

# Guiding document for making voluntary SMART commitments

## FAQs for state and non-state actors

### 1. Why should I make a commitment?

**Opportunity** to highlight and showcase ongoing Traditional Medicine initiatives, fostering global collaboration and mobilizing support, with concrete commitments aimed at driving greater outcomes and lasting impact.

Currently, <1% of global health research investment is focused on Traditional Medicine,<sup>1</sup> despite its widespread use by over 80% of the world's population.<sup>2</sup> This represents a significant missed opportunity for health system strengthening and innovation. While state actors are the primary commitment makers, non-state actor engagement can drive innovation while ensuring safety and efficacy standards.

#### **Health system benefits and social impact:**

- **Universal health coverage:** Traditional Medicine can expand health service delivery, especially at the primary health care level, supporting WHO's Triple Billion targets.
- **Cost-effectiveness:** Evidence-based Traditional Medicine integration can reduce health care costs while maintaining quality outcomes.
- **Health security:** Traditional Medicine approaches proved valuable during COVID-19 and can strengthen pandemic preparedness.
- **Equity and access:** Traditional Medicine services often provide culturally appropriate care for underserved populations.
- **Environmental sustainability:** Promote biodiversity conservation and sustainable sourcing practices.

#### **Economic opportunities:**

- **Innovations:** ~40% of biomedicines originate from natural, plant-based sources.
- **Bioeconomy development:** Sustainable Traditional Medicine practices support biodiversity conservation and green economies.
- **Research collaboration:** Joining global Traditional Medicine research networks enhances national scientific capacity.

#### **Innovation and research benefits:**

- **Scientific advancement:** Contribute to addressing the evidence gap where less than 1% of global health research focuses on Traditional Medicine.
- **Technology integration:** Leverage artificial intelligence (AI), digital health and modern research methodologies to validate traditional knowledge.
- **Intellectual property:** Participate in ethical benefit-sharing models that protect traditional knowledge while enabling innovation.

### **The global context**

The Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 was adopted at the 78th World Health Assembly in May 2025, with unanimous support from all 194 Member States. This

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<sup>1</sup> Bensoussan A, Lewith GT. Complementary medicine research in Australia: a strategy for the future. *Med J Aust.* 2004;181(6):331–3.

<sup>2</sup> WHO establishes the Global Centre for Traditional Medicine in India [website]. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. (<https://www.who.int/news/item/25-03-2022-who-establishes-the-global-centre-for-traditional-medicine-in-india>, accessed 11 November 2025).

represents unprecedented global consensus on Traditional Medicine’s role in achieving universal health coverage and the Sustainable Development Goals.

## 2. What is a commitment?

### Definition

A commitment is a public statement of new national Traditional Medicine financing, policy or legislation, or service delivery initiatives that are:

- SMART: Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound;
- Strategic: Aligned with the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 objectives; and
- Evidence-based: Grounded in scientific validation and safety standards.

### Strategic objectives framework

Commitments should address one or more objectives from the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034:

1. **Strengthen evidence base:** Research funding, clinical trials, innovation, collaborations.
2. **Regulatory mechanisms:** Safety standards, practitioner qualifications, product regulation.
3. **Health system integration:** Service delivery models, financing mechanisms, workforce development.
4. **Cross-sector collaboration:** Indigenous knowledge protection, biodiversity mapping and conservation, One Health approaches.
5. **Innovation:** Scientific advancement, technology integration, intellectual property.

## 3. What is a SMART commitment?

### Example of a SMART commitment a country could make:

*To establish a national office for Traditional Medicine to coordinate Traditional Medicine policy, regulation, research, service delivery and monitoring by 2028 by elevating the country’s Traditional Medicine budget by 50%.*

<b>S</b>	<b>Specific:</b> Clear description of what will be accomplished	The commitment refers to a specific action (research, integration, regulation, multisectoral collaboration) and indicates the key activity that will be taken up by the country.  <i>Example: “Establish a National Traditional Medicine Research Institute”.</i>
<b>M</b>	<b>Measurable:</b> Quantifiable indicators for progress tracking	The commitment can be monitored through a set of indicators, timelines, investments or outcomes to enable its progress and achievement to be tracked.  <i>Example: “Allocate US\$ 10 million annually for Traditional Medicine research”.</i>
<b>A</b>	<b>Achievable:</b> Realistic given national context and resources	The commitment refers to a realistic context, based on the availability of human and financial resources as well as the level of progress achieved in the past.  <i>Example: “Integrate Traditional Medicine into 25% of primary health care facilities by 2027”.</i>
<b>R</b>	<b>Relevant:</b> Aligned with	The commitment reflects a country’s situation, national priorities and the challenges it faces.

	national health priorities and Global Traditional Medicine Strategy	<i>Example: “Support SDG 3 target on noncommunicable diseases through evidence-based Traditional Medicine interventions”.</i>
<b>T</b>	<b>Time-bound:</b> Clear timeline with milestones	The commitment’s key milestone is to be met within a realistic time frame for achievement.  <i>Example: “Complete regulatory framework development by December 2026”.</i>

#### 4. What are not considered commitments

- Summarizing existing programmes without new commitments;
- General statements without specific actions or timelines;
- Activities that are not aligned to the Strategy priorities;
- Token gestures that do not represent meaningful contribution; or
- Appropriating traditional knowledge without community consent.

#### Red flags:

- No mention of safety, quality or evidence requirements;
- Lack of community engagement or Indigenous rights consideration;
- Unrealistic timelines or resource commitments;
- No accountability mechanisms, monitoring frameworks or progress indicators; and
- Activities that could harm Traditional Medicine practitioners or communities.

#### 5. Traditional Medicine commitment development and endorsement process

1. **Commitment template:** A standardized online form will be available for both governments and non-state actors on the Summit website: <https://tm-summit.org>.
2. **Process to submit commitments:** Commitment makers are requested to highlight relevant SMART commitments in the form; these will be reviewed for adherence to guidelines after submission.
3. **For government commitments: Ministerial Roundtable:** Ministers will formally endorse and announce their national commitments.
4. **Presentation at the closing plenary of the Summit, 19 December:** Validated commitments from both governments and non-state actors will be presented to enhance visibility, foster collaboration and promote accountability.
5. **Commitment dissemination:** Commitments will be publicized globally through the Summit website and media channels.

#### 6. Who can make a commitment?

##### Governments

- Ministries of Health and/or Family Welfare

- Ministries of Traditional Medicine/Indigenous Medicine
- Ministries of Science and Technology
- Provincial/State health departments
- Municipal health organizations
- Other government institutions.

**Non-state actors (see point 8 below)**

- Research or academic institutions
- Nongovernmental organizations, including youth groups
- Health practitioner organizations (public, non-profit)
- Philanthropic organizations/foundations.

## 7. What are the various types of leadership commitments?

In line with the four strategic objectives of the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025-2034, WHO is seeking commitments aligned with the following aims:

- **Research:** Generating rigorous scientific evidence around Traditional, Complementary and Integrative Medicine (Traditional Medicine).
- **Integration:** Embedding Traditional Medicine into mainstream health services
- **Regulation:** Establishing and strengthening appropriate frameworks to ensure the safety, quality and effectiveness of Traditional Medicine products, practices and practitioners.
- **Multisectoral Collaboration:** Fostering partnerships across government sectors, various state and non-state actors and other stakeholders to enhance coordinated efforts that promote and support Traditional Medicine.

## 8. What is a non-state actor?

Non-state actors play a pivotal role in complementing the efforts of state actors by enhancing implementation, fostering innovation and ensuring quality assurance. Broadly, their contributions encompass generating research and evidence to inform government priorities; offering technical expertise to shape policy commitments; initiating aligned actions, investments and innovations that reinforce government-led initiatives; promoting public awareness; and empowering citizens to articulate their needs and experiences, thereby guiding the formulation of government commitments and supporting their effective delivery. For the purposes of commitment-making on this occasion, WHO recognizes the following types of non-state actors in line with the principles of its [Framework of Engagement with Non-State Actors \(FENSA\)](#):

- Nongovernmental organizations
- Philanthropic foundations
- Academic institutions.

*Commitments are currently not sought from private, for-profit organizations in this commitment round.*

## 9. What are the benefits of making a commitment?

### Economic and development outcomes

- Investment attraction: Signal national plans to other actors for aligned and complementary investments.
- Sustainable development: Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals 3 (good health and well-being), 9 (industry, innovation and infrastructure), 15

(life on land), 16 (peace, justice and strong institutions) and 17 (partnerships for the goals).

### **Enhanced visibility and leadership**

- Global platform: Commitments to be presented during the closing ceremony of the second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine, 19 December 2025
- International outreach: WHO web and media reports provide visibility for commitments

### **Technical support and resources**

- WHO guidance: Access to technical documents, benchmarking tools and implementation frameworks.
- Global networks: Support from WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre and international research consortia.
- Capacity-building: Training programmes, fellowships and expert exchanges.

### **Evidence and innovation benefits**

- Research collaboration: Join global Traditional Medicine research priorities and funding opportunities.
- Technology transfer: Access digital health tools, AI applications and innovation pipelines.
- Data systems: Integration with international classification systems, e.g. International Classification of Diseases 11th Revision (ICD-11) or International Classification of Health Interventions (ICHI).

## **Implementation support**

[Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034](#)

### **Technical assistance**

- WHO Global Traditional Medicine Centre (Jamnagar, India)
- WHO Regional Offices
- WHO Country Offices
- Technical expert networks.

**Member States can submit commitments by 10 December 2025 [through this online form](#).**

**Non-state actors can submit commitments by 10 December 2025 [through this online form](#).**

**Any queries can be directed to [tmglobalsummit@who.int](mailto:tmglobalsummit@who.int)**