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Merck inks MoU with Afrigen Biologics for development of mRNA vaccine technology platform

July 3, 2024 | News

Contributes to expanding access to life-saving therapies in South Africa



Merck, a leading science and technology company, has announced that its life science business sector has entered a non-binding Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) with Afrigen Biologics to support the development of an mRNA vaccine technology platform. The collaboration is aimed at advancing mRNA platform manufacturing capabilities, scaling up production, optimizing processes, and providing troubleshooting expertise.

As part of the MoU, Merck will support Afrigen's Center of Excellence and training initiatives aimed at building capacity in low and middle income countries (LMICs) to produce mRNA vaccines and therapeutics. The mRNA technology transfer programme, co-led by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Medicines Patent Pool (MPP), is based on a South African consortium establishing and validating an mRNA manufacturing platform at a central site (the hub) and transferring the technology platform to partners.

The Afrigen-based mRNA vaccine tech transfer programme will provide sufficient transfer of know-how to allow the current 15 recipient manufacturers in the programme to produce and release mRNA vaccines at scale to support clinical development, national/regional marketing authorisation and WHO prequalification, and sustainable supply to meet local and regional vaccine demand.