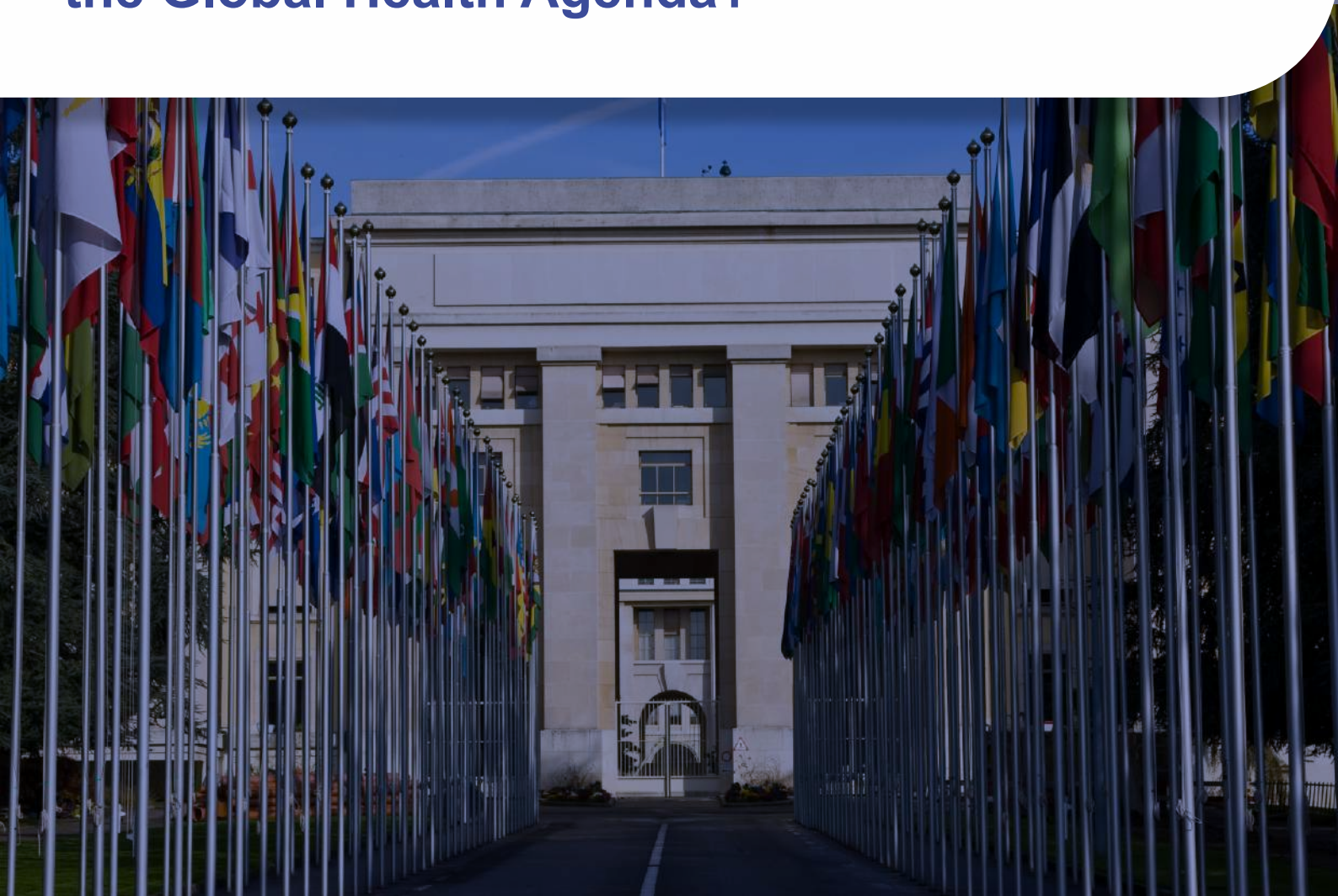


From the margins of the 78th World Health Assembly

The Power of Partnerships: Is there a Wider Private Sector Role in Achieving the Global Health Agenda?



In partnership with:



On the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly, International SOS convened “The Power of Partnerships: Is there a Wider Private Sector Role in Achieving the Global Health Agenda?,” bringing together business leaders and international health expert from Sanofi, GIZ, WHO Foundation, Eni, PharmAccess, and others to explore how cross-sector collaboration is evolving to meet today's global health challenges.

The discussion moved beyond traditional models to address three urgent priorities: rethinking partnership strategies for sustainability, mobilising catalytic funding, and embedding policy frameworks that ensure long-term impact.

This report outlines why now is the time to reimagine how the public and private sectors work together and how strategic partnerships can advance global health landscape.

The global health landscape faces converging pressures, from natural hazards, extreme weather, and geopolitical uncertainties to the rising burden of noncommunicable diseases (NCDs), so the private sector's role is no longer peripheral. With up to 90% of LMIC populations employed in private enterprises, companies are increasingly positioned not just as funders but as co-creators of health solutions. The event highlighted how partnerships grounded in shared value, policy alignment, and long-term vision can unlock transformative change.

Moderator and Panelists

This paper draws on insights shared during the side event “The Power of Partnerships,” held on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly. We thank our distinguished panelists and moderator for their contributions to the discussion, which informed the development of this report. The views expressed in this paper reflect the analysis and synthesis of the authors.



Moz Siddiqui

Director of Development,
WHO Foundation –
Event Panelist



Malin Jonsson

Project Manager,
GIZ – Event Panelist



Simone F. Mortara

Head of Global Health,
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Jon Fairest

Head of Sanofi Global
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Event Panelist



Isabelle Hagner

Director of Public Health,
International SOS –
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Successful public-private partnerships begin with a shared foundation. Despite differing mandates and timelines, the public and private sectors can align around common goals that deliver social impact and strategic value.



WHO Foundation's Flexible Engagement Approach

The WHO Foundation was created to accelerate funding and innovation by bridging the gap between the public sector and private investors. Moz Siddiqui, WHO Foundation's Director of Development, highlighted how the foundation reduces friction in partnerships by enabling more agile private sector engagement.

The Foundation is exploring how catalytic funding can support this shift, advocating for health as an investment and urging governments to include finance ministries in strategic discussions. While acknowledging that the private sector cannot entirely close the global health financing gap, the Foundation positions itself as a catalyst, unlocking innovation and scale when policy structures are transparent and conducive.

Build an Environment of Trust

Trust is the foundation of any successful public-private partnership in global health. Establishing shared goals and a common vision is essential. This process involves aligning stakeholder interests, identifying mutual benefits, and creating a unified understanding of health objectives while acknowledging the importance of safeguarding

public health interests amid diverse stakeholder motivations. The public sector must communicate policy goals transparently, while private entities should commit to responsible business practices. Partnerships thrive when a mutual commitment to ethical governance, healthcare access for all, and financial transparency exists^{1,2}.



GIZ's Localised Partnership Model

Malin Jonsson from Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit (GIZ) GmbH emphasised the organisation's long-standing experience in building cross-sectoral partnerships in areas such as NCDs, nutrition, and supply chains. GIZ promotes a "co-creation" model that views communities not merely as beneficiaries but as active stakeholders in the design and implementation of health programmes. This inclusive approach has been key to building trust and ensuring sustainable outcomes in its global projects.

***"Inaction kills.
Trust is a small word with a big impact."***

Charlotte Wilming, PharmAccess

Take a Longer-Term View

The success of global health initiatives depends on long-term planning rather than short-term crisis response. Governments tend to focus on immediate public health needs, where private sector agility can be a significant asset in situations like pandemics and natural disasters. The private sector, however, often operates on shorter business cycles driven by

shareholder expectations. A balanced approach that combines short-term responsiveness with long-term strategy, supported by innovative financing like outcome-based funding and blended finance, can help align public and private sector goals and strengthen health systems.



Sustained Engagement Through Government Partnership

Marie Stopes International underscored the importance of working hand-in-hand with governments to ensure project sustainability. Its model prioritises policy alignment, technical assistance, and long-term impact over short-term interventions, particularly in sexual and reproductive health services.

Create Innovative Structures

Innovative models that combine multilateral organisations, private investment, and development banks are key in closing healthcare funding gaps and enhancing service delivery. Collaborations involving local governments and healthcare providers tend to be more sustainable and effective. Approaches like those used in the HIV/AIDS response are now being applied to non-communicable diseases such as cancer and diabetes. Blended financing mechanisms, including social impact investments and outcome-based funding, highlight how cross-sector efforts

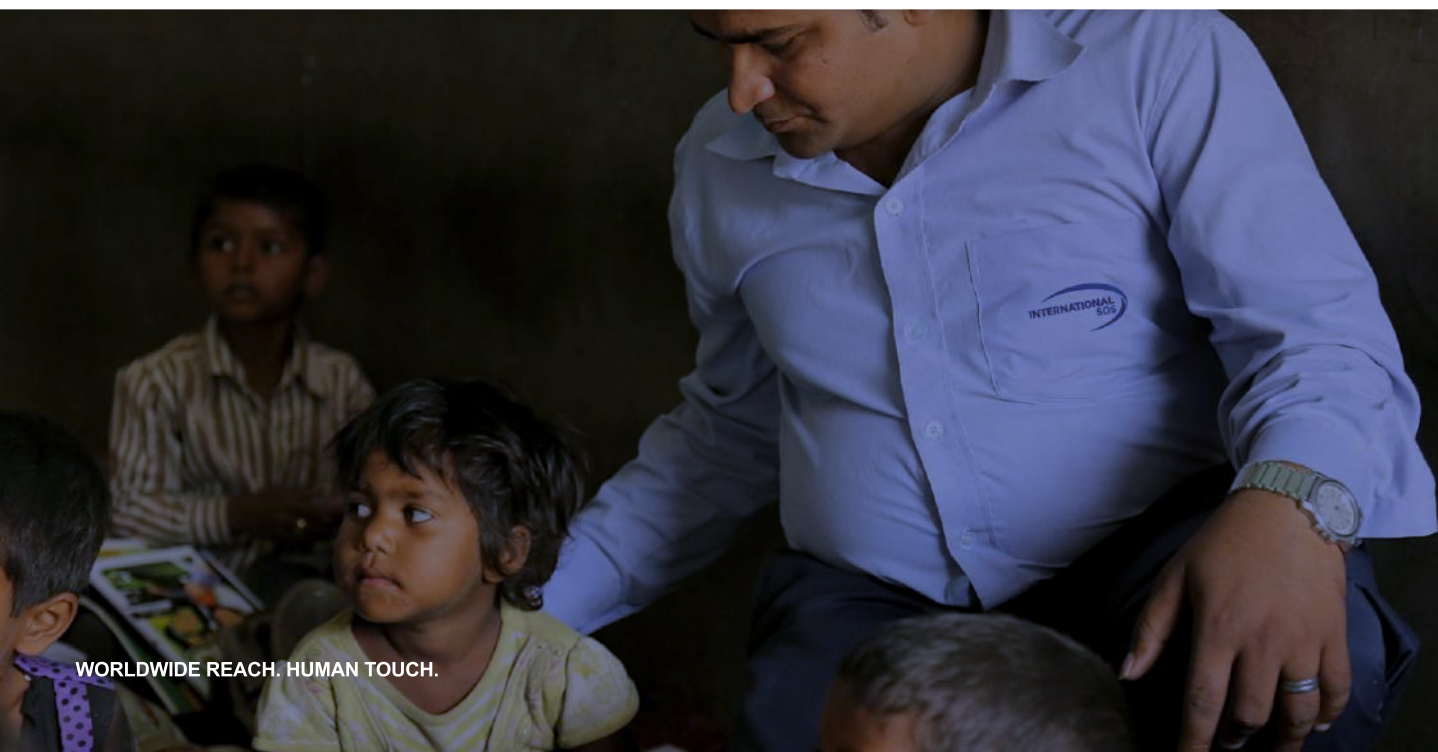
can lead to long-term, scalable solutions that align with private sector sustainability and CSR objectives^{3,4}.

Long-term funding frameworks, such as the Eni Ghana agreement, have sought to underscore the role of development banks and private companies in supporting health infrastructure for decades. These agreements are typically structured with sustainability goals at their core, reinforcing the need for durable, inclusive and sustainable partnerships to drive progress toward health and development targets.



Eni's Health & SDG Integration Strategy

Simone Mortara presented Eni's innovative model of embedding health into its broader sustainable development commitments. Working in over 30 countries, Eni partners with ministries of health to deliver long-term community health programmes through formal agreements. Through Health Impact Assessments (HIAs), Eni identifies local health needs and integrates solutions into infrastructure projects, such as providing CT scanners in Mozambique and clean cookstoves introduced as part of community health and infrastructure programmes. These efforts go beyond occupational health, and extend to contractors, families, and communities. Eni's long-term presence in countries like Ghana and Angola allows it to co-develop health programmes with ministries, NGOs, and communities. These partnerships are built on mutual commitment, with governments also taking ownership to ensure sustainability.



Involve the Private Sector Early

Involving the private sector in decision-making and establishing transparent data-sharing mechanisms can improve coordination and impact. The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted the importance of early private sector involvement, with companies contributing to vaccine development, logistics, and emergency response. A 2022 Lancet study found that early collaboration in health security helps avoid bottlenecks and boosts response efficiency. The pandemic also influenced global health financing, prompting increased private sector contributions through philanthropy, impact investment, and emergency aid⁵.



PATH

PATH: Aligning Objectives for Scalable Health Innovation

PATH advocates for alignment of objectives between public institutions and private partners from the outset. Their model promotes early co-design, ensuring innovations in diagnostics, delivery, and digital health are scalable, affordable, and adapted to the needs of LMIC health systems. This has been central to PATH's success in implementing high-impact global health solutions.

Capacity Building & Knowledge Transfer

Sustainable partnerships should emphasise knowledge transfer and capacity building. Public institutions can leverage private sector strengths in innovation, supply chain management, and digital health, while private companies benefit from understanding public health priorities, regulations, and epidemiological data.

Mechanisms such as joint training, collaborative research, and technology-sharing agreements support this exchange. A 2023 study in Science Direct found that investing in capacity building significantly strengthens the long-term effectiveness of public-private partnerships⁶.

PharmAccess

PharmAccess and the mTiba Platform

Charlotte Wilming showcased how PharmAccess is transforming partnerships from transactional to trust-based models. Through mTiba, a mobile health wallet platform deployed in Africa, PharmAccess connects patients, providers, and payers. The platform demonstrates how technology can foster transparency, build trust, and improve access to care across fragmented health ecosystems.

“Communities are not just beneficiaries – they are co-creators.”

Malin Jonsson, GIZ

Overcoming Challenges



The Frailties of the Current Model:

Despite progress, significant barriers remain in optimising public-private engagement for global health. These include:

- **Regulatory and policy misalignment:** Inconsistent policies across different countries create obstacles for multinational private-sector engagement.
- **Funding limitations:** Many partnerships rely on short-term donor funding rather than sustainable financing models.
- **Data-sharing challenges:** Privacy concerns and lack of standardisation hinder the effective use of shared health data.
- **Misaligned incentives:** Business interests often prioritise short-term profits, while public health goals focus on long-term impact.
- **Policy alignment:** Public-private health projects may face challenges when policy environments shift or diverge, which can affect continuity and funding predictability.

Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive framework that establishes common guidelines, promotes ethical investment, and incentivises stakeholder participation⁷.

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

Regulatory and Policy Misalignment

One of the primary challenges in public-private partnerships is navigating inconsistent regulatory frameworks across different countries. Many multinational corporations struggle to operate effectively due to fragmented policies on data governance, intellectual property rights, and healthcare delivery.

For example, global pharmaceutical companies face varying regulatory approval processes for new treatments and technologies. The absence of standardised regulatory requirements leads to delays, increased costs, and reduced incentives for investment in low- and middle-income countries. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO, 2023), differences

in national health policies often limit the ability of private entities to scale innovative solutions across multiple markets.

Furthermore, frequent changes in health policies, often driven by evolving national priorities, create uncertainty for long-term private-sector engagement. A 2022 report from the World Economic Forum emphasises the importance of harmonising regulatory environments through international collaboration to improve Private–Public Partnerships effectiveness. Initiatives such as the African Medicines Agency (AMA) seek to establish unified regulatory pathways to enhance access to medicines across the continent⁸.

An Example of Sustainable Co-Financing

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is a leading example of public-private collaboration that has significantly improved global vaccine access, vaccinating over 1.1 billion children through routine programmes since 2000, including more than 69 million in 2023 alone. Despite fiscal challenges, environmental disruptions, and global uncertainties, Gavi-supported countries maintained 80% DTP3 coverage, expanded vaccine protection to 56%, and continued to invest in immunisation, contributing a total of US\$1.7 billion under the co-financing policy since 2008.

“You can make a difference if you come together with a partnership.”

Jon Fairest, Sanofi

Funding Limitations

While Private–Public Partnerships (PPPs) can drive innovation, many partnerships rely heavily on donor-based or short-term project funding, which undermines sustainability. Traditional development financing mechanisms often prioritize immediate outcomes over long-term systemic change.

A key issue is the lack of blended financing models that combine public, private, and philanthropic resources to ensure sustainable investments. A report by the Global Fund (2023) highlights that only 10% of development funding for health in LMICs is structured for long-term sustainability, with most projects depending on grants and short-term aid.

The World Economic Forum's Global Health and Healthcare Strategic Outlook discusses the rapid growth in healthcare investments, noting that overall healthcare spending was expected to reach \$12 trillion in 2022, up from \$8.5 trillion in 2018. This surge underscores the importance of aligning such investments with national health priorities to avoid inefficiencies and ensure cohesive health interventions⁹.

Innovative financing mechanisms such as social impact bonds, outcome-based funding, and public health trust funds have been proposed as potential solutions.

The private sector cannot fill the funding gap, but it can unlock innovation and scale when aligned with policy.

sanofi

Sanofi's Global Health Unit: A Non-Profit Business Model

Jon Fairest from Sanofi's Global Health Unit, launched in 2022 a unique non-profit model focused on communities with limited access to healthcare. The unit reinvests all margins into local capacity-building projects targeting 40 underserved communities, with over 120 initiatives backed by a €25M impact fund. Sanofi focuses on access pricing, supply chain innovation, and grassroots health system strengthening. Sanofi also supports strategic transitions by handing over mature projects to governments, bridging the gap between short-term innovation cycles and long-term health system needs. Sustainability is key: projects are designed to be handed over to governments after 2–3 years.

Misaligned Incentives

The private sector and public health organisation often operate with different priorities:

- Governments and public health institutions focus on long-term population health outcomes and universal access to healthcare.
- Private sector entities, particularly for-profit companies, prioritise financial returns, market expansion, and shareholder value.

This misalignment can hinder effective collaboration. While pharmaceutical companies invest in high-cost research and development, governments seek to lower drug prices and increase accessibility. A 2023 Harvard Global Health Institute study found that only 25% of private health investments in LMICs are aligned with national health priorities, leading to inefficiencies and fragmented health interventions.

The Global Alliance for Chronic Diseases (GACD) brings together governments, research institutions, and private companies to align investments in NCD research with real-world implementation needs. Since 2011, the GACD has awarded over \$375 million in implementation science research grants to prevent and manage NCDs in low-resource contexts. While GACD's primary investors are public research funding agencies, some initiatives receive support from philanthropic organisation and private foundations focused on global health. These include The Wellcome Trust, The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and The World Bank¹⁰.



Governance and Continuity in Public-Private Health Collaboration

Public-private health initiatives often operate within diverse policy environments, which can influence the consistency of funding and stakeholder engagement. Research published in *The Lancet Global Health* (2023) highlights the importance of maintaining stable and well-aligned investment strategies to support programme continuity and long-term impact.

Public institutions may encounter challenges in sustaining long-term commitments due to:

- Shifting national priorities, which may evolve over time.
- Varying approaches to private-sector engagement in public health systems.
- Short-term planning cycles that can favour immediate results over broader systemic improvements.

Diversifying Funding Streams for Resilience

Lessons from PEPFAR: Diversifying Funding Streams for Resilience

Evolving global health funding patterns have underscored the value of diversified financial strategies. For example, changes in support for major international health programmes have encouraged organisations to explore broader stakeholder engagement and multi-source financing models. These approaches help reduce reliance on any single funding stream and promote continuity in global health efforts^{12,13}.

Data-Sharing Challenges

According to a 2023 study in *The Lancet Digital Health*, nearly 60% of global health data remains fragmented across isolated systems, preventing efficient coordination between public and private stakeholders. Governments and private companies often operate on separate digital platforms, making exchanging critical health data in real time difficult. Nevertheless, effective public-private collaborations require strong data-sharing frameworks to track health outcomes, measure impact, and inform decision-making. Global health experts have emphasised the role of public-private partnerships in advancing AI and data analytics for health surveillance, predicting disease outbreaks, and optimising resource allocation¹⁴.

The barriers to data-sharing include:

- Privacy concerns and multi-jurisdictional patient confidentiality regulations
- Lack of interoperability between digital health systems
- Reluctance from private companies to share proprietary data due to competitive concerns

Beyond these technical and regulatory challenges, data security and cyber threats, particularly in less developed countries, pose serious risks to the integrity and confidentiality of health information. Weak infrastructure, limited cybersecurity capacity, and insufficient governance frameworks exacerbate vulnerabilities. Moreover, ethical issues around data ownership, consent, and potential misuse can erode trust between sectors, undermining collaboration between the public and private sectors in advancing health initiatives.

BRIDGE Alliance: Advancing Global Health Security

Launched in May 2024, the BRIDGE Alliance - a joint initiative of the World Economic Forum and the World Health Assembly - aims to strengthen global disease surveillance through sustainable, cross-sector, and interoperable networks. It brings together partners like Abbott, CEPI, Microsoft, The Global Fund, WHO, and Siemens Healthineers to develop a blueprint for action and explore financially viable models for surveillance beyond pandemics. The initiative will also collaborate with a few "Lead Countries" to advance national biosecurity strategies and integrate public health, biosecurity, and biodefense efforts¹⁵.

Strategic Incentives for Private Sector Engagement

The private sector has compelling strategic, financial, and reputational incentives to invest in and trust public sector initiatives and partnerships with governments and NGOs. Thus, such

collaboration is not merely a philanthropic gesture but a smart, long-term strategy that unlocks value, sustainability, and relevance in an evolving global health landscape.

1. Market Stability and Risk Mitigation

- **Stable Operating Environments:** Strong public health systems reduce disease burden and health-related disruptions to supply chains and labor markets, ensuring business continuity.
- **Risk Sharing:** Partnering with governments can de-risk investments, especially in fragile or low-income markets, through guarantees, co-financing, or long-term contracts (e.g., hybrid PPP models).

Mitigating Risk Through Pooled Investment

The Global Fund, a collaborative funding approach pooling resources from governments, private donors, and development banks, invests over US\$5 billion annually to combat HIV, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria, striving for a healthier, safer, and more inclusive world. Through its efforts, 65 million lives have been saved, with 25 million people receiving antiretroviral therapy for HIV, 7.1 million treated for TB, and 227 million mosquito nets distributed in 2023 alone.

2. Wider Healthcare Access

- **Reaching Communities with Limited Healthcare Access:** Government-backed initiatives often provide access to low-income or remote populations that are otherwise difficult for businesses to reach.
- **Infrastructure Support:** Governments often provide regulatory frameworks, physical infrastructure, and data that enable market entry and scale-up¹⁶.

3. Policy Influence and Ecosystem Shaping

- **Shaping Regulations:** Constructive partnerships allow private actors to help co-design policies and health ecosystems conducive to sustainable innovation, including pricing, procurement, and data-sharing practices.
- **Alignment with National Priorities:** Engaging early enables companies to align their products and services with public health strategies, increasing uptake and long-term viability¹⁷.

Open Innovation Model

A pharmaceutical industry example of driving innovation in drug development, participating in nearly forty PPPs in Europe, the United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, Australia, etc. Its contributions take various forms, such as providing in-house expertise, robust data, new technologies and/or funding, each with a unique objective: to allow the generation of large databases (chemical libraries, clinical-biological data, epidemiological data, etc.) and access to expensive infrastructure such as biobanks, new preclinical models, or new technologies and specialised equipment.

4. Shared Value and Long-Term ROI

- **Healthier Populations = Productive Workforce:** Investing in public health directly improves workforce health, increasing productivity, reducing absenteeism and healthcare costs, especially for large employers. During the height of the HIV pandemic, Anglo American estimated the disease was affecting 21% of its employees in South Africa, costing it 5% of its total payroll costs – it became the first ever organisation to fund anti-retrovirals¹⁸. Extending the value of workforce gains to local communities is an area of ongoing research.
- **Cost-Effective Scaling:** Working with public health systems (e.g. through joint procurement or local manufacturing) can reduce distribution costs and create efficiencies that benefit both sides¹⁹.
- **Global Economic Gains:** Investment in employee health generates significant economic benefits: lower costs, reduced absenteeism, and increased productivity. McKinsey estimates a potential global economic value of up to \$11.7 trillion²⁰.

Workplace to Community Yaws Eradication on Lihir Island, Papua New Guinea

On Lihir Island, a large mining company, Newcrest Mining, partnered with International SOS, the Papua New Guinea Ministry of Health, and the WHO to tackle yaws, a neglected tropical disease endemic in the community. What began as a workplace health initiative to protect mine employees evolved into a full-scale mass treatment campaign covering the entire island, involving community members, local health authorities, and worker representatives.

Utilising a single dose of azithromycin, the programme, supported by International SOS's on-site medical and operational capacity under Newcrest's sustainability framework, led to a dramatic reduction in disease prevalence, from 2.4% to 0.3% after 12 months, and provided real-time data to guide WHO's global eradication strategy.

This model demonstrates how leveraging a private company's presence and trust within a community, coupled with reliable delivery partners and governmental endorsement, can extend workplace health benefits to broader populations, creating value for workers and their communities while reinforcing local public health systems²¹.

5. Sustainability Alignment

- **Meeting Sustainability Criteria:** Collaborations with governments and NGOs support sustainability and responsible business practices, which are increasingly linked to investment attractiveness and regulatory approval. Companies with strong sustainability ratings tend to attract more investors and boost their financial performance.
- **Cost-Effective Scaling:** Working with public health systems (e.g. through joint procurement or local manufacturing) can reduce distribution costs and create efficiencies that benefit both sides¹⁹.
- **Enhancing Brand and Trust:** Transparently engaging in social impact initiatives improves corporate reputation, builds community trust, and strengthens consumer loyalty to responsible brands.



"Workplaces are the beginning of a community. Then you can extend outside the fence."

Isabelle Hagner,
International SOS

Building resilience to natural hazard-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 extreme weather, natural hazards, and disaster resilience. This project is integral to the Ministry's efforts to strengthen public health infrastructure and increase access to a broader range of clinical services that meet the population's health needs now and in the future.

6. Access to Data and Knowledge

- ***Public Health Intelligence:*** Governments and NGOs often hold the most comprehensive health and demographic data, which can inform R&D, product localisation, and service delivery models.
- ***Joint Innovation:*** Co-developing solutions with public health institutions can accelerate access to pilots, clinical research networks, and regulatory guidance.

Data-Driven Partnerships for Urban NCD Prevention

Launched by Novartis, Novo Nordisk, and the Harvard Health Systems Innovation Lab at the 2022. World Economic Forum, this strategic public-private collaboration uses data to transform cardiovascular and metabolic health care. Through the Cities Changing Diabetes initiative, Novo Nordisk spearheaded a groundbreaking population-level study in Bogotá, Colombia, uncovering significantly underreported rates of diabetes (11%) and obesity/overweight (65%). This approach emphasises how public-private data collaboration can identify health gaps and inform targeted interventions, despite limited prior national data.

7. Catalytic Impact and Global Influence

- ***Being Part of Global Health Solutions:*** Multinational corporations that partner in solving critical health challenges are seen as thought leaders and responsible global citizens, positioning them to influence global policy dialogues (e.g., at WHO, UN, Gavi).
- ***Multiplier Effect:*** Government and NGO-backed programmes often attract additional funders, allowing private companies to leverage smaller initial investments for broader systemic impact²².

Yellow Fever Vaccination with Mining Sector Partners

Dr. Laurence Cibrelus, from WHO highlighted a successful yellow fever vaccination campaign working collaboratively with private mining companies targeting 70,000 mining workers in Central African Republic. In partnership with these employers, WHO facilitated mass vaccination and surveillance, demonstrating how industry partnerships can support national disease control programmes in high-risk zones.

“Partnerships are not procurement. We need to align our goals, not just our projects.”

Moz Siddiqi,
WHO Foundation

The Path Forward



As global health challenges grow increasingly complex, from the rise of noncommunicable diseases to the impacts of Natural Hazards, Extreme Weather, and geopolitical instability, one thing is clear: no single actor can solve them alone.

This is an unprecedented opportunity for communities and the private sector.

Strategic investment in global health is no longer confined to corporate social responsibility.

It is a smart, future-focused move that enables companies to open new markets, build operational resilience, align with long-term development and resilience priorities, and shape the ecosystems in which they operate.

Whether through blended finance models, scalable technology solutions, or catalytic partnerships with governments and NGOs, the private sector has the tools

and incentives to help lead transformative change.

What's needed now is bold, early engagement.

By co-creating solutions with public stakeholders and committing to long-term collaboration, businesses can play a pivotal role in building stronger, more accessible health systems.

This approach advances health outcomes, supports sustainable business growth, strengthens organisational reputation, and contributes to broader global development goals.

The path to achieving global health goals runs through partnerships.

The most forward-thinking companies will be the ones at the table, helping shape the future of global health, while securing their relevance, resilience, and returns.



This paper was developed by subject matter experts from International SOS, drawing on insights shared during the side event “*The Power of Partnerships: Is there a Wider Private Sector Role in Achieving the Global Health Agenda?*” held on the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly. In addition to the perspectives of panelists and the moderator, the authors synthesised contributions from

other organisations and individuals participating at the event as well as international health experts to produce a comprehensive and forward-looking thought leadership report. The insight, analysis and conclusions presented here reflect the independent work of the authors, informed by a broad spectrum of expertise and engagement.



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