

How European investment in research and innovation can help achieve the Sustainable Development Goals

Despite concerted efforts by governments and international funders over the last two decades to reduce the burden of infectious diseases, over 1 billion people—including 400 million children—still suffer from the major poverty-related diseases (HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis) and neglected tropical diseases. The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), which the European Union (EU) has committed to achieving, aim to end epidemics of these diseases in order to improve health and propel economic development.

These goals will not be reached without sustained investment in research and innovation for new tools that are necessary to address existing and emerging threats. Public funding for the development of these new tools is critical as it helps de-risk investment and can leverage other sources of funding to address poverty-related and neglected diseases where traditional market incentives are lacking.



PATH/Eric Becker

The EU is a critical investor in the global effort to develop innovative solutions to the world's biggest health challenges.



About PATH

PATH has been dedicated to advancing health equity through innovation for more than 40 years. We develop, introduce, and advance vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, digital tools, and innovative approaches to strengthen health systems worldwide. Our team shapes global conversations about health, advises ministries of health, trains providers, and breaks down barriers to increase the supply of life-saving commodities. PATH delivers innovation at scale, reaching approximately 150 million people each year. Some of our most impactful and well-known innovations include:

- The MenAfriVac meningitis vaccine, which has protected more than 475 million people in Africa's meningitis belt.
- An auto-disable syringe that has been used to deliver more than 7 billion vaccines in more than 40 countries.
- A 30-minute rapid diagnostic test for onchocerciasis (river blindness) designed for rural settings, used in 18 countries.
- The world's first malaria vaccine—intended for young children—now in phased introduction in three African countries, as a complementary tool in the fight against malaria.

EU investment in global health research and innovation: A success story

As the third largest public provider of global health research and innovation funding, the European Union is a trailblazer in international efforts to eradicate poverty-related and neglected diseases through investments in Horizon 2020, previous Research Framework Programmes, and the European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP). Sustained leadership from the EU is critical to ensuring the production of tools to prevent, diagnose, treat, and cure diseases that affect the world's most vulnerable populations.

Not only does European investment save lives around the world, but for every euro the EU invests in research and innovation for poverty-related and neglected diseases,

80 cents are reinvested back into European laboratories, universities, and companies that help deliver the objectives of the Framework Programmes. For example, the EU's investment in poverty-related and neglected diseases, through research and innovation under Framework Programme 7 (FP7), directly created over 10,000 jobs in Europe.

From 2010 to 2017, European public funders invested a total of €3.2 billion in research and innovation for poverty-related and neglected diseases at an average of €402 million per year. Through EDCTP, the EU has provided funding for game-changing innovations, including 102 clinical trials through EDCTP1 and support for 82 large-scale clinical studies through EDCTP2.

Next steps: Building on European leadership in health research and innovation

As policymakers come together to make decisions about the future of European leadership in global health research and innovation, we urge action on:

1. Strategy



Create a European global health strategy

Promote the EU's leadership in global health through the creation of an EU global health strategy, including a roadmap for how the EU plans to use research and innovation to accelerate global health goals and achieve the SDGs

Address new and emerging global health threats by setting clear roles, responsibilities, and coordination for the different EU Directorates-General and agencies, accompanied by transparent monitoring and accountability

2. Partnership



Building on EDCTP: Bolster an EU-Africa global health research and innovation partnership

Ensure the continued existence of an ambitious EU-Africa partnership fully dedicated to supporting research and innovation for poverty-related and neglected diseases

As part of this renewed partnership, promote collaboration and leverage funding from a variety of partners, including private, non-profit, and philanthropic sectors

Support greater flexibility in partnership models to attract international expertise in product development

3. Investment



Increase funding for the European Commission's investment in research and innovation

Defend an ambitious and robust research and innovation budget for the next EU multiannual financial framework (MFF) in order to advance critically needed health tools that address poverty-related and neglected diseases

Support increased investment for EU-Africa global health research and innovation partnerships to move promising products through critical stages of the development pipeline



PATH is a global organization that works to accelerate health equity by bringing together public institutions, businesses, social enterprises, and investors to solve the world's most pressing health challenges. With expertise in science, health, economics, technology, advocacy, and dozens of other specialties, PATH develops and scales solutions—including vaccines, drugs, devices, diagnostics, and innovative approaches to strengthening health systems worldwide.

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