

Developing the next generation of malaria treatments for Africa



Supporting a portfolio of three clinical studies, the PAMAfrica consortium advanced new antimalarial medicines for the most at-risk populations – including infants, young children and patients with severe malaria – as well as new non-artemisinin interventions.

Malaria remains a global and national priority. Since 2000, the malaria community has made significant gains to reduce the burden of this disease. However, since 2018, the decline in malaria incidence and mortality has slowed. Malaria continues to take the life of a child every minute and malaria-related deaths still exceed 500,000 annually.¹

As corroborated by the World Health Organization and the Lancet Commission on Malaria Eradication,² defeating malaria requires new tools to stay ahead of drug resistance, address key unmet needs and fill critical treatment gaps.

PAMAfrica's portfolio was built on the scientific expertise of consortium partners to progress three different therapies through the research pipeline over the 6-year project period.

What is the PAMAfrica consortium?

A group of 10 public and private sector research and development partners across Africa and Europe, led by Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV).

PAMAfrica was granted €21.9m over 6 years by the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP2) to implement an ambitious drug development project, with an additional co-funding of €22m from the PAMAfrica consortium partners.

The project was divided into four main work packages, each addressing a specific unmet medical need, with a fifth dedicated to coordination and operational support.

¹ World malaria report 2024

² <https://www.thelancet.com/commissions/malaria-eradication>

PAMAfrica Work Packages

WP 1

Work Package 1: Next-generation drug combination for uncomplicated malaria

Of several promising compounds from MMV's portfolio, Merck Healthcare KGaA tested cabamiquine, developed in combination with pyronaridine, in a Phase 2 clinical study. The combination was very effective in clearing parasites and clinical symptoms of malaria in adults and adolescents after a single dose. The combination was safe and well tolerated by patients. With such positive results, further development of the combination is expected, with future studies involving children, who are most affected by malaria.

WP 2

Work Package 2: New formulation of artemether-lumefantrine (AL) for infants 2-5 kg

Coartem® Baby is the first-ever optimized formulation and dose ratio designed specifically for infants 2-5kg based on the gold-standard antimalarial artemether-lumefantrine (AL). Coartem® Baby received market authorization from Swissmedic in July 2025 – with eight other African countries expected to follow within the MAGHP procedure – and was launched in Ghana in October 2025. This marks a significant step in providing age-appropriate treatment to vulnerable infants, who were previously excluded from standard malaria therapies.

WP 3

Work Package 3: New medicine for treatment of severe malaria

PAMAfrica supported a Novartis-sponsored Phase 2b clinical study in adults and children older than 6 months of age with severe malaria. Cipargamin (KAE609)³ is a novel non-artemisinin, which was developed as an i.v. injectable. Given evidence of prolonged parasite clearance times with artemisinin-derivatives in the Greater Mekong region and parts of Africa, an alternative non-artemisinin-based therapy is vital, should resistance to artesunate standard of care continue.

WP 4

Work Package 4: Capacity strengthening

To support PAMAfrica's three clinical programmes, the consortium undertook activities to strengthen research capacity at trial sites and among next-generation African scientists from partnering institutions. Targeted workshops for site personnel helped ensure patients received optimal care, and that the implementation of clinical studies and data generated were of the highest quality. These included specialized workshops on Good Clinical Practice & Good Clinical Laboratory Practice, Site Quality Management System, Scientific Writing, Scientific Management, Ethics Committee training, microscopy and communication skills. In addition, five PhD and six biostatistics MSc students received support in biomedical research studies.

WP 5

Work Package 5: Coordination and operational support

A Grant Management Team (GMT) ensured the coordination and operational support of the PAMAfrica project. It monitored the progression of each work package and dissemination of results, and ensured streamlined communication across the consortium, with external stakeholders and with EDCTP. It also coordinated the consortium's annual technical and financial reports. Throughout the project, the GMT issued 10 bi-annual newsletters, organized five annual meetings and 12 consortium governance meetings, as well as five EDCTP oversight meetings. It also supported the consortium's presence at two EDCTP Forums.

³ Cipargamin (KAE609) is a spiroindolone, originally discovered in 2008 as part of a Novartis-led consortium funded by MMV and the Wellcome Trust

