

PRESS RELEASE

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FUNDING FOR NEGLECTED DISEASE RESEARCH HITS RECORD HIGH, INCREASES FOR THIRD STRAIGHT YEAR

Rise in private sector investment fuels gains; progress remains uneven

Brussels, 30 January 2020 – For the first time, global funding for neglected disease R&D grew for three consecutive years, reaching a record high of more than US\$4.05 billion in 2018. Increases from both the public and private sectors drove a 7.9% (\$290m) rise in total global funding compared to the previous year. Investment over the past several years has translated into a robust innovation pipeline with more than 500 candidates in development, though not all diseases are receiving the investments in R&D they need.

This is according to the 12th annual G-FINDER report, which was launched today in Brussels by Policy Cures Research. G-FINDER is the world's most comprehensive survey of R&D funding for neglected infectious diseases, which disproportionately affect people in developing countries.

“The positive impact of sustained, record-breaking growth in R&D funding for the world's most vulnerable people can't be understated,” said G-FINDER's lead author, Dr. Nick Chapman. “The upward trend in investment driven by industry and the public sector provides hope for a future where no one lacks access to the vaccines, medicines and products they need to thrive. But at the same time, we can't overlook the fact that progress is uneven and funding gaps remain.”

Industry accelerates global investment

The private sector made its largest-ever investment in neglected disease R&D to comprise 17% (\$694m) of total funding in 2018. This growth represented a 20% (\$118m) jump from the previous year and was solely driven by increased investments (\$598m, up \$132m) from multinational pharmaceutical companies (MNCs). The collective contributions of MNCs have significantly closed the gap between industry and philanthropy in global funding shares.

The public sector also contributed record levels of investment (\$2.59b) and remained the largest source of neglected disease R&D funding. Though strong growth from industry in 2018 led to a marginal decrease in the public sector's total share of funding, down to its lowest ever level of 64%, investment levels remained high.

High-income countries provided the vast majority (93%) of public funding, and the top three funders all increased investment for the second year in a row. The United States provided 71% (\$1.77b) of total neglected disease research funding, the United Kingdom provided 9.2% thanks to its largest-ever contribution of \$230 million and the European Commission provided 5.4% (\$134m).

Funding from low- and middle-income country (LMIC) governments fell by 7.6% (\$7.9m) to \$95 million in 2018. However, this followed a year of record-breaking investment from India in 2017. Across all LMIC funders – including India – investments remain well above pre-2017 levels. In

keeping with trends from previous years, India (\$66m, 70%), South Africa (\$13m, 14%) and Brazil (\$12m, 12%) comprised 96% of funding from LMICs.

The philanthropic sector saw a modest 6% increase (\$43m) from 2017 with funding totaling \$760 million. While the philanthropic sector's total share of neglected disease funding remained virtually unchanged, it reached its highest level of funding in more than a decade. The sector's two top funders continued to comprise the bulk of philanthropic funding (93%) with both the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Wellcome Trust increasing investments in 2018, by 6.5% (\$36m) and 10% (\$11m), respectively.

Inconsistent progress, future potential

The “big three” neglected diseases – HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis – saw increased investments, even as their global share dropped marginally to 69% (\$2.79b) in 2018. Other diseases, such as hepatitis C (up \$30m) and bacterial pneumonia and meningitis (up \$16m) also saw significant bumps in funding.

While funding increased for the majority of diseases, one group remains left behind. Investment in R&D for neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) has flatlined, and even regressed, falling by 9.1% (\$34m) over the past decade. Six diseases that have historically received the lowest amount of funding – including four NTDs (leprosy, Buruli ulcer, trachoma and leptospirosis) – received their lowest-ever share of global investments in 2018.

Although basic and early-stage research continued to receive the largest share at 43% of the global total, investments in clinical development and post-registration studies spiked by 16% (\$198m) to a record high of \$1.40 billion. More than 70% (\$422m) of this funding came from investments made by MNCs.

“This year’s G-FINDER report shows us how three years of increased research funding has translated into a pipeline of more than 500 promising drug, diagnostic and vaccine candidates,” said Jamie Nishi, Director of the Global Health Technologies Coalition. “Even with this good news, it’s critical to remember that we still don’t have the level of investment needed to turn these breakthroughs into usable products. Stakeholders across all sectors will need to carry this momentum forward if we’re going to fully realize innovation’s lifesaving potential.”

The 2019 G-FINDER Report will be launched with a panel discussion on Thursday 30 January 2020 at Parc du Cinquantenaire, Brussels, Belgium. Tune into the livestream starting at 5:30pm CET here: <https://www.politico.eu/event/fundglobalhealth/>.

For further information, or to request an embargoed copy of the report, please contact the Policy Cures Research team at +61 2 8218 2109 or email info@polycuresresearch.org.

The full G-FINDER report will be available from 30 January at www.polycuresresearch.org/analysis.

ABOUT G-FINDER

G-FINDER, now in its twelfth year, is the most comprehensive report on global funding of R&D for neglected diseases like HIV/AIDS, malaria, TB, sleeping sickness and helminth infections. The annual G-FINDER report is intended to help policy makers, funders and product developers better understand the global landscape for neglected disease R&D, where funding gaps exist, and how their investments fit into the global picture. The G-FINDER survey is conducted by the independent research group Policy Cures Research and funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

ABOUT POLICY CURES RESEARCH

Policy Cures Research is an independent, not-for-profit global health think tank providing research, information, decision-making tools and strategic analysis for those involved in the creation of new health technologies for neglected diseases. Its focus is on providing governments, funders, researchers and civil society organizations with the information they need to make optimal R&D policy and funding decisions for diseases of the developing world.