

August 2015

Research Success Story



F A S T R E S P O N S E T O D E V E L O P A V A C C I N E A G A I N S T E B O L A

The European consortium involved in the Horizon 2020 project “EbolaVac” aims to develop a vaccine against Ebola to stave off outbreaks of the disease. Prof. Blaise Genton and his team from the Lausanne University Hospital, the University Medical Polyclinic and the Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute have experienced firsthand that it is possible through joint effort to mobilise support in a short time in order to respond to an emergency.

Blaise Genton has broad experience with the development of vaccines for malaria and helped develop infrastructure at Lausanne University Hospital to facilitate the testing of new products. Due to this expertise, Genton was approached to conduct an accelerated phase 1 trial for an Ebola vaccine. Even though he did not have funding, Genton immediately dropped his current projects and started preparations. He hired additional staff, and he and his colleagues and consortium partners wrote the project proposal in only 10 days. “The project was conceived under time pressure and for all involved, it was clear that securing funding was top priority. With the help of many partners, we were able to get everything in place”.

Intense collaboration

“The Ebola outbreak was the ultimate test to see if we

could respond to a public health emergency, not only in terms of capacity but also in terms of science, politics and funding. Although the period was stressful due to the high workload and high intensity, the team effort, intense collaboration and dedication were impressive to see. Everyone dropped their projects and concentrated all their energy on getting the project started”.

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Valuable federal funding

Once the EU had accepted the project proposal, Genton was able to profit from Euresearch’s network and direct contacts with the Swiss State

Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation in order to secure funding for his part in the project. “Euresearch’s ability to mobilise support on short notice as well as their knowledge of procedures, framing and terminology is indispensable, not only in this case when time was scarce but also more generally for junior researchers wanting to take the next step in their career”.

International recognition

The nature of the project attracted a lot of media interest and offered a great opportunity to get local visibility and international recognition for the quality of research done by the institution. “We never had media coverage like this before and the institution was not very well known. Many were surprised to hear that we were carrying out these trials and participating in an international project like this”.

About EbolaVac



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Prof. Blaise Genton

Lausanne University Hospital, University Medical Polyclinic, Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute

CONTENT SUMMARY

The Horizon 2020 project EbolaVac aims to develop a vaccine against Ebola as quickly as possible in order to protect the population and aid workers in affected areas where the risk of infection is highest. In this project, coordinated by the pharmaceutical company GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, the Lausanne University Hospital (Centre hospitalier universitaire vaudois, CHUV) contributes to the development of the vaccine by applying their expertise and making their infrastructure available for clinical trials.

Euresearch is the Swiss network mandated by the State Secretariat for Education, Research and Innovation providing targeted information, hands-on advice and transnational partnering related to European research and innovation programmes.

FACTS AND FIGURES

Project Name
EbolaVac

Research Area
Clinical Trial

Organisations
GlaxoSmithKline Biologicals, Belgium (Coordinator) and 3 partners

Start Date – End Date
07.10.2014 – 07.10.2017

Duration
3 years

Project Cost
€19.86 million

Project Funding
€19.86 million

Programme
Horizon 2020 Societal Challenge: Health, Demographic Change and Wellbeing

More Information
<http://ebolavac.eu>

EEN supports you in finding the right partners for innovation and business across academia and industry in over 50 countries in Europe and beyond. In Switzerland, access to EEN services is provided free of charge by Euresearch and Switzerland Global Enterprise.

