

## Project to improve global flavivirus defence kicks off



*A new project – FLAVIVACCINE – aims to increase the EU's ability to combat epidemic and pandemic viral threats both in Europe and around the world.*

Dengue, yellow fever, Zika, and West Nile viruses persist as major threats to global public health, affecting millions annually and claiming hundreds of thousands of lives. Recognising the urgency of effective interventions, the FLAVIVACCINE project seeks to offer an innovative, safe, and effective vaccine by developing and characterising a **pan-flavivirus vaccine candidate**.

Instead of directly targeting the virus, the project focuses on the initial infection resulting from contact with mosquito saliva. Thanks to this new approach, a **single vaccine** will be required to protect against multiple diseases, rather than multiple virus-specific vaccines.

Importantly, FLAVIVACCINE covers **the entire research and development value chain**, which may well be a **valuable resource in improving pandemic preparedness and response to future threats**.

The project's inaugural meeting took place in Montpellier on 25-26 January 2024, where the work plan was established. **"Today marks the beginning of a promising international collaboration. Together we will work toward a solution to the threats of flaviviruses to human health,"** stated



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Julien Pompon, Institut de Recherche Pour le Développement (IRD) & FLAVIVACCINE Project Coordinator. The project is guided by the ethical principles shared by the European Commission, and during the meeting, the researchers were challenged in a workshop to reflect on the ethical considerations of their research. Many topics were discussed: human data treatment, responsibility to animals, inclusion practices and many others.

The **consortium** consists of ten public and private institutions, including universities, research institutions and a vaccine developer. Strategically spanning seven countries in Europe and the United States, it ensures comprehensive coverage of all the required scientific expertise in cell biology, virology, immunology and vaccinology.

As the project unfolds, FLAVIVACCINE will **define the immunogenicity** of the pan-flavivirus target. It will then **develop and characterize the vaccine candidate** and **prepare it for clinical evaluation**.

**Contacts:**

**Project coordinator:**

Julien Pompon, IRD - [julien.pompon@ird.fr](mailto:julien.pompon@ird.fr)

**Communication Officer:**

Sara Lazzarin, ICONS – [sara.lazzarin@icons.it](mailto:sara.lazzarin@icons.it)

**About the project:**

The project "Development and Characterization of a Pan-Flavivirus Vaccine Candidate (FLAVIVACCINE)" officially commenced on January 1, 2024, with a scheduled duration of 48 months. The coordinator for this initiative is Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) in France. The collaborating partners include Universiteit Utrecht in the Netherlands, Agencia Estatal Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas (CSIC) in Spain, The Geneva Foundation (GF) in the United States, Norce Norwegian Research Centre AS (NORCE) in Norway, Fondazione ICONS in Italy, Commissariat à l'Énergie Atomique et aux Énergies Alternatives (CEA) in France, The Regents of the University of California in the United States, Institut Pasteur in France and Conserv Bioscience (CVB) in the United Kingdom.



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