

THE EU AND THE GLOBAL FUND TO FIGHT AIDS, TUBERCULOSIS AND MALARIA



A PARTNERSHIP
LIKE NO OTHER

BETTER
HEALTH
BRIGHTER
FUTURES

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References:

- Global Fund Results Report 2024
- Global Fund 2023-2028 strategy
- EU Global Health Strategy, 2022
- Partnership Report: Unitaid and the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

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 Friends of
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Europe

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Why continued investments are essential?

Introduction

The Global Fund was born out of the realization of the scale of destruction caused by HIV/AIDS and other major infectious diseases, at a time when tools to stop them in their tracks were becoming available, yet remained out of reach for people in poorer countries. The choice was stark: allow preventable diseases to continue causing deaths, or take action to scale up life-saving programs. In 2002, world leaders united in an act of international solidarity to establish the Global Fund, with the goal of ensuring that every person affected by HIV, tuberculosis, or malaria would have access to life-saving treatment and care. This initiative has been a success: the Global Fund has saved 65 million lives and provided opportunities to people who otherwise would have been left behind.

This paper highlights the crucial role of the European Commission (EC) in the creation and ongoing success of the Global Fund. Through the EC's political and financial support, combined with its strategic guidance, significant progress has been achieved over the past two decades in combating HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria, strengthening health systems, and addressing human rights and gender barriers to health care. Nevertheless, challenges persist, emphasizing the continued importance of this partnership.

"Our partnership was founded out of the unwillingness to accept the inequalities that made prevention, care and treatment for HIV, TB and malaria available only to the rich. Together with partners, the Global Fund galvanized global solidarity, political leadership, and investments against the diseases, which looked unbeatable at the time"

A portrait of Peter Sands, the Global Fund Executive Director, wearing glasses and a light-colored shirt. The portrait is partially obscured by a diagonal blue and purple gradient.

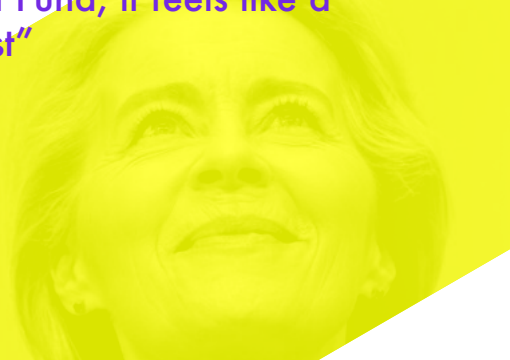
Peter Sands
Global Fund Executive Director

1. The role of the Commission in creating and shaping the Global Fund

From the outset, the EC played a key role in shaping the Global Fund, helping to define its strategy, governance, financial systems, management structure, and eligibility criteria. It co-established a Transitional Working Group in Brussels to guide the Fund's early development and operationalization. This group brought together donor and recipient countries, the private sector, the United Nations, and, for the first time, affected communities.

The EC has continued to be a strong partner on the Global Fund Board, driving key innovations such as performance-based funding, inclusion of affected communities, and support for locally-owned programs. The EC remains an active member of the Board.

"The EU has been a strong supporter of the Global Fund from the start. And how much we have achieved together! Back in 2002 an HIV diagnosis was in most cases a death sentence. And millions died from tuberculosis and malaria. If you think about it, this is not so long ago. But thanks to initiatives like the Global Fund, it feels like a distant past"



Ursula von der Leyen
EC President
(at the 7th Replenishment Pledging Session
of the Global Fund)

2000

- HIV/AIDS, malaria, and tuberculosis cause more than 5 million deaths every year, with 95% occurring in low- and middle-income countries.
- The UN Security Council holds its first-ever session on AIDS, recognizing its impact on peace and security in Africa. It adopts its first resolution on a health issue.
- The first International AIDS Conference in Africa, held in Durban, galvanizes global action on access to treatment. The EC announces plans for a high-level roundtable in Brussels to "streamline the battle against AIDS and HIV" and strengthen the fight against tuberculosis and malaria—two other major infectious disease killers.
- G8 leaders in Japan place infectious diseases on their agenda for the first time, laying the groundwork for the Global Fund.
- EC President Romano Prodi convenes the Brussels roundtable with UNAIDS and WHO, shaping the EC's policy framework for tackling HIV, TB, and malaria. Outcomes include launching a clinical trial partnership with Africa (now EDCTP) and fast-tracking large-scale financing—steps leading to the Global Fund.

TIMELINE OF THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE GLOBAL FUND

2001

2002

- Momentum for the Global Fund builds at the African Union Summit (April), the UN General Assembly Special Session on HIV/AIDS (June), and the G8 Summit (July).
- The EC releases its Programme of Action (2001–2006): Accelerated Action on HIV/AIDS, Malaria and Tuberculosis in the Context of Poverty Reduction, increasing the scale and visibility of its response to these pandemics.
- The European Parliament and the Council approve a €60 million contribution to the Global Fund to fight HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

The Global Fund
is formally established

2. The policy alignment between the EC and the Global Fund

2.1 EU global health policy

The Global Fund's 2023-2028 strategy, *Fighting Pandemics and Building a Healthier and More Equitable World*, closely aligns with the objectives of the EU Global Health Strategy, making the Global Fund a key partner in its implementation, particularly in:

Fighting communicable diseases:

The primary goal of the Global Fund is to end HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria. Since 2022, the Global Fund has invested \$66 billion across more than 100 countries, reducing mortality rates from these diseases by 61%.

Enhancing health security:

The Global Fund's investments have trained millions of health workers, strengthened diagnostics, and improved infrastructure for outbreak response. Leveraging its swift and flexible procedures, it has collaborated with EU-funded initiatives to deploy rapid diagnostic tools, PPE, and vaccines in low-income countries during the COVID-19 pandemic. It now supports countries in strengthening their response to mpox outbreaks.

Strengthening health systems and primary health care:

The Global Fund is the largest multilateral provider of health systems strengthening grants, allocating \$2 billion annually (2023–2025) to support health systems. These investments enhance health service delivery, community health systems, data systems, diagnostics, laboratories, workforce capacity, and supply chains.

Combating antimicrobial resistance (AMR):

In line with the EU's mobilisation against AMR, the Global Fund invests over \$74 million annually in AMR initiatives, including improving laboratory networks, enhancing AMR surveillance, and supporting infection prevention and control measures. It also works with international partners to drive research into new antibiotics and vaccines.

Improving sexual and reproductive health and rights (SRHR):

Around half of the Global Fund's financing supports HIV/AIDS programs, central to SRHR. These efforts prioritize HIV prevention and address structural factors driving the epidemic, particularly gender and human rights issues, with a focus on vulnerable groups. Key initiatives include preventing mother-to-child HIV transmission, malaria prevention during pregnancy, condom distribution, self-testing, and STI testing.

Leveraging additional funding for health:

For every \$1 invested by the Global Fund, countries contribute approximately \$3 in domestic health funding. The Global Fund's co-financing policies encourage governments to take on greater responsibility for health programs. The innovative Debt2Health initiative has also converted millions in debt repayments into health investments, generating \$226 million for health programs since its inception.

2.2 Gender equality and human rights

There are still significant gaps in access to healthcare both between and within countries supported by the Global Fund. Stigma, discrimination, gender inequalities and criminalization make people more vulnerable to HIV, TB, and malaria, while also limiting access to the care they need.

- The Global Fund is committed to addressing gender inequalities, aligning closely with the EU's Gender Action Plan. Investments in 13 priority countries have helped reduce HIV rates among adolescent girls and young women by 69% since 2010, while also breaking down gender-specific barriers to TB and malaria care.
- The Global Fund is also dedicated to making healthcare accessible to everyone, especially marginalized groups, in line with the EU's human rights agenda. Since 2017, the Breaking Down Barriers initiative has helped 24 countries tackle human rights challenges that prevent people from accessing HIV, TB, and malaria services. Addressing the root causes of these barriers, such as discriminatory laws, gender inequality, and the criminalization of key populations, is essential to building stronger, more equitable health systems.

As the Global Fund and the EU continue their shared mission, their partnership is key to advancing health equity, strengthening healthcare systems, and driving progress toward the end of HIV, TB, and malaria worldwide.

Investments in 13 priority countries have helped reduce HIV rates among adolescent girls and young women by 69% since 2010, while also breaking down gender-specific barriers to TB and malaria care.

2.3 The Global Gateway

The Global Fund's investments and priorities closely align with the EU's Global Gateway, particularly in fostering resilient health systems, promoting the digitalization of health tools, and supporting infrastructure development in low- and middle-income countries.

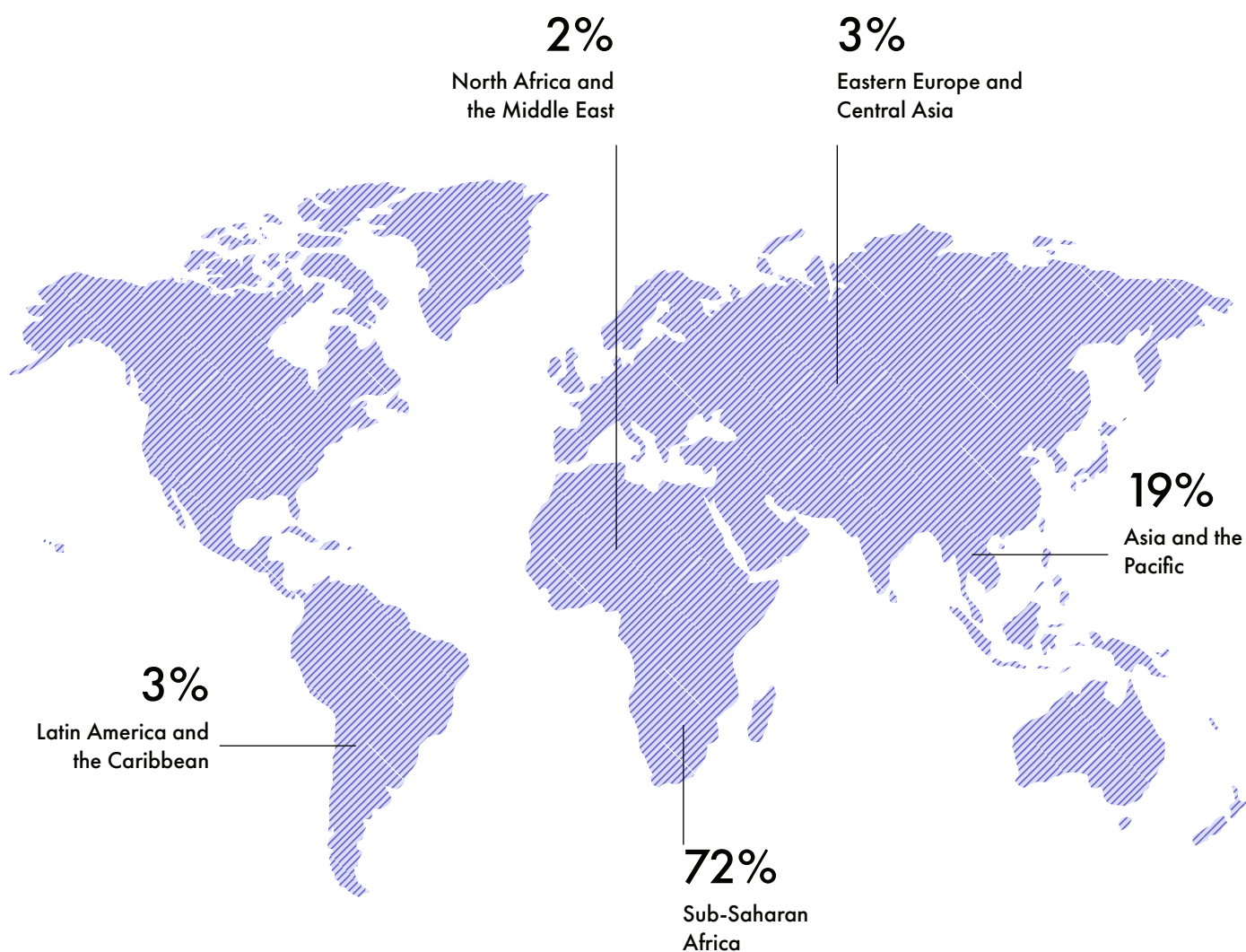
In Africa, where the Global Gateway prioritizes building health infrastructure, the Global Fund supports the procurement and supply chain systems essential for disease prevention and treatment. Leveraging its market-shaping influence, the Global Fund prioritizes quality-assured suppliers located near high-volume demand. It is also working with regional pooled procurement platforms, supporting initiatives like regional regulatory harmonization and demand generation for locally manufactured products and promoting capacity building for regional manufacturing.

To complement these efforts, the Global Fund is also collaborating with regional economic communities such as the East African Community, the Southern African Development Community, and the Economic Community of West African States/West African Health Organization to share lessons learned from the Global Fund's Pooled Procurement Mechanism and support the capacity building of regional pooled procurement systems. In August 2023, the Global Fund, in partnership with PEPFAR and Unitaid, launched a pilot review process for African manufacturers of HIV rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) to accelerate the production of RDTs on the continent. This initiative marked a pivotal milestone in the organizations' joint efforts to accelerate the supply diversification agenda worldwide.

2.4 Geographic focus

Global Fund investments by region

in 2021-2024 as of June 2024



The Global Fund and Africa:

The Global Fund operates extensively in sub-Saharan Africa, where the EU has prioritized cooperation under frameworks such as the EU-Africa Strategy. In 2023, 21.3 million people in Africa benefited from antiretroviral treatment; 1.94 million people were treated for tuberculosis, and 215 million mosquito nets were distributed. The Global Fund also makes substantial investments in climate-resilient health systems and addresses human rights and gender barriers to accessing healthcare.

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Fund delivered over \$4 billion in emergency support, primarily to African nations, strengthening their healthcare systems to manage both COVID-19 and the ongoing disease burden. These efforts align with the EU's commitment to universal health coverage and the implementation of its Global Gateway Strategy.



The Global Fund and Ukraine

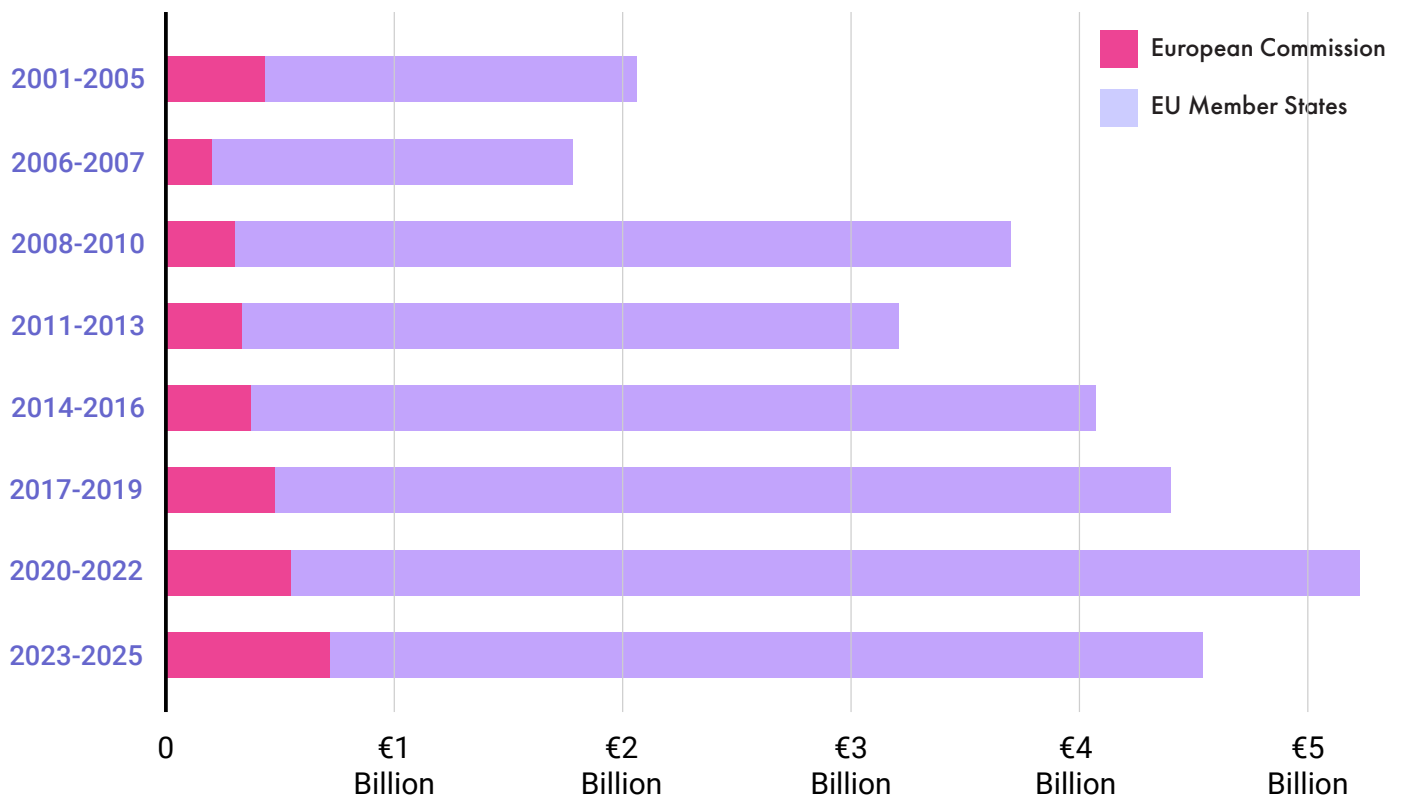
Ukraine's healthcare system is under severe strain due to the security challenges, disrupted supply chains, staffing shortages, and damaged facilities caused by the war. Vulnerable groups, including people living with HIV, face heightened risks of treatment interruptions and human rights violations, especially in occupied territories. Despite these challenges, Ukraine has maintained robust support for HIV programs through a coalition of government entities, civil society, and donors, notably the Global Fund.

The Global Fund has played a pivotal role in securing essential anti-retroviral therapy, tuberculosis medicines, and harm reduction services. It has also supported community-based organizations in ensuring treatment continuity and expanding access to care.

3. The impact of the EC's partnership with the Global Fund

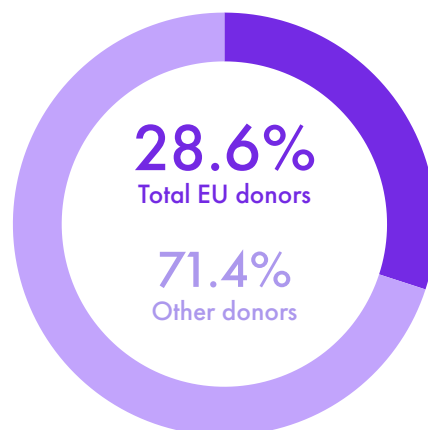
Since its creation, the European Commission has committed more than €3.5 billion to the Global Fund, contributing to the success of every replenishment to date.

The EC's financial contribution



EU pledges to the Global Fund

Together with additional support from Member States, the overall EU contribution over the years amounts to more than one-third of all resources committed to the Global Fund.



3.1 Health Impact

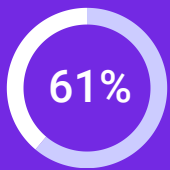
Since 2002, in countries where the Global Fund invests:



65 million lives saved



Every \$1 invested by the Global Fund has leveraged \$3 in domestic health funding



Reduction of combined death rate from AIDS, TB, and malaria

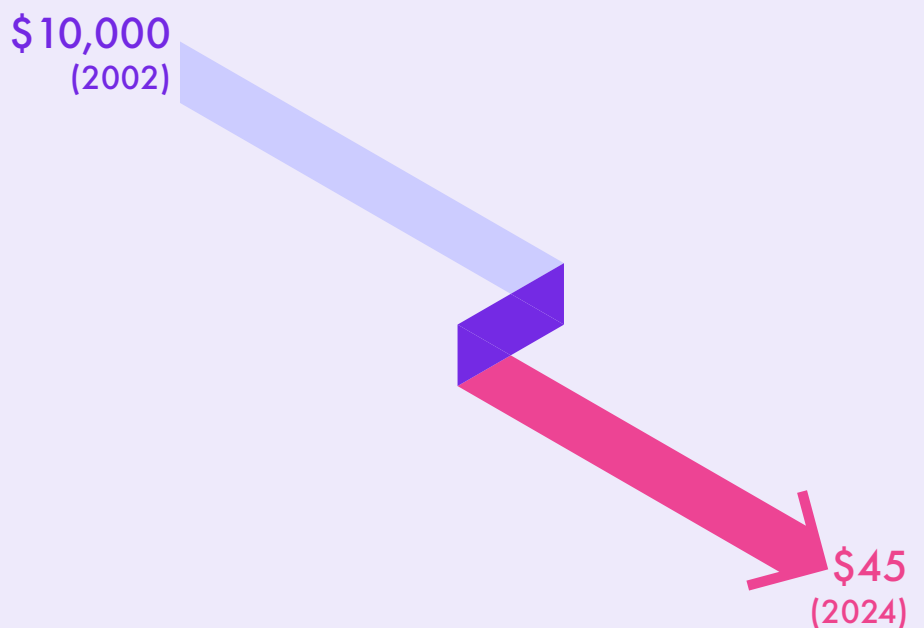
3.2 Economic Impact

Market shaping for increased impact

Market shaping has been central to the Global Fund's mission since its inception. By leveraging its purchasing power and innovative procurement strategies, the Global Fund has significantly reduced the cost of life-saving products, dramatically expanding access.

The Global Fund's pooled procurement and long-term agreements have driven manufacturers to scale production and improve supply chains. These efforts also accelerate innovation and market access, as demonstrated by the roll out of dual active ingredient bed nets to combat insecticide-resistant malaria mosquitoes.

Average price per person of antiretroviral treatment for HIV



Economic gains for health systems

Thanks to the Global Fund's efforts, cases of HIV, TB, and malaria have declined, reducing the strain these diseases place on health systems. The resulting savings strengthen health systems, enabling them to redirect resources toward treating other conditions.

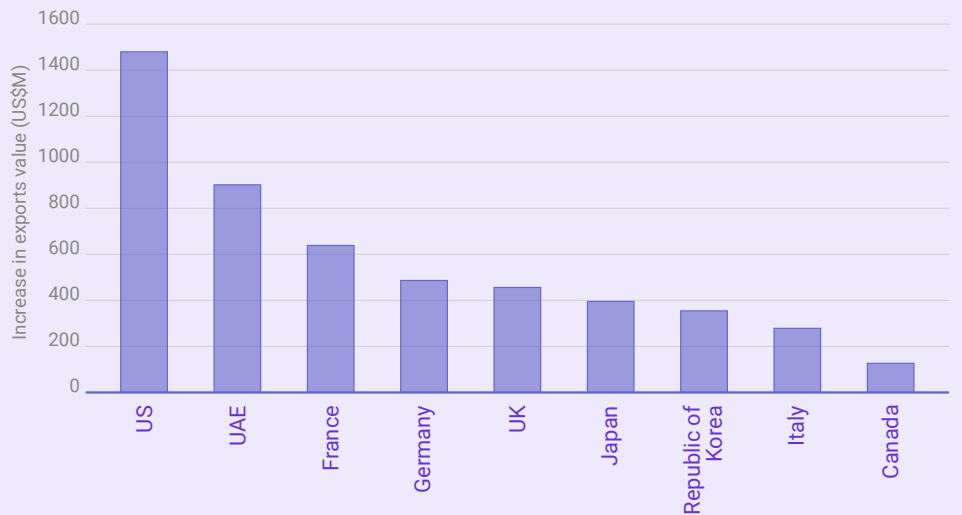
Between 2002-2023, in the countries where the Global Fund invests, its programs have generated:

\$1.2 Trillion	\$400 Billion	\$85 Billion
Health gains	Direct productivity gains	Cost savings to the health system

The economic dividend of achieving the elimination targets

Investing to eliminate these diseases yields a clear return on investment as these diseases hinder development by affecting children's education, as well as their ability to study, farm, and work.

These economic prospects would not only spur growth but also improve living standards and human development in low- and middle-income countries.



The example of malaria:

10%

Reduction in malaria incidence is associated with a:

**=
0.11**

percentage point increase in annual GDP per capital growth

90%

Reduction in malaria incidence by 2030 could bring about a:

**=
\$142.7 Billion**

boost to the economies of malaria-endemic countries

**=
\$80.7 Billion**

boost in international trade

**=
\$3.9 Billion**

boost in exports that would directly benefit G7 countries

LEVERAGING EUROPEAN PRIVATE SECTOR'S INNOVATION FOR IMPACT

The Global Fund is collaborating with European companies to enhance healthcare service delivery. These partnerships illustrate how European companies can showcase their expertise and innovation in global health, contributing significantly to advancing global health goals.

With **Orange**, the Global Fund is partnering to develop mobile health solutions that increase the impact of HIV and TB programs in Morocco. These tools, designed for health professionals and community workers, will strengthen the monitoring and retention of HIV and TB patients. Orange is also creating a digital platform to improve the country's health system by enhancing the stock management of health products.

With **Siemens Healthineers**, the Global Fund is working to accelerate the use of artificial intelligence (AI) in X-ray screening for tuberculosis. By leveraging AI, routine scans can be interpreted more quickly, allowing more people to be screened for TB and previously undetected cases to be diagnosed.

SUPPORTING SUSTAINABLE HEALTH PRODUCTS' SOURCING

When health products are manufactured far from where they are consumed, inefficiencies and global supply chain disruptions can hinder their equitable and timely delivery. To address this challenge, the Global Fund has long prioritized sourcing health products from manufacturers closer to the populations that need them. Building on this approach, the Global Fund is enhancing collaboration with partners such as African institutions, WHO, and Unitaïd to promote capacity-building for regional manufacturing across Global Fund-supported regions.

This strategy focuses on establishing a sustainable regional network that aligns supply with demand while avoiding duplication and underutilization of local capacities.

4. The added value of the Global Fund in the global health ecosystem

Over the last 20 years, global health institutions such as Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the Global Fund have leveraged their unique strengths to work alongside governments, communities, and a range of other partners - including WHO and Unitaid - to address health needs in low- and middle-income countries. While each of these partnerships has a distinct focus, their collective efforts are both complementary and comprehensive, with each contributing a crucial piece to the broader global health landscape.

Together, they tackle a wide spectrum of health challenges, from disease prevention and vaccination to health financing and policy development. Their work not only addresses urgent gaps but also strengthens health systems for the long term, ensuring resilience in the face of future health threats.

The Global Fund and Unitaid, partners to bring health innovations to affected communities

The Global Fund and Unitaid share a mission to promote equity in global health through complementary approaches. Unitaid focuses on identifying life-saving innovations and overcoming market barriers, while the Global Fund invests in scaling up these solutions. Since their inception, the two organizations have partnered to accelerate equitable access to health products for preventing, detecting, and treating HIV, TB, and malaria.

16%: That's the increase in health and economic impact of investments in the three diseases, achieved by combining Unitaid's investments in innovative health products with the Global Fund's capacity to scale them.

Gavi, the vaccine alliance and the Global Fund: united to eliminate malaria

Gavi and the Global Fund are working with countries to accelerate the introduction of new tools and advance progress toward a malaria-free world. Their efforts focus on ensuring communities have access to a comprehensive set of effective interventions - such as insecticide-treated bed nets, antimalarial treatments, and vaccines - tailored to local needs. They jointly invested in pilot programs to introduce the RTS,S vaccine, the first vaccine for malaria prevention recommended by WHO as a complementary tool to other interventions. Gavi continues to support countries in scaling up the rollout of malaria vaccines.

From norms to implementation: the partnership between WHO and the Global Fund

WHO, as the norm-setting institution, provides technical expertise, policy guidance, and strategic advice for disease elimination programs, such as addressing resistant TB or invasive malaria-transmitting mosquito species. These norms are crucial for guiding endemic countries in developing effective strategies. The Global Fund complements WHO's role by supporting countries in implementing these strategies through funding and technical assistance. For instance, during the COVID-19 pandemic, the Global Fund and WHO collaborated to strengthen health systems and pandemic responses. WHO offered technical guidance on infection prevention, diagnostics, and treatment, while the Global Fund financed essential supplies, including personal protective equipment, diagnostic tools, and oxygen supplies.

THE GLOBAL FUND'S DISTINCTIVE STRENGTHS

Substantial investments in health systems strengthening alongside investments in ending the three diseases:

The Global Fund is a leading international funder in critical areas such as human resources for health, laboratory capacity, surveillance systems, supply chains, and health commodities. These contributions also amplify the impact of other global health initiatives.

Significant financial scale:

\$15 billion invested in 2002-2025.

Inclusive governance:

Centered around country ownership and the active involvement of affected communities.

Strong and diverse partnerships

The Global Fund is a unique partnership of governments, civil society, technical agencies, the private sector and people affected by the three diseases.

Flexible model:

During crises, the Global Fund adapts its interventions to provide agile support through grant flexibilities, reprogramming and provision of emergency funding.

Conclusion

The fight against HIV, TB, and malaria has made significant progress, but the world remains off-track to meet the Sustainable Development Goal 3 target of ending these diseases by 2030. Despite a remarkable recovery from COVID-19 disruptions, complex challenges such as climate change, conflict, and growing inequities threaten to derail progress. The Global Fund's investments are essential to overcoming these obstacles, but achieving the SDG goal will require continued commitment to addressing not only the diseases themselves but also the underlying structural issues that amplify their impact, particularly in the most vulnerable communities.

The European Commission has been playing a pivotal role in advancing the Global Fund's mission, ensuring that health systems are resilient in the face of crises and that no one is left behind in the fight against AIDS, TB, and malaria. Continued investment is not merely an act of solidarity; it is an investment in a safer, healthier, and more prosperous future. By contributing to strengthening health systems, amplifying community-led efforts, and fostering innovative solutions, the EC can ensure that the goal of ending these diseases by 2030 remains within reach. This investment will save millions of lives, help prevent future pandemics, and lay the groundwork for long-term sustainable development.

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