

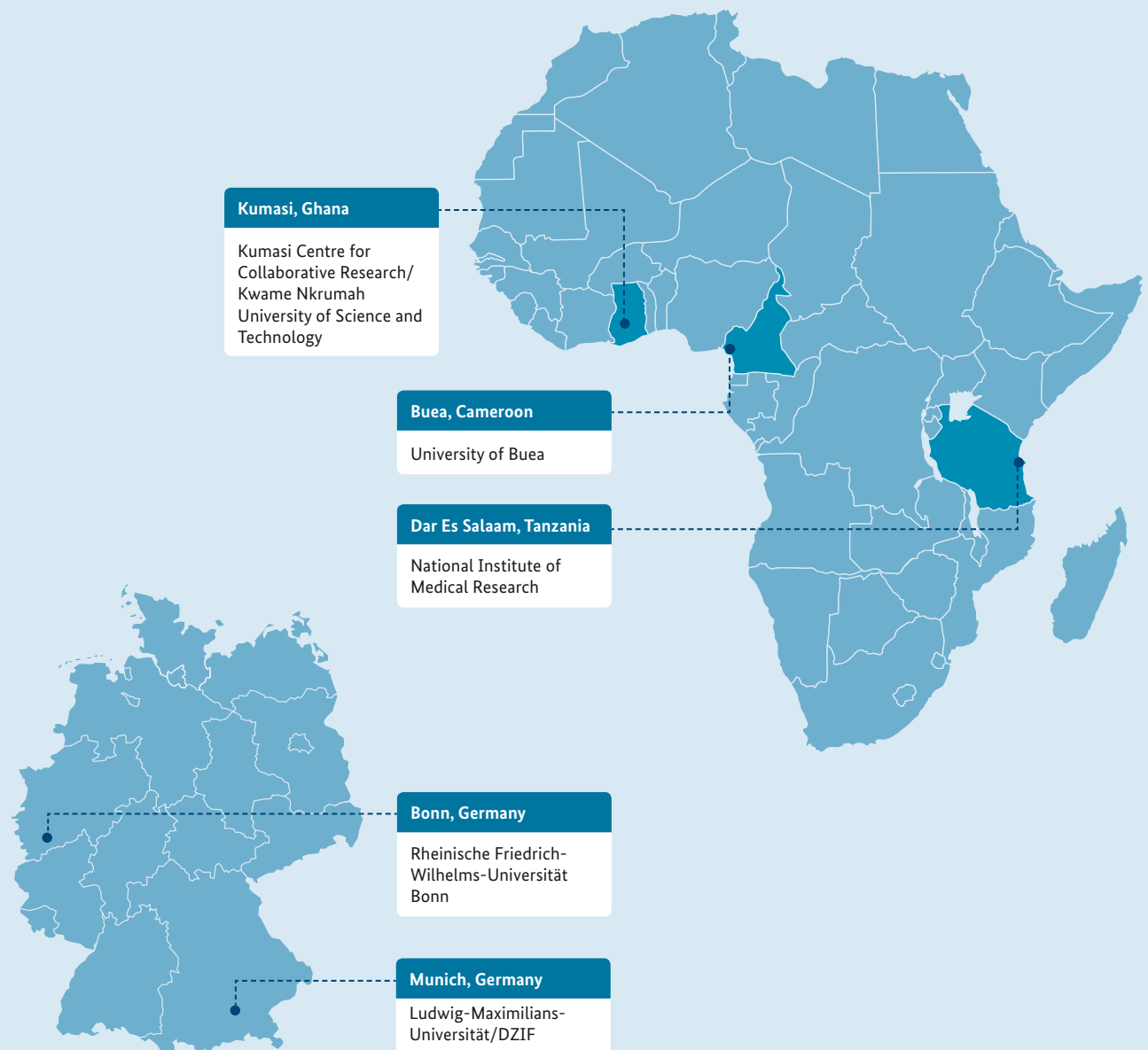


TAKeOFF

Tackling the Obstacles to Fight Filariasis and Podoconiosis

Mainly in Africa and Asia, more than 200 million people are parasitised by filarial nematodes (roundworms), which cause the neglected tropical diseases lymphatic filariasis, loiasis and onchocerciasis. By establishing a Filarial Clinical Trial & Research Platform (F-CuRE), the TAKEOFF consortium aims to harmonise the procedure for clinical trials in filariasis. To improve treatment regimens for morbidity control of filarial and non-filarial lymphedema (podoconiosis), the partners will conduct multinational clinical trials in Sub-Saharan Africa, thereby addressing patient needs as well as the science behind these diseases.

TAKeOFF – Project Partners





Wuchereria bancrofti microfilaria

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Worldwide, approximately one billion people are at risk of infection from filariae (parasitic nematodes). Mainly in Africa and Asia, more than 200 million people are currently infected, with lymphatic filariasis the most prevalent disease – one of 18 neglected tropical diseases as defined by the WHO. Filariae become lodged in lymphatic tissues, causing dysfunction of lymph vessels; this may result in lymphoedema. Furthermore, the drainage of lymph fluid within tissues can be blocked, causing an abnormal enlargement of the affected body parts. The most serious manifestation of the disease is also known as elephantiasis or elephant disease. The afflicted suffer from severe pain, physical impairment and great mental distress. The economic impact includes poor school performance, low productivity and higher healthcare costs and a reduced life span.



Hygiene training

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Execution and implementation of activities related to two fundamental capacity building outputs underpinning the TAKEOFF project are on course:

1. A Filariasis Clinical trial and Research platform (F-CuRE) has been set up among the three African network partners of the TAKEOFF consortium. Three clinical trials are currently ongoing in these partner sites together with three other sites in Mali, Sri Lanka and India which are independently funded by USAID. All the six sites are using a harmonized protocol and the trials are jointly coordinated by the German TAKEOFF partners and the NTD Support Center of The Task Force for Global Health of USA. The first trial is scheduled to be completed before the 3rd quarter of 2020.

2. An awareness programme that aims to improve communication and access to help those affected by the disease is yielding remarkable successes, including helping to identify more affected people suffering from lymphatic filariasis and podoconiosis, and providing morbidity management training to those affected in order to ameliorate symptoms of the disease. A podoconiosis treatment centre has also been set up in Cameroon to treat patients.

It has been hypothesized that treatment of HIV may have an impact on filarial pathology. Therefore, the network partners investigate how an HIV infection and its treatment affect the immune response of patients parasitised by filariae.

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