

FAQS: The Bill & Melinda Gates Medical Research Institute (Gates MRI)

What is the Gates MRI?

The Gates MRI is a non-profit biotech organization dedicated to the world's most vulnerable populations.

Our mission is to develop solutions to end preventable deaths caused by diseases that affect the world's poorest people. Our goals are to eradicate malaria, accelerate the end of the tuberculosis epidemic, and end diarrheal deaths in children. Our focus is translational medicine, advancing novel drug and vaccine candidates against the aforementioned diseases from the laboratory into human studies.

Why did the foundation launch the Gates MRI?

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation decided to establish the Gates MRI because it wants to accelerate the development of novel drugs and vaccines for diseases that remain major causes of mortality, poverty, and inequity in developing countries.

The Gates MRI will help researchers think big, explore ideas, collaborate across disciplines, and take a fearless approach to scientific inquiry in a way that isn't always possible in the private sector or in academic research labs.

Why is the institute focusing its efforts on malaria, tuberculosis, and enteric and diarrheal diseases?

Malaria, TB, and diarrheal diseases combined cause five deaths every minute.¹ Accelerating the development of life-saving interventions for these diseases could help to dramatically reduce the global burden of infectious disease.

Why now?

The tools being used in global health R&D are maturing, and we have a better understanding of how to integrate these for late pre-clinical through early clinical drug development. Even just five years ago, we didn't have the necessary tools to achieve our goals.

The Gates MRI approach aims to apply the latest relevant breakthroughs—not just in infectious disease, but across new areas of study, such as immuno-oncology or gene therapy—to translational medicine for our focus diseases. We want to accelerate the development of new solutions.

Why has the translational space been targeted by the Gates MRI?

Translational medicine—the process that evaluates promising scientific discoveries and translates them into potentially viable medical products—is the most complex stage of

¹ WHO Diarrhoeal disease fact sheet, updated May 2017; WHO Global Tuberculosis Report 2017; WHO Malaria Policy and Advisory Committee Meeting Report 2018

development. Often referred to as the “valley of death,” approximately 90 percent of biomedical discoveries fail before making it to market.²

We believe that to increase the probability of successfully advancing discoveries to products, it is imperative to test hypotheses, learn fast, and then feed those learnings back into the strategy.

How is the Gates MRI’s approach to translational medicine unique?

The Gates MRI will work across multiple interventions and disease areas, and aims to build on the best science by applying innovations from other disciplines, such as cancer research or engineering, to developing solutions for infectious diseases. Since we are not accountable to commercial interests, we are free to focus exclusively on our bottom line: lives saved.

What types of partnerships will the Gates MRI pursue?

The Gates MRI will collaborate with foundation product development partners, academia, pharmaceutical and biotech companies, Low/Middle Income Country (L/MIC) manufacturers, and non-profit organizations on upstream and downstream activities. We will establish partnerships that leverage assets, capabilities, and expertise in order to accelerate product development for our disease areas of interest.

How will the Gates MRI measure success?

We believe it is our responsibility to deliver on our bottom line: lives saved. Iterating fast is essential to our learning and growth. And in the end, it will be the best facilitator of our success.

What is the distinction between the Gates MRI and the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI)?

CEPI is focused on accelerating the development of vaccines for emerging infectious diseases. The Gates MRI will focus on developing interventions to fight long-established epidemics.

What role does the foundation see for other funders?

Governments and other funders continue to play an essential role in financing global health product development and in supporting the regulatory approval and delivery of successful product candidates. We hope that the Gates MRI will help to increase the number of potentially viable product candidates that donors, product development partners, developing country manufacturers, and others can then help move through later phases of development.

Will the Gates MRI only take product development to phase 2?

The Gates MRI will focus on translational product development (defined as preclinical candidate selection to human/clinical proof of concept in the target population). Once a candidate has achieved human proof of concept, the plan is to partner the program with an organization that has late-stage development and manufacturing expertise. Late-stage development partners may include non-profit product development partners, Low/Middle Income Country (L/MIC) manufacturers, and pharmaceutical companies.

² BIO, Biomedtracker, and Amplion Study on Clinical Development Success Rates 2006-2015

How will the Gates MRI share its findings?

The Gates MRI will adhere to the foundation's [global access](#) and [open access](#) policies.

Where is the Gates MRI located?

The Gates MRI is headquartered in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

For more information (press only): press@gatesmri.org.