

May 9, 2024

## **The Global Health Innovative Technology Fund provides grant to Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma and DNDi for Chagas disease drug discovery**

Mitsubishi Tanabe Pharma Corporation (Head Office: Chuo-ku, Osaka; Representative Director: Akihiro Tsujimura; hereinafter, "MTPC"), a member of the Mitsubishi Chemical Group, has been conducting joint research with the Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi), an international not-for-profit research and development organization. DNDi and MTPC have generated lead compounds targeted to the treatment of Chagas disease, a neglected tropical disease, and have received a grant of 294 million yen from the Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund) for a two-year project to promote the optimization from these compounds.

In September 2019, DNDi and MTPC began joint research for Chagas disease using a grant from the GHIT Fund as screening platform for hit identification. In April 2021, DNDi and MTPC started hit-to-lead research to create lead compounds and have successfully obtained lead compounds that have shown efficacy in pre-clinical models of Chagas disease. Moving forward, DNDi and MTPC will advance lead optimization research with the aim of creating development candidates. In addition, in the fall of 2023, MTPC was jointly awarded "DNDi 2023 Project of the Year in pre-clinical research" for the joint research results.

Chagas disease, which is caused by infection with the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi* results in an estimated 10,000 deaths per year. New drugs for people affected by Chagas disease are needed because the only two drugs currently in use present specific challenges and treatment limitations notably due to the still controversial efficacy for the chronic stage of the disease, low tolerability, and long administration periods.

MTPC has identified "Access to healthcare" as one of the important material issues that it needs to address. In addition to creating pharmaceuticals that address unmet medical needs, we will contribute to improving access to treatment of infectious diseases in developing countries through our participation in the GHIT Fund. In this way, we will provide hopeful options for all people facing illness.

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## <Reference>

### ■ About Chagas disease

Chagas disease is a potentially life-threatening disease caused by the parasite *Trypanosoma cruzi*, which is transmitted by the bite of a kissing bug (reduviid bugs). Symptoms of Chagas disease include high fever, rash, lymphadenitis, hepatosplenomegaly and unilateral eyelid edema in the acute phase (1 week to several months), followed by myocarditis and megacolon in the chronic phase (10 years to several decades later) initially without symptoms. Chagas disease affects about 6 million people.

### ■ About DNDi Projects of the Year

Every year, DNDi recognizes teams and partners for outstanding progress in the areas of pre-clinical and clinical research. Nominated by the DNDi Scientific Advisory Committee and selected by the DNDi Executive Board, the awards recognize two projects from among more than 40 in DNDi's R&D portfolio. Find out more about DNDi's 2023 projects of the year: <https://dndi.org/news/POY2023>.

### ■ About DNDi

The Drugs for Neglected Diseases initiative (DNDi) is a not-for-profit medical research organization that discovers, develops, and delivers safe, effective, and affordable treatments for neglected people. DNDi is developing medicines for sleeping sickness, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease, river blindness, mycetoma, dengue, paediatric HIV, advanced HIV disease, cryptococcal meningitis, and hepatitis C. Its research priorities include children's health, gender equity and gender-responsive R&D, and diseases impacted by climate change. Since its creation in 2003, DNDi has joined with public and private partners across the globe to deliver thirteen new treatments, saving millions of lives. [dndi.org](https://dndi.org)

### ■ About The Global Health Innovative Technology Fund (GHIT Fund)

The GHIT Fund is a Japan-based international public-private partnership (PPP) fund that was formed between the Government of Japan, multiple pharmaceutical companies, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome, and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). The GHIT Fund invests in and manages an R&D portfolio of development partnerships aimed at addressing neglected diseases, such as malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases, which afflict the world's vulnerable and underserved populations. In collaboration with global partners, the GHIT Fund mobilizes Japanese industry, academia, and research institutes to create new drugs, vaccines, and diagnostics for malaria, tuberculosis, and neglected tropical diseases. <https://www.ghitfund.org/en>