

The Future of Global Health Initiatives

August 2022

At the mid-point of the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) period (2015-2030), and with the COVID-19 pandemic throwing a renewed spotlight on the strengths and weaknesses of the global health system, there is a timely opportunity to reflect on the role of Global Health Initiatives (GHIs). In particular, how can GHIs most effectively accelerate country-led progress towards universal health coverage (UHC) and build the capabilities needed to respond to collective health challenges?

The ***Future of Global Health Initiatives*** process convenes a diverse group of stakeholders from across high-, middle- and low-income country governments, global and regional health organisations, research institutions and civil society, to review the roles and responsibilities of the GHIs. The process aims to provide specific recommendations for more efficient, effective and equitable arrangements, and catalyse collective action to shape a global GHI ecosystem that is fit for purpose through to 2030 and beyond.

The process will seek to ensure the most effective use of available resources in line with the SDG Agenda in a re-shaped global GHI ecosystem that is responding to countries' needs. In doing so it will ensure Global Health Initiatives realise their potential to improve health quality and equity and maximise overall health impacts through stronger and more resilient health systems, whilst creating a more joined-up, synchronised and open landscape for mobilising and delivering funds. It will *not* focus on mobilising new financial pledges, establishing new 'vertical' funds or mechanisms, or duplicating existing mechanisms for national level coordination like the Global Action Plan for Healthy Lives and Wellbeing for All.

Why is this needed?

Over the last two decades GHIs have contributed to enormous progress in protecting lives and improving the health of people globally, including significant progress against individual diseases like polio, malaria and HIV/AIDS, improving mother and child survival, and increasing coverage of specific interventions like vaccines. However, there is increasing recognition of the need for greater attention to overarching, system level coordination and structure of GHIs, to better align investment behind Agenda 2030. Reasons for this include:

- Significant **epidemiological and demographic changes** – notably aging populations and the growing burden of non-communicable diseases and mental health; growing threats from environmental degradation, climate change and new disease outbreaks; and enduring inequalities in health outcomes and health coverage.
- **Political and economic shifts** that present challenges for international resource mobilisation, and make the effective use of available resources more important than ever.
- The evolving nature of the **wider global health architecture** as new actors and initiatives emerge and regional bodies assume an increasingly prominent role.
- The need to address **power imbalances** in priority setting and decision making in global health, and ensure countries are in the driving seat.
- The inefficiencies created by the **fragmentation** of GHIs and their operating and funding procedures.
- The need to ensure sufficient prioritisation and coordination of **health system strengthening** investments for universal health coverage.

Global Health Initiatives is a term used to refer to organisations that integrate the efforts of stakeholders around the world to mobilise and disburse funds to address health challenges. They do so by supporting implementation of health programmes in low- and middle-income countries.

Since 2000 the number and diversity of GHIs has increased considerably, and now includes institutions such as the Global Fund to Fight AIDs, TB and Malaria, Gavi the Vaccine Alliance, the Global Financing Facility (GFF). Together GHIs have an annual expenditure of over \$6 billion and play an important role in shaping global health.

By driving a concerted effort to increase the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of the ecosystem of GHIs, the **Future of Global Health Initiatives** process will contribute to wider ongoing efforts to maximise the public health benefits of external and domestic investments in health, increase and broaden the mix of investments in global public goods, and improve sustainability and equity of health systems at all levels.

Next steps

Based on inputs from a multi-stakeholder coalition of partners including government representatives from countries including Kenya, Norway, Japan, UK, Canada, Indonesia, Ghana, Zambia, Uganda, Ethiopia, Rwanda and Nigeria, this process was formally initiated in summer 2022, and is expected to run through 2023. It will focus on bringing key stakeholders together to establish recommendations informed by a shared vision of what more effective, efficient and equitable GHI arrangements could achieve, and identify how all involved can use the tools at their disposal to make this a reality.

It is anticipated that a process of research and evidence gathering will begin in the third quarter of 2022, leading into a dialogue process to refine options and recommendations that is expected to run through until the first months of 2023. The process will utilise key platforms such as the World Health Assembly, Japan’s G7 Presidency, and the UN High Level Meeting on UHC to share recommendations and build a coalition around identified reforms.

A light-touch governance structure with a Steering Group of governments and civil society will be constituted to steer an open and inclusive process, and a small secretariat will be established. A Research and Learning Task Team will also be set up to ensure the process is informed by lessons learnt from previous reform efforts and centred around country experience and needs. This will include learning from other ongoing or recent alignment efforts, such as the SDG3 Global Action Plan, the GFF Alignment Working Group, and the work of the International Health Partnership and related initiatives.

The process will actively consider the interface, collaboration and complementarities of the GHIs with other key global health organisations that play a primary role in health system strengthening, particularly WHO, UN health agencies, and the multilateral development banks. It will also consider the interface between GHIs and effective priority setting for product development and innovation, and link to existing global partnerships such as UHC2030.

Ways to engage

Channel	Opportunity
As a member of a Stakeholder Group	Stakeholder groups representing international financing partners; domestic financing partners; civil society; global and regional health organisations; and researchers/ academic experts will be open to relevant parties interested in actively engaging in the process.
As a member of the Steering Group	A small number of representatives from domestic and international financing partners and civil society will be invited by two Co-Chairs to constitute a Steering Group that will oversee and steer day-to-day progress.
Through participation in the Reference Group	At key moments in the process, the Steering Group will convene a Reference Group that will bring together selected representatives from across the five stakeholder groups to create space for debate and provide guidance and advice to the Steering Group. Participation in the Reference Group will be decided on a case-by-case basis based on the subject of discussion.
As a member of a Task Team	Issue-specific Task Teams will be open to representatives from all stakeholder groups who have expertise and interest in a particular area and are able to actively contribute to a strand of work. e.g. to develop and deliver a supportive research agenda.

Interested parties are encouraged to reach out to Wellcome Trust for further information on how to engage; please contact **Clare Battle** (c.battle@wellcome.org).