



NW	ActionAid International
NW	ADRA
NW	Aprodev
NP	Austria
NP	Belgium
NW	CARE
NW	Caritas Europa
NW	CBM International
NW	CIDSE
NP	Czech Republic : FoRS
NP	Denmark: EU-NGO
NW	EU-CORD
NW	Eurodad
NW	Eurostep
NP	Finland: Kehys ry
NP	France: Coordination SUD
NP	Germany: VENRO
NP	Greece
NP	Hungary: HAND
NW	IPPF European Network
NP	Ireland: Dóchas
NP	Italy: ONG italiane
NP	Latvia: Lapas
NP	Luxembourg : Cercle
NP	Malta: SKOP
NP	the Netherlands
NW	Oxfam International
NW	Plan Europe
NP	Poland: Grupa Zagranica
NP	Portugal
NW	Save the Children
NP	Slovakia: MVRO
NP	Slovenia: SLOGA
NW	Solidar
NP	Spain: CoNgDe
NP	Sweden:CONCORD
NW	Sverige
NP	Terre des Hommes F.I.
NW	UK: BOND
NW	World Vision
	Wide
NP	National platform
NW	Network

## Addressing Poverty-Related and Neglected Diseases through Innovation and Research

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'.

## **CONCORD HIV/AIDS Working Group contribution to the European Commission consultation on the *Green Paper - From Challenges to Opportunities: Towards a Common Strategic Framework for EU Research and Innovation funding***

Research and development, particularly into Poverty-related and neglected diseases (PNRDs) are essential to ensuring that EU, national and multilateral development efforts are successful. Indeed, ill health is one of the key challenges in the developing world which needs to be addressed through investments in health systems, but also through investments in research, development and innovation for PNRDs.

Development cooperation alone cannot meet the needs of developing countries. The EC Communication entitled *The EU's Role in Global Health* (the *Global Health Communication*) extensively describes the importance of research and development, namely that "the EU should coordinate more effectively research on global health in order to address the highly fragmented landscape and identify shared global priorities for health research. It should promote effective and fair financing of research that benefits the health of all people."

### **Investing in Health Innovation: A development priority**

Increased coherence between the EU's relevant internal and external policies – such as Development, Research and global health policies– will reinforce the EU as a global actor and should be also a key objective for EU research funding. The sheer nature of the EU: its diversity, safety norms, collaboration and position in innovation, allow it to play a major role in improving global health. Health is influenced by social, economic and environmental factors which are increasingly influenced by globalization.

By engaging the best scientists to work with and in Europe, European competitiveness will be supported and promoted by means of strategic partnerships with non-EU countries in order to address specific problems of a global nature, such as the global HIV/AIDS pandemic. The Strategic European Framework for International Science and Technology Cooperation outlines the main objective of contributing to global sustainable development and of fostering Europe's scientific and technological excellence in order to address these societal challenges through research and innovation. Global health research should feature prominently in the new Framework Programme, whether in the field of international public health and health systems, poverty related diseases, or neglected infectious disease research. Furthermore, the Framework Programme should focus more strongly on supporting the research necessary to achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), specifically the health-related MDGs.

Less than 10% of health R&D is spent on diseases that affect 90% of the world's population. Investments in global health R&D can have a significant impact on development in low-income countries. Both by developing new technologies that can dramatically reduce disease burdens, and by strengthening local research capacities, which can contribute to the growth and diversification of firms, jobs, and economies.

Market forces alone will not lead to the development of new technologies and goods for the poverty related diseases. When these public goods are under supplied by the market public provision and public financing are required. **The European Union has a responsibility to step in to address this market failure.**

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'.

We recognise the important role that FP6 and FP7 have played in funding European research for poverty related diseases such as HIV/AIDS as well as their role in encouraging international research collaboration among African and European scientists. Based on those already successful experiences, the new Framework Programme further to committing itself to the policy priorities outlined in the Europe 2020 Strategy, should also align itself with other top policy priorities, such as the ones previously mentioned and adopted in the EU Communication on the EU Role in Global Health “continuing to give priority to actions which tackle global health challenges”.

Advances in the field of scientific research currently offer unprecedented opportunities to develop new biomedical products, but much remains to be done to ensure those efforts in R&D for global health are adequately funded.

**We therefore urge the EU to substantially increase funding for Research & Development into neglected and poverty related diseases.**

### **HIV/AIDS: A “grand challenge”**

More than 35.000 people die every day from infectious diseases such as Aids, tuberculosis, malaria and other neglected tropical diseases. Over 33 million people are infected with HIV – up from 26 million ten years ago – with 1.8 million people dying from AIDS in 2009 alone. And while the rate of infections has dropped, for every person who goes on treatment, two more are newly infected with HIV, with only 36% of those in need of treatment actually being able to access it. HIV/AIDS exacts a particularly high toll in sub-Saharan Africa where the epidemic has hit hardest, according to the latest comprehensive data from the World Health Organization. Women account for 60 percent of those living with the disease in sub-Saharan Africa and HIV/AIDS is the leading cause of death globally in women ages 15-44. New and better (long-term, sustainable and equitable) prevention tools are critically needed— particularly methods that women, youth, and most at risk populations can access, initiate, and afford.

New HIV infections continue to financially and physically burden health systems and stunt economic development. Even with all existing HIV/AIDS prevention and treatment strategies scaled-up to the maximum level feasible, we may only be able to cut the number of new adult HIV infections in half by the year 2031 and funding required for developing countries to address the pandemic could reach €25billion annually by 2031 (three times the current level) and total €506 billion over the next twenty-two years. A comprehensive response that includes both immediate available interventions, such as the expansion of existing prevention methods and treatment and care programs, as well as newer and longer-term solutions, like the development of microbicides and preventive vaccines, is needed to curtail new infections and eventually end the pandemic.

Investments in AIDS vaccines and microbicides research will not only lead to development of game changing health technologies, but can also contribute to broader economic development goals in the near and medium-terms both for the EU and in a global context.

Similarly, other Poverty-related and Neglected Diseases (PRNDs) such as Malaria and Tuberculosis, have suffered from a lack of funding for research into new prevention, diagnostics and treatment technologies. In some countries, for example, many of the existing tools available for TB control are old and insufficient to address the epidemics globally: no new drugs in widespread use have been developed for more than 40 years. The present regimen is difficult to use in HIV co-infected persons, and cannot be used in patients infected with multi-drug resistant (MDR) strains. When considering that HIV positive people are more than 50 times more likely to develop TB, and

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'.

one in four deaths from TB is HIV-related; the need for increased investments in HIV as well as other PRNDs is pertinent.

### **The need for innovation in HIV prevention science**

Innovation is essential to solve the challenges in AIDS vaccine and microbicides development. This will require: cross fertilization across functional areas and other research disciplines, engaging the next generation of HIV researchers and involving **more biotechs** which translate the most promising innovations from public-sector labs into product prototypes. There needs to be more applied science research, particularly more upstream product research – in other words, work in the laboratory and the field to develop innovative approaches for designing and testing HIV prevention tools. It is this work that will expand the development pipeline and accelerate the R&D process.

Tremendous progress made over the last 18 months offers hope that R&D investments will produce new methods and yield ways to eventually end the AIDS pandemic. In the fall of 2009, a trial in Thailand, a joint project of the U.S. and Thai governments, demonstrated that a vaccine can prevent transmission of HIV. The vaccine candidate showed a moderate efficacy of 31 percent. The quest for an AIDS vaccine has been further buoyed by discoveries by researchers at and affiliated with the International AIDS Vaccine Initiative and the Vaccine Research Center of the NIH of several new antibodies that neutralize a broad swath of HIV variants, giving scientists targets that are valuable in designing a potentially highly effective vaccine. In mid-2010, South African researchers announced that in a trial funded by USAID a vaginal microbicide gel containing the antiretroviral drug tenofovir had reduced HIV infections in women by 39 percent. Finally, recent results from a global study funded in part by the NIH found that taking as a prophylactic a combination pill currently used to treat HIV reduced the risk of HIV infection by 44 percent among men who have sex with men.

The Commission Staff Working Document on European Research and Knowledge for Global Health outlines that the only way science can contribute to improving health at a global level is whether the resulting knowledge from investments in R&D can be “translated into evidence-based services or products that improve public health in an equitable manner”. Therefore, **continuous efforts are needed to do more and better basic research, translate those research findings into evidence-based decisions, which can only be backed up by global support for country-led research.**

### **Covering the Full R&D cycle**

In the area of poverty-related disease research, there certainly exists a gap under the FP7 between basis research and product development, which has led to relatively few scientific ideas being translated into new technologies and products.

Product development partnerships (PDPs) were established in the mid-1990s to help address the 10/90 gap – that only 10% of health research funding was targeted toward diseases that accounted for 90% of the global disease burden covering all stages of the research process.

While each PDP operates differently depending on the disease area(s) of focus, they typically employ a portfolio approach to R&D to accelerate product development by pursuing multiple strategies for the same disease area. They also work in close partnership with academia, large pharmaceutical companies, the biotechnology industry and governments in developing countries.

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'.

Although PDPs typically use private industry approaches to portfolio management, they focus on disease areas that lack viable commercial markets. PDPs in advanced stages of product development have also focused additional efforts on ensuring equitable access and uptake of new products they have helped develop. According to the WHO expert working group on R&D financing PDPs provide an “optimal funding allocation at all stages of research and development, in a manner best designed to maximize public health returns in the developing world. As the R&D pipelines for PDPs mature, they have become increasingly involved in developing “access” strategies.

PDPs have evolved into an innovative organizational model to advance global health and development priorities. Investments in PDPs are impacting disease-endemic countries both as a result of the development of new biomedical technologies to combat debilitating diseases and the partnerships forged with developing countries as part of PDPs’ routine activities. With adequate political and financial support, PDPs can continue to build unique partnerships with private industry, academia, donors and developing countries to develop new health technologies and to ensure access for those who need them most. PDPs also have access commitments anchored in all their collaborations, meaning that they will ensure that the medical products will be made available in developing countries rapidly after licensure, at reasonable prices and in sufficient quantities.

Over the past years, ten new technologies have been brought to market already by PDPs, and there are currently 122 candidates in the development pipelines of the PDPs collectively. This includes 90 biopharmaceutical candidates (up from 5 projects in 1990) and 32 diagnostic / vector control **candidates**.

**Within the context of the Framework, we urge the EU to:**

1. Enhance their support for models which cover the full innovation cycle, i.e. from research to market such as the PDPs which have proven their effectiveness as cost-effective ways to develop innovative products for poverty and neglected diseases whilst incorporating market access into their core strategies.
2. Look for incentives to involve key stakeholders such as biotechnological firms whose role is especially relevant for R&D for an HIV/AIDS vaccine.

**It is imperative to adapt the research FP to encompass portfolio-based approaches focusing on needs-based and results-oriented innovation for health, by establishing a specific funding mechanism to support product development for new prevention, diagnostic and treatment technologies. The Framework should require smaller, more flexible consortia, and providing long-term, sufficient and predictable financial support**

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'.

## Conclusions

The European Union can play a key role in addressing the weaknesses that are currently preventing the realization of the full and equitable benefits that research can offer for global health. CONCORD HIV/AIDS WG therefore strongly supports a new research framework in which the EU specifically:

- Supports these priorities ensuring a budget line with increased funding for R&D to tackle poverty related disease.
- Ensures that research for and HIV/AIDS vaccine and microbicides continue to be prioritised and sufficiently funded under any new framework programme.
- Offers support and incentives to partnerships, mechanisms and stakeholders which address the “grand challenges” outlined in the Framework Document, as well as those which could address the priorities of full coverage of the innovation cycle, such as Product Development Partnerships or biotechs.

CONCORD is the European confederation of relief and development NGOs. Its national associations and international networks represent over 1 600 NGOs which are supported by millions of citizens across Europe. CONCORD leads reflection and political actions and regularly engages in dialogue with the European institutions and other civil society organisations. CONCORD is part of the 'Global Call to Action against Poverty'.