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Japan's GHIT injects $18 M in Malaria, Tuberculosis and NTD R&D projects

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With partners Including Shionogi, Eisai, Nagasaki, Ehime and Niigata University



The Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund has announced a total investment of approximately JPY 2.86 billion ($18 million) in six R&D projects for the development of drugs for malaria, tuberculosis (TB) and neglected tropical diseases (NTDs).

The GHIT Fund has decided to invest approximately JPY 910 million ($5.7 million) in a global partnershipfor preclinical studies of a long-acting injectable (LAI) for malaria prevention. This project is being led by Shionogi, Nagasaki University and Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV).

This project aims to conduct Chemistry, Manufacturing, and Controls (CMC) research and development, manufacture the active pharmaceutical ingredient (API) and investigational drug product and perform preclinical development of the candidate, thereby completing the necessary preparations for a Phase 1 Clinical Trial Application (CTA).

The GHIT Fund has also decided to invest approximately JPY 770 million ($4.8 million) into the development of DNDI-6174, an oral drug candidate for the treatment of visceral leishmaniasis (VL) and cutaneous leishmaniasis (CL) advanced by the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) and Eisai.

In addition, the GHIT Fund will invest a total of approximately JPY 1.17 billion (approx. $7.3 million) in the following four R&D projects:

1) A Phase 1 clinical trial of a *Plasmodium falciparum* monoclonal antibody project led by PATH, Ehime University and GlaxoSmithKline (GSK).

2) Integrated diagnostics enabled by Artificial Intelligence digital pathology for soil-transmitted helminths and schistosomiasis, led by Sweden-based AI startup company Enaiblers AB, Niigata University of Pharmacy and Medical and Life Sciences, Niigata University, Asahikawa Medical University, and QIMR Berghofer Medical Research Institute in Australia.

3) A Hit-to-Lead optimisation of novel antiviral compounds for flavivirus infections led by Eisai, Drugs for Neglected Diseases Initiative (DNDi) and the Japan Institute for Health Security (JIHS).

4) Lead development of a novel anti-tuberculosis agent with activity against drug-resistant TB and potential to shorten treatment targeting mycobacterial dormancy led by Niigata University and the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development, Inc. (TB Alliance).