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ASIA EDITION

Japan's GHIT invests $8.8 M in malaria, tuberculosis, and NTD R&D projects

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With partners including Mahidol University, Barcelona Institute for Global Health, and Eisai



Japan-based Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund has announced a total investment of approximately JPY 1.39 billion ($8.8 million) in six R&D projects for the development of drugs, diagnostics and vaccines for malaria, tuberculosis (TB), and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

For malaria, the GHIT Fund is investing JPY 648 million ($4.1 million) in a global partnership aimed at developing an mRNA vaccine to reduce infection and transmission of vivax malaria. This project is being led by Mahidol University and Chulalongkorn University in Thailand, and Ehime University in Japan. The investment builds on a prior GHIT-supported project that received approximately JPY 70 million ($0.4 million) between 2023 and 2025.

For the control of congenital Chagas disease, the GHIT Fund is investing JPY 93 million ($0.6 million) in the registration of a point-of-care diagnostic test in Argentina and Bolivia. This project is led by ISGlobal (the Barcelona Institute for Global Health), a research institute in Spain, and Eiken Chemical Co. in Japan. The GHIT Fund is also investing approximately JPY 183 million ($1.1 million) in lead identification, which represents an early-stage step in the development of new drugs for Chagas disease being led by Eisai Co. and others.

In addition, the GHIT Fund will invest a total of approximately JPY 466 million (approx. $2.9 million) in the following three R&D projects:

1. Facilitating local universal TB testing with Lung Flute ECO (FLUTTE): Validation in children, health care workers, and people living with HIV(PLHIV) with robust comparators for TB testing by the Research Institute of Tuberculosis, Japan Anti-Tuberculosis Association, Acoustic Innovations Co., Institute of Tropical Medicine, the Aurum Institute, Stellenbosch University, Instituto Nacional de Saúde and World Alliance for Lung and Intensive Care Medicine in Uganda.
2. Development of a novel *P. falciparum* multistage vaccine by Ehime University, Sumitomo Pharma Co., PATH, Statens Serum Institut and University of Copenhagen.
3. AI-guided approaches for schistosomiasis drug discovery by Aberystwyth University and University of Dundee in the UK and BrightCore, Inc. in Japan.