



PRESS STATEMENT BY BIOVAC

Thursday, 21 September 2023

Biovac partners with global biopharmaceutical company, EuBiologics, for the technology transfer of a Meningococcal Meningitis vaccine for Africa.

Cape Town, 22 September: Leading South African biopharmaceutical manufacturer, Biovac, today signed a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with global South Korean-based manufacturer EuBiologics, for the technology transfer of a Meningococcal Meningitis pentavalent conjugate vaccine.

This collaboration is a significant development for Biovac, as it would allow for the local production and distribution of a life-saving vaccine for use across Africa.

Meningococcal meningitis is a bacterial form of meningitis, a serious infection of the thin lining that surrounds the brain and spinal cord. Meningococcal meningitis can be associated with an overall case-fatality ratio of 10% to 15% for meningococcal disease even with appropriate antibiotic⁽¹⁾ therapy and can be as high as 50% in persons with meningococemia, the invasive form of the disease. Importantly, as many as 20% of survivors have permanent clinical sequelae, such as hearing loss, neurologic damage, or loss of a limb.-Meningococcal meningitis is present worldwide; however, regions of the world have different circulating serotypes. The highest unmet medical need is in the meningitis belt of sub-Saharan Africa, stretching from Senegal in the west to Ethiopia in the east, where there are new circulating serotypes such as serotype X⁽²⁾.

Morena Makhoana, Biovac CEO, states “This Meningococcal vaccine candidate which is currently under clinical development and is planned to be locally manufactured in Africa for Africa is a particularly important vaccine as it protects against the relevant circulating serotypes for our continent. In addition, the vaccine will be a fully liquid vaccine which allows for ease of use. We are particularly excited at the opportunity to partner with EuBiologics who share the same values of making a positive impact on the lives of people on our continent, particularly at a time when Africa is on a journey to vaccine manufacturing self-sufficiency.”

CEO of EuBiologics, Dr Baik Yeong-ok, expressed his enthusiasm stating: “We are very pleased to have signed an MOU with Biovac for the technology transfer of the pentavalent conjugate vaccine. This is the beginning of the collaboration between the two companies, but I am hopeful that this will lead to an

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/pinkbook/mening.html> accessed 21st September 2023
2. Agnmemel A, Hong E, Giorgini D, Nuñez-Samudio V, Deghmane AE, Taha MK. Neisseria meningitidis Serogroup X in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Emerg Infect Dis*. 2016 Apr;22(4):698-702. doi: 10.3201/eid2204.150653. PMID: 26982628; PMCID: PMC4806945



improvement in global public health, capacity building of an African manufacturer, and most importantly the impact to lives in Africa, where the disease burden is highest.”

The MOU was signed in Cape Town, while Biovac co-hosted the 24th Annual General Meeting of the Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturing Network (DCVMN), which brought together vaccine manufacturers, global partners, and stakeholders from across the globe. This collaboration represents the kind of partnership which is key for vaccine manufacturing to sustainably grow on the continent and improve health equity outcomes globally.

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About Biovac:

Biovac is a leading biotechnology company and a Centre of Excellence, rooted in Africa specialising in the development and manufacture of vaccines and biologicals for Africa and beyond. In collaboration with the South African Government, Biovac was established in 2003 to revive local human vaccine production in Southern Africa. Our strength lies in our global technical, strategic funding and commercial partnerships: WHO, PATH, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust, IVI, Sanofi & Pfizer. These partnerships have enabled Biovac to be a frontrunner in establishing the South African vaccine industry, through local infrastructure building, the transfer of sophisticated technology and the building of scarce aseptic manufacturing skills.

The company currently supplies a comprehensive range of vaccines in support of the South African Department of Health’s Expanded Programme for Immunisation. In addition to supplying millions of doses of vaccines per year, across South Africa and into some neighbouring countries, Biovac has recently entered into a partnership with Pfizer and BioNTech to manufacture their Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 Vaccine for distribution within the African Union.

The company is rolling out drug substance manufacturing and blow-fill-seal capacity through our OCV development and commercial manufacturing project in partnership with IVI supported by BMGF and Wellcome Trust. Biovac is also part of the WHO/MPP mRNA technology hub development led by

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Afrigen. The is responsible for the scale up, industrialization of the process and manufacture of the Ph III CTM.

For more information, please visit: www.biovac.co.za; <https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-biovac-institute>; <https://m.facebook.com/biovacSA>

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