



# **The Double Dividend:**

Why Germany should  
invest in Global Health  
Research

**A Position Paper**

January 2026

# 5 reasons to invest in global health research

Global health research remains a key issue for Germany. It promotes innovation, competitiveness and security while simultaneously helping us prepare for worldwide health crises.

## Global health research

1

### Strengthens society and development

Investments in research and development (R&D) for neglected diseases will save over 40 million lives by 2040 and achieve a return on investment of 405:1 (ROI).

Vaccine research for global diseases also protects populations in Germany and worldwide from infectious diseases.

2

### Promotes competitiveness and innovation

Investments in R&D strengthen German companies through new technologies, patents and innovation networks.

R&D partnerships open up new markets and contribute to stable supply chains in growth regions.

3

### Strengthens Germany and the EU as research hubs

International cooperation increases the visibility of German universities and attracts top talent.

Global research networks accelerate knowledge transfer and promote scientific excellence.

4

### Is a catalyst for German foreign policy and soft power

Health engagement strengthens Germany's credibility as a reliable partner in international negotiations.

Multilateral research alliances reduce dependencies and position Germany as an "honest broker".

5

### Is a security investment: creating stability, preventing crises

Strong health systems in partner countries promote regional stability.

Preventive pandemic preparedness costs much less than crisis reaction.

### Conclusion:

Germany's investments in global health research deliver a double dividend: they save lives worldwide and strengthen the positions of Germany and its partners as innovative, credible, and secure countries.

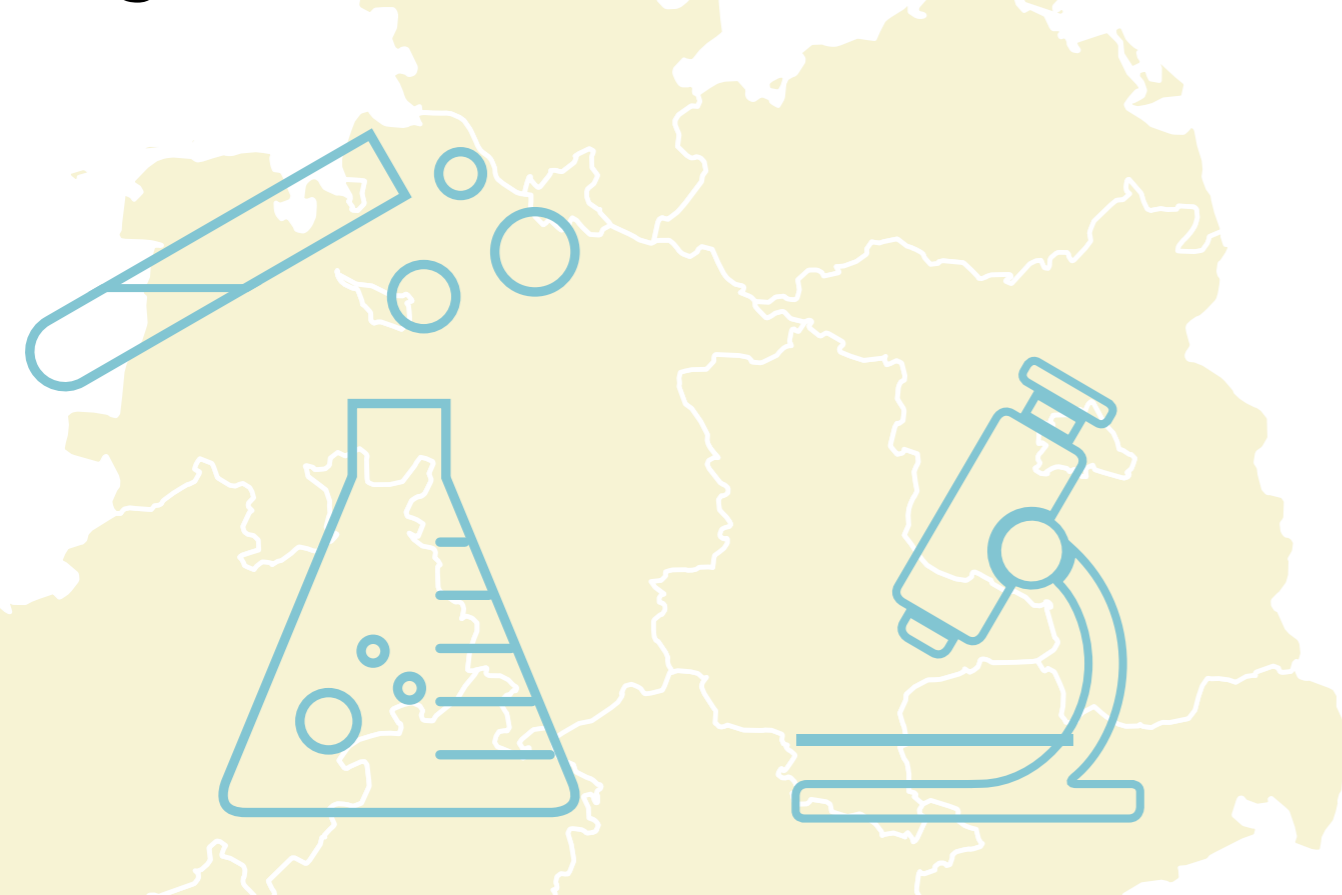
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### Abbreviations

GDP	Gross domestic product	HPV	Human Papillomavirus
BMFTR	Federal Ministry of Research, Technology, and Space	LMICs	Low- and Middle-Income Countries
CEPI	Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations	MPOX	Mpox Virus
CERMEL	Lambaréné Medical Research Center	NUM	University Medicine Network
DFG	German Research Foundation	OECD	Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development
DZIF	German Center for Infection Research	RHISSA	Research Networks for Health Innovations in Sub-Saharan Africa
EDCTP	European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership	RNA	Ribonucleic acid
EU	European Union	ROI	Return on Investment
R&D	Research & Development	RSV	Respiratory syncytial virus
GAVI	Vaccine Alliance	SDGs	United Nations Sustainable Development Goals
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus	WHO	World Health Organization

# 1. Introduction: Strengthening global health research



## 1.1. Germany's role in global health research

Germany has a rich scientific tradition in health: researchers such as Robert Koch, Rudolf Virchow, and Paul Ehrlich laid the foundations for modern medicine and embody the aspiration to view health as a social good. This heritage continues to shape Germany's commitment to global health today. As a high-tech nation convinced of the value of science, technology, innovation, and solidarity, Germany combines its own interests with global responsibility. R&D in the health sector play a decisive role in ensuring that Germany, Europe, and the world are better prepared for current and future health threats. At the same time, they are an expression of cultural identity and international soft power – they create trust, promote dialogue, and strengthen multilateralism.

With excellent research, modern infrastructure, and strong networks, Germany has considerable creative and international influence. One example of this is the German Alliance for Global Health Research (GLOHRA), which connects over 1.400 scientists at more than 225 German universities and research institutions. This network extends far beyond major locations such as Heidelberg, Munich, Berlin, and Hamburg, bringing together researchers from all over Germany. This potential must be expanded in a targeted manner – through smart, value-driven investments, international partnerships, and coherent research funding. Value-driven investments in R&D not only strengthen global health, but also promote social cohesion, economic stability, and trust between nations.

## 1.2. Why is global health research important for Germany?

Global health research refers to the interdisciplinary, scientific examination of health challenges that affect people worldwide, as well as their causes, consequences, and solutions. It encompasses research and cooperation projects that focus on health problems of global relevance and aim to improve health and equal health opportunities in an evidence-based manner worldwide. At its core is the understanding of health as a global public good and the shared commitment to reach the most vulnerable populations and population groups in particular. Global health research strengthens partnerships, creates jobs, and promotes resilience and stability worldwide – it is the foundation for health,

prosperity, and social progress, both in Germany and worldwide.

Global health research is therefore a strategic instrument for strengthening health protection, social justice, economic stability, and global cooperation. It creates the scientific basis to ensure security of supply, effectively combat infectious diseases, address the health consequences of climate change and biodiversity loss, improve prevention, and build resilient health systems. All of this not only benefits low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), but also contributes directly to health, innovation, and resilience in Germany, the EU, and countries globally.

## 1.3. Why now?

The global withdrawal of international actors from multilateral global health organizations (e.g., the US) is leaving gaps in funding, data, and global scientific leadership. This not only creates a need for action, but also opens up a strategic opportunity for Germany to position itself more strongly as a value-driven actor: as a reliable

international partner that promotes participation, solidarity, and academic freedom and is committed to multilateralism, international cooperation, and a rules-based, just world order. This role goes beyond short-term interests and helps to secure tomorrow's health, economic, and social returns through targeted investments today.

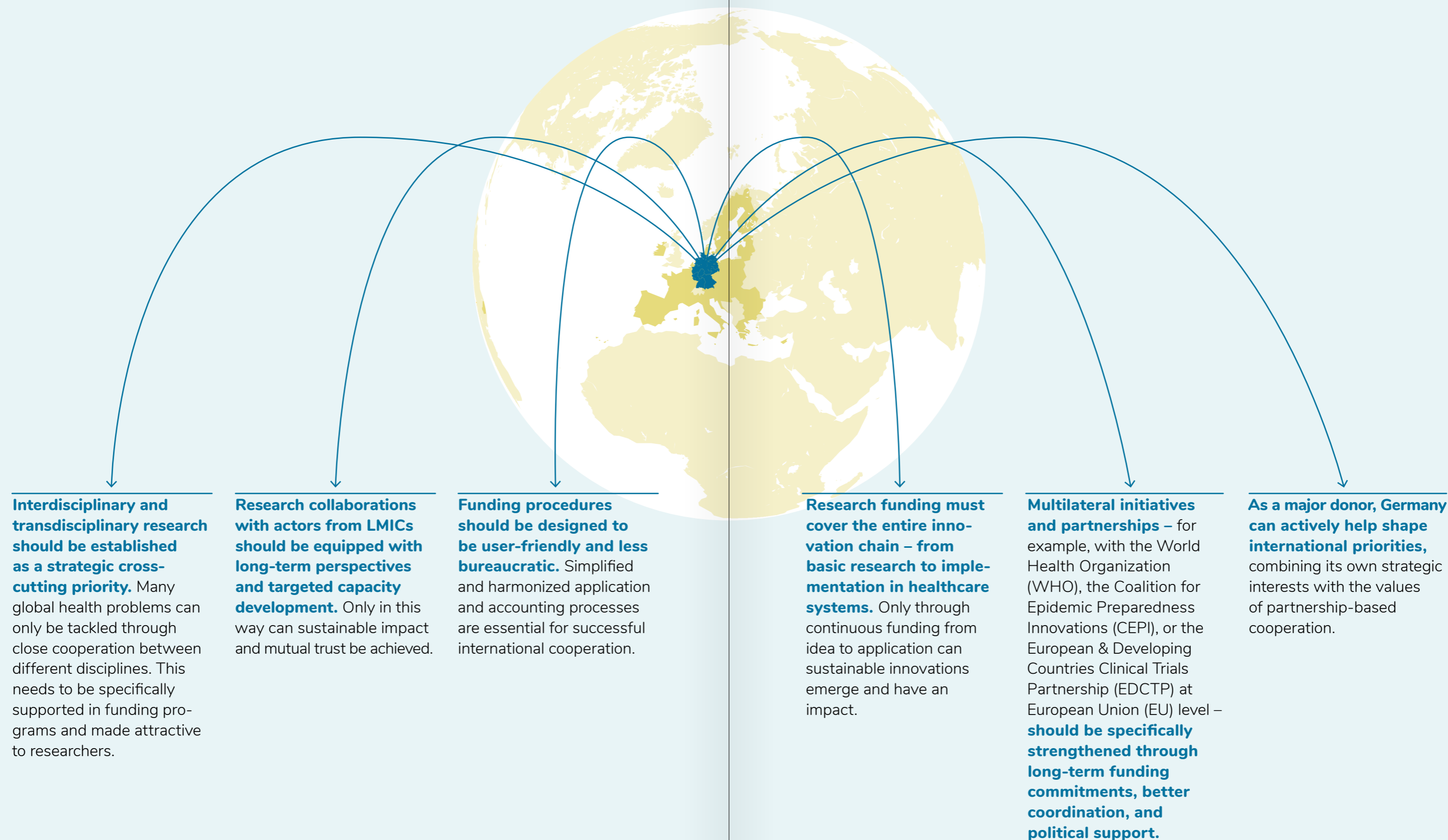
## 1.4. On which political basis?

The German federal government has increasingly recognized the importance of global health research in recent years and has strategically anchored it. The 2020 **Global Health Strategy** adopted by the German federal government names "Advancing research and innovation for global health" as one of five key areas of action. The aim is to develop sustainable solutions to global health problems through partnership-based, evidence-based research – in dialogue with LMICs and embedded in multilateral processes.<sup>[1]</sup>

In the 2025 **coalition agreement**, the CDU/CSU and SPD recognize the importance of global health and devote a separate paragraph to the topic. In doing so, the governing parties emphasize that global health will remain an integral part of German health, research, and foreign policy – with references to international cooperation, multilateral reform processes, and selected research priorities. Specifically, the agreement names the strengthening of security, prosperity, and resilience through global health as a goal.<sup>[2]</sup>

The **German government's Strategy on Internationalization of the Higher Education Institutions** in Germany (2024) emphasizes the importance of international cooperation in tackling global challenges including in health. It focuses on strategic partnerships, interdisciplinary research, and sustainable cooperation, combined with the removal of bureaucratic barriers and more flexible funding instruments for international partners. Its successful implementation will strengthen international research and the German science system structurally.<sup>[3]</sup>

## 1.5. How should global health research be strengthened?



## 2. Arguments and evidence

### 5 arguments that make a strong case for investing in global health research.

#### 1 Global health research strengthens society and development

2000 ..... 2040

**105**  
billion Euro  
global investment



**42,5**  
trillion Euro  
global benefit

**8**  
million  
saved lives

**405:1**  
ROI

**40**  
million  
saved lives

#### Social benefits of global R&D: The example of neglected diseases

Latest report by *Impact Global Health* demonstrates the global social and economic benefits of R&D for global health.<sup>[4]</sup>

Between 2000 and 2040, new biomedical products could save over 40 million lives and prevent 2.83 billion disability-adjusted life years (DALYs) worldwide.<sup>1</sup>

Innovative products to treat these diseases have already saved over 8 million lives worldwide. The distribution and introduction of further products could save an additional 32 million lives worldwide by 2040.

Every euro invested in R&D generates an average global social and economic benefit of €405 through avoided healthcare costs, treatment expenses, and productivity losses, as well as through the preservation of lives and healthy years of life.

This translates into a **return on investment (ROI) of 405:1**. In total, this results in a modelled global benefit of **€42.5 trillion** – with a **global investment of €105 billion**.<sup>2 [4]</sup>

Together as Team Europe, the EU and Member States contribute 8.5 percent (**€8.06 billion**) of global R&D investment in neglected diseases.

The global social and economic impact of Team Europe's contributions by 2040 is therefore considerable.<sup>[5]</sup>

Germany plays a central role in achieving this objective: with a 17 percent share of Team Europe funding, it is the second-largest European donor in the field of neglected diseases after the EU, with a focus on HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria between 2007 and 2022. The Federal Ministry of Research, Technology, and Space (BMFTR) provided almost €124 million for tuberculosis alone and is making a significant contribution to multiplier effects.<sup>[5]</sup>

Based on its proportional contribution, Germany is estimated to be responsible for saving almost 600.000 lives worldwide, impeding over 40 million DALYs, generating over €650 million in social benefits, and preventing nearly 75 million cases of disease.<sup>3 [5]</sup>

While this analysis focuses on poverty-related, neglected diseases in LMICs, where medical products remain insufficient, the arguments are broadly applicable to global health R&D.

- 1 Disability Adjusted Life Years, or DALYs, measure the burden of disease as the sum of years lost and years spent in poor health.
- 2 The numbers are based on the funding period 1994-2040. The benefits are calculated for the period 2000-2040.
- 3 Extrapolated data based on total benefits and proportional funding share.

## Benefits for Germany and the world: The example of vaccine research

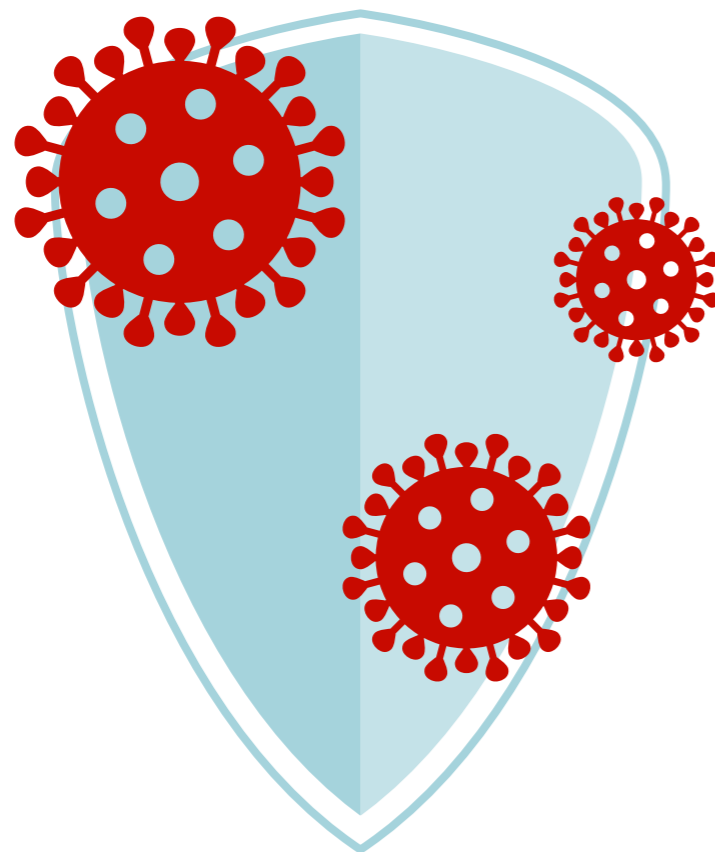
The development of three COVID-19 vaccines researched in Germany impressively demonstrates how German science was able to make a decisive global contribution to combating the pandemic – and at the same time underlines the security policy significance of strong vaccine research for the protection of the population and Germany's crisis resilience. Research into highly infectious diseases such as Mpox, influenza, polio, Ebola, and avian influenza (H5N1) is crucial for national and international health protection. It improves diagnostics, early warning systems, and, in particular, vaccine development. Thanks to existing smallpox research, an Mpox vaccine was made available within a few months of the global outbreak in 2022. Vaccination programs are effective measures, representing greatest value for money in global health.

Thanks to the Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunization (Gavi), around 19 million deaths have been prevented worldwide since 2000.

The global economic benefit of these programs is over €214 billion.<sup>[6]</sup>

Vaccinations also have great benefits in Germany: a study shows that vaccinations for adults – for example, against influenza, pneumococci, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV), or shingles – achieve a ROI of up to 19 times when social and economic effects are fully taken into account. This corresponds to a net benefit in Germany of up to €4.000 per fully vaccinated person.<sup>[7]</sup>

Studies also show that vaccinations go way further than just protecting against acute infections. They can also lower the risk of chronic diseases like heart attacks, strokes, or dementia, which means they can help people live longer. This again makes it clear that vaccine research and immunization programs take pressure off healthcare systems, protect lives, and are good for society and the economy.



## 2 Global health research promotes competitiveness and innovation



### Strengthening the innovative capacity of the healthcare industry

Many international studies confirm that public research spending has a significantly greater impact on national gross domestic product (GDP) and private R&D spending than general government spending. It also has an impact that extends far beyond the immediate project period. In the fields of health and basic research in particular, it provides long-term impetus for private-sector innovation:

A recent analysis of 15 OECD countries shows that innovation-oriented measures achieve GDP multipliers of 9.6 to 15.3 after five years, where generic spending only achieves around 1.<sup>[8]</sup>

The observed **crowding-in effect** is particularly relevant: government R&D investments specifically trigger additional private innovation spending, which is a key lever for sustainable growth and technological progress.<sup>[8]</sup> These **spillover effects** can continue for up to 24 years, with private follow-up investments peaking on average eight years after government funding.

A recent analysis by the *Global Health Technologies Coalition* and *Impact Global Health* shows that every euro of public investment in basic biomedical research in the pharmaceutical sector generates an average of €7 in private R&D investment after eight years.<sup>[9]</sup>

In Germany, the long-term leverage effect of public R&D investment significantly exceeds the OECD average: every euro invested attracts more than 3.7 times as much in private funding, thereby strengthening innovation capacity in the long term.<sup>[10]</sup>

The German healthcare industry employs almost eight million people and is one of the country's most important economic sectors. The success of mRNA vaccines is a prime example of how innovative this sector is for global health: companies such as BioNTech and CureVac benefited from early funding through programs run by the BMFT, the German Research Foundation (DFG), and the European Union (EU). These targeted investments enabled medical progress and raised the international profile of German research.

## Global innovation gains: Research with LMICs generates worldwide benefits

Collaborative research in and with LMICs contributes significantly to global health security and care. The following examples illustrate that investments in research and innovation in and with LMICs create global health goods that also directly benefit Germany and Europe, through medical innovations, greater security of supply, and economic returns.<sup>4</sup>



### Example 1: Malaria research and vaccine innovation

**AS01-Impfstoff-Adjuvans:** Originally developed for malaria vaccines, the AS01 adjuvant was first used in the RTS,S/Mosquirix vaccine. Today, it forms the basis for vaccines against shingles (Shingrix) and RSV (Arexvy), which are used in over 45 countries. In the US, over 9 million adults have been vaccinated since 2023, with an estimated €82 million in healthcare costs saved.

**ChAdOx1 vaccine platform:** This platform was developed in malaria research and formed the basis for the Oxford/AstraZeneca COVID-19 vaccine, which saved over 6 million lives in its first year. The platform is now being further developed for vaccines against influenza, tuberculosis, Zika, and chikungunya and is considered a cost-effective, globally scalable solution.<sup>[10]</sup>

Findings from malaria research have provided the foundations for some of the most significant vaccine innovations in recent years, with direct benefits for healthcare systems worldwide.

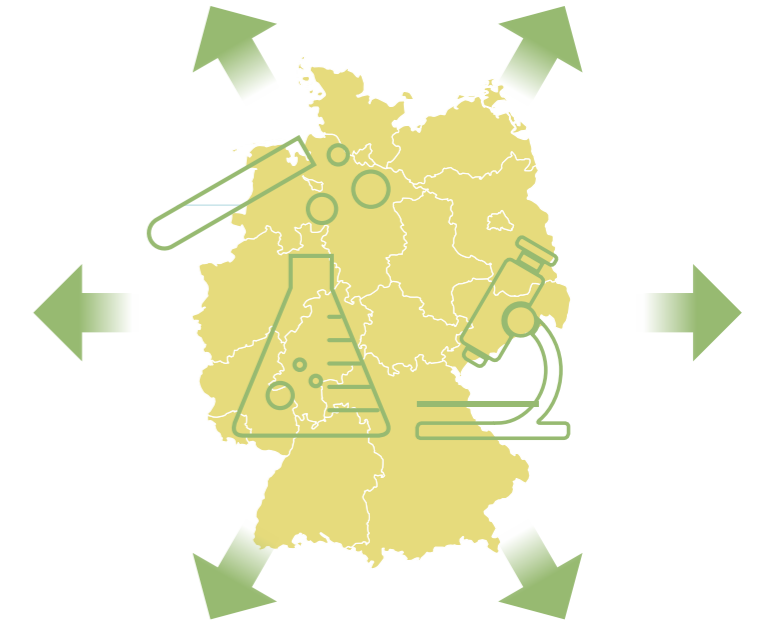
### Example 2: Sexual and reproductive health

**Cepheid Xpert HPV Test:** Originally validated in LMICs, this rapid HPV test delivers results within an hour and enables same-day treatment – a crucial advance in regions with limited access to health-care services. Today, it is part of cervical cancer screening programs in the United Kingdom and is considered the fastest HPV test on the market, including the option for self-sampling.

**Mirena-Intrauterinpeppessar:** Developed as an affordable contraceptive method in LMICs, Mirena is now established worldwide. It offers up to eight years of protection, is cost-effective (€4 – 11 per year), and is also used to treat heavy menstrual bleeding with 95 percent effectiveness after two years.<sup>[10]</sup>

These innovations demonstrate how research from LMICs is improving access to sexual and reproductive health while making care in wealthier countries more efficient and patient-friendly.

<sup>4</sup> Global health goods are measures, structures, or resources (e.g., vaccines, research findings, surveillance systems) whose benefits are not limited to individual countries but protect and promote health worldwide.



### Example 3: Climate preparedness through knowledge transfer to protect vulnerable groups

**Climate change** is also causing health problems in Germany, especially due to heat waves. In 2023 and 2024, there were several thousand heat-related deaths in Germany.<sup>[11]</sup>

International research projects, for example in South and Southeast Asia or sub-Saharan Africa, are developing heat-adapted care models, early warning systems, and measures for urban areas.

These findings and resources can be transferred cost-effectively to large German cities – especially in densely populated, socially disadvantaged neighborhoods with high heat exposure.

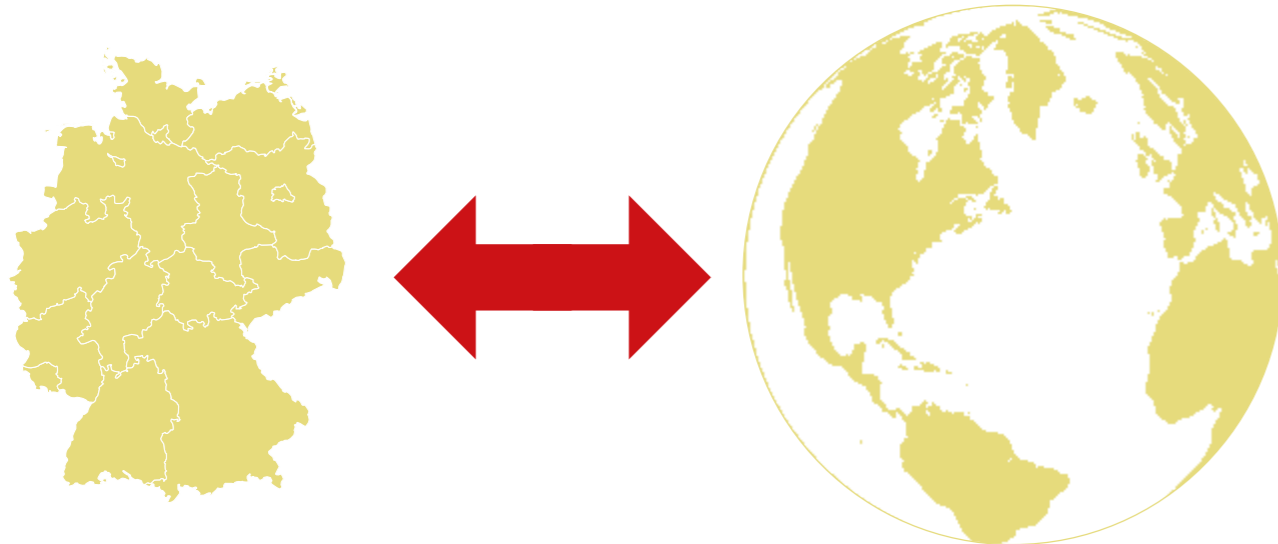
This shows that investing in global health research today lays the foundation for future breakthroughs and at the same time strengthens Germany as a center of innovation and business.

### R&D investments as the key to global procurement and markets

Germany and the EU cannot produce essential goods on their own. Regional production capacities in LMICs are necessary to ensure security of supply in an economically viable manner, reduce dependencies on individual manufacturing nations, and mitigate security policy risks. Studies show that building local capacity not only improves employment, technology transfer, and access to health goods in partner countries, but also makes partner countries reliable economic partners in the long term.<sup>[12, 13]</sup> Global R&D partnerships can contribute to:

- creating stable conditions for German foreign investment,
- opening up global procurement and markets,
- securing local skilled workers,
- developing common standards,
- and deepening integration into global innovation networks.<sup>[12]</sup>

### 3 Global health research strengthens Germany and the EU as research hub



#### Internationalization through new partnerships

The German government's strategy on Internationalization of the Higher Education Institutions already shows how international cooperation opens up new perspectives, strengthens the German science and higher education system, and contributes to solving global challenges.<sup>[3]</sup> Investments in global health research significantly increase the international visibility of German universities and research institutions. Germany enjoys a high reputation worldwide and attracts many international students. Participation in major European research programs such as Horizon Europe further strengthens this international profile and fosters strategic collaboration with partners across the globe.

Germany can strategically leverage this momentum: while established science locations are losing their appeal due to political upheavals, threats to academic freedom, or restrictive visa policies, new opportunities are opening up for German institutions to strengthen international research partnerships and attract the best minds, whether directly at German research institutions or as scientific partners or “ambassadors” in partner countries.

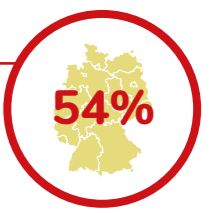
International partnerships also facilitate a valuable exchange of methods, particularly with regard to research methods that are already well established in LMICs, such as participatory approaches. Such methods are particularly useful because they tailor research more closely to local needs and realities, increase the acceptance and effectiveness of interventions, and promote the equitable exchange of knowledge between researchers from different contexts.

The example of the BMFTR-funded Research Networks for Health Innovations in Sub-Saharan Africa (RHISSA), which build capacity in both Germany and partner countries through collaborative research, demonstrates this in concrete terms. For example, the participatory research approach from the RHISSA project CEBHA+ has been transferred to the PREPARED and COLLPAN projects of the Network University Medicine (NUM). Instead of a linear transfer of knowledge at the end of the project, the focus was on integrated knowledge translation, the establishment of long-term working relationships, and targeted decisions about who, what, and how to co-develop and communicate in order to develop practical solutions for pandemic preparedness and care.

#### Strengthening domestic institutions and employment effects

A recent report on investment in R&D for neglected and emerging diseases shows that although much of global health research focuses on diseases in LMICs, around 54 percent of the funds allocated for this purpose in Germany remain in the country itself – for example, at universities, research institutes, and companies. These investments not only strengthen health systems worldwide, but also promote the German

research landscape, create high-quality jobs, and ensure international competitiveness. Current figures show that an investment of around €900.000 creates an average of 2.7 jobs (e.g. scientists, laboratory technicians, security personnel) and an additional 10 indirect jobs in upstream and downstream areas such as supplier companies, catering, and retail.<sup>[10]</sup>



#### Success through international research cooperation: the example of malaria

One example is the German Center for Infection Research (DZIF) professorship for immune epidemiology and clinical infection research in the tropics at the Centre de Recherches Médicales de Lambaréné (CERMEL) in Gabon. In collaboration with the University of Tübingen, phase II and III studies on the first malaria vaccine were conducted there, the evidence from which contributed significantly to the WHO recommendation in 2021.<sup>[14]</sup> This made one of the world's most significant infectious diseases

addressable by vaccine for the first time, a breakthrough given the more than 263 million cases and 600.000 deaths annually, especially in Africa.<sup>[15]</sup>

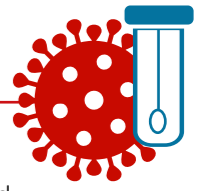
Another recent example is a highly effective single-dose malaria protocol developed by CERMEL researchers, which showed a 93 percent success rate in clinical trials and is now being further developed in collaboration with pharmaceutical companies for cost-effective and easy-to-use delivery.



#### Top research in Germany even in times of crisis: the example of PCR testing

Another example of the global relevance of German research is the development of the first SARS-CoV-2 PCR test by Prof. Dr. Christian Drosten and his team at Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin. The DZIF made the test publicly available in mid-January 2020, and shortly thereafter, the WHO adopted the procedure as an international reference protocol.<sup>[16]</sup>

The test became the global gold standard for COVID-19 diagnostics.<sup>[17]</sup> This shows how Germany as a research hub can act quickly and effectively on a global scale in times of crisis.



#### Scientific exchange: promoting the circulation of data, methods, and ideas

Integration into international research networks makes global health research a particularly effective leverage for Germany as a center of science. It not only gives researchers at German institutions access to resources such as pathogens and data, but also stimulates innovative approaches such as participatory research methods.

Further case studies in the appendix demonstrate how global health research strengthens health systems worldwide, promotes innovation, and increases resilience to health crises – while also creating concrete benefits for Germany, for example in curbing antimicrobial resistance, preparing for climate-related health risks, preventing diseases such as dengue fever, and establishing resilient supply chains and international vaccine production.



## 4 Global health research as a catalyst for foreign policy and soft power



### Building trust, conveying values: Germany as a reliable health partner in the world

In an increasingly multilateral world, where traditional power structures are being challenged by new players and shifting dynamics, global health research enables Germany to build trust, forge alliances, and be perceived as a reliable partner. With scientific excellence and humanitarian commitment, Germany can credibly represent its values while building partnerships that extend far beyond the health sector.

This credibility is reinforced by a global health ecosystem that has emerged and matured in recent years. With institutions such as the Robert Koch-Institute, including its Centre for International Health Protection (ZIG), and Germany's role as host of the WHO Pandemic Hub, Germany has positioned itself as a central actor in global health security,

pandemic preparedness, and international scientific cooperation. Together with universities, research institutes, and implementing partners, these institutions form a dense and trusted network that links national expertise with global needs.

When German research institutions work together with partners in LMICs to find solutions to global health challenges, Germany demonstrates its commitment to global justice and scientific cooperation on an equal footing. This commitment to academic freedom and evidence-based health policy positions Germany as a counterweight to authoritarian systems that instrumentalize or suppress research. In diplomatic negotiations and in the formation of international alliances, this reputation can give Germany decisive advantages and build trust.

### Equality through diversity: strengthening multilateralism in health research

Multilateral initiatives for global health research are key instruments of international cooperation,<sup>[18]</sup> while bilateral funding for selected initiatives remains important. Multilateral initiatives such as CEPI, EDCTP, and the numerous product development partnerships

- make partner countries less dependent on political fluctuations in individual donor countries

- contribute to the creation of long-term and equitable cooperation structures
- lay the foundation for joint product development and strengthen health systems
- promote trust and political resilience
- strengthen Germany's role as a reliable partner in a rules-based international system.<sup>[19]</sup>

## 5 Global health research as a security investment



### Stability through better healthcare systems worldwide and in Germany

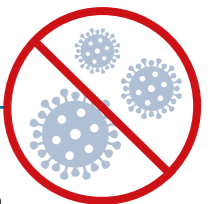
Weak health systems keep entire societies in poverty and can contribute to the destabilization of states. Optimized health is fundamental to a dignified life, well-being, and the creativity and productivity of societies. Health is a core element of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and is closely linked to all other SDGs. Adequate basic medical care plays an important role in determining people's prospects for the future in their communities.

Investments in global health research strengthen local health systems, improve care, can build trust in government institutions, and contribute to political and social stability in the long term. At the same time, they create early warning systems for transnational health threats such as pandemics or antimicrobial resistance, which can then be detected in a timely manner.

### Pandemic preparedness through shared public goods

The COVID-19 pandemic has cost Germany over €439 billion in direct government spending and around €660 billion in economic losses (GDP losses, decline in consumption, lack of investment).<sup>[20]</sup> These enormous sums stand in strong contrast to the comparatively low costs of preventive measures:

Experts estimate that around €3.9 billion per year – for example, to strengthen health systems in LMICs and to promote R&D – would be sufficient to prevent future pandemics. In contrast, the global social losses of future pandemics are predicted to cost €600 billion per year.<sup>[13, 21]</sup>



### SORMAS: Epidemic control developed for West Africa, established in Germany

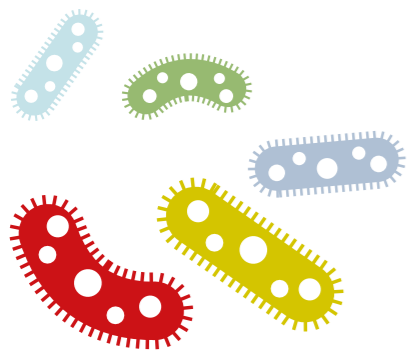
The Surveillance Outbreak Response Management and Analysis System (SORMAS) was originally developed during the 2014/15 Ebola outbreak at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research for use in West Africa. During the COVID-19 pandemic, SORMAS was operational in over 80 percent of German health authorities (315 authorities).<sup>[22]</sup> SORMAS demonstrates how research from resource-limited contexts can deliver practical, cost-effective solutions and strengthen

national health protection infrastructure in the long term. Global health research creates the necessary public goods – surveillance systems, early warning networks, open data platforms, and research infrastructures – from which all countries benefit, regardless of their level of investment. Through strategic investments, Germany cannot only contribute to global security, but also protect its own economy from the devastating costs of future pandemics.

# 3. Further case studies on the double dividend for Germany, the EU, and the world

Investments in global health research generate impact both globally and within Germany and the EU. Many of the measures described are developed or coordinated through European programmes. Targeted EU investments and

active German engagement can strengthen global health initiatives that contribute to worldwide health and supply security, while also supporting Germany's key economic, scientific and health interests.



## AMR: Global strategies ensure the effectiveness of important medicines in Germany

**Antimicrobial resistance (AMR)** is threatening the effectiveness of antibiotics worldwide – and thus key areas of medicine and agriculture. Animal husbandry is particularly affected. Increasing resistance leads to illness and threatens food security.<sup>[23]</sup>

Vaccination programs and research into alternatives can reduce the use of antibiotics in high-risk regions and curb the spread of resistant pathogens. This will preserve the effectiveness of important drugs in the EU as well.

## Innovation in Germany: The example of mRNA vaccines

The development of the first mRNA vaccine against COVID-19 by BioNTech is an impressive example of how national research funding and international cooperation can work together: thanks to long-term public funding in Germany and the subsequent partnership with Pfizer, which provided support in clinical trials, logistics, and production, the leap from basic research to global application was achieved in a record time.<sup>[24]</sup> The scientific breakthrough had an immediate global impact – in 2021 alone, COVID-19 vaccines prevented nearly 20 million deaths, according to estimates by Imperial College London.<sup>[25]</sup> BioNTech made a significant contribution to this success.

## Dengue fever: Global research enables local prevention

**Dengue fever**, long known as a tropical disease, is increasingly affecting Europe. In Germany, over 1.600 cases were registered in 2024.<sup>[26]</sup> With the spread of the Asian tiger mosquito, the risk of endemic spread is growing in the coming decades. A severe case costs an average of over €800 in direct medical expenses per patient.<sup>[27]</sup> Investment in global research into vaccines, therapies, and vector control, developed in endemic areas, is crucial for early detection and containment of outbreaks. It protects health, relieves pressure on the healthcare system, and strengthens economic stability.

## Neglected diseases: R&D investments as a driver for the European economy and innovation

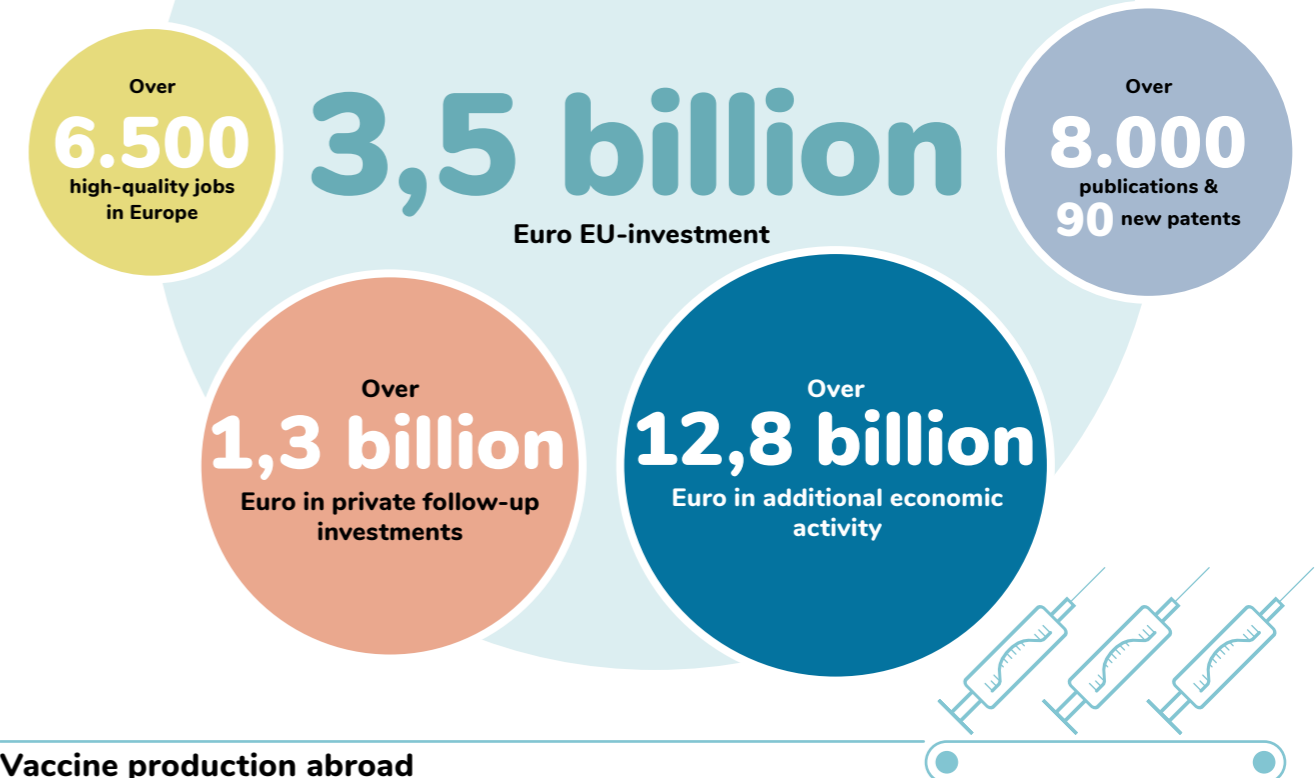
The EU's €3.5 billion investment in global health research and innovation in the field of neglected diseases has an impact far beyond the health sector, because it

- creates high-quality jobs in Europe,
- strengthens European economic activity and competitiveness,
- attracts significant private follow-up investment,

- generates above-average overall social benefits,
- and supports the development of scientific publications and new patents.

Current figures show that continued EU funding for research into neglected diseases can ensure the development of transformative health innovations with global reach by 2040, with significant benefits for Europe and its partner countries.<sup>5 [5, 28]</sup>

<sup>5</sup> The numbers are based on the funding period 1994 – 2040. The benefits are calculated for the period 2000 – 2040.



## Vaccine production abroad

Establishing global vaccine production not only contributes to global health security, but also brings direct benefits for Germany: it strengthens security of supply by avoiding bottlenecks such as those experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic, when the majority of global vaccine production was concentrated in a few countries. Contractually secured production shares with partners enable faster and more reliable access to vaccines in the event of a crisis.

Vaccine production abroad also offers opportunities from a scientific perspective: joint research, clinical trials, and technology transfer promote

the exchange of knowledge, data, and talent and increase the international visibility of Germany as a research hub. The EU initiative Manufacturing and Access to Vaccines, Medicines and Health Technologies (MAV+) illustrates that such investments not only secure regional supply, but also strengthen European supply chains and thus the resilience of the EU as a whole.<sup>[29]</sup> At the same time, strengthening health security in LMICs contributes to deepening global health diplomacy and supports African partners in breaking away from historically grown dependencies and building greater independence and regional ownership.

## 4. Answers to frequently asked questions

### “Why invest in other countries when we have problems here in Germany?”

Global health research also strengthens health protection in Germany. International knowledge transfer on topics such as vector-borne diseases, antimicrobial resistance, and pandemic preparedness benefits research, healthcare, and prevention in Germany as well. Diseases do not stop at borders; they require joint, cross-border action.

### “Isn't that the job of the WHO?”

The WHO coordinates, sets standards, and collects global health data – but scientific knowledge comes from research. This must be promoted and carried out nationally, on a European level, and globally in order to enable evidence-based solutions and develop the basis for global standards.

### “Does it make an economic difference at all?”

Yes. Investments in global health research strengthen Germany's innovative capacity, particularly in areas such as biotechnology, vaccine development, and diagnostics. They create highly skilled jobs, protect supply chains and markets from crisis-related disruptions, and contribute to the development of skilled workers in international markets.

### “Why should German taxpayers' money go abroad?”

Global health research is not a one-way street, it also strengthens health protection in Germany. Diseases know no borders. International cooperation enables us to learn from existing experience and knowledge in other parts of the world. Every euro spent on global research is an investment in prevention, stability, and security.

### “Doesn't this mainly benefit other countries?”

Global research partnerships are reciprocal – German universities, companies, and citizens benefit from joint studies, better data, clinical networks, and technological progress.

### “Isn't this basically classic development cooperation?”

Global health research complements development cooperation, but is primarily scientific cooperation with a shared interest in knowledge and exchange. It is based on partnership, reciprocity, and scientific excellence, and generates knowledge that benefits both LMICs and Germany. While development cooperation often follows a more one-directional logic and can strengthen security and soft-power objectives, research creates solutions that can be applied within Germany and globally and developed into innovations that reach global markets.



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# 6. The signatories

Dr. Rebecca Ingenhoff, Nora Anton  
German Alliance for Global Health Research

Secretariat c/o Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin  
Charitéplatz 1, 10117 Berlin  
e: secretariat@globalhealth.de  
t: +49 30 450 572 100  
www.globalhealth.de | linkedin.com/company/globalhealth-de

## On behalf of the interdisciplinary Steering Committee of GLOHRA 2024 – 2026

Dr. Ahmed Abd El Wahed  
Universität Leipzig

Prof. Dr. Shadi Albarqouni  
Universitätsklinikum Bonn

Prof. Dr. Merike Blofield  
Universität Hamburg

Prof. Dr. Dr. Kerem Böge  
Charité Universitätsmedizin Berlin

Prof. Dr. Walter Bruchhausen  
Universitätsklinikum Bonn

Prof. Dr. Amélia Camarinha Silva  
Universität Hohenheim

Prof. Dr. Manuela De Allegri  
Universitätsklinikum Heidelberg

PD Dr. Meral Esen  
Universitätsklinikum Tübingen

Dr. Daniela Fusco  
Bernhard-Nocht Institut für Tropenmedizin

Torben Heinsohn  
Helmholtz Zentrum für Infektionsforschung

Prof. Dr. Beate Kampmann  
Charité – Universitätsmedizin Berlin

Prof. Dr. Frank Klawonn  
Ostfalia University of Applied Sciences &  
Helmholtz-Zentrum für Infektionsforschung

Dr. Dr. Carsten Köhler  
Universitätsklinikum Tübingen

Prof. Dr. Charlotte Köhler  
Europa-Universität Viadrina

PD Dr. Shannon McMahon  
Universität Heidelberg

Abed-Nego Oubda  
Technische Universität Dresden

Prof. Dr. Clarissa Prazeres da Costa  
Technische Universität München

María Camila Ramírez  
Medizinische Hochschule Hannover

Prof. Dr. Nikkil Sudharsanan  
Technische Universität München

## GLOHRA Strategic Advisors

Prof. Dr. Kayvan Bozorgmehr  
Universität Bielefeld

Prof. Dr. Eva Rehfuess  
Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität München

Design: Helmut Kraus

