About the AIDS Technology Transfer Initiative

HIV/AIDS affects over 33 million people worldwide\(^1\) and whilst the disease is being tackled effectively in many countries, sub-Saharan Africa remains the hardest hit and is home to 22.5 million, over two-thirds (68%), of those who are affected\(^2\). Although access to first-line treatments has improved in sub-Saharan Africa and the wider developing world, due to the nature of the HIV virus which can replicate and mutate rapidly, the importance of second-line treatments is growing. As a result, increasing manufacturing knowledge and capacity within these regions will play a vital role in providing access to these important therapies.

For this reason, Roche initiated the TTI aimed at sharing knowledge and supporting companies in countries with limited resources to produce generic HIV medicines through knowledge sharing and capacity building.

The AIDS Technology Transfer Initiative (TTI) was launched by Roche in 2006 as part of our ongoing commitment to increase access to HIV medicines and to address the growing need for second-line treatment. The TTI focused on supporting companies in countries with limited resources to produce generic HIV medicines through knowledge sharing and capacity building.

The four year programme was to provide a sustainable solution to deliver HIV healthcare in resource-limited settings and reduce African manufacturers’ reliance on the West.

The initiative saw a dedicated team from Roche sharing knowledge and hands-on guidance and training on-site for the manufacture of second-line treatment saquinavir\(^1\) with companies in developing countries. In addition to visiting their local production facilities, training was also held at Roche’s factory in Spain to ensure key expertise was shared effectively.

Following the successful launch, and in response to the increasing demand, in 2008 Roche expanded the TTI with pan-African Good Manufacturing Practices (GMP) training seminars for local manufacturers focused on improving locally produced essential medicines.

1 Saquinavir, an HIV protease inhibitor, marketed by Roche under the trademark Invirase

Key facts and figures

- HIV/AIDS affects over 33 million people worldwide\(^1\)
- 22.5 million affected by HIV/AIDS reside in sub-Saharan Africa\(^2\)
- The Roche TTI was intended to build capacity and share knowledge and skills by partnering with local companies in developing countries
- Since 2006 the TTI has assessed 39 manufacturers and provided them with on-site support and guidance
- Roche signed Technology Transfer agreements with 13 companies/organisations in 6 countries for the manufacture of generic versions of saquinavir
- This was complemented by two African GMP training seminars for around 60 participants
“We welcome the commitment from local companies to produce their own quality generic versions of saquinavir. The technical assistance from Roche should help strengthen and extend their manufacturing abilities for quality medicines.”

Lembit Rágo, Coordinator of Quality Assurance and Safety of Medicines, World Health Organization

Results
The TTI was completed in 2009, representing a truly innovative and sustainable step in the fight against HIV/AIDS, by providing on-site training and continuous support to build capacity as a long-term solution. Through this increase in local production capabilities for HIV medicines, the initiative also worked towards a reduction in the reliance on developed countries. This enabled developing countries to move towards global standards of treatment for this disease.

During the initiative, Roche received expressions of interest from 41 manufacturers in 17 countries, assessed 39 of them to determine timing and delivery of technical expertise, and finalised agreements with 13 companies and organisations.

These companies and organisations are now capable of producing generic copies of saquinavir. Additionally, through the training seminars, around 60 delegates from 20 organisations were trained on compliance to GMP.

Roche signed TTI agreements with:

- Adcock Ingram, South Africa (2009)
- Aspen Pharmacare, South Africa (2006)
- Beximco Pharmaceuticals, Bangladesh (2007)
- CAPS Pharmaceuticals, Zimbabwe (2007)
- Muhimbili University of Health and Allied Sciences (MUHAS), Tanzania (2009)
- Radiant Pharmaceuticals, Bangladesh (2009)
- Regal Pharmaceuticals, Kenya (2007)
- Shelys Pharmaceuticals, Tanzania (2008)
- Varichem Pharmaceuticals, Zimbabwe (2007)
- Zenufa Laboratories, Tanzania (2008)

References