



# Charting Progress Towards a Public-Private Action Framework in Global Health

A panel discussion co-hosted by the Business Council on International Understanding (BCIU) and International SOS on the Margins of the World Health Summit, Berlin, Germany.

# Introduction



On October 16, 2023, International SOS supported the Business Coalition for International Understanding (BCIU) in convening a multisectoral panel of experts to discuss progress made in recent years in leveraging the wider private sector towards global health goals, exploring how to build trust, capacity and impact.

Public-private sector engagement is increasingly being recognised as essential in the global health context, harnessing the strengths of various stakeholders to create more resilient, effective, and sustainable solutions to address health challenges on a global scale. Collaboration between governments, NGOs, and multinational corporations remains a key strategy in global health initiatives: we have seen during the COVID-19 pandemic that it can also facilitate more coordinated responses to health crises and emergencies worldwide.

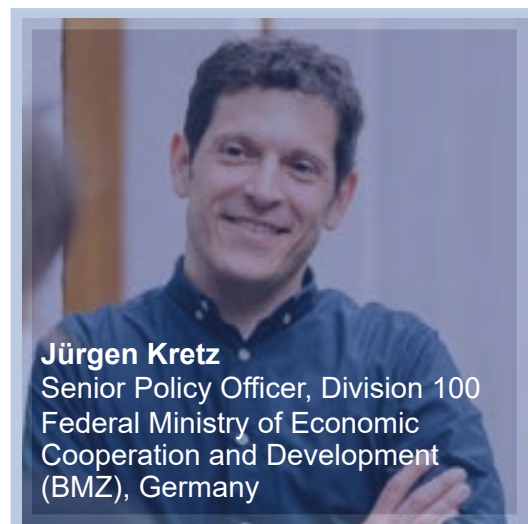
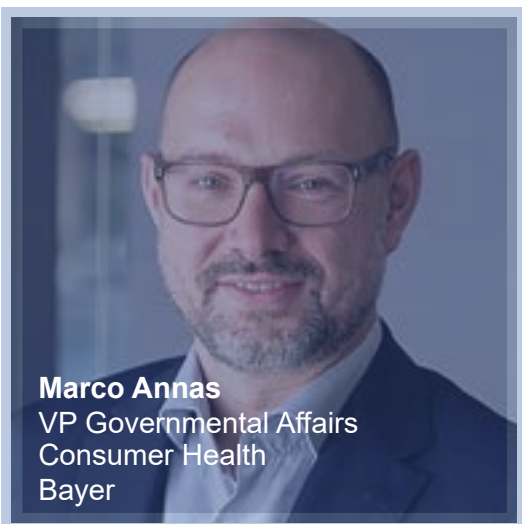
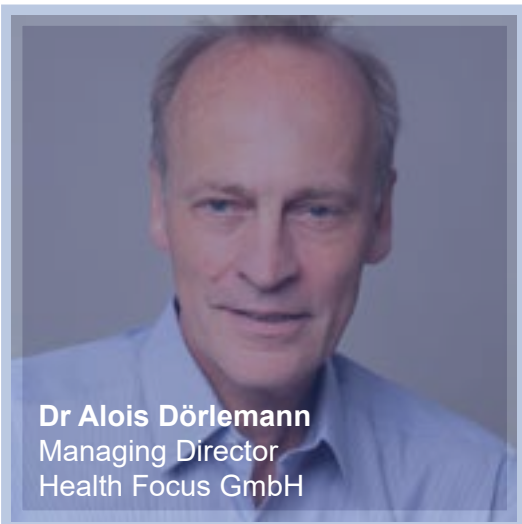
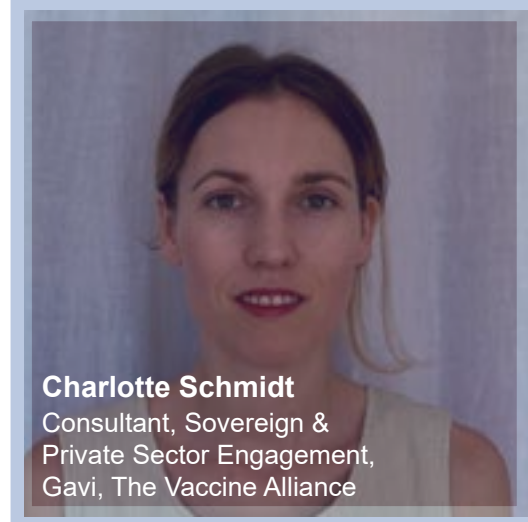
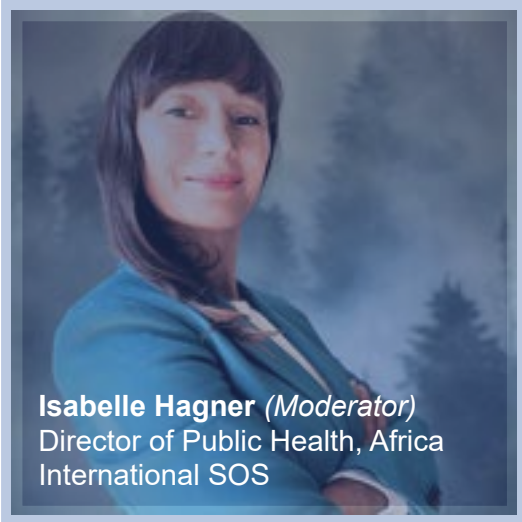
In the current context of poly-crises, with climate change intensifying health risks and placing added pressure on communities, there is an urgent need for a fresh approach to engagement. There is a call for a new model that aims to leverage private sector expertise and resources – and not only those that reside within the pharmaceutical sector - to accelerate joint action and deliver impactful solutions on a larger scale.

We extend thanks to our moderator and expert panellists for their participation and thoughtful comments and look forward to seeing everyone again this year, at the World Health Summit.

**Global Healthcare Systems**  
**International SOS**

## Moderator & Panelists

We would like to thank all our moderators and panelists for sharing their time, experiences and insights.



# Key Themes For Action

Five key themes emerged from the discussions, underpinned by ideas that could help foster greater collaboration across sectors and industries to achieve more together, faster. We explore these themes further in subsequent pages.



## Build an Environment of Trust

Establishing shared goals and a common vision between the public and private sectors is essential for fostering trust and collaboration in global health. This involves aligning interests, identifying mutual benefits, and creating a unified understanding of the overarching health objectives. By developing a joint roadmap, both sectors can work towards a common purpose, which can enhance efficiency and reduce duplication of efforts.



## Take a Longer-Term View

By adopting a longer-term perspective, public and private sectors can work together to build a resilient and adaptive ecosystem that addresses global health challenges in a sustained and impactful manner. This approach goes beyond immediate crises, focusing on creating lasting solutions and strengthening the overall health infrastructure. In this context the private sector can be more innovative and flexible with its business models and work towards redefining the paradigm of 'profit' driving every business decision.



## Create Innovative Structures

Create innovative approaches whereby multilaterals, private sector, and development banks implement strategic projects, working closely with local governments and other delivery organisations. In doing so, they harness the power of institutionalisation to build sustainable, long-term programmes that are replicable. For example, many of the learnings from HIV are now being applied to non-communicable diseases such as cancer care. Social impact investments and outcome-based funding are examples of approaches that can leverage the strengths of both sectors to ensure sustainable and scalable solutions.



## Involve the Private Sector Early

Bring private sector delivery partners in early and engage them through the transparent sharing of data. Both the public and private sectors hold valuable information that, when combined, can lead to more comprehensive insights and effective strategies. The role of the private sector in global health security during COVID-19 is a case in point, especially where a large proportion of healthcare is delivered privately. Establishing clear protocols and standards for data sharing while addressing privacy concerns can enable a more collaborative and data-driven approach to solving global health challenges.



## Capacity Building & Knowledge Transfer

Collaborative efforts should focus on building and strengthening the capacity of both the public and private sectors. This includes knowledge transfer, skill development, and technology sharing. Public agencies can benefit from the private sector's expertise in innovation and efficiency, while private entities can gain a better understanding of the public health landscape. Training programmes, joint research initiatives, and mentorship opportunities can facilitate this exchange of knowledge.

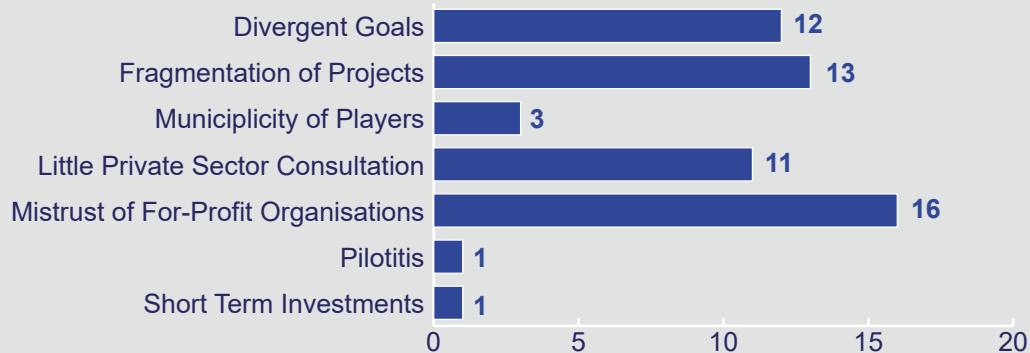
# Assessing the Gaps & Opportunities to Strengthen Public-Private Engagement

Ahead of the panel session, BCIU ran a poll to understand the frailties of the current public-private engagement model and the contribution private sector organisations can make towards achieving global health goals.

Thirty participants, representing multilateral and bilateral donors, the private sector, IGOs, NGOs, civil society and academia, responded out of a possible forty-five. Below are the findings.

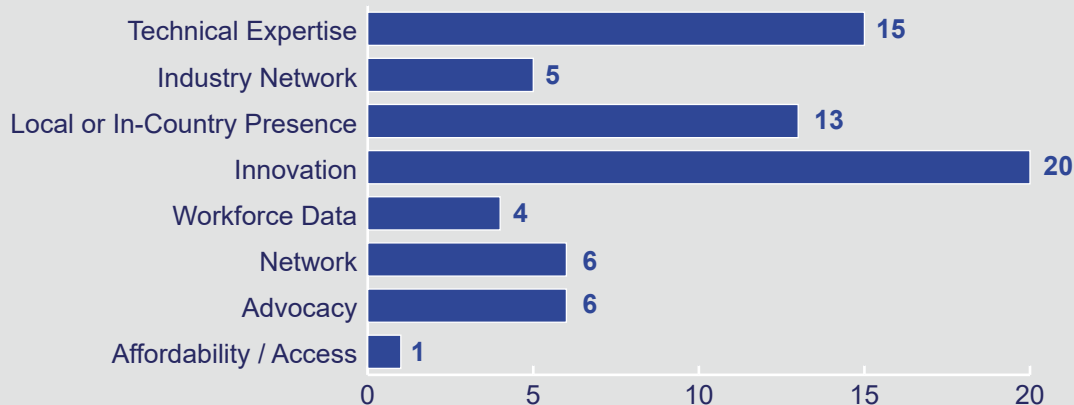
## Key Finding 1:

The frailties of the current model were considered to be 'mistrust of for-profit organisations' followed by 'fragmentation of projects' and 'divergent goals'. Where comments were provided, the concept of 'pilotitis', as well as 'short-term investments', were considered additional barriers to successful public-private engagement.



## Key Finding 2:

Beyond funding, 'innovation', followed by 'technical expertise', were considered the most valuable contribution the private sector can make. 'Local or in-country presence' follows close behind.



# The Frailties of the Current Model

**A number of challenges and weaknesses related to current efforts were discussed, all of which are addressable and suggest the path to a new public-private framework for action on global health:**

- **Mistrust of for-profit organisations:** This was noted as a substantial frailty (Key finding 1). With ‘trust’ playing a central theme in upcoming global health initiatives, addressing this proactively should be a priority for stakeholders in 2024. Trust was also noted as an issue for the panel, for example preventing regulation of public-private partnerships in countries like Indonesia for many years. Trust issues can mean that discussions are slow, and sometimes demotivating for participants.
- **Fragmentation of projects:** A large proportion of participants surveyed mentioned how the fragmentation of projects and divergent aims are currently a barrier to success: ensuring equity was a priority for several of the panellists and noted as a barrier by some.
- **Narrow focus on vertical programmes targeting specific diseases:** While these are perceived to be easier to deliver and more attuned to supporting donor measures of success, there is a need for integration in global health. This means systematising collaborative practice throughout national health systems, adopting the One Health approach, and facilitating greater local and international collaboration. Strategies for systematising collaborative practice throughout national health systems include shared governance models and enabling legislation, interprofessional healthcare teams, and shared clinical pathways.
- **Lacking early private sector involvement and market systems development to ensure sustainable programmes for the longer term:** One example is the mass distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide Treated Nets (LLINS) in Uganda where sustainability beyond donor funding has come into question. By contrast, Gavi’s focus on market development and vaccine access for developing countries has led to a win-win for public and private sectors alike.
- **‘Pilotitis’ and ‘short-term investments’ were considered additional barriers to successful public-private engagement models.** The panel noted a preponderance of ‘one-offs’ in the realm of global health. Short-termism was not just a feature of private sector action, but also influenced some government decisions.
- **Poly-crises and climate change exert pressure on weakened health systems and COVID-19 highlighted this reality:** Action to reduce the future negative impact of health crises has in some instances been slow to materialise in the public sector context. During the pandemic, many governments struggled to engage with the populace effectively on the topic. We are reminded, starkly, that the ability to influence human behaviour is central to positive public health outcomes.
- **Barriers for smaller companies:** It was noted to be particularly problematic to enter the space of global health: there is no clear regulatory assistance, nor does the legal system bind private and public systems easily towards common goals. Entering a market was noted to be fraught with risk in some instances, especially for small players, with political actors changing frequently, and personal and political objectives altering health priorities.

# THE OPPORTUNITIES

**A number of opportunities for a new public-private framework for action on global health were discussed. These included:**

- Beyond funding, leveraging the private sector's technical expertise was considered a key benefit. This included leveraging their data, metrics for success, network, global footprint, advocacy capabilities, and digital innovation. Conversely, private sector must take a longer-term view of financial returns and profitability if goals are to align for the greater good.
- Harmonisation and alignment of agendas: promoting collaborative governance among different stakeholders to build trust, facilitate communication, and promote collective action to address complex health challenges (as partnerships like Gavi have done successfully). For industry, the establishment of government or public affairs departments can foster deeper collaboration through a shared language and goals.
- Private sector actors would do well to view public-private engagement within a wider sustainability context. In practical terms, this means integrating global health goals within a company's mission statement and including examples of their public-private partnerships in their ESG and annual reporting. Aligning with global health goals, such as the SDGs, can yield many positive outcomes, such as the attraction and retention of talent.
- Risk reduction through closer collaboration and accelerated action on individual public and private sector efforts and interventions. Bayer noted that the rebuilding of Ukraine's agricultural sector is having a knock-on effect also on health outcomes as part of a OneHealth approach.
- Providing support for stretched health systems remains a key opportunity. One suggestion from the panel was to radically reorientate and realign public-private partnerships towards primary care, in regions that currently prioritise secondary and tertiary care (e.g., in Asia).
- Working with academic institutions to enhance global health security. Harvard University was one example of novel academic partnerships extending into global health, setting up laboratories across Africa in genomic surveillance to monitor the spread of infectious disease and track the evolution of pathogens.
- Creating opportunities for partnerships at the community level. In many countries, 50-60% of healthcare is delivered by the private sector. Trust is lost however when care in the private sector is not distributed in the same way, leaving remote and disenfranchised communities exposed. It was felt that providing a network to help private sector distributors extend their remit to last-mile delivery would make a big difference.
- Building skills and capacity at the country level. In many countries vaccines are given by nurses and not community health workers; discussion was had on the possibilities available to train these staff to contribute and fill gaps, helping build up more sustainable and resilient systems.
- Addressing the burden of climate and health. The health sector could work within a OneHealth approach to address this multifaceted problem, bringing in experts from within and outside the traditional health area. For example, funding or delivering work in biodiversity or animal health, working on risk communication, or monitoring activities.
- Community engagement and dealing with vaccine hesitancy. The malaria vaccine campaign will be a challenge, with the need for multiple vaccines at a young age, so it will be paramount to work closely with mothers in particular. Private sector organisations are ideally placed to engage with existing networks in countries involved in its roll-out.

# Practical Insights from the Panelists

**Our panelists were asked about the public-private engagement models that enabled successful outcomes to be reached. What specifically did the private sector bring to the table and what lessons can we take forward?**

- When Gavi started it was about pooling demand and procurement. However, soon Gavi and partners realised that this was not enough. Since then, Gavi has been actively engaged in market shaping, bringing down prices and broadening the supplier base for several vaccines, with the aim of creating healthy markets. Gavi has also deployed innovative financing mechanisms, e.g. for the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine, to ensure the vaccine reaches many more children. Overall, Gavi is supporting governments as they drive vaccination efforts in-country. Gavi also offers additional support in health systems strengthening, among other things, and works with civil society to raise awareness and reach those in need.
- Reaching the last mile, especially among zero-dose children, has been a core priority for Gavi. Innovation is a key part of this, for example, Gavi has collaborated with Zipline, a drone company, to deliver vaccines to remote areas. Furthermore, Germany has been a strong partner of Gavi in strengthening African health systems. Germany and Gavi are currently collaborating on scaling up vaccine manufacturing in Africa through a new Gavi instrument, the African Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator, that is expected to be operational by the end of 2024.
- The Ghana Heart Initiative, a project jointly established with Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ), a development agency, Bayer, and the Ghanaian Ministry of Health, has combined Bayer's knowledge of the disease area with GIZ's expertise in project management. Understanding the local context and efficient execution has been a key part of the success. Now over 5,000 health workers have been trained in understanding cardiovascular diseases and treatments, with 70-80 trained as trainers, to ensure the continuity of the programme, and over three million patients have benefited from improved CVD management. On the back of this, new Ghanaian national guidelines have been developed on how to treat heart attacks and strokes.
- Good success can be achieved through partnerships such as these, where efforts are focused on one concrete area with a view to scaling up later. The potential to scale up to look at NCDs in a broader context, for example. For Bayer, the key is to start somewhere and use the learnings to build at scale. One consideration is around the readiness of countries to partner; they need to have structured health strategies and policies in place. Private sector organisations need to understand the country they are entering and fully analyse the needs first.
- In the Africa context, global health is already a public-private partnership. However, mostly it is unstructured and not formalised. If you formalise that partnership it becomes a win-win for both parties. When existing relationships are built upon, the possibilities are boundless and we gain the maximum benefit. Examples were given of innovative bonds floated on international markets to fund immunisation.
- In many instances it was important to have the private sector drive the change. Frontloading CSR was discussed, in order to fund the big global health issues. For example, this existing strategic focus for companies could be used to fill gaps in neglected tropical diseases, or to fund research needed for pandemic preparedness. The need to build management capacity in health systems was also highlighted; private sector can help build managerial capacity that is lacking in the health education curriculum.
- A key reminder was that the private sector is made up of many industries and market segments and goes far beyond the pharmaceutical industry. Understandably, it is often seen by global health actors as the main player in this dynamic. This means that we are missing an opportunity to tap into a wider pool of organisations and experts, routinely involved in global health issues. Our panelists asked: what role can global health play in driving more company CSR initiatives?



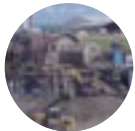
- The German Health Alliance has been supporting PPPs at different levels: yet donors and implementing agencies are still reluctant to engage the private sector. “What are the interests sitting behind these companies’ involvement?” is a frequent question. Increased dialogue can help to break down barriers.
- The role of smaller players is also undervalued, To address this, the German government-owned development bank, KfW, provides smaller companies with opportunities to enter PPPs, obtaining co-funding from DEG and KfW.
- Beyond funding the most valuable contribution of the private sector is in innovation. Bringing different perspectives, enhancing diversity of opinion and accelerating efforts, often leads to more valuable solutions. PharmAccess is an example of innovative technologies bringing health services to the last mile and empowering more decision-making. However, we often underestimate the amount of risk taken on by the private sector and there is value in having more players to share that risk.
- Technology transfer can be a key benefit. For example, establishing a manufacturing capability in Africa would be transformational, however, an advance market commitment is needed to build capacity and help offset costs, e.g., through an Africa Vaccine Manufacturing Accelerator financing instrument. Our panelists asked: once vaccines are made locally, how will fair distribution of vaccines be assured?
- Increasingly businesses are focussing on their corporate social responsibility and wanting to contribute to the global good. Countries themselves are interested in developing their managerial and technical capacity which is an area where the private sector could contribute, i.e., through the development of training tools or programmes to help accelerate these competencies.
- It is clear that the supply chain management system in many industries is more efficient than in healthcare. The global health community would do well to adopt innovative solutions such as the use of drones to deliver vaccines to remote areas, making it easier and cheaper to meet the needs of hard-to-reach communities.
- The private sector, in partnership with governments and key actors such as Gavi and the Global Fund, could help to create longer-lasting impact given that it takes a long-term view when entering and investing in a market. Bilateral aid on the other hand is often time-bound.



# Practical Insights and Illustrations on What Works

## A Selection of Examples from International SOS

International SOS has been a global health partner to the public and private sector for almost forty years. It has deep experience of tackling infectious diseases such as Ebola and COVID-19 as well as contributing to reducing non-communicable diseases and strengthening health systems. In the examples below, we show how public-private sector partnerships – both informal and formal – can often be the catalyst for longer-term impact:



### Community health programmes

A large mining corporation in Papua New Guinea, with the support of International SOS's on-site medics, developed a programme of eradication of yaws on Lihir island which has since formed the basis of the global eradication schedule.



### NCD awareness and control

International SOS designed and implemented a comprehensive NCD awareness and control programme in India for one of its key technology clients which is now the default Health Policy of several technology and professional services corporations. The longer-term impact of these programmes can be felt beyond the workforce, extending into the community.



### Capacity building

International SOS has been involved in pre-hospital medicine capacity-building in Indonesia including partnerships with academic institutions to develop accredited competencies. Through our own CSR programme (IDEFIX) we have been providing emergency medicine courses to Mozambican doctors and nurses working at the public central hospitals of Maputo and Pemba since 2020. Those who have been trained are now able to save more lives and can also share their acquired knowledge with their peers. More recently, International SOS has trained healthcare workers in Guyana around key occupational health topics.



### Augmenting government capability and providing surge capacity

Alongside its private-sector clients, International SOS's medical teams played a role in the response to the 2014 Liberian Ebola outbreak, repurposing existing worksite clinics for Ebola response. During the COVID-19 pandemic, multiple private actors, including International SOS, provided surge capacity to the Australian government for COVID-19 vaccine roll-out.



### Addressing misinformation and disinformation

In Papua New Guinea, International SOS supported public diplomacy during COVID-19, ensuring factual information was shared to support vaccine uptake. Working with private employers, International SOS is helping to contribute to engagement and awareness around the health-related risks of climate change.



### Health systems strengthening

International SOS supported the EU and Ministry of Health of Tunisia in expanding universal coverage of essential front-line care to citizens across 13 governorates. The programme covered 200 locations and International SOS supplied, installed and commissioned 36 lines of medical equipment and provided end-user training.



### Building resilience to climate-related health risks

International SOS provided technical assistance to the Ministry of Health of a Pacific Island to design and implement a methodology for health facility redevelopment that embeds climate and disaster resilience. This project forms an important part of the Ministry's efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure and increase equitable access to a wider range of clinical services that meet the health needs of the population now and into the future.

# THE PATH FORWARD



*If you want to go fast, go alone, if you want to go far, go together.*

*- African Proverb*

From these discussions, it is clear that closer cooperation and adaptation of individual efforts and interventions from public and private sectors could pave the way for more impactful and longer-lasting positive health outcomes.

Successful public-private engagement comes in the form of community health programmes to reduce disease burden; capacity building through training and education programmes; augmenting government capability, supporting climate resiliency, addressing misinformation, expanding primary health care, and overall health systems strengthening.

Through fostering mutual understanding and collaboration, transparent communication and shared goals, more productive partnerships can be facilitated.

To further progress successful public-private engagement, there is a great need for the demystification and the reimagination of the role of the private sector. Beyond financial contributions, companies can leverage their vast resources, technical expertise, extensive networks, and innovation to do this.

During the Opening Ceremony at the World Health Summit we heard from speakers that the challenges we face in global health need us now to 'go far and go fast together'. Accelerated action towards positive global health outcomes can be achieved by harmonising agendas and fostering closer collaboration.

Many private organisations are currently trying to align with global health goals, but they struggle to understand how to do so: drawing on lasting, varied, and effective public-private engagement examples will help this agenda.

If you would like to partner with International SOS to tackle global health issues together, please connect with us on social or reach out directly.



## FOLLOW US



*We would like to thank the following individuals for their contributions to this report:*

*International SOS: Dr Anthony Renshaw, EMEA Regional Medical Director; Isabelle Hagner, Director of Public Health for Africa; Frederic Balme, Senior Vice President, Global Health Development; Selina Haylock, Communications Director.*

*Business Council for International Understanding: Reid Harrison, Senior Programme Officer, Life Sciences.*