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The Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED) is pleased to acknowledge the support of Pfizer Pharmaceuticals on Phase II of the Mapping African Research Ethics Review and Medicines Regulatory Capacity (MARC) project ([www.researchethicsweb.org](http://www.researchethicsweb.org)).

MARC Phase I was a three year (2009 – 2012) initiative led by COHRED and US NIH Fogarty funded South African Research Ethics Training Initiative (SARETI) at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in South Africa and funded by Pfizer and the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP). MARC developed an interactive map of Sub-Saharan Africa's health research ethics committees (RECs) and provides a web-based platform to increase contact and communication between African RECs. In addition, the project also aims to map medicines regulatory authorities (MRAs) and facilitate better links between MRAs and RECs.

Prof Carel IJsselmuiden, Executive Director of COHRED said "With the support of our partners, MARC has successfully identified and mapped 173 RECs and 26 MRAs operational in 37 African countries. This data greatly contributed to the first African conference for research ethics. In addition, the project expanded to Latin America and mapped over 1000 REC's. As a result, MARC received acknowledgement in *"Moral Science: Protecting Participants in Human Subjects Research"* issued by the (US) Presidential Commission for the Study of Bioethical Issues.

Pfizer supported MARC because effective and efficient ethics review of health research, including clinical trials, is key to developing medicines, interventions and medical technologies in and for Africa. Through COHRED's Health Research Web (HRWeb) ([www.healthresearchweb.org](http://www.healthresearchweb.org)), an interactive platform, ethics review research information on RECs and MRAs in Africa will be made accessible. This will enable a major step in contributing to effective ethics review of health research globally.

Dr. Jack Watters, Pfizer's Vice President of External Medical Affairs said "Pharmaceutical companies have an important role to play in global health and we were pleased to partner with COHRED. MARC and MARC II aim to connect networks, support transparency, further develop the capacity for local ethical review, and drive high standards for clinical trials whilst seeking to

foster innovation on a global scale.”

MARC Phase II is taking an interventional approach to address various ethical review bottlenecks identified in the African research ethics landscape. MARC II will improve the quality of ethics review by building capacity and efficiency through training and the strengthening of information management systems. MARC Phase II aims to connect other regions in the world, and become a valuable international index for the work of research ethics committees (RECs).

**Read more** <http://www.alphagalileo.org/ViewItem.aspx?ItemId=134787&CultureCode=en>