The German biotechnology company BioNTech will install the first containers for the production of the vaccine against Covid-19, which it has developed with the US pharmaceutical group Pfizer, next March in Rwanda, in Kigali.

Dubbed a BioNTainer, BioNTech's first modular factory has been built in Europe and inspected by the company's manufacturing experts, the company said. The mRNA specialist is planning to ship the mini factory to Kigali, Rwanda, in the first quarter of 2023.

Each BioNTainer consists of one drug substance and one formulation module for a total footprint of about 800 square meters.

The units will be able to crank out about 50 million doses a year of BioNTech's Pfizer-partnered COVID-19 vaccine, company executives said during a February conference call.

This isn't BioNTech's only move to bolster production in Africa. The German-based company is still working to build its own manufacturing base in Kigali, where the first BioNTainers will be stationed. BioNTech broke ground on the Kigali site back in June.

Aside from Kigali, BioNTech plans to ship BioNTainers to Senegal and potentially South Africa.

The vaccines produced in the Africa-wide network will go to people living in member states of the African Union.

Aside from COVID vaccines, BioNTech is using its mRNA platform to advance malaria and tuberculosis vaccine candidates. Eventually, BioNTech hopes to also produce those vaccines with its BioNTainers

The Kigali site will hire a staff of 100 by 2024. BioNTech has said vaccine production should begin within a year of delivery of the BioNTainers.