

IMI PREPARING FOR PANDEMICS



As part of the EU response to the spread of the **coronavirus disease** COVID-19, the Innovative Medicines Initiative has announced a new call of UP TO

€45 MILLION

in research funding for research teams that can develop:



The public-private model means the best brains from academia and industry will work together from the very beginning.

The funding recipients will have to demonstrate the ability to get their tests/treatments onto the market rapidly.



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IMI launched a similar initiative on Ebola in 2014, contributing significantly to the development of the two-dose vaccine regimen currently being trialled to control the outbreak in African countries and to strengthen future Ebola epidemic preparedness.

How it works: This is a fast-track, competitive funding call. Proposals will be assessed by independent experts, and the funding will go to the consortia with the highest scores. Applicants who want to score well will need to demonstrate their ability to develop tests and/or treatments for COVID-19 that will reach the market as rapidly as possible.

Private sector pharmaceutical companies will match the €45 million funding with in-kind contributions, bringing the value of investment to €90 million total.

To ensure maximum impact for patients, applicants should demonstrate their operational capacity as well as their readiness and access to asset(s) to progress through clinical development and reach patients as rapidly as possible.



Preparing for the worst: what else is IMI doing?

CORONAVIRUSES were behind high-profile disease outbreaks in recent years like SARS and MERS, but they are also responsible for the common cold. They can jump from animal to human.



ZAPI — Zoonotic Anticipation and Preparedness Initiative

ZAPI is an IMI-funded project that was set up to prepare for disease outbreaks like those caused by coronaviruses. The researchers have developed antibodies that block MERS 'spike proteins' (the spikes that give coronaviruses their name), as well as a vaccine, and tests in animals have shown that they could be effective in treating MERS. ZAPI is now running tests to see if the MERS therapeutic antibodies are also capable of blocking the spike proteins on COVID-19, and the initial results are promising. The project is also working on developing a biomanufacturing platform that can rapidly scale up the manufacture of vaccines or therapeutic antibodies, AND helping prepare for fast-tracking regulatory approval in emergency situations.

COMBACTE NET

Originally part of IMI's antimicrobial resistance programme, the COMBACTE-NET project resulted in a pan-European network of hospitals prepared to perform high-quality clinical studies of new antimicrobials, supported by a network of laboratories. The network is being mobilised in preparation for a rapid response to an immediate emerging infectious disease threat. Hospitals will contribute to the global effort to standardise the information gathered from patients with suspected or confirmed COVID-19, using the WHO-recommended Case Report Form (CRF) developed by the International Severe Acute Respiratory and emerging Infection Consortium (ISARIC). In addition, diagnostic laboratories have received a survey to ensure they are prepared to detect COVID-19 in the event that a clinical trial is rapidly initiated.

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