

What is the Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA)?

MeTA is an alliance of partners working to improve access to medicines by increasing transparency and accountability in the healthcare marketplace. The UK Department for International Development (DFID) is providing initial funding. Other partners include governments, global and national civil society organisations, pharmaceutical and other business interests, the World Health Organization (WHO) and the World Bank.

Why MeTA?

One in every three people in the world does not have the basic medicines they need. For some, the cost is too high. For others, the medicines are not available in their local health centre. Reliance on the market alone to supply medicines to poor people will not work. However, there is much that MeTA can do to increase poor people's access to affordable essential medicines by improving transparency and accountability within the marketplace.

How will MeTA work?

For the first time, MeTA brings together at both the international and national levels, a diverse group of people with an interest in the pharmaceutical sector (stakeholders) to find ways to improve information flows, and increase transparency and accountability about the selection, regulation, procurement, sale, distribution and use of medicines in developing countries. By doing so, MeTA will improve how decisions are made about medicines, improve the way they are purchased and supplied, encourage innovative and responsible business practices, and increase the voice of patients and consumers.

Financial and technical support

In seven countries – Ghana, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, the Philippines, Uganda and Zambia – MeTA's financial and technical support will encourage a focus on making information about medicines publicly available. It will strengthen national capacity – including the capacity of stakeholder groups to engage in a process to collect, analyse, disclose and use data on the quality and registration status of medicines, their availability, price and the promotion policies and practices. Each country has its own context and ways of providing medicines. Analysis and public disclosure of how the medicine supply chain works, and issues affecting the affordability of medicines, equitable access and the rational use of medicines will help to see how to improve policy, practice and health outcomes for people.

Multi-stakeholder approach

When a country implements MeTA, it makes a commitment to progressively disclose a standard set of core data covering the quality, availability, price and promotion of medicines. This commitment also includes fully involving civil society, business and other stakeholders to work

together to generate, disclose, debate and use these data to help address problems in the pharmaceutical market. This multi-stakeholder approach aims to shift some decision-making power to consumers and put greater competitive pressure on suppliers – thereby improving the functioning of the pharmaceutical market – and to promote better governance and more appropriate resource allocation by public purchasers. Ultimately, that means better health for people.

Medicines	Essential health commodities, such as drugs, vaccines, contraceptives, diagnostics and laboratory supplies
Transparency	Improving information access, scrutiny and use, to support the development of viable, efficient medicines markets and supply systems that benefit all developing country consumers
Alliance	Stakeholders from public, private and non-profit sectors working together to effect significant positive change

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