

NEWS RELEASE

for immediate release

September 2020

## Africa and European Union against Covid-19

Covid-19 is increasing its impact in Africa, with contagions that are spreading, healthcare systems in serious difficulty and a still unpredictable future.

Within this context, a consortium of African and European universities and research institutions put together their clinical and laboratory excellence to submit a proposal to the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) for a research project to be immediately implemented in Brazzaville (Republic of Congo), where the SARS-COV-2 pandemic started from March 2020.

The project, **ITAIL-COVID-19** aims at the implementation of novel and **Integrated Testing Approaches** and **Intensive Laboratory training** as strategy against **COVID-19** spread in Brazzaville, Republic of Congo.

The European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership approved this project (Grant Agreement RIA2020EF-2947-ITAIL-COVID.19), rewarding the commitment of the project's developing partners with a high score among the 153 proposals received from different parts of Africa and Europe.

The ITAIL-COVID-19 have already started the project activities, which are proceeding tirelessly, as highlighted during the routine project meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2020 which involved the Partners from Republic of Congo, France, Germany, Belgium and UK.

"This is an extraordinary example of collaboration between Africa and European universities and research institutions and substantial support from the European Union in the common fight against Covid-19", said Dr Mathieu Ndounga, ITAIL-COVID-19 Project Coordinator at Fondation Congolaise pour la Recherche (FCRM), Republic of Congo.

This project will cover the urgent need for accurate, reliable and rapid testing capacities to quickly identify the largest number of infected individuals in the Congolese population residing in Brazzaville, the capital. Moreover, by performing a seroprevalence study, it will be evaluated the spread of the virus within the population in patients who have cleared the infection without being identified by RT-PCR testing.

"While strengthening the national laboratory capacities, we will also continue the development of our training platform by engaging students in PhD thesis on COVID19 and we will contribute in various ways in strengthening collaborations with national and international stakeholders like AFRICA-CDC, IRD, etc.", said Prof. Francine Ntoumi, Chair of the Congolese Foundation for Medical Research (FCRM), Republic of Congo.

The ITAIL-COVID-19 consortium is coordinated by the Fondation Congolaise pour la Recherche Médicale (FCRM, Republic of Congo), and it involves the Bernhard-Nocht-Institut für Tropenmedizin (BNITM, Germany), the Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD, France), R-Evolution Worldwide Community Interest Company (UK) and Coris BioConcept, (Belgium).



## **Contacts and further information**

- Prof. Mathieu Ndounga, ITAIL-COVID-19 Project Coordinator: [matteondounga@gmail.com](mailto:matteondounga@gmail.com)
- Prof. Francine Ntoumi, ITAIL-COVID-19 Principal Investigator, FCRM Director: [fntoumi@fcrm-congo.com](mailto:fntoumi@fcrm-congo.com)
- Steve Diafouka Kietela, ITAIL-COVID-19 Project Manager: [diafkietelas@fcrm-congo.com](mailto:diafkietelas@fcrm-congo.com)
- Dario Scaramuzzi, ITAIL-COVID-19 Networking & Communication Manager:  
[d.scaramuzzi@revolutionworldwide.community](mailto:d.scaramuzzi@revolutionworldwide.community)

For more information please [click here for the Project Website](#)

You can also follow us by clicking on the social media: [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), [Instagram](#), [Youtube](#), and write us by the [project email](#).