

## Gates Foundation to accelerate mRNA vaccine innovation in Africa and globally

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At the recently held 2023 Grand Challenges Annual Meeting, Bill Gates, Co-chair of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, announced new investments to advance access to mRNA research and vaccine manufacturing technology that will support low- and middle-income countries' (LMICs) capacity to develop high-quality, lifesaving vaccines at scale.

The move builds on lessons the foundation has learned from more than 20 years of working with vaccine manufacturers in LMICs and the opportunity to leverage recent scientific advances to develop low-cost, high-quality health tools that reach more people around the world. mRNA technology is considered a potential game-changer for a range of infectious diseases, including tuberculosis, malaria, and Lassa fever, which disproportionately affect people in LMICs. This new technology can significantly lower the costs of mRNA research and manufacturing and enable expanded access—helping to close critical gaps.

The foundation has announced a total of \$40 million in funding to advance access to Quantoom Biosciences' low-cost, mRNA research and manufacturing platform, which was developed with an early-research Grand Challenges grant made to its parent company, Univercells.

The Institut Pasteur de Dakar (IPD) and Biovac, research institutes with vaccine manufacturing experience based in Senegal and South Africa, respectively, will receive \$5 million each to acquire the technology and will be able to use it to develop locally relevant vaccines.

To further advance the technology and lower costs for commercialisation, the foundation also will provide \$20 million to Quantoom Biosciences, ensuring LMICs can benefit from the next-generation mRNA health tools. The Gates Foundation will grant another \$10 million to other LMIC vaccine manufacturers to be named.

This new funding builds on the foundation's previous \$55 million investment in mRNA manufacturing technology.