

Global Forum for Health Research

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Responsible Sector and Bank Unit:	AFTHD
Recipient:	GFHR, (Swiss non-profit Foundation)
Web Address:	http://www.globalforumhealth.org
Financial Arrangements for FY09 (Amount in US \$ Million)	
Total Budget:	103.00
DGF Funding Request:	3.74
DGF Percentage:	3%
Objectives and Expected Outcomes	
<p>Only a fraction of global funding for health research and development (R&D) goes to problems affecting the poor in developing countries where most of the global burden of preventable disease and death is to be found. The human and economic costs of such misallocation of resources are enormous. To correct this imbalance - the "10/90 gap" - the Global Forum for Health Research (GFHR) was established in 1998, with the strong support of the Bank. Its specific objectives are to help focus research efforts on the health problems of the poor, seek to improve the reallocation of health research funds in both public and private sectors, and facilitate collaboration between partners in all sectors. Among its early strategies to address much neglected areas, GFHR generated and incubated a number of research "initiatives", which subsequently graduated into independent programs, for which GFHR continues to encourage global support. Many donors make their financial contributions directly to the research initiatives or through GFHR. In the case of the Bank, GFHR has agreed to our request that it continue to be a channel for Bank funding, and it also channels funding to programs that were not originally prepared within GFHR, but are in keeping with its mandate - such as the Medicines for Malaria Venture (MMV). GFHR also tracks global sources for health research; creates tools to improve research priority setting and equity in research; and encourages and tracks public-private partnerships to overcome the pharmaceutical industry's reluctance to invest in product R&D for diseases affecting the poor in the developing world, given the weak or absent commercial market viability. Forging alliances to bridge the "10/90 gap" is an essential dimension of GFHR's work, in which it has been highly successful during its existence.</p>	
Main Components	
<p>Components: (i) unique work in tracking global resource flows to identify health research funding gaps; high-profile analytical work to identify global research agendas and set research priorities in major neglected areas for the health of the poor; studies and prominent publications on research on determinants of health, burden of disease, cost-effectiveness and equity analysis; (ii) organization of a widely respected global annual Forum on health research priorities and funding, at which the main actors in the public and private sector interested in improving the allocation of health research funds discuss the past record and future actions (every 4 years in conjunction with Ministerial Summits on Health Research); (iii) supporting initiatives bringing together a wide range of partners in a concerted effort to foster research on solutions to priority health problems in low- and middle-income countries, thus attracting new financing to these areas - e.g. Medicines for Malaria Venture, Child Health and Nutrition Research Initiative, Alliance for Health Policy and Systems Research, Sexual Violence Research Initiative, Road Traffic Injuries Research Network, Global Network for Research in Mental and Neurological Health, and Initiative on Cardiovascular Health in Developing Countries. (iv) Strengthening communication among the many GFHR partners and disseminating information regarding the "10/90" health research gap; and (v) measuring the results of the actions taken.</p>	
Performance Indicators	
<p>There are four main performance indicators: (i) Information and dissemination - number and type of products; (ii) Research Initiatives /Networks sustained or developed; (iii) Holding of the global annual Forum on health research - number/range of participants and; (iv) Development and application of tools (e.g. priority setting, tracking global health research resource flows; equity analysis).</p>	

Progress and Achievements

Following the 2nd External Evaluation, during 2007 GFHR developed a new Strategy 2008-2014 which articulates and guides the implementation of its work program. This emphasizes a focus on 3 main strategic priorities and on engagement with decision-makers to influence resources and priorities in research for the health of the poor. Recent achievements include: **(a)** Forum 11 took place in Beijing in 2007, attended by a large Bank delegation, which included the HDN VP Joy Phumaphi. In 2008, the Forum will be part of a larger, high-level "Global Ministerial Forum on Research for Health" in Bamako, Mali, being jointly organized by GFHR, the Council on Health Research for Development (COHRED), WHO, the World Bank and UNESCO and to involve around 1000 participants. This will be a unique worldwide gathering of Ministers of Health together with some Ministers from other sectors, especially Science & Technology and Development Cooperation, and other leading actors to specifically focus on research for health and innovation. It follows the smaller WHO Ministerial Summit which was organized alongside and interfaced with Forum 8 in Mexico City in 2004, the two meetings addressing the theme *"The Health Research Necessary to Achieve the MDGs"*. **(b)** Continuation of the publication series, launched in 2004, entitled *"Global Forum Update on Research for Health"*, which assembles articles from Ministers, leaders of health and research agencies and experts, addressing the theme of closing the research gaps to improve the health of the poor; **(c)** Development of close collaboration with COHRED, which has a focus on strengthening national health research systems in low-income countries, in order to create synergy of efforts in this respect at country, regional and global levels. **(d)** Encouraging evidence-informed priority setting, including through use of the GFHR best practice tool, the *"Combined Approach Matrix"*, now widely used by countries and research institutions to assist them in health research priority setting, including such dimensions as the analysis of gender-related issues. **(e)** The widely quoted GFHR annual series *"Monitoring Financial Flows for Health Research"*, a major contribution to the international health research field that alternates between biennial assessments of the global spending totals on health R&D (>US\$ 125 billion in 2003 and rising at +/- US\$ 10 billion/year) and disaggregated analyses of health research spending by countries, on specific diseases and in sectors such as the pharmaceutical industry or public-private partnerships. **(f)** Support to GFHR health research networks and initiatives, such as those quoted earlier under 'Main Components'.

Partners

WHO, COHRED, UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme of Research and Training in Tropical Diseases, UNDP/UNFPA/WHO /World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction, Rockefeller Foundation, Swiss Tropical Institute, bilateral donors (industrialized and developing countries, e.g. also contributions from Brazil, Mexico, India) and others.

Governance and Management

GFHR is governed by a 25-member Foundation Council (FC), representing nine constituencies with a major interest in health research. The Bank is a member of the FC and of the Council's Strategic and Technical Advisory Committee (STRATEC) and Finance Committee. There are two FC meetings and two or three STRATEC meetings per year. Objectives and allocations are decided through: analytical work to identify priorities (a core function of GFHR); consensus-building through the annual Forum which brings together researchers, policy makers and other interested parties; STRATEC, which reviews and approves individual projects up to US\$ 100,000 and makes recommendations to FC on emerging possibilities. The Bank is represented on the governing bodies of programs for which funding is channeled through GFHR at Bank or donor request, including: IAVI, MMV, the European Observatory, GAVI (ended recently) and others. GFHR has a small secretariat of professional and support personnel based in Geneva. Reporting is done through annual reports, publications, and a website.

Exit Strategy

The Bank (HDN) plans to continue engagement in GFHR as long as performance is satisfactory. GFHR's analytical work and priority-setting provide a service to the whole donor community and developing countries worldwide. GFHR is well established as an influential and respected global actor. Long-term support may be requested subject to satisfactory evaluation (last independent evaluation was conducted in 2007) and HNP restructuring discussions that may affect GFHR's future role as a Bank partner in implementing HNP strategies and priorities.