

RESEARCH FOR HEALTH AFRICA



ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

Research for Health Africa (R4HA) is one of COHRED's flagship areas of technical support to low- and middle-income countries. R4HA is a partnership programme that aims to strengthen research governance in African countries through the support and development of effective research systems for promoting health, science, technology and innovation.

The COHRED Group



Supporting research and innovation systems for health, equity and development



THE CHALLENGE

Most African countries do not have strong Research for Health systems and this results in the following challenges:

1. Limited research for health;
2. Research that is driven by the agendas and priorities of outside donors rather than by the true needs of a country;
3. Inefficient use of available funds;
4. Inefficient use of research results; and, ultimately unfavorable health, equity and development outcomes.

The development of national research systems for health and innovation are often hindered by managerial, regulatory, financial and capacity deficiencies. More specifically, there is often a lack of human resources, little or no control in setting national research priorities, inadequate research policy frameworks, weak career path development for researchers and unpredictable research financing.

THE SOLUTION

In May 2010, COHRED launched Research for Health Africa with the support of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Directorate-General for International Cooperation (DGIS), The Netherlands. This four-year programme is implemented jointly with The New Partnership for Africa's Development Agency of the African Union (NEPAD). The initial focus has been on strengthening the research governance and information management systems for research for health in Mozambique, Senegal and Tanzania.

WHO BENEFITS AND HOW?

- Governments and research institutions in the participating countries benefit from a better managed research and innovation for health system, where information is shared, research duplication is minimized, and research is targeted towards jointly agreed upon national priorities.
- Governments benefit by working in partnership with other countries in the region. Together they share experiences and create momentum as they build national systems for managing research and innovation.
- Citizen's of these countries benefit through better health, equity and development outcomes.
- Donors benefit by knowing where to target their research investments in the participating countries.

SUCCESS STORIES

R4HA works with Tanzania in setting a cross-sectoral national research agenda. The president of Tanzania committed to dedicate 0.7% of GDP to science and technology. The new research agenda guides the appropriate allocation of this increased public investment in research.

R4HA also supported the development of e-based research for health management information systems in Tanzania—working with the Commission on Science and Technology (COSTECH) and the National Institute for Medical Research (NIMR).

In Senegal, R4HA helped to establish a national council for research for health—a body that aims to strengthen the coordination of research in the country. Coordination was identified as the major problem for advancing research in Senegal.

With the Institute of Public Health (INS), R4HA works on defining a national research for health agenda for Mozambique. The agenda will be based on the research priorities identified by the relevant sectors involved in research for health.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

The World Bank lists 47 countries in sub-Saharan Africa as “developing.” COHRED works with 7 of these countries through R4HA and a separate West Africa project. With the support of one or several donors, COHRED would like to expand its work in Africa to the other 40 developing countries in the region. This expansion could be done at a cost of approximately Euro 90,000/country or a total of Euro 3.6 million. This budget would allow for the basic foundations of a research for health system to be in place, which includes a research agenda, a research policy and a management structure.

¹ Source: econ.worldbank.org

COHRED is the Council for Health Research and Development. We support research and innovation for health, equity and development in low- and middle-income countries. COHRED promotes research for health and innovation that addresses the needs of the disadvantaged. COHRED works with countries to build the skills and systems required for such essential research. We partner with governments, research institutions and local communities, building on expertise from around the world.

COHRED

1-5 Route des Morillons
P.O. Box 2100
1211 Geneva 2
Switzerland

T: +41 22 591 89 00
mclin@cohred.org
www.cohred.org