

CONTINUING
THE FIGHT AGAINST
PANDEMICS IN
THE COVID-19
ERA



University Hospital of Cocody in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire: a young mother speaks with a social worker in charge of the Depistneo project. It coordinated the systematic screening of the HIV and Hepatitis B in young mothers and their newborns.

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GLOBAL HEALTH AND FEMINIST DIPLOMACY: BOTH PART OF THE SAME STRUGGLE FOR ACCESS TO RIGHTS

The health crisis caused by the novel coronavirus has brought health issues to the forefront of the international political agenda.



STÉPHANIE SEYDOUX,
AMBASSADOR FOR
GLOBAL HEALTH

In the face of the pandemic, L'Initiative has been exemplary: it demonstrated responsiveness, efficiency and solidarity, promptly deploying the technical assistance that developing countries needed.

L'Initiative has especially strived to mitigate the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, of which women and girls are the foremost victims through the increase of gender-based violence, school and health center closures, economic shock, and other causes. And to do so, L'Initiative has relied on the gender equality road map proposed by Expertise France. **French technical expertise was mobilized to achieve equality and empowerment, to fight violence against women and girls, and to facilitate their access to sexual and reproductive health and rights.**

Pursuing its feminist diplomacy, France has made these challenges a priority. The hosting of the Generation Equality Forum in June 2021 will highlight this

commitment, as well as that of the multi-actor partnership “Bodily autonomy, and sexual and reproductive health and rights.” The solidarity-based development bill, which will soon be passed into law, will consolidate this priority.

I would also like to praise L'Initiative's unflinching commitment in all these areas, which translates into its support for projects promoting sexual health and better access to quality services for adolescents in West and Central Africa, such as JADES (Solthis) and Kora-Dud (Alliance Nationale des Communautés pour la Santé). **In 2021, L'Initiative will carry on fighting by strengthening this rights- and gender-based approach.**

In 10 years, L'Initiative has done exceptional work, while innovating and reinventing itself to be able fulfill people's needs. **L'Initiative is the perfect synthesis of our bilateral and multilateral actions:** it has materialized France's commitment to equality and to the right to health and well-being—an action of which we can be proud. 🌍

"TO ALWAYS BE PRESENT AND TO CONTINUE SUPPORTING OUR PARTNERS"


In global health, the year 2020 will go down in history.

The success of the Lyon Replenishment Conference in 2019, as the Global Fund was about to open a new funding cycle, raised great hopes. In early 2020, the global community was fully mobilized to put an end to three great pandemics of HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria by 2030. But that was before the COVID-19 pandemic took the entire world by surprise and reminded us that infectious diseases remain a serious threat in the 21st century.

In an unprecedented context, Expertise France worked hard to face up to the crisis, thanks to its teams' mobilization, including that of L'Initiative in the Health Department. I would like to pay tribute to their commitment and their responsiveness during this year like none other. Their commitment made major achievements possible: the reprogramming and additional funding that allowed project leaders to continue their activities; supporting research projects in partnership with the French Agency for Research on AIDS and Viral Hepatitis (ANRS) to continue re-

search in developing countries and reorganizing technical assistance to provide guidance for countries submitting funding requests to the Global Fund.

Thanks to L'Initiative, in 2020, **13 technical assistance missions were implemented** through the Global Fund's "C19RM" plan. A total of **27 projects in the process of being funded were able to benefit from reprogramming** involving €600,000, and **€2.7 million worth of additional funding was committed**. This close cooperation with the Global Fund continues in 2021, as the fight against COVID-19 is far from over.

This is the flexibility that characterizes us: the ability to quickly mobilize technical assistance (sometimes in a few days' time), to rapidly deploy experts on the field or remotely, to create new procedures and working methods. All of this in order to always be present and to continue supporting our partners closest to our ultimate beneficiaries. With these assets, we will join the AFD Group this summer, to give French public aid even more impact in global health. 



JÉRÉMIE PELLET,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE
OFFICER, EXPERTISE
FRANCE

2011-2020

L'INITIATIVE HAS BECOME CRUCIAL IN THE FIGHT AGAINST PANDEMICS

139 funded projects

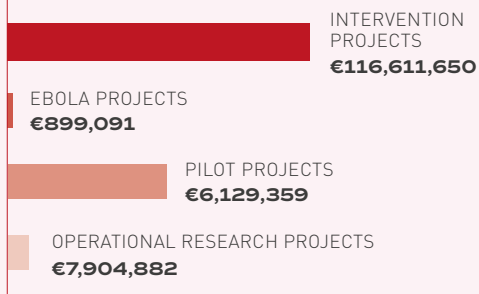


38

COUNTRIES
INVOLVED IN
AT LEAST ONE
PROJECT

**Budget
committed
to project
funding**

TOTAL
€131,544,982



118

INTERVENTION
PROJECTS

5

EBOLA
PROJECTS

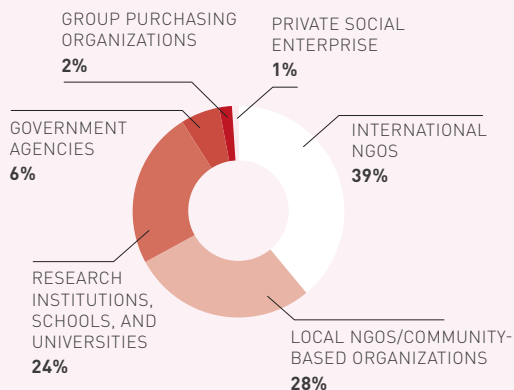
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OPERATIONAL
RESEARCH
PROJECTS

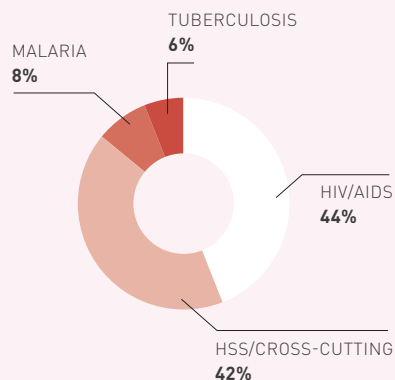
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PILOT
PROJECTS

95 project leaders
supported



Increasingly cross-cutting
projects

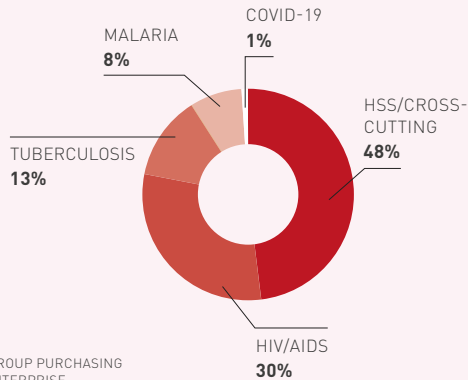
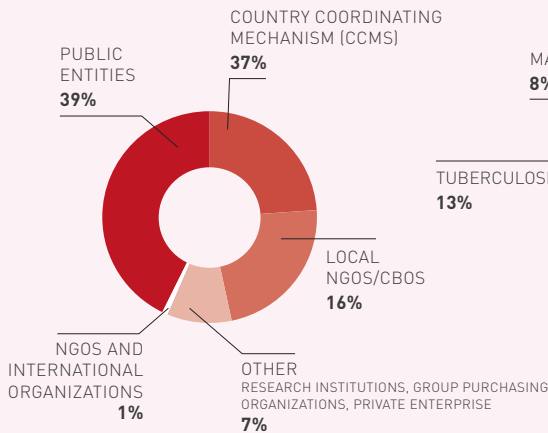


In 10 years, L'Initiative has established itself as a key mechanism in France's strategy to combat HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria. A reputed facility among its peers and partners, L'Initiative uses all its energy to bring technical assistance and support to transformative projects in French-speaking countries. Our goal: access to health for all, and the elimination of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria pandemics.

554 missions

3 out of 4 missions in support of national health authorities

Nearly 1 out of 2 missions dedicated to the health system strengthening



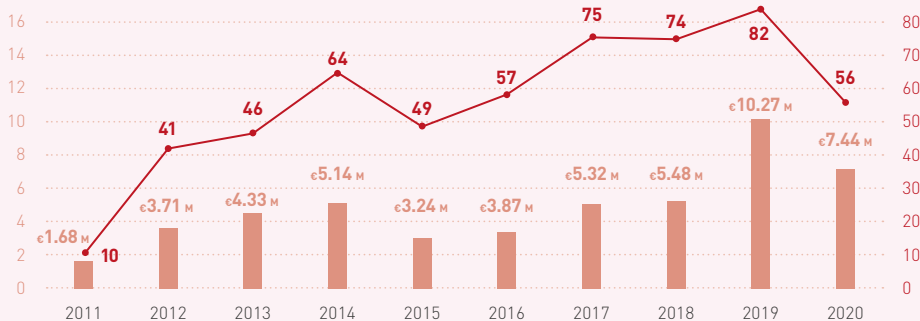
45,142
DAYS OF EXPERTISE

€50.5
MILLION

1,446
EXPERTS

247
BENEFICIARIES SUPPORTED BY AT LEAST ONE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE MISSION

An increase in technical assistance



€7.44 m
COMMITTED BUDGET

56
NUMBER OF COMMITTED MISSIONS

Looking back

10 YEARS OF INITIATIVES

Over the ten years following its creation, the 5% Initiative has continued its actions, changed its name, and renewed its strategy to keep up with the pace of the Global Fund cycles. Let's look back on the important steps that marked this unique program's evolution.

NOVEMBER 18, 2011

Signing of the agreement between FEI and the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The operator France Expertise Internationale (FEI) was tasked to implement the 5% Initiative, an indirect contribution to the Global Fund.

APRIL 27, 2012

Launch of calls for proposals

The selected themes were health system strengthening and operational research. A total of 118 projects were submitted.

Back to the roots

During the Global Fund's Third Replenishment Conference on the 4th and 5th of October 2010, France announced the creation of a facility representing 5% of its annual Global Fund contributions: the 5% Initiative. This mechanism was designed as a response to the recurring difficulties French-speaking global health stakeholders met when trying to access Global Fund resources or to ensure their effective implementation. In 2020, the facility became "L'Initiative."



DECEMBER 13, 2011

First steering committee

The committee defined the criteria of eligibility for support, relationships with the French diplomatic network, and the regulations aiming at avoiding conflicts of interest. It approved 3 requests for technical assistance out of 25 received.

APRIL 23-24, 2013

Strategic meeting with the partners

The 5% Initiative held a seminar to discuss the first year's results, anticipate the needs for technical expertise, and define the next rounds of calls for projects.

DECEMBER 7-11, 2013

The 5% Initiative's first international event

The 5% Initiative took part in the 17th International Conference on AIDS and STIs in Africa (ICASA) in Cape Town, South Africa.

JANUARY 2020

New identity

The 5% Initiative changed its name and became "L'Initiative."



SEPTEMBER 12-15, 2017

CCM in workshops

In partnership with the Global Fund, a workshop was organized in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, for the benefit of country coordinating mechanisms (CCM).

JUNE 2-3, 2016

First expert seminars

The 5% Initiative held a seminar in Paris for all the experts of its networks, who are regularly mobilized for technical assistance to our partners.

DECEMBER 1, 2014

Malaria seminar in Bangkok

Eighty researchers, partners, and civil society representatives discussed "New challenges for malaria control and elimination: the role of operational research for innovation in designing interventions."

Read here: bit.ly/article-malaria-journal

OCTOBER 9-10, 2019

Sixth Global Fund Replenishment Conference in Lyon, France

Under France's Leadership, the Global Fund raised 14 billion dollars in pledges, an unprecedented amount for a multilateral health organization.

FEBRUARY, 2019

Launch of the presidential initiative for health in Africa

This was the first pilot project of the 5% Initiative.

JANUARY 30, 2018

Presentation of the 5% Initiative's strategic evaluation report to the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

The document confirmed the relevance and necessity of the mechanism.

NOVEMBER 2-7, 2016

Training sessions on sexual and reproductive health

Adolescents' sexual and reproductive health is a major issue (see pages 10-11). In Saly, Senegal, an education cycle in sexual and reproductive health, gender, and human rights was organized for project leaders.

JANUARY 1, 2015

Creation of Expertise France

The French international technical cooperation agency was created from the merging of six operators, including France Expertise Internationale.



10 YEARS OF MULTIFACETED GOVERNANCE

Embodied by a multi-stakeholder steering committee, L'Initiative's governance facilitates dialogue, synergies, and cohesion in the fight against pandemics.

PILOT PROJECTS
Steering based on context

Since 2019, L'Initiative has funded *ad hoc* missions following suggestions of its steering committee or its teams. In this way, it puts issues that arise in specific contexts on the agenda and helps to achieve France's health, scientific, strategic, or political goals. Once they are approved by the steering committee, these projects are set up by L'Initiative, which identifies suitable leaders who will develop them in relation to their context. This is an opportunity to create new operational partnerships: L'Initiative is collaborating in this way for the first time with its German and British counterparts within a training project geared toward health system strengthening (see page 31).

The steering committee is in charge of defining L'Initiative's strategic directions, examining and approving technical assistance requests, and of finalizing the project selection process following evaluation. The committee meets once a month.

A committee that reflects the global health ecosystem

The committee brings together a variety of stakeholders in a rather unprecedented way for the development aid ecosystem: representatives from the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs, the French Ministry for Solidarity and Health, Agence Française de Développement, and the French Red Cross, but also from civil society, with representatives from Coalition PLUS, Sidaction, Solidarité Sida, and Global Health Advocates.

Since 2018, representatives of the French research sector have joined in, nominated by the French National Alliance for Life and Health Sciences (Aviesan). Ambassador for Global Health Stéphanie Seydoux also has a seat.



DR. CLAIRE REKACEWICZ,
FRENCH AGENCY FOR RESEARCH
ON AIDS AND VIRAL HEPATITIS (ANRS)
MEMBER OF L'INITIATIVE'S STEERING
COMMITTEE FROM 2018 TO 2020

By including French research actors in the steering committee, L'Initiative creates essential synergies and facilitates coherence in our actions. Bringing elements of context and perspective, the researcher's point of view informs the implementation and evaluation of public health programs. And vice versa: the strategies deployed on the field allow us to better understand the contexts in which we carry out our research programs.

Cross-cutting approaches in the field

Here's a beautiful example of this cross-cutting approach: the members of the steering committee facilitated the implementation of an innovative Planned Technical Assistance Program (DAT), deployed for the first time in Mauritania in 2021. Its goal? To enhance the capabilities of national stakeholders involved in the fight against pandemics, from ministries to civil society organizations, in order to improve Global Fund financing implementation on a national scale.

One of the main challenges in the fight against the three pandemics in Mauritania is to place civil society at the heart of the system. Indeed, community organizations play a pivotal role: in a context of concentrated epidemic, sometimes they are the



↑ *The signing, in January 2021, of the partnership agreement with the Islamic Republic of Mauritania's health authorities to implement planned technical assistance.*

only players who are able to safely bring comprehensive community care services to vulnerable populations, who are particularly exposed to HIV/AIDS. To meet this challenge, the representatives of the civil society members on L'Initiative's steering committee were actively involved. Thanks to their knowledge of the field in Mauritania and its community organizations, Coalition PLUS, Solidarité Sida, and Sidaction largely contributed to the development and deployment of the program, as well as to the recruitment of the expert in charge of implementing activities targeting civil society members. 🌐

➤ **Find out more**
bit.ly/planned-technical-support-Mauritania

Looking back

10 YEARS OF ACTIONS FOR GENDER EQUALITY

L'Initiative integrates gender equality in all its forms of action to combat pandemics efficiently. In 2021, it created a road map and a dedicated taskforce.

The objective of ensuring gender equality in our projects and our technical assistance missions falls within France's international strategy and corresponds to Expertise France's road map for gender equality. For ten years, L'Initiative has gradually provided itself with the means to fulfill this ambition.

A criterion for project evaluation

How can gender issues be better integrated into a call for projects against pandemics? This question marked L'Initiative's early considerations on the subject. 2015 saw the launch of the call for projects "Adolescents and young girls", targeting a population and age group for whom sexual and reproductive health is a vital issue. Since 2018, L'Initiative's team has

been trained in cross-cutting integration of gender in projects to guide its partners from as early as the negotiating phase. Simultaneously, proposals submitted during calls for projects, whatever the theme, are now all evaluated through the lens of gender integration. An annex to applications was designed, to help applicants identify key points for the integration process in their project.



OLIVIA NGOU,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF THE NGO
IMPACT SANTÉ AFRIQUE AND CO-FOUNDER
OF CIVIL SOCIETY FOR MALARIA
ELIMINATION NETWORK (CS4ME)

Gender inequalities hinder access to health services and contribute to the under-reporting of malaria cases. We advocate for systematic gender consideration in the fight against endemic diseases.

A marker to analyze gender integration in projects

Evaluating gender integration and adhering to a clear road map: this is what L'Initiative seeks to achieve by adopting the gender marker created by the OECD's Development Assistance Committee. This marker relies on a scoring system making it possible to evaluate the project's objective from a gender perspective: 0 if gender is not taken into account, 1 if gender is a part of the project, 2 if the cross-cutting integration of gender in the project is effective. This analysis makes custom guidance possible from the negotiation phase to deepen the integration of gender into the project if necessary. Between 2017 and 2019, 38% of the projects supported by L'Initiative scored 1 or 2. The goal: to reach 50% by the end of 2022.



50%
OF L'INITIATIVE-SUPPORTED
PROJECTS TO SCORE
1 OR 2 BY THE END
OF 2022

New mission objectives

As for technical assistance, gender was integrated into missions' terms of reference in 2019, and objectives in this matter must be set. Simultaneously, a webinar created by L'Initiative trains all experts in these issues and offers methods of deployment in the field. For instance, the HIV/AIDS Combined Prevention Plan in Guinea Bissau gave experts the opportunity to ensure equal representation and the presence of key populations, female sex workers, and women on the national team. The objective? To account for the specifics pertaining to HIV-positive women throughout the entire process.

While equal representation in teams of experts is encouraged, there is still room for progress. Of the mission expert positions, 26% were held by women, and 64% of missions had at least one female expert*. In 2021, a study will aim at identifying gender-related obstacles women face accessing expert roles, and it will suggest concrete actions as early as 2022. There is a growing awareness of the necessity to involve specific gender expertise from the funding request writing stage. This is a

need L'Initiative is ready to meet for the Global Fund's next funding cycle. 🌐

Find out more

bit.ly/enhance-gender-integration

**According to the survey about the technical assistance provided by L'Initiative to the NFM3 funding request, November 2020*

Find out more: bit.ly/survey-technical-support-NFM3



↑ Speakers and attendees after the round table "Youths and HIV" organized by Expertise France and Sidaction, during the ICASA conference in Kigali, December 2019.

10 YEARS OF COMMITMENT TO KEY POPULATIONS

Over the past ten years, our experience in the field of sexual and reproductive health has taught us this: in order to efficiently engage the most vulnerable populations, integrating the issue of human rights—including the rights of sexual and gender minorities—is absolutely necessary.

What's most important is to combat discriminations, especially those targeting sexual and gender minorities when it comes to accessing care or information about health.


Fighting stigmatization

As early as 2016, L'Initiative committed itself to tackling the issue by integrating

it into all of its projects related to sexual and reproductive health, especially those targeting adolescents. In 2017, a training session was organized for the local leaders and partners of four projects targeting young girls and adolescents in Africa: the goal was to provide everyone with the technical bases in sexual and reproductive health, and to deconstruct representations and stereotypes associated with sexuality.

Learning from the field

What lessons can we learn from our actions in the field? Which good practices should be adopted for better inclusion of sexual and gender minorities? As early as 2018, a first assessment was made, and, in late 2020, a quantitative and qualitative study of the projects funded since 2015 was launched to clearly identify what could be improved. This will help strengthen operational guidance for beneficiaries, by including this commitment in scoping documents.

With this study, L'Initiative will also fulfill its strategic mission to produce knowledge: the results will emphasize France's position on sexual and reproductive health and rights, especially with the Generation Equality Forum in June 2021 coming. 

SEXUAL AND REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH IN PROJECTS AND MISSIONS*



34%

OF PROJECTS
including 72% on
the HIV component

10%

OF MISSIONS
concern technical assistance,
including 77% on the HIV component

**Among projects and missions with at least one HSS component, between 2015 and 2020.*



“Dignity is at the heart of the medical issue”

BY ALAIN KRA, HEAD OF THE HUMAN RIGHTS DEPARTMENT, ENDA SANTÉ



In a project led by ENDA Santé and supported by L'Initiative, Alain Kra promotes the inclusion of human rights in the fight against epidemics in Côte d'Ivoire.

How do human rights shape health issues?

Dignity is at the heart of the medical issue. When discriminated against or victims of violence in their community, people most vulnerable to HIV and tuberculosis epidemics—sexual minorities, drug users, sex workers, etc.—

will not get tested or treated. At the hospital, if their dignity and their right to privacy are not respected, no relationship of trust can be built with the medical staff. Treatment adherence will also be jeopardized.

What do you do to remove these obstacles in Côte d'Ivoire?

With ENDA Santé, we are looking to create a more inclusive society for stigmatized persons, by raising awareness among

key players, such as law enforcement officers, lawyers, social workers and religious leaders. Simultaneously, we are developing local legal assistance resources: many HIV-positive people don't defend their rights because of their distrust in the legal system. We also created a panel of “friendly” lawyers to better represent victims of discrimination. We work with law schools to foster a pool of law professionals who are sensitive to these issues.

The Proximity Project: closest to LGBTI minorities

In Cameroon, LGBTI minorities are particularly affected by HIV. The taboos, prejudice, and violence they experience drive them away from health services. To counter this problem, Alternative Cameroun implements the “Proximité” project, funded by L'Initiative since 2018.

This project's goal is to teach the staff of ten LGBTI community organizations to deliver HIV and sexually transmitted infections proximity services: testing, implementation of pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), proctology treatments, and others. Since its launch, no fewer than 1,500 proctology consultations were offered in complete safety. These improvements in medical capabilities are coupled with guidance to better understand gender and to make possible the creation of a security plan to protect LGBTI persons.



Looking back

10 YEARS OF SUPPORT

L'Initiative provides continued technical support for its partners in programing and in administrative and financial management. The goal: making sure these tasks never hinder the realization of the partner's objectives.

This consistent support is provided by L'Initiative's teams and begins during the project selection phase, during which project leaders receive guidance from the negotiations phase to the program's closure.

Sharing rules for good management

Once the project is selected, a training session is organized to show the leaders how L'Initiative operates, administratively and financially. The goal: to share rules of good management and allow leaders to best anticipate the mandatory intermediate and final audits. Sessions are tailored to the partner's needs and familiarity with management issues. They take place in the field whenever possible, as was done in Southeast Asia in 2017, where L'Initiative's team spent four days with

the administrative and financial officers of the projects funded in the region. **This training program is proving particularly useful** for those who receive this kind of funding for the first time.

Listening to those on the ground

Once activities are launched, L'Initiative remains at the project leaders' disposal during project implementation. It answers questions, throughout the process of budget preparations, semi-annual



SOADE LATTRACH,
ADMINISTRATIVE AND
FINANCIAL OFFICER

"When it comes to administrative and financial monitoring, our role is not to restrict project leaders or to impose procedures. We are partners who work together toward a common objective. Our actions are carried out in the spirit of advice and support."

Long-term support for our partners

In 2019, L'Initiative led a technical assistance mission for the Congolese Youths Against AIDS Association Network (RACJ) to establish an institutional analysis and a corresponding reinforcement plan. The network then partnered with Médecins du Monde to implement a project funded by L'Initiative in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. This support helped strengthen RACJ, which became a project leader itself: today, it is the recipient of a grant from L'Initiative to improve access for Kinshasan adolescents to sexual and reproductive health services that are gender sensitive and integrate human rights issues. The support is continuing in 2021 via technical assistance aimed at consolidating RACJ's financial management and monitoring and evaluation capabilities.



↑ In Kinshasa, RACJ regularly organizes prevention events to raise awareness among youths for the fight against HIV/AIDS.

financial reports submissions, audits to anticipate, or the drafting of contract addenda. **Beneficiaries enjoy everyday support, which has been strengthened thanks to a growing administrative and financial team since 2016.** At the same time, if project leaders need specific assistance—to develop procedure manuals, for instance—targeted guidance can be provided by external experts.

Reinforced monitoring and evaluation, and capitalization systems

L'Initiative also provides support in monitoring and evaluation. Starting from the negotiation stage, it guides leaders in the creation of a relevant logical framework. Then, a steering and monitoring tool allows them to control their indicators on a continuous basis. In 2021, a platform shared with Expertise France's Health Department will be launched: it will allow

further improvement of project steering and their contributions to key indicators defined in L'Initiative's strategy.

Furthermore, several evaluation stages occur during the life of the project. They are designed to bring some perspective and recommend adjustments before the project's closure. **In addition, since 2015, L'Initiative has been carrying out cross-cutting evaluations;** these result in recommendations from several projects relating to the same issues. Capitalization projects were also launched in 2018, particularly for adolescents' access to sexual and reproductive services. Another approach to fuel collective reflection and to improve our practices. 🌀

➤ **Find out more**
bit.ly/Initiative-our-impact

2020, an exceptional year

“TO SERVE
IS OUR MOTTO”



ÉRIC FLEUTELLOT, TECHNICAL DIRECTOR OF THE 'MAJOR PANDEMIC' UNIT,
HEALTH DEPARTMENT OF EXPERTISE FRANCE

Despite the health crisis, L'Initiative's activity didn't slow down, far from it.

A record number of missions and commitments, uninterrupted technical assistance and internal reorganization in order to deal with the crisis: these are the challenges posed by this no ordinary year, and that we have taken up together.

COVID-19 struck suddenly in early 2020, and within a few weeks health systems were mobilized to diagnose, treat and support hundreds of thousands of patients. Not all countries were hit with the same intensity. But, everywhere, the implementation of measures necessary to slow down the virus' propagation caused great disruption in hospitals and health centers. Effective access to health services was limited and even interrupted. Extremely

reduced capacity of diagnostic capability, decrease in prevention, and interruption in care access are all indelible consequences of the crisis. The three pandemics of HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria have even "taken advantage" of the global health crisis created by COVID-19: **everywhere, one pandemic hides another.**

However, 2020 was a record year for L'Initiative. **Never before had it deployed so many technical assistance missions!** The entire L'Initiative team, its steering committee, our colleagues in Africa and in Asia—and most of us here—were sheltering in place, while being more than ever present on the front! Necessity prevailed: so that our partners could access funding from the Global Fund, we shook up our regulations and procedures. We initiated

Thet Aye, her daughter Shwee Yie Thin and her grandmother Da Nyunt are members of M-Fund, a non-profit and low-cost health insurance model for migrants in Thailand.

→



remote technical assistance and changed our working hours. **We also signed a record number of new funding agreements.** In this unprecedented context, a coordinated response had to be implemented. We had to work twice as hard, find the energy to not be discouraged and to be faithful to our commitment. **In these exceptional times, the complementarity between powerful multilateral aid and quick and flexible bilateral aid must be exploited.**

In Paris, between lockdowns, **we also revisited our organization, with a strengthened team**, diverse through its range of experience and competence, and expanded to better prepare the future and to better serve.

To serve is our motto. To serve coun-

tries, and their healthcare systems; to serve people, never forgetting the most vulnerable and the marginalized; to serve the Global Fund for more efficiency and responsiveness; and, finally, to serve the values and mission for global health held by France, a country concerned with the role played by civil society, research and human rights communities, and a country that also strives to invest in the long term for long-lasting impact. ☉

“**So that our partners could access funding from the Global Fund, we shook up our regulations and procedures.**”

2020, an exceptional year

A TIME OF CHALLENGES

After the historic success of the Global Fund's Sixth Replenishment Conference and the 20% increase in French contributions, L'Initiative had to meet the challenges of 2020.




ELSA MARCONNET,
L'INITIATIVE ADMINISTRATIVE
AND FINANCIAL MANAGER

Equipped with our new strategy centered on access to health for all and the elimination of pandemics, we implemented support systems on an exceptional scale in 2020, a year that proved even more unique than expected. To prepare for the Global Fund's new funding cycle, L'Initiative's steering committee invested over a million euros in the deployment of experts throughout twenty Sub-Saharan African countries and Southeast Asia in late 2019. And that was before the health crisis broke out, threatening to erase years of progress made toward the elimination of HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis.

In 2020, in a critical health context, L'Initiative committed €9 million to support partner countries in their funding requests: an amount never matched since its creation, and which represents funding for about 6,000 days of expertise. L'Initiative

2020 was an unprecedented year. We had to reorganize to keep up with our budget's increase and the multiplication of projects. And to face the health crisis, we quickly adapted our operations so that supported projects could continue, and vulnerable populations would not be further marginalized. We released exceptional funding for masks, equipment and inputs. We also funded renovations in health centers to allow them to serve patients while observing protective measures.

also continued its support to long-term projects that provide structure and transformative change, complementing Global Fund activities in the field. Its financial investments reached €23.7 million to support 14 projects in the field and 3 operational research projects, while reinforcing its support to ongoing projects to face the COVID-19 epidemic (see pages 24-25). 



53
COMMITTED
EXPERTISE
MISSIONS

INCLUDING
88%
IN SUB-SAHARAN
AFRICA

SENEGAL

GAMBIA

CÔTE D'IVOIRE

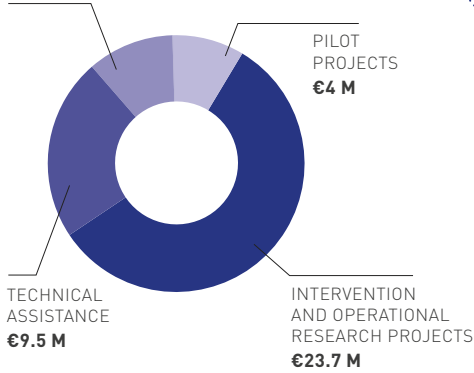
BURKINA FASO

6,000+
DAYS OF
EXPERTISE

MADAGASCAR

€41.7 M committed

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
AND MONITORING COSTS
€4.5 M



PILOT
PROJECTS
€4 M

TECHNICAL
ASSISTANCE
€9.5 M

INTERVENTION
AND OPERATIONAL
RESEARCH PROJECTS
€23.7 M

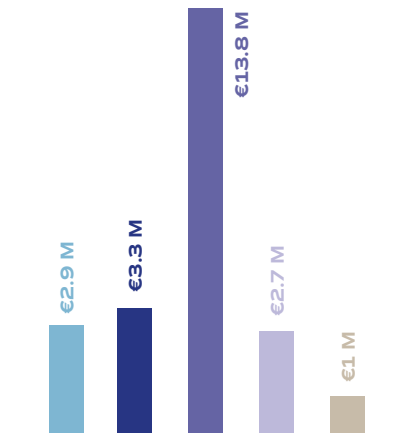
● 2 PLANNED TECHNICAL SUPPORT PROGRAMS IN MAURITANIA AND CHAD

● 5 COUNTRIES RECEIVED OVER 50% OF THE TOTAL EXPERTISE FUNDING, VIA 24 MISSIONS

€9.45 M for technical assistance missions

€23.7 M for project funding

- 3 OPERATIONAL RESEARCH PROJECTS to ramp up the fight against malaria in Greater Sahel and Central Africa
- 2 INTERVENTION PROJECTS to strengthen healthcare systems
- 12 INTERVENTION PROJECTS to serve vulnerable populations
- COVID-19 ADDITIONAL SUPPORT
- PROJECT AUDITS AND EVALUATIONS + PROJECT SELECTION COSTS



2020, an exceptional year

SUPPORTING THE BENEFICIARIES OF TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

To support our partners as they were facing the consequences of the Covid-19 pandemic, our team was mobilized—including remotely. Our operational mechanisms were adapted to ensure the continuity of technical assistance activities and implemented projects.

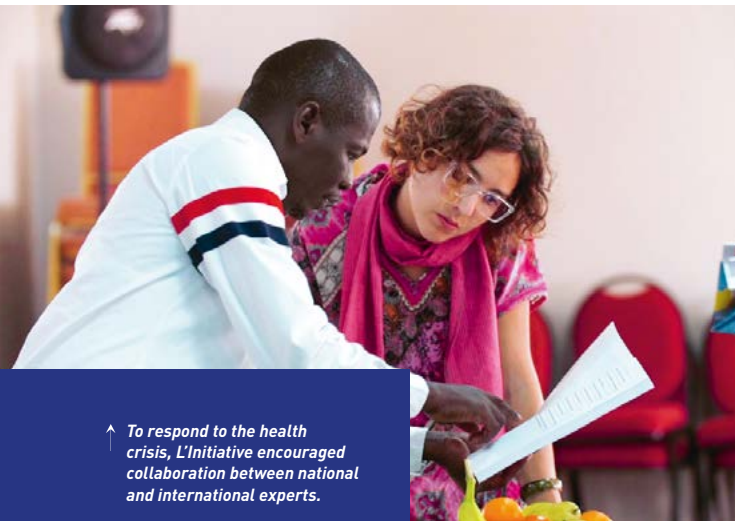
As is the case every three years, 2020 was a decisive year for countries eligible for the Global Fund; it was marked by the writing and the submission of funding requests for 2020-2022.

Sustained support for countries in the funding request phase

As early as March, in a chaotic international context, priority was given to continuity in supporting countries that were preparing their funding requests. Procedures were adapted for more flexibility and speed. L'Initiative deployed unprecedented resources: **34 countries were supported**, including 20 in French-speaking Africa; **over 260 experts were mobilized**; and **more than €9 million** was dedicated to that mobilization.

Adjusting mission implementation in the field

Interrupting support was out of the question despite the scale of the crisis. The reorganization of operations and




↑ *To respond to the health crisis, L'Initiative encouraged collaboration between national and international experts.*



MARIA KIROVA,
HEAD OF THE HIGH IMPACT
COUNTRIES DEPARTMENT,
GLOBAL FUND

During this singular year, L'Initiative succeeded in providing technical assistance while at the same time protecting the health of our experts and supporting institutions in our partner countries. Our close collaboration allows us to make sure that resources are well spent for expertise with real impact.

implementation were done remotely to guarantee technical assistance continuity. Closer coordination with experts and operators of technical cooperation in each partner country helped to mitigate the restrictions imposed by COVID-19 and to continue technical assistance.

This difficult and unprecedented context did nonetheless allow the development of good practices, which will last beyond the crisis. The use of national and regional expertise was facilitated by international travel restrictions. National experts played a pivotal role in coordinating all parties: Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM), national authorities, international experts, and L'Initiative project officers in Paris. 



A RESPONSIVE TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

45%

of missions implemented in less than a month

76%

of support missions for funding requests to the Global Fund for 2021-2022 launched in less than two months

88%

of the 43 funding requests supported by L'Initiative submitted to the Global Fund approved in first submission

€2.795 BILLION

of funding obtained for the fight against pandemics and COVID-19 thanks to L'Initiative's support



These figures are from a survey of L'Initiative's project officers on all support missions for funding requests during the 2021-2022 Global Fund cycle.

Supporting the Global Fund's response facility

To respond to the health crisis, the Global Fund launched the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM). Its objective: to mitigate the impact of the pandemic on HIV, malaria, and tuberculosis programs, and to urgently strengthen national and community health systems to ensure continuity of care. L'Initiative was mobilized to give a dozen West and Central African countries access to these funds, for as much as €100 million. Nearly €400,000 was invested by L'Initiative in technical assistance, including in monitoring and evaluation efforts. This commitment is being continued and strengthened in 2021.


2020, an exceptional year

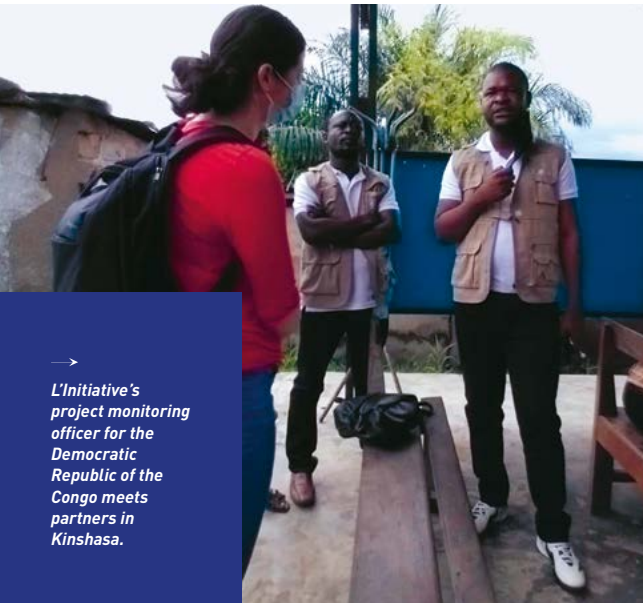
SUPPORTING FUNDING REQUESTS

During this year of writing and submitting funding requests to the Global Fund, L'Initiative took action at the request of its partners' Country Coordination Mechanisms (CCMs)—including when the health crisis forced all stakeholders to adjust their operations methodologies.



THOMAS TCHETMI,
THOMAS TCHETMI, OFFICER IN CHARGE
OF COORDINATING THE PROCESS
OF DEVELOPING FUNDING REQUESTS
IN CAMEROON, UNAIDS

*For the Global Fund's new cycle, the Cameroon Public Health minister asked UNAIDS to oversee the coordination of the funding request process. We supervised the selection of experts, some of whom were then mobilized by L'Initiative. Then, a participatory approach was deployed to include all parties' points of view: civil society, public administration, private sector, bilateral and multilateral development cooperation. But the health crisis disrupted the process, and it became impossible for international experts to be present and to conduct writing, reviewing, and approval workshops, for instance. **L'Initiative had to adapt quickly and ensure the continuity of technical assistance missions and the realization of the requests' crucial phases:** strategic plan review, development of the new strategic plan and financing requests, etc. L'Initiative's strength lies in its flexibility and its capacity to respond rapidly.* 



→
L'Initiative's project monitoring officer for the Democratic Republic of the Congo meets partners in Kinshasa.

“**L’Initiative’s strength lies in its flexibility and its capacity to respond rapidly.**”



BOUBACAR IBRAHIM NGORA,
PERMANENT SECRETARY,
NIGER CCM

L’Initiative is a long-standing partner of the Niger CCM. In 2020, it supported us from the launch of the country-level dialogue to the negotiation phase. **A community expert allowed us to emphasize the role of civil society in our funding request,** in particular regarding subjects connected to tuberculosis and HIV testing. Then, we organized feedback exchanges at each step of the process to inform community representative that their priorities were indeed included. But, very quickly, the health crisis disrupted our organization. The closing of borders forced us to work with international experts remotely. To ensure the completion of the writing process, L’Initiative provided us with Internet connection tools. **This flexibility and responsiveness are what we have always appreciated in our work with L’Initiative:** it knows how to make its support evolve according to the context, our strategy, and what works in the field. ☉



AÏSSATOU MBAYE NDIAYE,
VICE-PRESIDENT,
SENEGAL CCM

For this new funding cycle, we set up a specific monitoring committee to further involve Senegalese civil society in the development of the request, up to the negotiating phase and the implementation of the grant. In coordination with our other partners, L’Initiative’s experts supported us on the strategic level, helping us to identify the right methodology. During the country-level dialogue, **we organized four inclusive participatory workshops gathering representatives from the country’s fourteen regions to collect the very diverse high-priority needs of Senegalese communities.** After supporting one of these first-phase workshops, L’Initiative walked us through the capitalization and approval processes, which was crucial support to ensure the actual inclusion of civil society’s concerns in the request. **We obtained the implementation of an HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria observatory, which will be managed by civil society members.** It will allow the main beneficiaries of the Global Fund’s grants to take part in the decision making: a way for civil society to fully play its strategic role in the fight against the three diseases. ☉

“**Crucial support to ensure the actual inclusion of civil society**”

2020, an exceptional year

ALONGSIDE PROJECT LEADERS TO ENSURE THE CONTINUITY OF CARE

To guarantee the continuity of activities implemented by its beneficiaries and partners, L'Initiative adapted its support to the project leaders. By April, it had initiated new procedures to redirect its financial support.

In April 2020, a new mechanism was launched as a matter of urgency in order to reprogram current activities. This made it possible to redirect up to 10% of the project's initial grants toward adaptation activities to deal with the COVID-19 health crisis, such as prevention, treatment update, maintaining access to treatment, healthcare personnel training, and purchasing of equipment (hand sanitizer, gloves, masks, etc.)

Reprogramming activities

L'Initiative has thus facilitated the reprogramming of the activities of Santé Diabète, a NGO supported since 2016 for

its projects in Burkina Faso and Mali and that specializes in prevention and joint care of diabetes, tuberculosis, and HIV. It was a big challenge that involved redirecting part of the NGO's activities to a prevention and monitoring program on the link between COVID-19 and diabetes, this latter being both a comorbidity factor of COVID-19 and a pathology frequently associated with tuberculosis.

The Malian Federation of Associations for People with Disabilities (FEMAPH), supported by L'Initiative since 2018, also requested reprogramming. Thus, L'Initiative funded the development of specific activities to allow people with disabilities to access care safely, in spite of the deteriorated context. For maximum flexibility in the face of urgency, reprogrammed activities could start with the written agreement of a referring officer at L'Initiative, without waiting for the paperwork required to sign an addendum to their contract.



↑ The president of the Malian Deaf association receives masks that are for the hearing impaired, on June 25, 2020.

Releasing funds

When reprogramming was insufficient, supported project leaders were entitled to receive an additional grant from L'Initiative. This additional funding was allocated to fighting COVID-19 and adapting services to fight HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria in times of COVID-19, in connection with the project's activities: they reached up to 15% of the current grant. For maximum fluidity in obtaining the additional funding, the release was done through an expedited procedure, after a succinct request by project leaders.

With reprogramming and additional funding, no less than 27 project leaders received more support to deal with these exceptional circumstances. Simultaneously, L'Initiative decided to fund 6 projects

among 32 selected by the ANRS after its call for project "South COVID-19" was launched in April 2020, for a total of €943,003. The goal: to support research on the virus in countries with limited resources. 🌐

COVID-19: OUR ADDITIONAL SUPPORT MECHANISMS

€621,133

in reprogramming
for 16 projects

€2.80 M

of additional funding
for 21 projects*



**ANRS project not included*

2020, an exceptional year

ENSURING THE CONTINUITY OF HIV CARE IN THE MENA REGION

In the Middle East and North Africa (also known as the MENA region), coverage for HIV prevention and treatments is among the weakest in the world, and AIDS-related deaths continue to rise. The COVID-19 pandemic brought additional obstacles to care access. In the midst of the emergency, project leaders have been able to adapt their actions thanks to our support.



Solidarité Sida, ITPC-MENA, and five partner associations launched the **FORSS Program (Train, monitor, support: community mobilization for the fight against HIV in the MENA region)** in 2018 with the support of L'Initiative. The objective: to improve prevention, care, and access to treatment in Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, Mauritania, and Tunisia. The project set up a community observatory in each country and influences national and international strategies through advocacy actions.

With the COVID-19 pandemic, the main concern was to maintain access to community services in operation, all the while ensuring safety for all. Some activities were reprogrammed as a matter of urgency, and L'Initiative released €229,286 of additional funding. Food aid and hygiene kits were quickly delivered to



→ Covid-19 prevention poster produced by Al Shebab, FORSS Program's partner in Egypt.



←
Community facilitators from ten associations are trained in HIV quick testing and in hepatitis B testing by SOS Pairs Éducateurs in Mauritania.

2,714 beneficiaries in five countries. The partner association teams received protective equipment against COVID-19 and developed contingency plans to ensure continuity of services despite the difficult context. Since then, Solidarité Sida launched a study to evaluate the effects of COVID-19 on access to health care for persons living with HIV and key populations in the project's five countries. 🌐

Peer education at the service of key populations

Supported by L'Initiative since 2019, the **“Access to quality health services for key populations”** project, led by the NGO SOS Pairs Éducateurs, aims at improving the HIV testing offer in Mauritania by strengthening the capacities of ten civil society organizations. From the early stages of the health crisis, curfew and

measures to restrict non-essential activities have led to a drastic decrease in the activities deployed by these organizations, thus further weakening and isolating key populations. In response, SOS Pairs Éducateurs implemented an emergency strategy, supported by L'Initiative. The objective: ensure continuity of care and meet the needs of the most vulnerable persons in basic hygiene and food. Thanks to reprogramming of certain activities involving €34,349, food and hygiene kits were distributed to more than 200 people. The NGO was also supported by Coalition PLUS, a global network of community organizations and itself a beneficiary of additional funding from L'Initiative, to contribute to the continuity of care in Mauritania. 🌐

📌 Further reading

The Coalition PLUS report on this project (in French only): bit.ly/coalition-plus-reportage-Mauritanie

2020, an exceptional year

ELIMINATING MALARIA IN SOUTHEAST ASIA


In the Greater Mekong region, the number of malaria-related deaths decreased considerably in the past decade. But the emergence of resistance to artemisinin—the principal component of the best available anti-malarial drug—constitutes a major threat to the regional and global efforts deployed in fighting the disease.



**Advancing
knowledge with
the Institut Pasteur
du Cambodge**

When facing drug resistance, the key is to work as closely as possible with the people on the ground, in the places where contaminations occur. In Cambodia, most malaria-carrying mosquitos are found in forests, a veritable reservoir for the disease. Since 2018, the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge and the NGO Partners

for Development have implemented an operational research project with the forest-dwelling people in the district of Koh Nheak, in the north of the country. Funded by L'Initiative, they are seeking to understand transmission mechanisms in forest environments in order to design suitable control and prevention measures, mostly by means of community actions. In 2019, malaria incidence decreased by 45%, thanks to targeted actions making it possible to reach people in the most remote impacted areas.

For activities to continue in 2020, L'Initiative granted the Institut Pasteur du Cambodge additional funding. These funds not only served to provide the protective equipment essential to community workers and beneficiaries of the project, but they also allowed the institution to conduct COVID-19 information and awareness activities. 

➤ Further reading

Discover our story about this project:
bit.ly/report-malaria-forest



↑ The Institut Pasteur du Cambodge's research relies on forest workers trained to collect data from their peers and to test for malaria.



The historic success of the Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative (RAI)

In order to be contained on a broader scale, the anti-malarial drug resistance impacting the Greater Mekong region requires a coordinated response. This is the purpose of the Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative, launched by the Global Fund in 2013, in Cambodia, Laos, Myanmar, Thailand, and Vietnam. These countries present a number of socio-economic and geographic similarities (cross-border regions with many mobile or migrant populations, remote areas), which call for a joint response mechanism. The RAI coordinates the surveillance of malaria cases and ensures that all countries follow health recommendations, thanks to a robust network of local partners, including civil society organizations. Over the course of three funding campaigns launched since 2013,

L'Initiative gave RAI's the resources needed to recruit high-quality consultants, who help with the RAI funding requests, at both national and regional levels. Today, the results are visible. 🌐



IZASKUN GAVIRIA,
PORTFOLIO MANAGER
AT THE GLOBAL FUND



In the Greater Mekong region, we are now at a point where eliminating Plasmodium falciparum—the particular strain of malaria that is prone to becoming resistant—by 2023 seems attainable. Never in history has anybody managed to eliminate malaria in an entire region as quickly. This really can be seen as an achievement of historic importance.

FIGHTING HIV, TUBERCULOSIS, AND MALARIA IN THE SHADOW OF COVID-19



MICHAEL BYRNE, HEAD OF THE TECHNICAL ADVICE
& PARTNERSHIPS DEPARTMENT, GLOBAL FUND

The COVID-19 pandemic is creating the perfect storm of economic, health, and social crises

***Read the report:**
bit.ly/impact-Covid-HIV-TB-malaria

that is threatening to destroy decades of progress in the fight against poverty, inequality, and deadly diseases like HIV, TB, and malaria. **Our report on the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, TB, and malaria services and systems for health*** shows that

the novel coronavirus has massively disrupted actions in low-and middle-income African and Asian countries in 2020. The stark truth is that we will see more incremental deaths from HIV, TB, and malaria in 2021 as a consequence of the disruption caused by COVID-19 in health systems and mechanisms designed to fight pandemics.

Through fast action and funding from the Global Fund, governments, and partners, **we may have avoided the worst-case sce-**


nario so far in low- and middle-income countries. The Global Fund has already provided US\$990 million to help countries fight COVID-19 (for tests, treatments, and medical supplies), protect front-line health workers, adapt lifesaving HIV, TB, and malaria programs, and reinforce fragile systems for health. To support the international fight against COVID-19, we are leveraging our extensive health and community networks, our well-established health procurement and decades of experience fighting infectious diseases.

During this extraordinarily challenging year, L'Initiative played a critical role in ensuring the continuity of lifesaving programs and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 in the fight against the three diseases in countries where the Global Fund invests. L'Initiative has proven to

In Yeumbel, Senegal, health worker Bagen Coumba Ndiaye talks about the dangers of tuberculosis during an important awareness-raising community action during the COVID-19 pandemic.



be highly flexible and agile in improving the effectiveness of our grants and supporting countries in their response to COVID-19. **With the rapid deployment of technical experts in the field, L'Initiative has helped increase access to and effectively implement the Global Fund-supported programs** in Africa, Southeast Asia, and in the Caribbean while at the same time strengthening the capacity of civil society organizations and national health responses.

Since its creation ten years ago, **L'Initiative has been one of our closest partners in West and Central Africa.** Our partnership remains essential to beat COVID-19, safeguard the progress we collectively achieved, and continue to strengthen health systems to make this world safer for all. 

Together, for durable and resilient health systems

Working together is a key component of the elimination of pandemics and the reduction of mortality. That is the reason why Expertise France, and its German and British counterparts, GIZ/BACKUP Health and the British Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office, as well as the Global Fund have developed a joint initiative to strengthen health systems. The objective: to enhance the impact of the Global Fund's investments in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria, and to contribute to structuring care services by providing technical, programmatic, and operational capacity building to the people working in the health systems of our partner countries. Training sessions will be implemented with African universities to form a task force dedicated to the issue of health system strengthening for the Global Fund's next cycle.

FINANCIAL REPORT 2020

Expenditures by type of operator

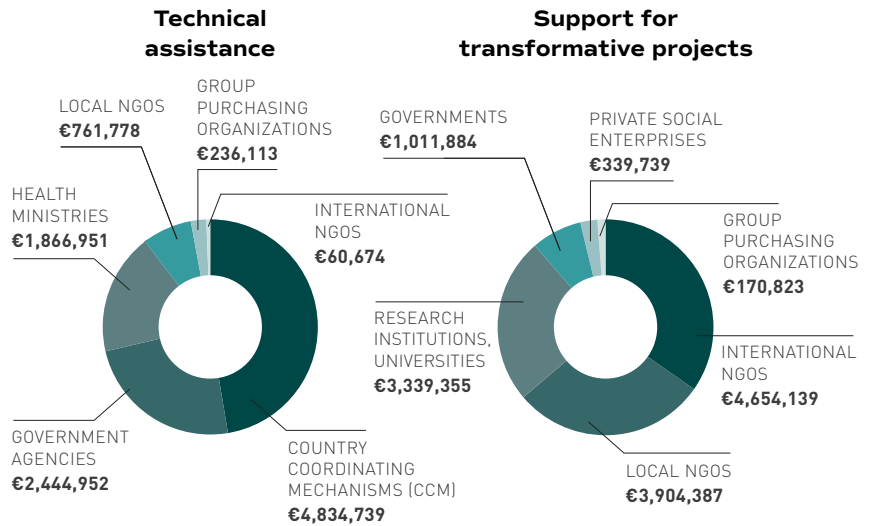
Global expenditures 2020
€28,563,508

INCLUDING
€10,207,206
for mobilizing
skills and technical
assistance missions.

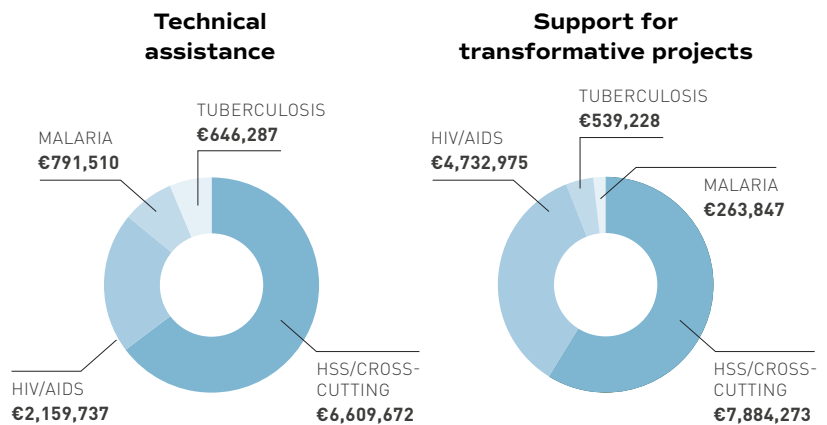
This figure represents all the expenditures made through the Expertise Channel in 2020, including on-site support to management units for Global Fund grants to Chad and Mauritania.

€13,420,323
for support to
catalytic projects.

This figure represents expenditures dedicated to the funding of field, pilot, and operational-research projects.

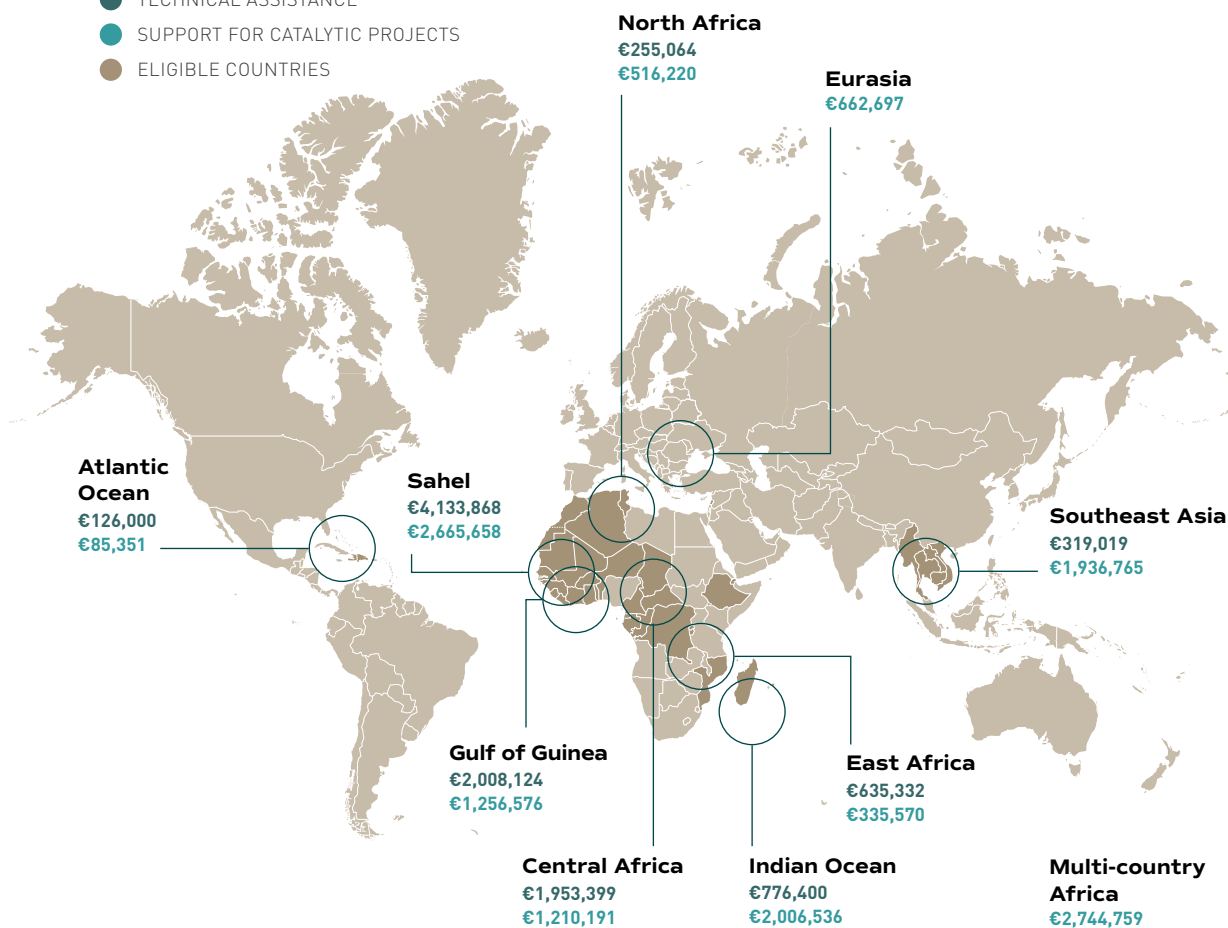


Expenditures by pandemic



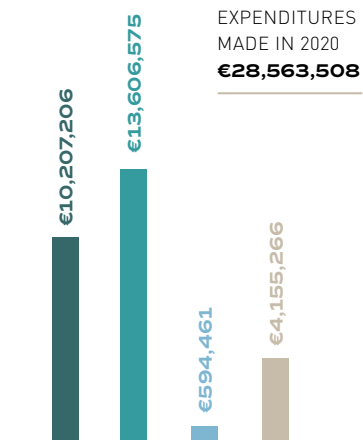
Expenditures by geographic region

- TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- SUPPORT FOR CATALYTIC PROJECTS
- ELIGIBLE COUNTRIES



Expenditure share

- MOBILIZATION OF SKILLS/ TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE
- CATALYTIC PROJECTS SUPPORT
This figure represents expenditures made for the funding of projects and includes call for project-related costs.
- CROSS-CUTTING ACTIVITIES
Training, monitoring-evaluation, audits, capitalization, etc., for catalytic projects and expertise missions.
- MANAGEMENT AND COORDINATION COSTS



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