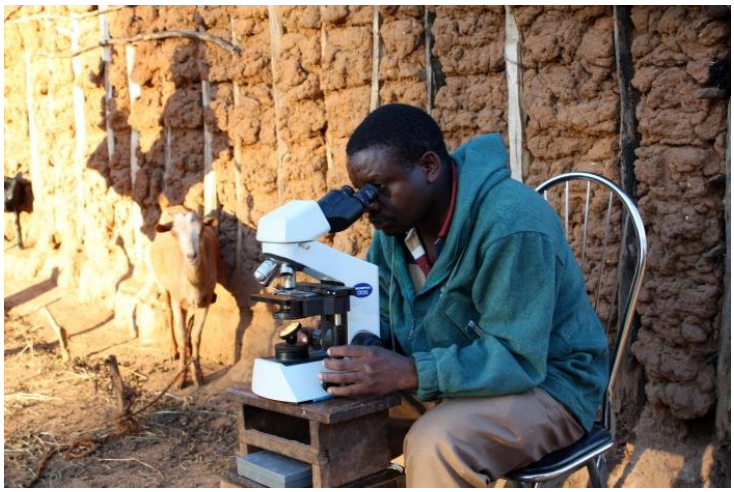
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GHIT fund in Japan invests $2.9 M for treatment of neglected tropical diseases

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A total of approximately 400 million Yen investment in Eisai, Ehime University, DNDi and others for new drug and vaccine development for neglected tropical diseases



The Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund, in Japan, has announced an investment totaling approximately 400 million yen ($2.9 million) for the research and development of new drugs against mycetoma and onchocerciasis, which are Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs), as well as a vaccine against malaria.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises 20 NTDs, which are infectious diseases caused by parasites, bacteria, fungi, toxins and viruses prevalent mainly among the poor in tropical regions. NTDs afflict over 1.6 billion people in the world and have until now received limited attention in terms of the development of therapeutic interventions, partly due to the lack of market incentives.

The GHIT Fund will invest approximately 300 million yen ($2.2 million) in a project by Eisai Co. and Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) for regulatory approval and to prepare for patient access to drugs for eumycetoma. Mycetoma, an NTD, is a progressive disease that destroys subcutaneous and deep tissues infected by bacterial or fungal invasion through a wound.

The GHIT Fund will also invest approximately 70 million yen ($0.5 million) for the development of an mRNA vaccine against malaria by Ehime University and Mahidol University and 30 million yen ($0.22 million) in an onchocerciasis drug development project by BoZo Research Center, DNDi, University Hospital Bonn, and Mahidol Oxford Tropical Medicine Research Unit (MORU).