

WHO and EIB strengthen efforts to combat COVID-19 and build resilient health systems to face future pandemics

- WHO and the European Investment Bank enhance cooperation to support countries in addressing the health impact of COVID-19
- The first phase will address urgent needs and strengthen primary health care in ten African countries
- Enhanced WHO-EIB partnership will scale up financing to assure the chain of essential supplies, including personal protective equipment, diagnostics and clinical management
- New initiative will accelerate investment in health preparedness and primary health care with a focus on health work force, infrastructure, and water, sanitation and hygiene
- The initiative involves measures to address the growing threat of antimicrobial resistance

The World Health Organization and the European Investment Bank will boost cooperation to strengthen public health, supply of essential equipment, training and hygiene investment in countries most vulnerable to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The new partnership between the United Nations health agency and the world's largest international public bank, announced at WHO headquarters in Geneva earlier today, will help increase resilience to reduce the health and social impact of future health emergencies.

"Combining the public health experience of the World Health Organization and the financial expertise of the European Investment Bank will contribute to a more effective response to COVID-19 and other pressing health challenges," said Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, WHO Director-General.

"WHO looks forward to strengthening cooperation with the EIB to improve access to essential supplies including medical equipment and training, and deliver better water, sanitation and hygiene where most needed. New initiatives to improve primary health care in Africa and support the EU Malaria Fund hint at the potential impact of our new partnership," Dr Tedros concluded.

"The world is facing unprecedented health, social and economic shocks from COVID-19. The European Investment Bank is pleased to join forces with the World Health Organization as a key part of Team Europe's efforts to address the global impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. The EU Bank's new partnership with the WHO will help communities most at risk by scaling up local medical and public health efforts and better protect people around the world from future pandemics. This new cooperation will enable us to combat malaria,

address anti-microbial resistance and enhance public health in Africa more effectively.” said Werner Hoyer, President of the European Investment Bank.

Improving local public health efforts to tackle coronavirus

The WHO and the EIB will increase cooperation to help governments in low- and middle-income countries to finance and secure access to essential medical supplies and protective equipment through central procurement.

Building resilient health systems in vulnerable countries across Africa

The WHO and the EIB will reinforce cooperation to support immediate COVID-19 needs and jointly develop targeted financing to enhance health investment and build resilient health systems and primary health care to address public health emergencies as well as accelerate progress towards Universal Health Coverage.

The partnership will benefit from the EIB’s planned 1.4 billion EUR response to address the health, social and economic impact of COVID-19 in Africa.

This will address immediate needs in the health sector and provide both technical assistance and support for medium-term investment in specialist health infrastructure.

The collaboration envisages rapid identification and fast-track approval of financing for health care, medical equipment and supplies.

The first phase of the collaboration will see public health investment in ten African countries.

Long-term collaboration to overcome market failures in global health

The agreement signed today establishes a close collaboration to overcome market failure and stimulate investments in global health, accelerating progress towards Universal Health Coverage. Increased cooperation between the WHO and the EIB will strengthen the resilience of national public health systems and enhance preparedness of vulnerable countries against future pandemics, thanks to investments in primary care infrastructure, health workers and improved water, sanitation and hygiene.

Future cooperation will strengthen the EIB’s 5.2 billion EUR global response to COVID-19 outside the European Union.

Scaling up investment to tackle antimicrobial resistance

The two organisations will also cooperate in an initiative to address investment barriers hindering development of new antimicrobial treatment and related diagnostics. Antimicrobial resistance is amongst the most significant global health threats.

The WHO and the EIB are working on a new financing initiative to support development of novel antimicrobials and address the estimated 1 billion EUR needed to provide medium-term solutions to antimicrobial resistance. Other

crucial partners have been invited to join this discussion.

Improving the effectiveness of malaria treatment

Under the new agreement the EIB and WHO will support development of the EU Malaria Fund, a new 250 million EUR public-private initiative intended to address market failures holding back more effective malaria treatment.

Strengthening EIB support for healthcare, life science and COVID-19 investment

In recent years the European Investment Bank has provided more than 2 billion EUR annually for health care and life science investment.

In the context of the COVID-19 pandemic, the EIB is currently assessing over 20 projects in the field of vaccine development, diagnostic and treatment, leading to potential investments in the 700 million EUR range. The EIB will also take part in the EU's rolling pledging effort for the coronavirus global response that is taking place on May 4th.

Background information

The **World Health Organization** provides global leadership in public health within the United Nations system. Founded in 1948, WHO works with 194 Member States, across six regions and from more than 150 offices, to promote health, keep the world safe and serve the vulnerable. Our goal for 2019-2023 is to ensure that a billion more people have universal health coverage, to protect a billion more people from health emergencies, and provide a further billion people with better health and wellbeing.

[WHO's information site on the COVID-19 pandemic](#)