Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT)

Research Areas

- Tool Development
- Biomarker Research

At a Glance

- Status: Active Consortium
- Year Launched: 2013
- Initiating Organization: Government of Japan
- Initiator Type: Government
- Rare disease
- Location: Asia

Abstract

The Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund is a consortium established by the government of Japan, Japanese pharmaceutical companies, the U.N. Development Programme, and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation with a mission to discover and develop new pharmaceutical drugs, vaccines and diagnostics against the infectious diseases that are prevalent in developing countries. The consortium aims to facilitate international partnerships that enable Japanese technology, innovations, and insights to play a more direct role in improving global health.

Mission

The GHIT Fund is a consortium that aims to accelerate the development of novel medical technologies and drugs to diagnose, prevent, and treat high-prevalence infectious diseases worldwide. The GHIT Fund is sponsored for the Japanese government, the U.N. Development Programme, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and several Japan-based pharmaceutical companies. The initial targets of their efforts are disorders designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as neglected tropical diseases prevalent in developing nations.
The consortium is the result of three recent policies in Japan. The first is an effort to revitalize the country and make the Japanese pharmaceutical industry a center for innovation. The second is a greater call for adopting an open innovation research and development (R&D) model by incentivizing international partnerships. Global health has also become a central component of Japan's foreign policy, joining international efforts to combat neglected tropical diseases.

The consortium focuses its efforts on accelerating novel drugs, vaccines (both preventive and therapeutic), and diagnostic technologies, leveraging Japan’s advanced technology and innovation sectors to accelerate the creation of new biomedical systems, methods, and products that are appropriate, effective, affordable, and easy-to-use. The consortium also focuses on enabling international partnerships in R&D, involving existing or new Japanese and non-Japanese entities. Another goal is to develop a new drug-discovery screening platform to assist the screening of compound libraries housed within Japanese companies and academic institutions. The vision is to have Japanese research organizations donate compounds, with the GHIT Fund reimbursing screening costs and leveraging screening programs of existing product-development partners.

**Consortium History**

2013: Grants of $5.7 million were awarded to six global partnerships working on innovative drugs and vaccines against malaria, tuberculosis, and Chagas disease.

**Structure & Governance**

The GHIT Fund is governed by five different bodies. The Council consists of GHIT sponsors and funders and is responsible for appointment and dismissal of members of the Council and Board of Directors; amendments to the Articles of Incorporation; determination of the terms for the Board; advocacy for the GHIT Fund; and approval of financial statements.

The Board of Directors consists of subject-matter experts in global health; half of its members are Japanese. This body is responsible for approval of midterm strategies; approval of annual plans and budget; appointment and dismissal of Selection Committee members; approval of selection criteria and priorities for Selection Committee; and approval of grant recommendations from the Selection
Committee.

The Selection Committee consists of subject-matter experts in drug discovery from both the government, academic, nonprofit, and industrial sectors. This body is responsible for reviewing and evaluating grant proposals and progress reports from grantees; recommending the funding of proposals to the Board of Directors based on results of the reviews and evaluations; and ensuring the independence, accountability, and transparency of grant recommendations.

The GHIT Fund also employs dedicated staff who are responsible for daily operations, proposal of midterm strategies and annual plans to the Board of Directors, proposal of selection criteria and priorities to the Selection Committee, and reporting financial statements to the Council.

In addition to these boards and committees, the GHIT Fund also has advisors who are available to provide guidance to the chair of the Board of Directors and the management team.

Financing

The GHIT Fund has a budget of approximately $100 million, with 50 percent provided by the government of Japan, 25 percent provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and 25 percent provided by the pharmaceutical industry. Fund administration is provided by the U.N. Development Programme. Grants are awarded to accepted proposals and fund projects up to proof-of-concept stages. Any projects looking to advance products beyond proof-of-concept require a co-investor and commercial partner.

Intellectual Property

Grantees have full rights to the inventions supported by the GHIT Fund. Any and all existing data and findings owned by a grantee at the initiation of a project, including but not limited to information, know-how, or intellectual property (background IP), will remain that of the original inventor, who retains rights to share, assign, or license the rights to a third party. In the case of licensing-out data or products funded by the GHIT Fund, grantees and/or participants will grant royalty-free licenses in Low-Income Countries (LICs) categorized by the World Bank classification. In Lower-Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) and Upper-Middle-Income Countries (UMICs), grantees and/or participants will grant licenses
that can improve access to the product for low-income patients and populations. In LICs, LMICs, and UMICs, participants and/or grantees will set prices for products on the basis of a no gains/no loss policy that can improve access to the product for low-income patients and populations.

Patent Engagement

Subject-matter experts in the delivery of global health technologies serve in various capacities, including on different governance boards and committees.

Data Sharing

The GHIT Fund encourages open access to the data generated by it projects. All data and its processes for access will be transparent and clearly defined with the aim to ensure data quality, security, and equitable access. All data and findings will be disclosed in a broad and prompt manner in order to optimize prospects for the translation of findings in the global advancement of new healthcare technologies. Grantees should utilize public-access repositories and, if unavailable, should use alternatives for access that can ensure the transmission of new scientific findings to the larger R&D community.

Links/Social Media Feed

Homepage: https://www.ghitfund.org

Points of Contact

Ark Hills Sengokuyama Mori Tower 25F, 1-9-10 Roppongi, Minato-ku, Tokyo 106-0032
phone: +81-36441-2032
fax: +81-36441-2031
Sponsors & Partners

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