Our vision

“ The power of research and innovation will improve the health and well-being of those burdened by infectious diseases of poverty.”

Our Mission

“ To foster an effective global research effort on infectious diseases of poverty and promote the translation of innovation to health impact in disease endemic countries.”
OUR HISTORY AND ACHIEVEMENTS

Established in 1975, the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) is hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO) and is co-sponsored by the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the World Bank and WHO. TDR’s organizational arrangement as a United Nations-based programme, engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders, puts it in a unique position to play a pivotal role as a catalyst, facilitator and advisor in the global health research debate.

TDR has a proven record of major contributions in the development of new and improved approaches to controlling infectious diseases of poverty, and the building of research capacity and leadership in disease endemic low- and middle-income countries. TDR’s achievements were internationally recognized in 2011 when it won the prestigious Gates Award for Global Health. Achievements include:

- Leading research in support of 5 major neglected disease elimination campaigns.
- Developing in special partnerships with others, 12 new drugs for parasitic diseases.
- Generating evidence for demonstrating the effectiveness of insecticide-treated bednets and artemisinin-combination therapy, now the mainstay of malaria control and treatment.
- Supporting implementation research for onchocerciasis as a model of side-by-side control intervention and research in public health.
- Strengthening research capacity both in institutions and by training thousands of individual researchers in disease endemic countries.
- Developing basic molecular entomology, leading to new genetic engineering strategies for disease vector control.

The global health environment has changed much since the establishment of TDR. Many new players have joined the fight for better health in the poorest countries, creating a dynamic environment with great potential to make significant advances in global health. The solid foundations of TDR, combined with this responsive and forward-looking strategy, put it in a strong position to ensure that research and innovation are harnessed to improve the health and well-being of those burdened by infectious diseases of poverty.
IMPACT GOALS

Our vision, of making research and innovation improve the health of those burdened by infectious diseases of poverty, has been translated into specific goals for impact. These build on the Programme’s strengths and provide flexibility to draw on new innovations. Some of these goals are long-standing aims that require years of sustained commitment, while others offer fast, efficient solutions for improved control and treatment.

We aim to:

- **Foster research** on infectious diseases of poverty that leads to health improvement.
- **Engage disease endemic regions and countries** in setting the health research agenda and harmonizing the global response.
- **Strengthen the capacity** of individuals and institutions in disease endemic countries to perform research related to their own priority health issues.
- **Develop innovative knowledge**, solutions and implementation strategies that respond to the health needs of disease endemic countries.
- **Translate innovation**, knowledge, solutions and implementation strategies to policy and practice improving health.
- **Promote the involvement** of individuals, communities and societies in the use of research evidence to reduce the burden of endemic diseases in their countries.
OUR GUIDING PRINCIPLES

TDR was founded upon solid core principles that have stood the test of time and have led to much success and impact. We share WHO’s research strategy principles of IMPACT, QUALITY and INCLUSIVENESS and these values provide a foundation for all of our activities.

IMPACT

- **Impacting** upon public health, through research and knowledge dissemination
- **Fostering** regional, national, institutional and individual capacity strengthening
- **Facilitating** knowledge sharing and networking
- **Addressing** strategic knowledge gaps in the control of infectious diseases of poverty
- **Harnessing** innovation to improve health in low- and middle-income countries
- **Integrating** research aims and capacity development goals to achieve broad impact

QUALITY

- **Maintaining excellence** in training and research outputs
- **Promoting standards of good practice and ethical conduct** in research
- **Efficiently and transparently managing** resources, to ensure health returns for investment in research
- **Acting with respect** and open communication in all endeavors

INCLUSIVENESS

- **Promoting equity** and supporting research and capacity development, for the benefit of all
- **Building** on the strengths and resources within disease endemic countries
- **Increasing** the voice of disease endemic countries in setting the research agenda
- **Adding value** by working in true partnership
OUR PRIORITIES

There is a long list of potential research needs on the most neglected diseases. In consultation with our governing bodies and other stakeholders, we take a well-defined approach to mapping our priorities. All activities need to satisfy three general criteria before being considered. The priority of an activity is further judged against its fulfilment of a range of specific criteria.

GENERAL CRITERIA

1. Where a **positive impact** can be made in the control and treatment of infectious diseases of poverty.
2. Where the activity is a **priority of disease endemic countries**.
3. Where TDR has **specific advantages** in addressing a health research issue.

SPECIFIC CRITERIA

- Fills a critical knowledge gap
- Responds to a need for capacity strengthening
- Promotes social and gender equity and reaches the most disadvantaged
- Has novelty and innovation
- Encourages multidisciplinary, multi-sectorial approach
- Interacts with control programmes and communities
- Has a strategic benefit
- Maximises the link between research and capacity building
- Demonstrates feasibility, potential sustainability and value for money
IMPLEMENTING OUR VISION

To bring our mission to practical action, we have developed two main programmes of activity. Through these complementary and interacting vehicles, the principles, impact goals and priorities of TDR are implemented to allow us to make a difference in the fight against infectious diseases of poverty.

INTERVENTION AND IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

- **INTERVENTION RESEARCH**: developing and evaluating methods, tools and strategies for effective treatment and control of disease.
- **IMPLEMENTATION AND OPERATIONAL RESEARCH**: optimizing the translation of innovation to health impact in disease endemic countries.
- **RESEARCH ON VECTORS, ENVIRONMENT AND SOCIETY**: addressing complex interactions influencing disease transmission and control, through integrated, multidisciplinary, ecosystem- and community-based research.

RESEARCH CAPACITY STRENGTHENING AND KNOWLEDGE MANAGEMENT

- **RESEARCH CAPACITY STRENGTHENING**: supporting training, leadership development and project-related capacity building to strengthen the ability of countries and regions to respond to their own research needs.
- **GAP ANALYSIS FOR AGENDA SETTING**: promoting evidence-based priority setting to identify emerging needs in research and capacity strengthening.
- **PARTNERSHIP AND ENGAGEMENT**: building networks and collaborating with WHO, TDR co-sponsors and partners to harmonize around and align with global health goals.
MANAGING FOR SUCCESS

Our success is dependent not only on quality science, but also on its efficient management and attention to detail. This requires a multi-disciplinary approach to best practise, innovation and excellence, which is carried out through:

ENSURING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

• Aiming to further strengthen our governance in which disease endemic developing countries and developed countries form a unique global partnership.
• Striving to draw on the expertise and network of our four co-sponsors and the Joint Coordinating Board.

MOBILIZING RESOURCES

• Aiming to further broaden our support base and become a partner of choice for research on diseases of poverty.
• Enhancing financial sustainability of our research and capacity building activities through seeking co-funding from committed partners.

MAXIMIZING OUR IMPACT

• Ensuring that efficient and effective management processes are in place to deliver tangible results.
• Aiming for the highest standards in the activities we support.
• Providing value for money, by maximizing our resources through good planning, timely implementation and leveraging outcomes.

ANTICIPATING RISKS AND REDUCING UNCERTAINTIES

• Developing a culture of risk management, to better support the planning, implementation, decision-making and budget allocation.
• Committing to work actively towards a strong risk management system that enables anticipation, assessment and monitoring of potential threats to the Programme.
ASSESSING RESULTS

- Learning from success and failure, using our results to improve performance and enhance our accountability.
- Working with our stakeholders to set targets and develop indicators to assess our contribution to health.
- Ensuring that an efficient information management system is in place for planning, monitoring and reporting.

MAKING A DIFFERENCE THROUGH EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION AND ADVOCACY

- Sustaining a trusted, open and credible source of information.
- Engaging and bringing together diverse partners to identify knowledge gaps and promote research that can generate new ideas and solutions.
The Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR) is a global programme of scientific collaboration established in 1975. Its focus is research into neglected diseases of the poor, with the goal of improving existing approaches and developing new ways to prevent, diagnose, treat and control these diseases. TDR is sponsored by the following organizations: