

## 2013 Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise Funders' Meeting

### *Summary, Themes, and Recommendations*

#### **Meeting Information**

Sunday, 06 October 2013

12:00 – 5:00 p.m./12h00 – 17h00 EDT

AC Hotel Barcelona Forum, Paseo Taulat, Barcelona, Spain

Bill Snow, director of the Global HIV Vaccine Enterprise, opened the meeting and welcomed many of the top institutions around the world that are funding HIV vaccine research and development (see [Appendix A](#) for a listing of participants). He recognized the absence of representatives from the US Government: NIAID, OAR and MHRP due to the temporary government shut-down and noted their importance in any deliberations about HIV vaccine funding.

Following up on the first Funders' meeting held last year, this meeting expanded the list of participating organizations from 11 to 16 to put special focus on European funders. As before, the meeting intended to get key funding institutions to understand one another's plans and priorities, capacities to respond to new research developments, common interests and potential areas for collaboration.

The meeting started with Bill Snow providing a progress update on the areas identified during the last meeting.

- On **Industry Engagement**, is currently working on an Industry Think Tank to bring industry representatives together to discuss how they can best contribute to the HIV vaccine R&D efforts;
- On **Advancement Criteria for Efficacy Trials**, the Secretariat assisted the Clinical Collaborators group in developing the Immune Space Template and a manuscript describing it was submitted for publication to PLoS Medicine;
- On **GMP Manufacturing**, the Secretariat created an interactive "Bench to Clinic" webtool to guide academic researchers through complexities of moving into first-in-human trials;
- On **Adjuvants**, the Secretariat is working with NIAID to organize a workshop to look at characterization of recombinant ENV protein(s) formulated with various adjuvants;
- On **Tools to Maintain Funding**, the Secretariat is beginning work on a set of resources to put the state of the field in context for funder use.

Amapola Manrique described the Immune Space Template (see Appendix B for the presentation), which can be used by funders and researchers to better identify which candidates are sufficiently different in the elicited immunological responses to justify (as one of the criteria) advancement to the next stage of clinical trials. Participants described their activities and challenges toward harmonization.

Presentations by funders (see Appendix C for all presentations) have been divided into two sessions. In the first sessions, funders who participated in the Funders' meeting last year provided brief updates on major changes in thinking and direction since last year. In the second session, new participants and all European funders provided a more detailed overview of their programs. Each organization was asked to consider their own goals for the meeting and how they would like to proceed in the future, following the set of six slides covering the following areas:

- Top five organizational priorities;

- Process to create/fund initiatives;
- Flexibility/capacity to respond to new developments in future funding years;
- Recent changes in funding directions and expected shifts;
- Areas that you would like to see being funded (either through your institution or another source);
- Ideas to discuss with this group, including possible areas to collaborate.

After the presentations, there was a discussion on the state of the field, opportunities for collaboration, and potential focus areas for the Enterprise Secretariat.

### **State of the Field and Opportunities for Collaboration**

- Flat (or even reduced) funding for HIV vaccine R&D make funder interactions more important than ever before. Funding for HIV in general is even less stable as governments are reviewing their funding priorities. In this light, integration of HIV vaccine efforts with other HIV prevention modalities, and even with other diseases, may serve as a long-term strategy to better fit into the broader agenda of disease prevention and avoid the perception of an “HIV exceptionalism”;
  - o Interest in therapeutic vaccines is on the rise and may lead to the expanded mandate for some of the funding organizations, putting further strain on the available resources.
- EDCTP pointed out the open-ended nature of their efforts to build capacity (especially regulatory capacity) and encouraged other partners to bring ideas for potential collaborations;
- Further one-on-one discussions between funders are needed to learn where common interests exist and to find ways to work together.

### **Potential Funder-generated activities for the Secretariat**

- Management of Clinical Trial Sites, and issue identified during the last year’s meeting, remains an important challenge for funders. An inventory of “operation-ready” sites would be very helpful, as well as a supplementary listing of sites that require minimal investments to become operational;
- A map of existing collaborations between funders/organizations would be very helpful to understand the landscape of current interactions. The map could build on the existing Resource Tracking Group report and, in addition, identify where the funds are going, what the funding cycles are, and how individual researchers and research organizations could access the funds;
- For Funder’s Tools, it was suggested that they include:
  - o Specific examples and case studies of how governmental investments in global health benefitted directly the country that was funding these efforts;
  - o Making the business case for investment in HIV vaccines (like work done on TB) by modeling the economic impact of the continued epidemic and of having the vaccine.
- It was recommended for the Secretariat to support the field in these areas:
  - o Facilitate exchange of best practices and knowledge of funding cycles;
  - o Consider if there are ways to improve access to funds;
  - o Interaction and communication with other vaccine fields. Vaccine design and the immunology of other viral infections can greatly inform the HIV vaccine field;
  - o Increasing pragmatism and adopting a more disciplined approach to advancing vaccine candidates and bring greater efficiency to allocation of resources.