

Frequently Asked Questions

What is SEARHEF?

The **South-East Asia Regional Health Emergency Fund (SEARHEF)** is a pioneering regional mechanism established in 2008 to support Member States in responding rapidly in the immediate aftermath of a health emergency, the most critical phase for saving lives. It was designed to support lifesaving interventions, bridging critical gap between the onset of a health emergency and the arrival of larger humanitarian and other support.

What are the core objectives of the fund?

The fund provides critical, catalytic support to save lives and reduce morbidity during health crises by funding emergency preparedness and response.

What is the SEARHEF governing mechanism?

The fund is accountable and transparent, with progress reported regularly at WHO's regional governing body meetings- the Regional Committee - and with oversight by the SEARHEF Working Group comprising of representatives from all Member States of WHO South- East Asia Region.

Why has SEARHEF been strengthened?

WHO South- East Asia Region faces growing and overlapping health threats, including climate shocks, frequent disease outbreaks, and economic volatility. To protect hard-won health gains, the fund is strengthened to become more agile and sustainable. The reforms in business rules for SEARHEF have kicked in at most opportune times since January 2026, when financial landscape is rapidly evolving and funding priorities for health remain limited, both globally and in the Region.

What are the key financial changes for Member States?

Beginning in 2026, the pooled budget will expand significantly from US\$ 1 million to US\$ 3 million or beyond per biennium.

- ⦿ **Support Duration:** First 6 months following the health emergency.
- ⦿ **Funding Ceiling:** The maximum allocation for a single emergency will be US\$ 400 000.
- ⦿ **Tranches:** Funds will be disbursed in two tranches: the first up to US\$ 200 000, and the second after 70% of the first is utilized.



Who can now contribute to SEARHEF?

SEARHEF is now open to voluntary contributions from a wider array of partners, including Member States, donors, partners, philanthropies, the private sector and high net worth individuals.



What are mechanisms for private sector contributions?

All voluntary contributions are accepted strictly in accordance with WHO quality, regulatory, and ethical standards, complying with the Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors (FENSA).



When can donors contribute?

Contributions may be one-off, time-bound, or multi-year partnerships

- ◉ Standby service agreements
- ◉ Infrastructure strengthening (e.g., solar power, storage facilities, etc.)
- ◉ Technical advisory services
- ◉ During emergencies: Rapid activation of pre-agreed in-kind support (e.g., cargo flights, telecom packages, technical surge).
- ◉ Preparedness phase: to kickstart critical preparedness activities as identified from assessments of International Health Regulations Monitoring and Evaluation Framework and other national assessments.
- ◉ Pre-positioning supplies: Ensuring critical lifesaving supplies are procured, stored, and readily available in priority locations, reducing response time and enabling immediate action when emergencies occur.



What are voluntary in-kind contributions?

Voluntary in-kind contributions are non-cash donations that support emergency preparedness and response. These include medical supplies (medicines, vaccines, diagnostics, equipment), and services such as logistics, warehousing, telecom, solar systems, or expert support. All in-kind contributions are demand-driven, quality-assured under WHO standards, and integrated into our emergency operations plans. This approach diversifies our resource base, reduces pressure on limited cash reserves, and allows partners to contribute according to their comparative advantage.



What are the core principles of the fund?

The fund is Rapid, Catalytic, and Accountable. It provides swift financing to prevent the escalation of emergencies, reduces downstream humanitarian costs, saves lives, and safeguards progress toward Sustainable Development Goals.

Partner with us to strengthen emergency preparedness and response to protect lives across the WHO South-East Asia Region.
