



**ESSENCE**  
on Health Research



ESSENCE on Health Research is an initiative that allows funders to identify synergies, bring about coherence and increase the value of resources and actions for health research. Its focus is on low- and middle-income countries.

[www.who.int/tdr/partnerships/essence/en](http://www.who.int/tdr/partnerships/essence/en)

## WHY ESSENCE?

Over the past several decades the value and impact of funding for health research has been given increasing importance. The result has been a sharp rise in uncoordinated and fragmented funding of an increased number of initiatives and projects.

Recognizing that such fragmentation and lack of coordination wastes time and resources, the ESSENCE on Health Research initiative aims to promote better strategic cooperation between funding partners as well as strengthening research for health, development, and equity.

### GOAL

To increase the impact and efficiency of support for strengthening health research capacity in low- and middle-income countries

## WHAT HAS ESSENCE ACHIEVED?

- **Policy dialogue** – Enhanced policy dialogue and strategic collaboration among funders of health research, as well as between funders and recipient countries. The number of ESSENCE member agencies has doubled since its inception.
- **Better mechanisms for harmonization and alignment of funders** – Proposed new mechanism for reviewing investments in clinical research capacity in low- and middle-income countries and coordinating capacity strengthening efforts, as recommended by the World Bank and Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness and Innovation (CEPI). This new mechanism is now being piloted in collaboration with the WHO Global Observatory on Health R&D and World RePORT.
- **Country Pilots** – Developed country-based pilot models of collaboration between programmes to harmonize practices and optimize resources. In Tanzania, this has led to the development of TASENE - a joint programme of funding between Tanzania, Sweden and the Netherlands.
- **Innovative approaches to optimization of resources** – Developed good practice guidance documents that detail successes and failures in strategies, approaches and support for strengthening research capacity. Below are some examples.



# WHO IS INVOLVED?

ESSENCE members include some of the top funders of health research around the world. These include health research funding agencies, international health institutions, government research agencies, development agencies, philanthropists and multilateral initiatives.

ESSENCE on Health Research members are advised by a Steering Committee of seven members, representing European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP); Fogarty International Center - National Institutes of Health, (FIC/NIH); International Development Research Centre (IDRC); South African Medical Research Council (SAMRC); Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (Sida); Wellcome Trust; Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction (HRP); and the Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), which hosts the Secretariat of the initiative.

Please visit the website for a complete listing of our members.



*"Over its ten years of existence, ESSENCE has proven its unique role in facilitating enhanced policy dialogue between the funders of health research. It is unmatched by any other forum or network of funders".*

*Hannah Akuffo - Senior Specialist, Sida, Co-chair, ESSENCE Steering Committee*



*"ESSENCE is exceptional in its diversity of the types of funders that we bring together. We invite any funder of global health research capacity to connect with the ESSENCE community as we work together to strengthen the impact of our investments".*

*Linda Kupfer - Senior Scientist, FIC/NIH, Co-chair, ESSENCE Steering Committee*

## WHY GET INVOLVED?

The ESSENCE initiative is open to a broad range of agencies, who:

- help address the research capacity needs expressed by partner countries
- want to learn more about the countries where investments have been made
- provide better mechanisms and innovative platforms for alignment of funders
- develop improved methodologies, monitoring and evaluation indicators to track the impact of investment in capacity development at all levels



*ESSENCE members at the annual meeting in London, UK, April 2019*

## CRITERIA FOR PARTICIPATION

ESSENCE on Health Research initiative members must represent agencies and research councils which are funders of research capacity strengthening for health and development; these agencies may be from high-, middle- or low-income countries.

**Secretariat is hosted at:**



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