

# VAX-ACTION

Tackling Effectively Vaccine Hesitancy in Europe

## NEWSLETTER

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## About VAX-ACTION

### 1. Introduction & Background

VAX-ACTION is a 30 month project (Dec2023-May2026), co-funded by the EU4Health programme (101133273-EU4H-2022-PJ-5), coordinated by Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal. The project's primary objective is to bridge the gap between academic evidence and its practical application, specifically emphasizing translational and implementation sciences. This will be achieved through targeted interventions addressing behaviors of specific groups (refusal, acceptance, hesitancy), training needs (focused on frontline healthcare workers), and information campaigns (aimed at promoting health literacy and countering misinformation). There is also a lack of dialoguing frameworks (theoretical, analytical, and methodological), and a limited scope of interventions:

- short length
- limited number of participants
- lack of evaluation (processes and outcomes)
- lack of public knowledge of evidence (processes and outcomes)
- need for greater involvement by policy-makers, lobbyists, etc.

## TOP NEWS

### About VAX-ACTION

The project's objective is to bridge the gap between academic evidence and its practical application to reduce vaccine hesitancy.

### VAX-ACTION Kick Off Meeting

On December 1st, 2023, the VAX-ACTION project kicked off its ambitious initiative

### EUVABECO meeting

VAX-ACTION Project presented along side the EUVABECO, and Co-OPERATOR projects in Brussels.

## 2. Goal & Relevance

The goal is to support EU Member States and relevant stakeholders to implement a combination of tailored, evidence-based interventions aimed to reduce vaccine hesitancy. Its relevance is to contribute to policy making through sound theory, existing evidence, and best practices.

### 3. Methodologies

The project will use sound methods and innovation to address vaccine hesitancy interventions and its evaluations, including survey design, interviews and focus groups in five targeted regions, to address specific issues raised by recently approved vaccines for emergent diseases/infections/virus (Covid-19 and mpox) and loss of trust in long-standing vaccines included in national vaccination programmes.

### 4. Target Audiences

- Frontline healthcare workers (FHWs).
- Specific population groups (e.g., newly arrived migrants, hesitant parents, people of low socio-economic status)

### 5. Target Countries & Regions



Porto, PT | Paris, FR | Rome, IT



Bucharest, RM | Prague, CR

### 6. Structure

Three step process, six working packages

- 1. Research phase – Mapping of evidence and practice on vaccine hesitancy**
  - AIM: To identify the content and outcomes of interventions aimed to address vaccine hesitancy in the northern hemisphere to inform the design of a robust and cohesive action plan of interventions to reduce vaccine hesitancy in EU member states
- 2. Intervention phase – interventions design, implementation, and evaluation**
  - AIM: Building on the research phase, it aims to design, implement and evaluate tailored interventions aimed at frontline healthcare workers and targeted social groups in selected countries to inform the design of broader recommendations and toolkits to apply in other EU countries and elsewhere
- 3. Conclusion phase – communication and recommendation**
  - AIM: By providing target-country specific and EU-wide recommendations, it aims to engage relevant stakeholders in adopting effective changes and inform wider audiences

WP's name		Objective	Time of completion
WP 1 Management and coordination		To oversee project management, including scheduling meetings, monitoring progress, and evaluating outcomes. Responsible for financial management, writing and delivering progress reports, and ensuring compliance with national and European privacy and data protection laws. Also involved in implementing interventions, managing data, and overseeing responsible dissemination.	01.12.2023 – 30.05.2026
Phase	Research	WP 2 Europe-wide interventions mapping and critical appraisal	To identify the content and outcomes of interventions aimed to address vaccine hesitancy in the northern hemisphere to inform the design of a robust and cohesive action plan to reduce vaccine hesitancy in EU member states and beyond (aim of intervention stage – WPs 3, 4 and 5).
	Intervention	WP 3 Oversight of interventions and external evaluation	To oversee the overall consistency of tailored and evidence-based interventions designed for frontline health workers (FHWs) and targeted populations (WPs) in the different target regions and to design and implement the external evaluation plan of those interventions.
		WP 4 Interventions targeting FHW for vaccine promotion towards hesitant users	To tailor, implement and evaluate interventions designed for frontline health workers (FHW) in five partner countries, which them to accompany vaccine hesitant users and patients
		WP 5 Intervention targeting vulnerable populations' misconceptions and knowledge	To tailor, implement and evaluate interventions designed to reduce vaccine hesitancy among targeted populations by addressing misconceptions and increasing knowledge about vaccines and related diseases.
	Conclusion	WP 6 Recommendations, communication, and exploitation	To engage in dialog with relevant stakeholders, providing target-country specific and EU wide recommendations to deal with vaccine hesitancy, distributing these recommendations and the project work and results widely to relevant audiences (public health and health care communities, EU and country specific stakeholders, and the broader public).

### 7. Partners

VAX-ACTION brings together a consortium of partners led by Tiago Correia from the Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Universidade Nova de Lisboa, Portugal.



### 8. To Wrap up

There is an urgent need for the implementation of tailored, evidence-based interventions embedded in specific contexts. Sustained research is necessary to support health authorities and decision-makers in understanding the types of interventions available, their effectiveness, how to translate effective solutions to new contexts, and how to learn from unsuccessful ones to create opportunities for improvement and redesign. The outcome should be the drawing of recommendations for embedding improvement and change, along with tailored dissemination and evaluation strategies. Our standpoint is that this approach is the way forward to scale up good practices in Europe and beyond, effectively tackling vaccine hesitancy.



## Successful Kick-off Meeting Marks the Beginning of VAX-ACTION Project

On December 1st, 2023, the VAX-ACTION project kicked off its ambitious initiative with a highly productive meeting led by Project Coordinator Tiago Correia. (See newsletter cover photo). In addition to marking the project's official takeoff, the primary goal of the meeting was to establish the basis for fostering collaboration, transparency, and efficient planning and execution among project partners. The meeting covered various crucial topics, setting the stage for the project's success in the next two years.

The partners actively participated in discussions and contributed valuable insights to the project's development. This ensured a shared understanding of project goals and expectations. A comprehensive overview of work packages provided awareness of the project's structure, agenda, and the responsibilities of each work package leader. The discussion highlighted the critical importance of meeting task deadlines and deliverables to ensure the seamless progression of the project.

Additionally, the project's management structure was discussed in detail. This included a clear definition of the responsibilities of the project coordinator, management committee, work package leaders, and other contributing members. The meeting also discussed the pre-funding announcement strategy, and the partners had an insightful conversation about additional issues, such as the Consortium Agreement and further administrative queries. This helped further strengthen the partners' collaborative spirit through transparent communication, effective organisation, and meaningful cooperation among its diverse and dedicated team.

The VAX-ACTION consortium is excited about the journey ahead and is committed to studying the effectiveness of vaccine hesitancy interventions during the project's course.

The VAX-ACTION started on 1 December 2023 and will last until 31 May 2026. It is funded by the European Union's EU4H program under the Grant Agreement no.101133273. GHTM-IHMT is the leader of the consortium of 9 partners from 6 European countries and is coordinated by Tiago Correia, professor and GHTM Researcher.

## EUVABECO Partners and Advisory Board Meeting



Invited by Elena Petelos of EUVABECO Project, VAX-ACTION Project Manager, Anabela Pereira presented VAX-ACTION along side the EUVABECO, and Co-OPERATOR projects in a meeting convened in Brussels and hosted by EUVABECO partner Sciensano on May 13-14, 2024. It was a critical session to evaluate progress and outline future strategies with the goal to identify areas or topics of collaboration, synergies, or potential challenges that could be jointly addressed by the VAX-ACTION, EUVABECO, and Co-OPERATOR projects. As the three projects address similar issues, it including the policy perspective and plans for sustainability.

Participants engaged in discussion over the two days through sessions spanning a variety of essential topics, including the progress made in identifying innovative vaccination practices within Europe, the project's strategic operations, planning for future implementations, and mechanisms for effective communication and coordination among diverse stakeholders.

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