A Collaboration to Finance Innovation in Maternal Health: The MOMs Initiative

The MOMs (Maternal Outcomes Matters) Initiative aims to deploy up to $50M over the next several years in debt and grant capital to improve maternal health in regions of the world where there are high rates of women dying from complications of pregnancy and childbirth.

The MOMs Initiative was launched in June 2019 by the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation (DFC), Merck for Mothers (Merck’s global initiative to address preventable maternal mortality), Credit Suisse, and USAID to stimulate, advance, and scale innovations that contribute to a healthy pregnancy and safe childbirth — laying the foundation for lifelong good health for women, children, and communities.

In many countries with poor health indicators, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) and entrepreneurs are an untapped resource for innovation that can accelerate gains in health using financially sustainable business models. The MOMS Initiative intends to support local enterprises that are primed to have an even greater impact on maternal health outcomes because of their successful track record in one or more of the following areas which directly and indirectly contribute to maternal health: health infrastructure, health service delivery, training for health providers, digital solutions for more efficient and effective care, financial inclusion, sustainable energy, and supply chain strengthening.

The MOMs Initiative is seeking to fund businesses and entrepreneurs well-equipped to improve maternal health in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia in a financially sustainable way. Funding from The MOMs Initiative may take the form of a blend of grant and debt capital, and/or the provision of technical assistance on a cost-sharing basis.
Investment Criteria

The MOMs Initiative will consider providing grants, technical assistance, and/or financing to businesses that meet the following criteria for both maternal health impact and financial sustainability:

Maternal Health Impact Criteria
- Has established maternal health as an organizational priority as demonstrated by services rendered, products provided, or customers reached
- Demonstrated success in improving maternal health
- Strong likelihood of achieving greater measurable impact as a result of funding
- Operations in low- or middle-income countries with a high burden of maternal mortality and an enabling environment for business expansion

Financial Sustainability Criteria
- Must be a for-profit, non-profit, social enterprise, or company that is not more than 30% government owned
- Target geography is sub-Saharan Africa and/or South Asia
- Proposed projects must demonstrate long-term financial sustainability and a clear potential to scale
  - In operation for at least 2 years
  - At least $1 million of annual revenue and/or assets
  - Positive net equity position
- Preference will be given to projects that are innovative in terms of their products/services, target clients, or business model
- Management team has proven its ability to execute a project that achieves both financial and social objectives and reflects gender diversity

Terms and Conditions

Term: Maximum of 10 years; target 6-7 years.

Funding Amounts Available: Target range USD $5 - $10 million per project, with a minimum USD $1 million per project; maximum commitment USD $20 million

Types of Funding: Grants, technical assistance, and/or debt financing

Disbursement: Social performance benchmarks may be incorporated as condition to disbursement in addition to standard disbursement conditions

Investment Process

Businesses interested in seeking investment from The MOMs Initiative should submit a pitch deck outlining how they meet the investment criteria via email to CSTMFORMOTHERS@merck.com.

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1Funding by each of the Initiative participants will be subject to each participant’s due diligence and internal approval policies and procedures, the availability of funding, environmental, social, and governance requirements, and definitive contractual documentation satisfactory to all parties.

MOMs Initiative is supported by funding from Merck, through Merck for Mothers, the company’s $500 million initiative to help create a world where no woman has to die giving life. Merck for Mothers is an initiative of Merck & Co., Inc., Kenilworth, N.J., U.S.A.