NACCAP

The overall mission of NACCAP is to fuel the development of African-owned research centers to be capable of carrying out clinical testing of new interventions against poverty-related diseases. In addition, NACCAP aims to stimulate networking between R&D institutions to help ensure collaboration and complementarity. The research led to effective and affordable products that meet local needs.

The NACCAP Programme is focused on Sub-Saharan Africa. It is funded by the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs and managed by the ‘WOTRO Science for Global Development’ division of the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). The development of new clinical interventions against poverty-related diseases was identified as a priority by the Dutch government in 2002.

European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP)

The European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) was established in 2003 and was cofunded by the European Commission and European Member countries under the European Sixth Framework Programme. Its aim was to accelerate the development of new clinical interventions against HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. In 2014, the programme was extended to other poverty-related and neglected infectious diseases in Sub-Saharan Africa. It is a European – African partnership focused on African needs and priorities that builds upon existing R&D activities of member states and involves stakeholders such as the pharmaceutical industry and relevant international bodies. The NACCAP projects have been funded in accordance with the EDCTP strategy.

Research projects

The NACCAP-I programme had a total budget of 20 million euros, was launched in 2002 and ran until 2012. The programme released two open calls for proposals aimed at research and capacity strengthening. Through these calls, four African-European partnership projects were funded. Additionally, in cooperation with EDCTP, a total of ten projects were funded. In 2012, three successful projects received further funding in NACCAP-II to consolidate the capacity developed. The ARIS research project continued the INTERACT and COMMAL activities, and the ARITA research project was prolonged. The NACCAP-II programme has a total budget of 4.5 million euros and ends in 2016.

Novembre 2016
High quality research and sustainable research capacity building through a Research Support & Training Center network for Sub-Saharan Africa (ARISE)

African institutes often depend on international collaborators, the bulk of research activities focus on single diseases selected by the international communities and not on local health agendas. Furthermore, long-term visions on regional health problems are often not developed. It has been recognised that African institutes need to get more actively engaged in research programmes conducted in their countries. And in order to make real progress, successful transfer of research ownership to African institutes is a prerequisite.

Against this background, this project established a network of Research Support & Training Centers (RSTCs) in knowledge institutes of medicine in Sub-Saharan Africa. This was done by consolidating and expanding existing RSTC activities in Malawi, Uganda, Rwanda and Zimbabwe. Synergy between the RSTCs was strengthened through regular network meetings, exchange training and expert workshops. The network offers a unique platform for quality research in a standardised, internationally embedded and recognised environment.

The applied RSTC model consists of the following essential elements:
- Support services and consultation (support on research, data management, grants, and clinical trials);
- Training (applied and academic courses);
- Institutional research infrastructure (ethical review, communication and information, research coordination and management, and research agenda).

The outcome is that in all four RSTCs, experts – on grants and project management, data management, clinical operations such as data monitoring, ethical compliance and research initiation and statisticians – are available and capable for every aspect of research support.

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Duration
1 June 2012 – 30 June 2016

Synergy between the RSTCs was strengthened through regular network meetings and workshops. For example, in 2015 the RSTC in Zimbabwe organised a 5-day Trainer of Trainers (ToT) workshop on Evidence-Based Health Care (EBHC) for seven delegates (three from Malawi, two from Rwanda and two from Uganda).

Within the participating countries, efforts were made to harmonise existing capacity in research support activities. One major achievement in all four partner countries has been to centralise research support activities under one roof, the one-stop-shop, which meant that both in Zimbabwe as well as in Uganda a RSTC building has been constructed.

Results

Four RSTCs were established in Zimbabwe, Uganda, Rwanda and Malawi. These RSTCs were integrated into their respective host institutes and their activities were often conducted in a South-South collaboration between network partners. The RSTC activities were grouped into three categories
- Training & Courses;
- Support Services;
- Governance & Infrastructure.

The network has shown to be able to generate funds to cover part of its own running cost.

Training & Courses: over 3,000 trainees attended the courses of whom the majority were students and faculty staff. In all sites, a course portfolio was developed offering a range of courses on: conduct of clinical research, biostatistics, evidence-based medicine, data and grants-management.

Support Services: the service package – of epidemiological & statistical support; data- & grant-management support and monitoring of clinical trials – was developed in all sites. These services generally increased the quality of the research conducted in the host institutes.

Governance & Infrastructure: the RSTCs have established themselves in the centre of the research activities in their host institutes. They have made vital contributions to the development of research policies & guidelines. Through regular newsletters they have been able to become the source of research information for students and staff.

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