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GHIT Fund infuses 1.37 B yen to develop new lifesaving drugs

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The Global Health Innovative Technology (GHIT) Fund in Japan has announced a total of 1.37 billion yen to invest in seven partnerships to develop new lifesaving drugs and diagnostics for malaria, Buruli ulcer, Chagas disease, leishmaniasis, schistosomiasis, and soil-transmitted helminths (STH). This includes three newly funded projects and four that will receive continued funding.

As of September 29, GHIT's portfolio includes 50 ongoing projects: 26 discovery projects, 16 preclinical projects and eight clinical trials. The total amount of investments since 2013 is 22.3 billion yen (US$211 million).

"It is tremendously important that research and development (R&D) for neglected diseases, temporarily paused during the spring and summer due to the pandemic, are gradually resuming all over the world," said GHIT's CEO and Executive Director, Catherine Ohura.

"We are very thrilled about the new investments in clinical stages, such as the development of a treatment for leishmaniasis, entering Phase I trials in humans, and the development of a rapid diagnostic kit for schistosomiasis, using patient specimens in the Philippines and Kenya. Additionally, other investments in the target and discovery stage include such innovative approaches as a recombinant anthelmintic protein drug for STH, rapid diagnostic technology for Buruli ulcer, and compound screening in collaboration with multiple Japanese companies. These new candidates will strengthen our portfolio and provide new hope for patients and healthcare professionals," Ohura continued.