

Unitaid and the Republic of Korea:

Advancing health innovation

The Republic of Korea and Unitaid are working together to bring lifesaving health innovations to those who need them most. Together, we are breaking down barriers to access these products and tackle some of the world's most pressing health challenges.

A member of Unitaid's Executive Board since 2008, the Republic of Korea has contributed a total of US\$117 million to date. In 2024, it ranked as Unitaid's second-largest donor. As a global leader in health innovation and advanced manufacturing, Korea is a key partner in expanding access to prevention, diagnostics and treatment for HIV, TB, malaria, maternal and newborn health, and pandemic preparedness. This collaboration leverages nearly two decades of Unitaid's experience to help ensure innovative solutions reach people in low- and middle-income countries.

About Unitaid

We save lives by making innovative health products available and affordable for people in low- and middle-income countries. We work with partners to identify innovative treatments, diagnostics and tools, help tackle the market barriers that are holding them back and get them to the people who need them most – fast.

Unitaid plays a unique role in the global health landscape by bringing together a wide range of stakeholders, including global health organizations, governments, researchers, manufacturers and communities, to accelerate access to lifesaving health innovations.

Unitaid's key results:



300 million+ people use Unitaid-supported health products every year



100+ ground-breaking products introduced since 2006



Our approach helps reach global health targets **three years faster**



Delivering **US\$46** of impact for every **US\$1** investment with savings of **US\$10 billion** by 2030.

Partnering to drive health innovations

Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response (PPPR)

The Republic of Korea has emerged as a global leader in pandemic prevention, preparedness, and response (PPPR). Through strong political leadership, the sharing of technical expertise, and sustained financial support, Korea is helping advance a safer, healthier world – closely aligning with Unitaid’s mission.

Building on lessons from the COVID-19 pandemic and the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A), Unitaid and Korea’s partnership is helping countries shift from emergency response toward long-term, resilient health systems, in close collaboration with local partners.

The adoption of the WHO Pandemic Agreement at the 78th World Health Assembly in May 2025 marked a turning point in global health cooperation. The agreement reflects a renewed commitment to more equitable, coordinated responses in the event of future health crises.

Together, we are transforming commitment into action – ensuring that no one is left behind in the next global health emergency.

Thanks to Korea’s continued support, Unitaid is helping turn this vision into a reality by:

- Supporting scalable innovations adapted to local health systems
- Accelerating the evaluation and introduction of effective pandemic tools
- Strengthening regional manufacturing to secure supply chains for pandemic response
- Promoting global coordination for equitable access to medical countermeasures

Regional manufacturing

The Republic of Korea is a leader in biotechnology and is uniquely positioned to support the strengthening of regional manufacturing capacities in low- and middle-income countries. Through technology transfer and bio-workforce capacity building, Korea’s expertise – especially in therapeutics and diagnostics – plays a vital role in strengthening health systems.

Unitaid is working to increase regional capacity to manufacture essential health products at scale, starting in Africa, where 70% of all pharmaceuticals consumed are currently imported. Our investments are supporting countries to locally produce diagnostic tests, malaria prevention drugs, and medical oxygen to support national responses to HIV, TB and malaria, and be better prepared for future health emergencies.

CASE STUDY:

From crisis to capacity: How Republic of Korea’s commitment is powering Africa’s diagnostic future

Africa is the world’s largest consumer of rapid diagnostic tests, with over half a billion used each year. Until recently, all these tests were imported – leading to delayed access to quality products and increased vulnerability to global supply chain disruptions, as seen during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In response, Unitaid and FIND partnered with Senegal’s Institut Pasteur de Dakar to launch diaTROPIX, a not-for-profit manufacturing site that has increased local production 15-fold. The Republic of Korea’s leadership was a key driver of this success. Korean biotech company *Bionote* provided critical technology and expertise, enabling the transfer of know-how to support local manufacturing.



As the need for COVID-19 tests has diminished, diaTROPIX is now harnessing this same technology to produce essential rapid diagnostic tests for HIV, malaria and other infectious diseases. Regionally manufactured products tailored to local needs not only enable countries to meet today's needs for quality-assured diagnostics, but also contribute to stronger, more resilient health systems that are better prepared to pivot in the case of future health emergencies.

This partnership exemplifies Korea's innovation and commitment to building self-reliance, strengthening regional health security, and leaving a lasting impact.

Advancing access to diagnostics

Unitaid works to develop, introduce and accelerate access to high-quality, affordable, and innovative diagnostics in low- and middle-income countries. By investing in a wide range of tools – including rapid diagnostic tests, self-testing kits, and point-of-care molecular diagnostics – we help close the critical diagnostic gap for diseases like HIV, TB, malaria, COVID-19 and cervical cancer, while strengthening preparedness for future pandemics.

The Republic of Korea is a key partner in this effort. With a dynamic biotech sector and recognized leadership in diagnostic innovation, Korea is advancing the development of cutting-edge technologies to improve disease detection in resource-limited settings.

For example, through the [DriveDx4TB](#) and [START4ALL](#) projects, Unitaid is working with implementing partners to accelerate the readiness and introduction of new tools to detect TB, as millions of people remain undiagnosed each year. Unitaid is working with South Korean manufacturers to support product trialing and validation while more broadly facilitating early access to innovative diagnostics in low- and middle-income countries.

CASE STUDY:

Portable AI-compatible X-ray device for TB screening

Weighing just 5kg and designed for use in the most remote settings, ultraportable digital chest X-rays are an essential tool for identifying TB early. Compatible with AI-driven computer aided detection software that interprets X-rays and performs on par with expert human radiologists, this combination of tools allows for early TB screening and triage outside of traditional health facilities.

Unitaid and CHAI reached a landmark voluntary agreement with South Korean manufacturer Poskom to expand access to its portable X-ray device. This collaboration will help bring life-saving TB screening closer to people's homes and communities in 138 low- and middle-income countries, including those most affected by the disease.

Photo: A woman is screened for TB at home with the ultraportable chest X-ray device.
© Poskom



Partnership at the heart of our work

Unitaid's strategic partnership model brings together governments, communities, researchers, companies, and national, regional and global health organizations, to make global health responses more efficient and sustainable.

Now more than ever, with funding gaps threatening to reverse progress, stronger coordination is essential to tackle increasingly complex global health challenges. While many organizations hold part of the solution, no single actor can address these challenges alone.

One example of Unitaid's partnership model in action is our collaboration with the Global Fund and Gavi in the fight against malaria. By aligning our complementary strengths, we drive greater impact, ensuring lifesaving innovations reach the people who need them most.

Each partner plays a distinct, complementary role in accelerating access to malaria innovations:

- **Unitaid identifies and invests** in innovative malaria diagnostics, treatments and prevention tools with high potential for impact, and connects a range of partners – from researchers, developers, governments and communities – to overcome the market barriers and ensure these tools reach the people who need them most.
- **The Global Fund and Gavi work with governments and communities to scale up proven tools** as they enter the market, reaching more than 100 countries around the world.
- **Together, we invest in providing equitable and affordable access to new tools** by executing market-shaping strategies.



By combining the innovative, cost-effective health products introduced by Unitaid with the global scope and community networks of the Global Fund and Gavi, we reach global goals faster and make health funding go farther, saving millions of lives.

Unitaid in numbers



0.5%

With about 0.5% of the funding allocated to the global health response, Unitaid delivers massive returns.



1.96%

Our lean Secretariat represents less than 2% of our total investment portfolio.



186m

By 2030, these products will avert an additional 186 million instances of illness or disease.



930k

In the process saving nearly 1 million additional lives.