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CEPI partners with BioNet to expand variant-proof vaccine programme

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BioNet has been manufacturing a mRNA COVID-19 vaccine developed by Thailand's Chulalongkorn University and the University of Pennsylvania in the US



CEPI, the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations, has announced the latest award under its $200 million programme, launched in March 2021, to advance the development of vaccines that provide broad protection against SARS-CoV-2 variants and other *Betacoronaviruses*.

CEPI will partner with BioNet—a French-Thai vaccine manufacturer and member of the Developing Country Vaccine Manufacturing network (DCVMN)—providing up to $16.9 million to support preclinical studies, Phase I and Phase II clinical trials, production of necessary clinical trial material, and process and analytical development.

CEPI will support the researchers of a global and multidisciplinary consortium led by BioNet and composed of American and Thai universities (Pennsylvania, North Carolina, California-Davis and Chulalongkorn) and South Korea-based International Vaccine Institute as they seek to establish preclinical and clinical proof of concept for a novel vaccine that uses multiple mRNA molecules that encode for several SARS-CoV-2 target proteins (ie, immunogens) from different variants, which could provide broad protection against SARS-CoV-2 variants. To protect the fragile mRNA molecules, they are then encapsulated into a fatty sphere, known as a lipid nanoparticle for use as a vaccine.