

Japan-backed fund unveils TB, malaria therapy search

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A non-profit group said Friday it was launching a project to comb the catalogues of some of Japan's biggest drug companies in the hunt for treatments for diseases that kill thousands of people every year.

The [Global Health Innovative Technology](#) Fund (GHIT Fund), set up by the Japanese government, Japanese pharma companies and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, said they were looking at a potential five-year commitment of more than \$100 million to support research and development into neglected diseases.

The project will see researchers looking through the libraries of compounds held by drug companies to see what possible treatments they contain for tuberculosis, malaria, and other illnesses that threaten hundreds of millions of people in the developing world.

The announcement was made on the sidelines of the five-yearly Tokyo International Conference on African Development (TICAD) which will see [Japan](#) welcome heads of government from up to 40 African countries.

Japanese pharmaceuticals Eisai, Daiichi Sankyo, Shionogi, Takeda Pharmaceutical and the Institute of Microbial Chemistry (BIKAKEN), will allow the fund access to their compound libraries to identify possible therapies, a statement issued by GHIT said.

"The fund is unique in that it involves a consortium of pharmaceutical

companies who initiated a partnership with government and civil society to support research and development for neglected diseases," the statement said.

"It also is the first time the Japanese [government](#), a longtime top-funder of international aid, has made a significant commitment to developing new technologies that target diseases that are mainly a burden on poor countries," it said.

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