

STRENGTHENING PHARMACEUTICAL INNOVATION IN LMICs



ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

In 2008, COHRED in partnership with NEPAD, (The New Partnership for Africa's Development) launched the 'Strengthening Pharmaceutical Innovation in Africa' project. The initiative supports low and middle-income countries (LMICs) in crafting strategies, building skills and engaging in pharmaceutical innovation to address issues related to access to medicines for the benefit of the continent's population.

The COHRED Group



Supporting research and innovation systems for health, equity and development



THE CHALLENGE

Ensuring a secure supply of safe, affordable medicines for citizens is a constant priority for health policy-makers in low and middle-income countries. It is well known that the rise of India as a source of low-cost generic medicines, and the growth of countless public and private initiatives have gone some way towards alleviating this need and saving countless lives in sub-Saharan Africa. However, reliance on importation of medicines and philanthropy to address access issues is a risky long-term strategy. Because both global frameworks of trade in pharmaceuticals and donor priorities can easily change, a more sustainable approach is needed.

THE SOLUTION

Pharmaceutical innovation is a way for countries to not only deliver sustainable access to medicines, but is also a way of supporting local manufacturing, research and development. By doing so, a country can build stronger, more innovative local economies. However, pharmaceutical innovation may not be the most appropriate strategy for every country. Before embarking on this course of action, countries need to consider what policies and capacity they have in place and what their access and equity needs are. Through the 'Strengthening Pharmaceutical Innovation in LMICs' initiative, COHRED together with NEPAD is helping countries to achieve this.

WHO BENEFITS AND HOW?

Many stakeholders will benefit from this initiative as described below:

- All of those who rely on safe, affordable medicines for good health in low and middle income countries.
- All of those who stand to be employed by the industries a pharmaceutical innovation strategy will help to create and to support (resulting in alleviation of poverty and social development)
- Government will benefit due to:
 - (longer term) savings made on the purchase of pharmaceuticals
 - creation of potential markets for export
 - the stimulation of associated sectors (packaging, labeling, distribution)
 - greater availability of cheaper raw materials
 - stronger regulatory capacity
- External partners who seek to engage in technology transfer and sharing in expertise/knowledge.
- Donors and partners who are seeking to demonstrate sustainable investment in local systems, which will have a real longer-term impact on health.

SUCCESS STORIES

The 'Strengthening Pharmaceutical Innovation in LMICs' project has already demonstrated a great deal of success. This project has several years head-start on the growing international consensus concerning the merits of local production as strategy for resolving access issues. This project has already completed the first stage, and has delivered both a guide to pharmaceutical innovation for low and middle income countries, alongside a 'pharmaceutical innovation grid' to help countries design an appropriate strategy. COHRED remains firmly embedded in the continuing work and dialogue in this area, as a member of the Technical Committee of the Pharmaceutical Manufacturing Plan for Africa (TCPMPA).

HOW YOU CAN HELP

COHRED seeks additional partners and donors to assist in the continued expansion and implementation of the 'Strengthening Pharmaceutical Innovation in LMICs' project. The main activities in this next phase will be working with three countries (i.e. 2 in Africa and 1 in Latin America or Asia) and international partners to assist these countries in the development and implementation of pharmaceutical innovation strategies. This phase will focus on delivering "proof of concept" of the recommended approaches and tools. The expected outcomes will be clear short, medium and long-term priorities for pharmaceutical innovation for the identified countries, and an action plan for the achievement of those priorities.