillar of the Investment Plan for Europe. The EU Malaria Fund is thankful for the decisive €64 million contribution and the visionary leadership of Team Europe in infectious diseases.

Acknowledgements

Ruth Arnon, Former President of the Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities and Co-Inventor of Copaxone, together with **Stefan Kaufmann**, Founding Director of the Max Planck Institute for Infection Biology in Berlin and former President of the International Union of Immunological Societies – both Co-Chairs of the eradicateMalaria Scientific Advisory Board - conclude: "Indeed, now is the time to build on the recent successes of novel platform technologies. We are ready to take on the challenge to develop a vaccine against malaria, the deadly infectious disease affecting so many children in sub-Saharan Africa."

Pedro Alonso, Director of the World Health Organization's Global Malaria Programme, states: "With the technological advances made on vaccines to fight COVID-19, and the demonstration once again of the value of vaccines to fight communicable diseases and change the course of history, I believe that the time has come to launch a renewed effort to develop a safe and highly efficacious vaccine that could help us realize our long term vision of eradicating malaria."."

David Reddy, CEO of Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV): "Continued innovation in malaria interventions will be an essential factor in the final push to eradication. The new vaccine technologies rolled-out during the COVID-19 pandemic provide a promising opportunity for transformative innovation in malaria".

Marco Forte, General Manager of Fondazione Monte dei Paschi di Siena, adds "We were firmly convinced that the strong efforts committed with the launch of Covid19 vaccines might strongly contribute to eradicate Malaria. The evolution of scientific skills and team working will become a role model to improve and develop new technologies to fight against Malaria and we are very pleased we have given our contribution to achieve this outcome."

Angeliki Krisilion, Member of the Management Board of Investitionsbank Berlin and Chair of the Supervisory Board of EMM EU Malaria Fund Berlin Managementgesellschaft mbH: "Berlin is an important hub for medical science in Europe. IBB Group has done groundbreaking work in the fight against malaria with the EU Malaria Fund by providing financial support to companies developing products to fight malaria. We are grateful to the team of the EU Malaria Fund for adding concrete and impactful measures empowering the fight against Malaria."

Holm Keller, Executive Chairman of kENUP Foundation: "We are grateful for the commitment of all partners that have contributed to the EU Malaria Fund. We continue the fight against malaria and hope the EUMF and eradicateMalaria decisively contribute to fight infectious diseases endemic in Africa."