

WHO Foundation Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

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WH 
Foundation



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General

What is the WHO Foundation?

The WHO Foundation is an independent grant-making foundation, based in Geneva, that sets out to protect the health and well-being of everyone in every part of the world, working alongside the World Health Organization and the global health community. It supports donors, scientists, experts, implementing partners, advocates, and more, from every country, in rapidly finding new and better solutions to the most pressing global health challenges of today and tomorrow.

Why was the WHO Foundation created?

The WHO Foundation has been set up with the vision to invest in every life. Tackling the biggest and most pressing global health challenges faced by humanity today, while preparing for those we will face tomorrow, is now critical. We have to be far more prepared to avoid further pandemics, prevent climate change health challenges from crippling our health systems and to ensure preventable diseases are avoided.

The Foundation was in development for nearly two years before it was launched in May 2020 and the impact of COVID-19 has shown even further the urgent need for investment in health. The Foundation funds programs and initiatives related to the three WHO pillars, and essential themes that are the foundations of better health. Currently, the WHO is not set up to approach individual or corporate donors. The WHO Foundation is dedicated to fundraising and tailored for specific types of donors. We speak their language, and we have the ability to craft tailored projects and partnerships.

For example, High Net Worth Individuals (HNWIs) look for a personalized process in which they can invest and engage, and the WHO Foundation can provide that. Furthermore, the WHO Foundation, as an independent entity, can offer tax incentives to donors. Similarly, WHO is not set up for donations from the general public where an internal system to handle donations would risk overly high transaction costs. In addition, the WHO Foundation provides a further layer of separation to protect the normative work of WHO from undue influence.

Where will the WHO Foundation be located?

The WHO Foundation has been established in the canton of Geneva, Switzerland. It works with service providers or liaison officers in key donor markets.

Legal structure and governance

What is the legal status of the Foundation?

The WHO Foundation is a legally independent entity under Swiss law, with its own bank account and staff. The Foundation is therefore legally not being established by WHO. However, a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) has been signed by WHO and WHO Foundation and is accessible here.

Why is the Foundation being set up in Switzerland?

There are a number of reasons for this:

- Proximity to WHO
- Flexible governance arrangements
- Relatively simple legal set-up and low establishment costs
- Robust legal and regulatory framework
- Neutrality of Switzerland

To whom is the WHO Foundation accountable?

The WHO Foundation is accountable to the WHO Foundation Board, the highest executive Board in the organisation.

What is the nature of WHO's relationship with the Governance of the WHO Foundation?

WHO will have a permanent observer seat on the Foundation Board. WHO will also work closely with WHO Foundation advisory groups to ensure alignment with the WHO General Program of Work (GPW), WHO norms and standards and WHO priorities.

Why is the WHO Foundation not being housed within the WHO?

An entity set up under private Swiss law offers several advantages that underpin the business case for the Foundation. Such advantages cannot be provided by an entity housed within WHO. These include:

- An ability to provide tax deductions and hence be attractive to high net worth donors, the private sector and individuals in the context of flash appeals
- A nimble governance structure, that is more attractive to non-traditional donors, comprised of philanthropists or individuals that have access to such persons
- A legal separation from WHO thereby providing a more credible firewall that protects WHO
- An ability to engage in innovative financing mechanisms implemented through, or in collaboration with, the Foundation
- The possibility of setting up endowments and receive legacies and trusts

Relationship with WHO

How is it ensured that the WHO Foundation advances the interest of WHO and safeguards its reputation?

The following mechanisms enable WHO's input into the WHO Foundation's strategic and operational conducts:

- WHO input in the statutes of the Foundation
- The MoU between WHO and the Foundation
- The role of WHO as an observer on the Foundation board
- WHO in being a member of, and proposing persons to be in, advisory bodies of the Foundation
- Close consultations between the Director General of WHO and the WHO Foundation Chair of the Board on the process and selection of the CEO
- Periodic consultations (at least quarterly) between WHO Director General, the WHO Foundation Chair of the Board and the WHO Foundation CEO

What is stated in the MoU between the WHO Foundation and WHO?

The MoU contains key provisions that regulate the relationship between WHO and the Foundation. These provisions include:

- Authorization to use the WHO name on a revocable basis
- Description of a mechanism that would require the Foundation to work with WHO in identifying WHO areas, on a high level, that need to be funded and for which the Foundation can solicit funds in a flexible manner
- Application of the FENSA principles to the work of the Foundation
- Requirement for periodic consultations with WHO DG
- Possibility for WHO to propose potential Board nominees
- Requirement to consult with, and take into account, the views of, WHO on any governance changes including governance composition or any material decisions that impact the business model of the Foundation
- Role of WHO as an observer on the Board
- Ability to participate in, and nominate members of, Foundation advisory groups
- The aim to provide WHO as a target between 70% and 80% of funds raised by the Foundation over any given two-year period
- Obligation to only provide funding to implementing partners or activities that advance the priorities of WHO and adhere to its technical norms, standards and policies
- Description of the reporting and M&E arrangements between WHO and the Foundation and assurance that such arrangements will not burden WHO
- WHO's right of audit over Foundation accounts
- Dispute resolution mechanisms
- Obligation to indemnify WHO for any losses, claims, liabilities caused by its acts or omissions
- Provision stating that If MOU is terminated, right to use WHO name ceases
- Provision that is the MOU is terminated, 70% of funds held by Foundation go to WHO

The complete MoU is accessible [here](#).

How will the use of the WHO name/brand/logo be regulated?

The WHO name is licensed to the Foundation on terms included in the MoU between WHO and the WHO Foundation. The authorization to use the WHO name can be revoked by WHO at any time and for any reason. In addition, WHO will ensure oversight over the use of the WHO name through its role on the Foundation Board and through its agreement with the Foundation. Issues of concern that may arise will also be addressed and resolved through periodic exchanges between the Foundation CEO and the WHO management.

Donations

Are donations to the WHO Foundation tax deductible?

Donations to the WHO Foundation are enabled through Transnational Giving Europe (TGE), a network of philanthropic institutions collaborating to foster charitable giving within Europe, to make donations by European residents (of 21 countries) eligible for tax deduction in their own country. Donations from US American citizens are enabled through a

collaboration with a US 501c3 entity to be eligible for tax deduction. Similar arrangements will be pursued for other jurisdictions.

How are donors assessed for suitability? How does FENSA come into play?

Protecting the WHO Foundation and the WHO from reputational risks is a top priority. The WHO Foundation will follow FENSA principles when accepting donations and vetting donors. For all questions of the WHO Foundation's interpretation of FENSA principles, the WHO Foundation will consult with the WHO. Standard Operating Procedures (SoPs) are being developed and implemented to frame decision-making related to the suitability of donors. Additionally, the CEO, management, Board members and donors will be required to declare any conflicts of interest. Further, due diligence will be done for all recruitment of staff and on potential donors.

Partnerships

How can interested individual partners and/or companies get involved and support the WHO Foundation?

We build partnerships that can change the face of global health. Our aim is to build strong collaborations that are right for each theme and initiative. We work with partners WHO has not traditionally been able to engage, due to high transaction costs, structural difficulties, or lack of experience. While applying FENSA principles, we encourage collaborations based on aligned interests and big ambitions. We believe in leveraging the strengths and expertise of all our partners, while releasing previously unavailable funding and resources. Building a healthier future for people around the world demands flexible and coordinated efforts on a scale that has never been seen before.

We understand our partners' philanthropic engagements, such as the causes and partners they support. We work with them to craft individual donations and support. We bring donors and partners on the ground together, creating connections and teams, sharing results and information, and providing expert analysis, so that together we can discover the best possible world health solutions. All of our initiatives are grounded in research and evidence-based approaches, with measuring impact built in from the outset. We start small, and based on data-driven achievements, we scale up our involvement.

We also engage in strategic corporate partnerships. These go beyond financial contributions alone: we also welcome in-kind expertise that supports us in meeting our shared objectives.

The WHO Foundation also reaches out to the general public through campaigns related to public health events or specific health issues, as well as for focus topics related to the Foundation's themes or regional needs (e.g. Non-Communicable Diseases, Maternal and Child Health, etc.).

To get involved please contact the Foundation by email:

info@who.foundation

Grant-making

Who are implementing partners and how are they selected?

Implementing partners are institutions and organisations that fit into the overall Foundation strategy and the WHO GPW. Most often they are organisations that already work with WHO. Implementing partners are decided by the Programming/Grant-management team of the Foundation.

At this point in time, we do not accept unsolicited grant applications. Please check our website ([link](#)) for future requests for proposals.

What is the M&E process for grantees (i.e. WHO and WHO implementing partners)?

The WHO already has robust processes in place for M&E and the WHO Foundation will not seek to duplicate or burden the WHO with additional processes. The WHO will be required to report on the grants they receive, but the process will plug into those already existing within the WHO.

What is the extent of the flexibility of funds received (i.e. earmarked and un-earmarked funds)?

In any foundation, un-earmarked funds are the gold standard. Particularly large gifts from HNWI's who tend to be more willing to give large gifts when they have a say in where their money goes. To mitigate this problem, the WHO Foundation will seek to create an endowment fund early on, the profits from which will provide un-earmarked funding directly for WHO. The WHO Foundation will also take a large part of the burden of donor interaction from WHO and provide its funding to WHO as flexibly as possible and fully aligned with the WHO Programme Budget.

