

Mapping the Funders of One Health Research: A Bibliometric Analysis 2014–2024

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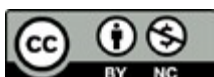
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List of abbreviations and acronyms

AMR	Antimicrobial resistance
ATs	Action Tracks (of the One Health Joint Plan of Action)
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
NGO	Non-governmental organization
OH	One Health
OHHLEP	One Health High-Level Expert Panel
OH JPA	One Health Joint Plan of Action (Quadripartite)
WHO	World Health Organization
WOAH	World Organisation for Animal Health
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
UK	United Kingdom
US	United States

Abstract

This study provides the first comprehensive mapping of funders acknowledged in One Health (OH)-labelled peer-reviewed research. Using a bibliometric dataset of 5,488 OH-labelled publications published between 2014–2024, the analysis identified and harmonized 642 distinct funders, classified them by institution type, and mapped funded publications to the six Action Tracks (ATs) of the Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA). The study examines how the global research system supports OH priorities and identifies key patterns as well as gaps in the funding landscape.

Acknowledged OH research funding is dominated by public-sector institutions, with national research councils, government agencies and multilateral organizations accounting for nearly four-fifths of funded publications. Funding is concentrated around zoonotic diseases, food safety, antimicrobial resistance, and related governance and surveillance functions (AT2–AT5). At the same time, no single model of OH funding exists. Different funder types and countries support distinct combinations of priorities, creating a diverse ecosystem characterized by institutional specialization and varied national approaches. Capacity strengthening (AT1) and integrating the environment (AT6) remain important components of the OH agenda but rely on a narrower coalition of countries and funders.

The funding landscape is also marked by significant geographic concentration. Most visible funders are located in high-income countries, while no low-income-country funders were identified in the dataset. Moreover, publication acknowledgements capture only part of the wider OH financing ecosystem, with many implementation-oriented investments remaining invisible in bibliometric analyses. As the OH JPA approaches its conclusion in 2026, the study provides a timely evidence base for informing future OH policy, funding and implementation strategies.

Executive summary

This study provides the first comprehensive mapping of the funders that support One Health- (OH-) labelled research globally. It analyses more than 5,400 publications (2014–2024) and their associated funding acknowledgements, identifying more than 600 distinct funder names, classifying funders into institutional categories, and mapping funded publications to the six Action Tracks (ATs) of the Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA). In doing so, the study provides new insights into how the global research system supports OH priorities and where important structural imbalances, dependencies, and gaps remain.

Visible OH research funding landscape

The findings show that acknowledged OH research funding is built around a common core of priorities centred on zoonotic, vector-borne and neglected tropical diseases (AT2 and AT3), food safety (AT4), and antimicrobial resistance (AT5). Public-sector institutions dominate this landscape, with national research councils and public science funders accounting for 35% of acknowledged publications, followed by government agencies at 31%, and multilateral organizations at 12%. Together, these actors account for nearly four-fifths of acknowledged OH-funded publications and provide much of the scientific, regulatory and institutional foundation of OH research.

At the same time, the funding landscape is not characterized by a single model of OH. Different categories of funders support different dimensions of the OH agenda, while countries appear to operationalize OH according to their own scientific capabilities, institutional arrangements and policy priorities. For example, the US, the UK and Switzerland exhibit broad thematic portfolios, whereas countries such as China, Brazil and Portugal display narrower thematic concentrations. As a result, the diversity of the OH agenda is sustained through a combination of institutional specialization and different national approaches to OH. Capacity strengthening (AT1) and integrating the environment (AT6) remain meaningful components of the funding landscape but are supported by a narrower coalition of countries and funders than the dominant OH research themes (AT2–AT5).

Equity and acknowledgement practices

The acknowledged OH funding landscape also reveals important patterns of geographic and institutional concentration. Most visible funders are headquartered in high-income countries. From middle-income countries, Brazil, China and India provide important contributions, but notably, no low-income-country funders were identified in the dataset. As a result, both funding volume and thematic breadth remain concentrated among a relatively small number of research systems. These patterns have important equity implications, as funding concentration helps determine who generates OH evidence, which priorities receive sustained support, and which actors participate in agenda-setting. They also raise questions about the resilience of the OH

research ecosystem, given that recent growth in acknowledged funding has been driven largely by a small number of major funding economies. The findings therefore highlight the importance of funding partnerships that empower leadership and knowledge generation in low- and middle-income countries. They further emphasize that strengthening domestic and regional OH funding mechanisms would allow a broader range of countries to contribute to agenda-setting, programme leadership and knowledge generation within the global OH ecosystem.

The study also provides a foundation for improving understanding of the wider OH funding landscape. Only 42% of OH-labelled publications contain a formal funding acknowledgement, and publication-based analyses tend to capture research funding more readily than other forms of support. Many investments in implementation, technical assistance, workforce development, institutional strengthening and policy support may not generate peer-reviewed publications or formal funding acknowledgements. As a result, this study should be understood as a map of the visible OH research funding landscape rather than a complete account of how OH activities are financed in practice. Future efforts to improve the visibility and coordination of OH funding, including implementation-oriented investments and institutional support mechanisms, could help reveal important contributions that are currently less visible from bibliometric analyses.

Implications for the next One Health Joint Plan of Action

As the current OH JPA approaches its conclusion in 2026, this study provides a timely evidence base for understanding how OH research is funded and how different actors contribute to the wider OH agenda. The analysis suggests that the strength of the current system lies in its breadth of thematic coverage as well as diversity of funders, while its principal challenges relate to the concentration of funding visibility and influence among a relatively small number of countries and institutions. The latter risks reinforcing existing inequities in the global OH research system by limiting the visibility and influence of low- and lower middle-income countries. Understanding these dynamics will be important for ensuring that future OH strategies are able to build on existing strengths, engage a broader range of actors, and better align research, implementation and financing pathways in support of OH objectives.

1. Introduction

The concept of One Health (OH) and the OH approach have gained increasing prominence over the past two decades as an integrated framework for understanding and addressing the interconnections between human, animal, plant and ecosystem health. The evolution from the Tripartite collaboration (Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), World Health Organization (WHO) and World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH)), to the Quadripartite partnership, following the inclusion of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) in 2022, helped position OH as a key principle for mitigating zoonotic risks, strengthening food systems, and managing environmental change. The Quadripartite's One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) 2022–2026 provides a shared framework for advancing this agenda through coordinated action across sectors and disciplines (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOAH, 2022). Despite its prominence, OH remains a diffuse and heterogeneous research domain that explicitly spans human, animal, plant, environmental and social systems, bringing together multiple disciplines, institutional actors and funding systems (Humboldt-Dachroeden *et al.*, 2020; Miao *et al.*, 2022; OHHLEP *et al.*, 2022).

Recent work has begun to clarify the scale and structure of OH-related research outputs, scientific networks and thematic trends (Humboldt-Dachroeden *et al.*, 2020; Miao *et al.*, 2022; Mwatondo *et al.*, 2023; Szomszor *et al.*, 2025). However, this literature leaves two critical questions largely unaddressed: 1) who funds OH research, and 2) how does funding influence the trajectory, priorities and balance of the field? In any research field, funding is a central mechanism through which agendas are set, capacities are built and scientific priorities are reinforced (Sridhar, 2012; Viergever and Hendriks, 2016). Without understanding how OH research is funded, and by whom, it is difficult to determine whether the global OH system is aligned with strategic priorities identified in the OH JPA, or whether certain areas remain systematically under-supported.

These questions are particularly relevant in the context of the OH JPA, which identifies policy, advocacy and financing as the first of three interconnected Pathways of Change, alongside organizational development and sectoral integration (Pathway 2) and data, evidence and knowledge exchange (Pathway 3) (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOAH, 2022). Together, these pathways support the implementation of the six OH JPA Action Tracks (ATs) and provide a mechanism for translating OH principles into practice. For example, financing can influence which priorities are pursued, which actors are engaged, and where capacities and evidence are developed. Therefore, examining who funds OH research can provide insights into how this pathway of change is functioning within the broader OH ecosystem. It can also highlight opportunities to engage a wider range of stakeholders, such as philanthropic organizations and private sector actors, in advancing OH objectives.

This study addresses this gap by providing the first comprehensive mapping of funders acknowledged in OH peer-reviewed research publications from 2014 to 2024. It extends a previous bibliometric analysis (see Szomszor *et al.*, 2025) by moving upstream from research outputs to the financial and institutional actors that enable them. Drawing from over 5,400 OH-labelled publications and more than 600 unique funder names, the analysis harmonizes funder identities, categorizes them by funder type, and assigns funded publications to the six OH JPA ATs as they represent the principal areas through which the Pathways of Change are operationalized. By integrating funder identities with thematic and geographic dimensions, the study offers a more complete picture of the OH-labelled research ecosystem and establishes a baseline for strengthening the alignment between global OH strategies and the funding patterns that shape them. The study findings provide a detailed view of the thematic, institutional and geographic landscape of OH funding from 2014 to 2024.

The motivation for this work is two-fold. First, mapping OH funders makes it possible to understand the degree to which the global research system supports the capacities, governance structures, surveillance functions, food systems, innovation priorities and ecosystem management needs articulated in the OH JPA. Second, it provides a strong evidence base for identifying gaps, dependencies and structural imbalances that might impede effective implementation of OH principles in practice. While previous studies (such as Humboldt-Dachroeden *et al.*, 2020; Miao *et al.*, 2022; Mwatondo *et al.*, 2023; Szomszor *et al.*, 2025) have highlighted the transdisciplinarity and networked nature of OH research, none has properly examined the funding architecture underpinning these outputs. Given that the OH JPA is coming to an end in 2026, this work is timely as it provides practical evidence that can inform the next phase of OH policy, research and funding.

2. Methods

This analysis builds upon the bibliometric dataset produced by Szomszor *et al.* (2025), originally developed to examine global trends in OH-labelled research. The original dataset was extracted from the Dimensions database and comprises 6,618 OH-labelled publications published between 2010 and 2024. However, for the purposes of this study, we rely on a subset of 5,488 publications (2014–2024) for which topic modelling, OH JPAAT mapping, and metadata cleaning had been fully harmonized as part of the earlier analysis. This subset forms the analytical dataset used to map funders and examine the thematic, institutional and geographic characteristics of OH research funding.

2.1 Data sources and extraction

All analyses were conducted using bibliographic metadata extracted from the Dimensions database. Dimensions is a comprehensive research information platform that provides structured fields for author affiliations, institutional locations, funding acknowledgements and citation metadata from publications, grants, patents, datasets

and policy documents (Hook *et al.*, 2018). These features make Dimensions suitable for large-scale mapping of research activity and funding patterns.

It should be noted that the dataset consists exclusively of peer-reviewed publications and does not include grey literature. Moreover, Dimensions indexes predominantly English language content, so OH research published in other languages may be underrepresented, potentially biasing the visibility of both research outputs and funders from some regions.

To map publications to the appropriate OH JPA AT(s) and to understand the thematic structure of OH-labelled literature, we use the search strategy and the topic model that was developed and applied by Szomszor *et al.* (2025).

2.2 Identification and harmonization of funders

Funding information in Dimensions is derived primarily from acknowledgements sections in journal article manuscripts. The system uses an internal alias-matching algorithm (Digital Science, 2025) to link strings in acknowledgement text to known funders. This includes recognizing formal funder names (e.g. Wellcome Trust, National Institutes of Health) and common aliases or project-level identifiers, such as ‘Horizon 2020’ (mapped to the European Commission) or ‘Fleming Fund’ (mapped to the UK Department of Health and Social Care).

It should be made clear that this approach results in a dataset that reflects acknowledged funding relationships reported in publications, rather than a complete record of all funding support received by researchers or institutions. Funding that is not explicitly acknowledged in publications will not be captured by this approach.

Because funding acknowledgements vary widely in structure, spelling and specificity, manual checks and harmonization were performed by the paper’s author Martin Szomszor. For example, different European Union funders were grouped under ‘European Union’ rather than assigned to Belgium, to avoid artificially inflating the counts for that country. Country income groups (high, upper middle, lower middle, and low) were assigned according to the World Bank’s 2022–2023 income classification (Hamadeh *et al.*, 2022).

2.3 Country attribution and authorship analysis

The Dimensions database assigns author countries through automated parsing of affiliation strings. In addition to analysing author affiliations, a complementary analysis of country mentions in titles and abstracts was carried out using the Edinburgh GeoParser, an open-source geoparsing library. This enabled us to determine whether a publication addressed a particular geographical location even if it did not involve authors based there.

2.4 Quality checks and validation

To test whether missing funder information was due to Dimensions' limitations or genuine absence of acknowledgements, a detailed check was conducted for the country with the lowest funding acknowledgement rate: Nigeria. Ten randomly sampled open access OH-labelled publications from first authors whose affiliations are organizations in Nigeria were manually reviewed (by Martin Szomszor). None included a formal funding acknowledgement. Instead, the authors thanked individuals, mentors, or laboratory staff.

Although this validation exercise was limited in scope, it suggests that low funding acknowledgement rates in some countries reflect genuine differences in funding structures or publication practices, rather than deficiencies in Dimensions or the bibliometric approach. More broadly, it indicates that acknowledgement practices may vary substantially across countries, institutions and publication systems.

2.5 Limitations

Several limitations of this analysis should be noted. First, only 2,283 publications (42%) in the dataset had any identifiable funder. Thus, the funder analysis represents fewer than half of all OH-labelled publications from 2014 to 2024 identified by the study. For the remaining 58%, it is unclear whether research received external funding, was supported through institutional or block funding mechanisms, or reflects differences in acknowledgement practices across journals and countries.

Second, funder name coverage may be biased towards high-income countries, where funding reporting conventions are more consistent, and funder information is more frequently ingested into Dimensions via CrossRef, FundRef, or public grant portals, such as Gateway to Research in the UK, Cordis for European Union funding, or the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Reporter in the USA. Moreover, the manual quality check and validation described above suggests that acknowledgement practices vary between countries and institutions, which may impact the visibility of funders within bibliometric datasets. As a result, the absence of a funder from the dataset should not necessarily be interpreted as evidence that no funding was provided.

Third, missing or incomplete author address data affects the accuracy of author-country analyses. Sixteen percent of publications lacked identifiable author-country information, potentially underrepresenting contributions from low- and middle-income countries.

Fourth, the predominance of English-language content in the underlying database may result in the under-representation of OH-labelled research published in other languages. Consequently, some funders and research ecosystems may appear less prominent than they are in practice.

Lastly, the search strategy for obtaining the dataset captures publications that explicitly identify themselves as OH research, which means that it represents a body of "self-

labelled” OH publications. It may miss studies that use OH principles without explicitly labelling themselves as OH or are framed through related concepts such as EcoHealth, Planetary Health or agricultural/environment health traditions (Szomszor *et al.*, 2025). Moreover, no inclusion or exclusion criteria were applied to further increase or decrease the number of publications. For example, the search strategy did not seek to filter for evidence that demonstrates incremental benefit in adopting a OH approach, nor did it systematically identify publications that do not use OH terminology but could be classified as OH through a classification matrix. The implications of this decision are discussed more fully by Szomszor *et al.* (2025).

3. Results: Funder landscape

The bibliometric dataset includes 5,488 OH-labelled publications (2014–2024). Of these, 2,283 publications (42%) include at least one formal funder acknowledgement, while 58% do not. Although the proportion of funding acknowledgements may seem low, this pattern is typical of bibliometric funding analyses and provides a useful basis for examining the visible landscape of acknowledged OH research funding.

3.1 The global OH research funder landscape

Across all acknowledged publications, 642 distinct funders were identified (Supplementary Data Table 1). The vast majority (82%) are headquartered in high-income countries, with a relatively small group (14%) in upper middle-income countries and only 4% in lower middle-income countries. No funders headquartered in low-income countries appear among the 642.

The most frequently acknowledged funder in the OH-labelled dataset is the European Commission (322 publications) (see Supplementary Data Table 1). It is followed by the National Natural Science Foundation of China (147 publications), Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia of Portugal (140 publications), Brazil’s National Council for Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq) (116 publications), Brazil’s Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) (111 publications), and the WHO (95 publications).

Although the top six funders are geographically diverse, the overall funding landscape remains highly concentrated, with high-income countries, particularly in Europe and North America, accounting for the majority of funders. This pattern is consistent with previous studies of OH networks and publication outputs (Mwatondo *et al.* 2023; Szomszor *et al.*, 2025) and underscores the concentration of funding power held by institutions in the Global North.

3.2 Distribution by funder type

To better understand the institutional landscape behind OH-labelled research, each funder was classified into one of eight funder types (Table 1). This categorization helps clarify the kinds of institutions that support OH-labelled research, how responsibilities and priorities differ across sectors, and where leadership in OH-labelled research funding is concentrated. It also provides a lens for analysing how influence is distributed across the OH research ecosystem and supports further examination of alignment with regions, income groups and OH JPA priorities.

Applying this categorization to the 642 funders in the dataset (Table 2) reveals a funding landscape strongly dominated by public-sector institutions when measured through acknowledged publications. National research councils and public science funders account for the largest share of publications (35%), followed closely by government ministries and public agencies (31%). Together, these two categories are associated with roughly two-thirds of all OH-labelled publications in the dataset. When combined with multilateral organizations (12%), public-sector actors account for nearly 80% of acknowledged OH-funded publications.

Philanthropic foundations and charities represent the next most significant source of acknowledged funding, contributing to 15% of publications. Multilateral and intergovernmental organizations, while relatively few in number (19 funders), are associated with 12% of acknowledged publications.

In contrast, other funder types make comparatively small contributions to the publication dataset. Academic institutions, including universities and hospitals, account for only 3% of acknowledged publications, while non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and non-profit organizations (2%) and private-sector entities (2%) account for similarly small proportions.

Overall, the distribution of publications by funder type highlights a highly public-sector-driven OH research ecosystem, with philanthropic and multilateral actors playing important secondary roles that indicate a high level of influence relative to their numbers. On the other hand, private, non-profit, and academic institutional funding sources provide a relatively limited direct contribution, and this is likely due to the reality that they more commonly take on roles in OH implementation, service delivery or partnership, rather than acting as primary funders of research.

Table 1. Categories of funder types and OH-labelled research funding trends.

Funder category	Description	OH-labelled research funding trends*
Multilateral / intergovernmental organizations	Includes international or intergovernmental bodies with mandates that extend across national borders, such as United Nations agencies, regional economic communities and institutions, and development banks. Examples: European Commission, WHO.	Multilateral organizations show the widest theoretical mandate but have diverse practical orientations. The European Commission stands out as the only funder with substantial activity across all six ATs. WHO is heavily oriented towards AT1, AT2, AT3 and AT5, with more limited engagement elsewhere. Other agencies show selective but multi-track contributions.
Government / ministry / public agency	Includes government line ministries and departments, and public authorities at national or subnational levels across sectors. Examples include ministries of health, national disease control centres and public aid agencies.	Public entities occupy the centre of governance, surveillance and system-strengthening work, mainly distributing assignments across AT2–AT5 and often AT1. Agricultural and food authorities contribute heavily to AT3 and AT4, while development agencies connect capacity-building (AT1) to AMR (AT5).
National research council / public science funder	Dedicated public bodies whose primary role is to fund and advance research and innovation. They include national research councils, science foundations, and academies of science that support OH-related scientific development. Examples: National Natural Science Foundation of China, the UK Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council.	Public science funders form the core scientific backbone of OH-labelled research, supporting research across all six ATs but being especially strong in AT2–AT5. Their portfolios reflect national scientific priorities and the structure of academic research funding, with environmental (AT6) and capacity-building (AT1) components present but smaller.
Philanthropic foundation / charity	This group includes private foundations, charitable trusts and donor organizations that support research, innovation or implementation in areas relevant to OH. Examples: Wellcome Trust, Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia (Portugal).	These funders demonstrate surprisingly broad thematic engagement, contrary to the assumption that they focus narrowly on human health threats. Many foundations (both private and public) show significant activity in AT5 and AT6, with contributions also across AT1–AT4, depending on mission and geography. Their role mirrors the scientific ecosystems of their home countries.
Academic / university / hospital	These institutions provide internal research grants or institutional support for OH research. The category includes	Academic institutions contribute modest volumes but fill thematic gaps. They strengthen AT6 through environmental and

	universities, higher education institutions, research institutions and teaching hospitals.	agricultural universities, support AT3 and AT4 through biomedical centres, and occasionally contribute to AT1 and AT2. Their role is complementary rather than system-shaping.
NGO / non-profit organization	Non-governmental and civil society organizations, and professional or scientific associations involved in supporting research or implementation activities related to OH.	NGOs, although small in scale, mainly support AT4 and AT6, adding depth to underfunded environmental and food systems domains. They also contribute to interdisciplinary science and wildlife health, helping offset gaps left by governmental funders and research councils.
Private sector / industry	Companies and commercial entities, such as biotechnology firms, diagnostics manufacturers, pharmaceutical companies and agribusinesses that fund OH-related work.	Private-sector funders exhibit a broader footprint than is commonly assumed. While many engage in AT3 and AT4, numerous actors also contribute to AT1, AT2, AT5 and even AT6. Life science companies, research laboratories, energy companies and food-sector firms show multi-track involvement, reflecting regulatory, environmental and technological interests rather than a purely commercial biomedical orientation.
Other / not classified	A very small number of funders that could not be classified confidently due to insufficient metadata.	Not available

*Authors' (AV and MK) analysis based on funder acknowledgements included in publications (see Supplementary Data Table 1).

Table 2. Distribution of funders by type and associated publications.

Funder type	No. funders	Publications acknowledging funder	% of all publications acknowledging funder
Multilateral / intergovernmental	19	544	12%
Government / ministry / public agency	222	1,345	31%
National research council / public science funder	144	1,530	35%
Philanthropic foundation / charity	86	648	15%
Academic / university / hospital	90	129	3%
NGO / non-profit organization	36	106	2%
Private sector / industry	43	82	2%
Other / not classified ¹	2	9	0%
Total	642	4,393	100%

Source: Authors' compilation from Dimensions data of 5,488 publications (2014–2024).

Because individual publications may acknowledge multiple funders, the total number of funder-publication links (4,393) exceeds the number of publications acknowledging funders (2,283).

3.3 Coverage and acknowledgement patterns

The acknowledged funding data show a highly uneven distribution of visible OH research funding. A small group of funder countries accounts for most acknowledged funder-publication links, led by the United States, the United Kingdom, the European Union, Brazil and China. The landscape is therefore dominated by high-income funder countries and the European Union, while also showing substantial acknowledged contributions from Brazil and China, both classified in the dataset as upper middle income, and a smaller but visible contribution from India, classified as lower middle income.

These patterns should be interpreted as funding visibility rather than as a direct measure of total OH research investment. The dataset captures funders that appear in publication acknowledgements and are indexed in Dimensions, and therefore reflects acknowledgement practices, funder indexing, and the structure of formal research funding systems. Countries or institutions that rely more heavily on internal university resources, institutional support, informal funding or externally administered projects may be less visible in this type of bibliometric funding data.

Country-level visibility can also arise from very different funder structures. For example, Portugal's total is almost entirely driven by Fundação para a Ciência e Tecnologia, whereas Brazil and China are represented by a broad range of funders through domestic science and public-sector institutions. Country totals should

¹ The dataset includes only two funders that could not be confidently classified, indicating a high level of clarity in the institutional categorization.

therefore be interpreted alongside the underlying funder composition, rather than treated as equivalent indicators of national funding-system breadth.

The main coverage issue is not the absence of middle-income country funders, since Brazil, China and India are clearly visible in the dataset. Rather, it is the concentration of acknowledged OH funding among a relatively small number of countries and institutions, together with the limited visibility of lower-income funder countries in the major acknowledged funding landscape. This pattern is consistent with the broader challenge identified by Mwatondo *et al.* (2023); OH activity in Africa and other lower-resource settings can be substantial, but its funding is often externally supported, unevenly documented, or not captured in ways that make local funding structures visible in global datasets.

3.4 Research capacity and funding acknowledgement patterns

The analysis reveals an important distinction between the institutions that fund OH-labelled research and those that conduct it. While national research councils and government agencies constitute the largest share of funders, the organizations that produce most funded OH-labelled research are universities and public research institutes. This pattern is not unique to OH—universities typically generate the bulk of funded scientific output across disciplines (Larivière *et al.*, 2018)—but in the OH context it underscores how agenda-setting and resource allocation remain concentrated among public funders (Pettan-Brewer, 2023), while the operational work of cross-sectoral research is carried out primarily within academic institutions.

This separation between the sources of funding and the sites of knowledge production likely contributes to differences in funder acknowledgement practices across countries and institutions. More specifically, a clear pattern begins to emerge:

- OH-labelled publications acknowledging funding are disproportionately produced by universities, public research institutes, and international research consortia located in high-income countries, consistent with the findings of Szomszor *et al.* (2025).
- Unfunded / unacknowledged funder publications are more likely to originate from teaching-focused universities, hospitals, and institutions in low- and middle-income countries with limited access to competitive grants. Understanding who is funding this research requires further research.

This pattern suggests a concentration of research capacity, whereby institutions that are more embedded in formal research funding systems are also more likely to report and acknowledge funders.

3.5 Geographical distribution of acknowledged funders

The geography of OH funders reveals a strongly concentrated landscape. The largest numbers of funders originate from a small cluster of high-income countries, led by the

United States, followed by the United Kingdom, Brazil, China, Spain, Switzerland, Germany, Canada, France, Portugal, Australia and India (see Supplementary Data Table 1).

At the regional level, Europe accounts for both the greatest number of funders and the highest volume of funded OH-labelled publications, reflecting the central role of the European Commission and strong national research funding systems in European countries. North America follows, driven primarily by US federal agencies and major philanthropic foundations. Asia shows significant growth, with China's National Natural Science Foundation emerging as a major funder in the past decade. By contrast, Africa hosts very few funders, despite a steadily increasing OH-labelled publication base. This pattern mirrors the emerging evidence suggesting that OH investment continues to flow predominantly from the Global North to the Global South, rather than being supported by domestic scientific budgets or regionally anchored research funding mechanisms in low- and middle-income countries (Mwatondo *et al.*, 2023; Szomszor *et al.*, 2025).

3.6 Time trends in funder acknowledgements

Figure 1 displays the time trend of funding acknowledgements by country for OH-labelled research between 2014 and 2023. The United States consistently appears as the largest funder of OH-labelled research, with a rapid upward trajectory in publication count after 2018. The United Kingdom was the second largest funder until 2022, after which its count of funder acknowledgements declined making it the fourth largest funder by 2023. Subsequently, Brazil and China become the second and third largest funders, respectively, after 2022. The reasons for the decline in funding from the United Kingdom cannot be determined from the dataset.

Other funders from European countries, as well as Canada, India and Australia, are active funders, albeit at lower levels, throughout the decade. Finally, there are countries such as Chile, South Africa, New Zealand and Kenya that contribute by funding fewer than 10 OH-labelled publications per year. Overall, acknowledged OH research funding has increased substantially over the study period, with a sharp acceleration after 2018, with growth driven primarily by a handful of major research economies.

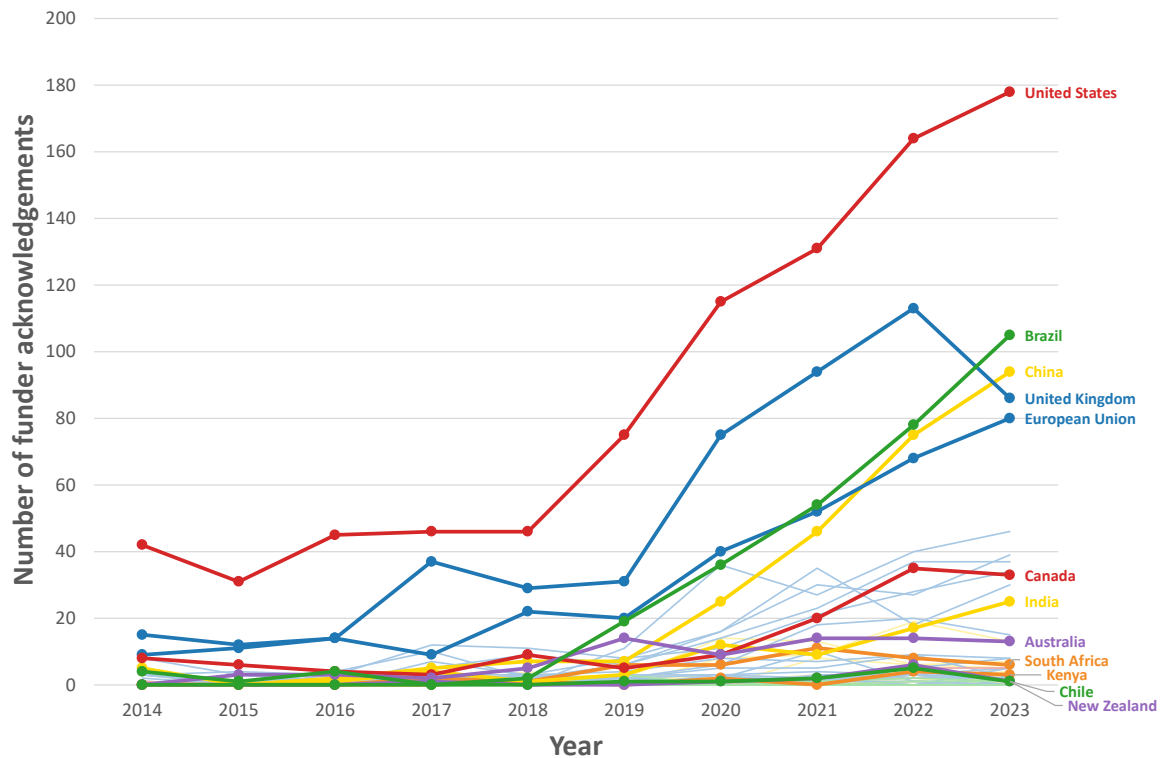


Figure 1. Time trends in total funder acknowledgements for all countries (2014–2023). The top two funding countries for each continent are labelled (the remaining countries are included but not labelled).

3.7 Funder co-occurrence

Of the publications that acknowledge a funder, 52% contain only a single funder. The remaining 48% contain more than one funder, with 26% of publications acknowledging two funders, 12% of publications acknowledging three funders, and 10% of publications acknowledging four or more funders. Figure 2 displays the co-occurrence of funders by country for these 48% of funder-acknowledged publications.

The co-funding patterns reveal a highly uneven but structurally coherent geography and sometimes regionally bounded patterns of collaboration among major OH funders. The European Union emerges as a central co-ordinating actor by partnering extensively with funders across Europe and maintaining strong co-funding ties with the United States. The United States is the only funder with a genuinely global co-funding footprint, engaging with partners across every continent. The United Kingdom collaborates widely across Europe, North America, Africa and Asia but shows no co-funding links with South America. On the other hand, China's co-funding footprint is comparatively narrow as it partners primarily with a small group of high-income countries, including selected European states, the United States, Canada and Australia. It shows no co-funding connections with funders in Africa, Asia more widely, or South America.

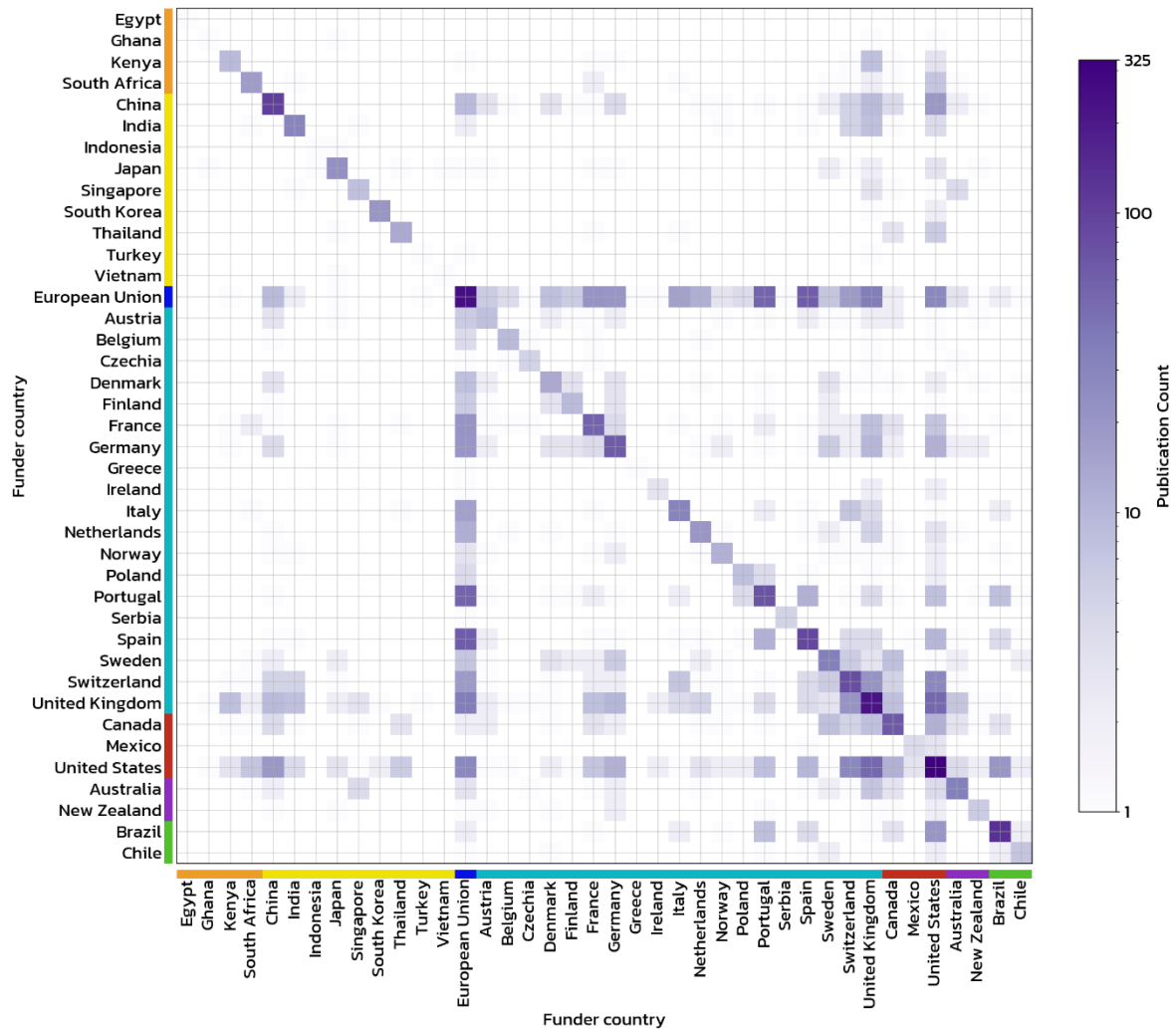


Figure 2. Heatmap of publications where funders from both countries are acknowledged.
 Note: The cells where country names match (i.e. the diagonal) show the count of publications where at least two funders from the country are acknowledged (i.e. domestic funder collaboration).

Figure 3 presents the geographic relationship between funder countries and the mentioned countries of study in funded OH-labelled publications. As stated in the methodology (Section 2), the mention data is based on the titles and abstracts of the publications, so coverage might be lower than if observing the mentioned countries in the full publication texts. The strong diagonal running through the matrix indicates that most funders primarily support research focused on their own national context, with an especially pronounced domestic funding and research focus for China, India, the United States, Brazil, and much of Europe. Outside this diagonal, the European Union shows a broad spread of mentions concentrated across European countries, consistent with its multi-country regional mandate.

Cross-national funding appears in a relatively small number of distinct pairs. For example, funders in the United States show the most diversity as they are mentioned

most by studies that focus on other countries, especially in Kenya, South Africa, China, India, Thailand and Brazil. Similarly, funders in the United Kingdom are acknowledged in several studies that focus on Kenya, China, India and Indonesia, while funders in France are acknowledged by some studies that focus on Thailand and the United States. Germany and Switzerland also show limited but clear mentions in countries such as Kenya and Ghana, respectively. There is insufficient evidence to determine to what extent these are driven by historical ties. But overall, the data show that acknowledged OH research funding remains strongly anchored in domestic research systems, with a smaller number of visible cross-national funding relationships.

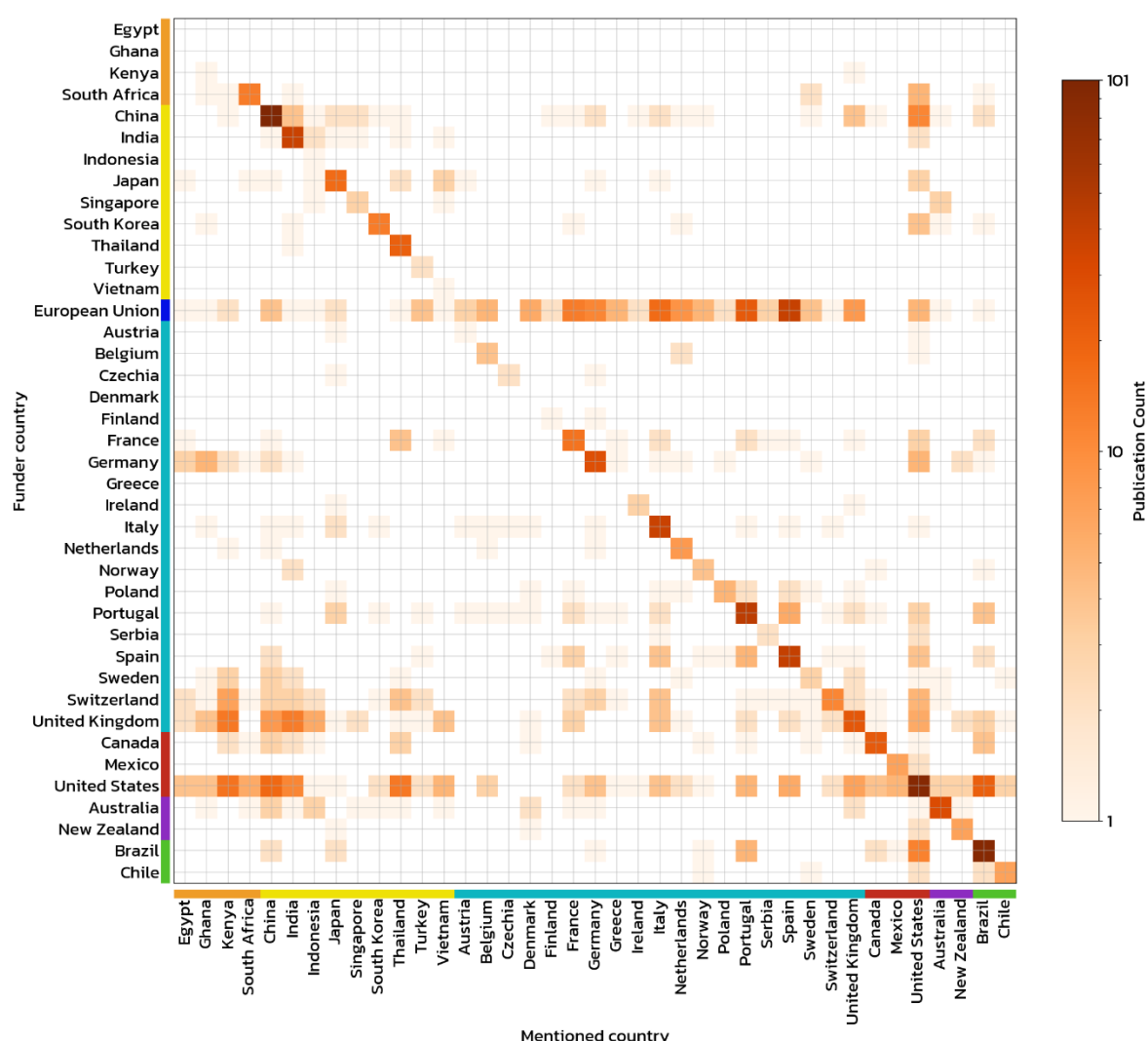


Figure 3. Heatmap of publications with funder acknowledgements by country and mentions of geographical locations aggregated by country.

4. Results: Thematic dimensions

Using the OH JPA as a framework, each funded OH-labelled publication was mapped to one or more of the six ATs (AT1–AT6). Because many publications cut across

multiple domains, AT percentages represent the share of total assignments, rather than mutually exclusive proportions. This approach allows for comparison of the thematic priorities associated with different funder types and countries.

4.1 Overall thematic orientation of the global funder landscape

Across the global OH funding landscape, the largest numbers of AT assignments fall within AT3 (endemic zoonotic, neglected tropical and vector-borne diseases: 1,319 assignments), AT5 (antimicrobial resistance: 1,267) and AT2 (emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases: 1,219), closely followed by AT4 (food safety: 1,158). These patterns are broadly consistent with those identified in the bibliometric analysis of OH-labelled research publications by Szomszor *et al.* (2025). Together, these four tracks form the core of funded OH-labelled activity and reflect shared priorities across most funders.

On the other hand, a noticeably smaller volume of AT assignments fall within AT1 (capacity strengthening: 907) and AT6 (environment and ecosystems: 883). Although both ATs are represented across all major funder categories and appear prominently in several funder portfolios, this distribution indicates a structural tendency for OH-labelled funding to be concentrated in the scientific, technological and surveillance-oriented components of the agenda (AT2–AT5). More specifically, research in public good domains, such as long-term workforce development, governance reforms, policy integration and ecosystem health, receive meaningful but uneven investment, often concentrated in multilaterals, development agencies, environmental research bodies and a subset of philanthropic and academic institutions. This underscores that while the OH research system is broadening beyond biomedical and food safety portfolios, its preventive, environmental and system-strengthening dimensions still rely disproportionately on a relatively small set of actors, rather than being embedded across the entire funding base.

4.1.1 National research councils and public science funders

National research councils and public science funders, such as those in Brazil, the UK, the USA, Canada, Australia and major European agencies (Annex 2: Table A1), show a genuinely broad thematic footprint across all six OH JPA ATs (Table A1). In quantitative terms, the portfolios of most of these institutions largely centre around AT2–AT5. However, many national or public funders make notable investments in AT1 through training, research infrastructure, fellowships and early-career schemes.

Furthermore, there are environment- and agriculture-focused councils that typically pair activity in AT6 with substantial activity in AT3–AT5. These include the UK's National Environment Research Council (NERC), the Swedish Research Council and its environment/agriculture counterparts, Brazil's agricultural and state-level foundations, and agencies like the US National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA) or the South African Water Research Commission. In their portfolios, ecosystem monitoring, agri-environmental research and natural-resources management (AT6)

are closely linked to zoonotic diseases (AT2), food safety (AT4) and antimicrobial resistance (AT5), and this profile underpins much of the scientific and infrastructural backbone of OH-labelled research across the biomedical, agricultural, environmental and social science domains.

4.1.2 Philanthropic foundations and charities

Philanthropic foundations display a more diverse OH thematic research footprint (see Supplementary Data Table 1) than is often assumed (Kundu and Matthews, 2019). They show significant activity in AT3–AT6, placing them closer to research funding agencies than to purely health security actors. Their contributions to AT1 and AT2 are smaller but not negligible, especially among foundations that fund fellowships or institutional development (e.g. Wellcome Trust, National Natural Science Foundation of China, Foundation for Science and Technology – Portugal).

Interestingly, philanthropic funders appear to mirror the priorities of their national scientific ecosystems, with Chinese, Portuguese, Brazilian and some European foundations showing expansive portfolios, and North American philanthropic bodies retaining a somewhat stronger global health security tilt. Moreover, China and Portugal tend to have greater emphasis on AT5 and AT6 through their national science funders, so some foundations also have portfolios that focus on these ATs. The National Natural Science Foundation of China in particular shows a strong orientation towards innovation (AT5) and ecosystem science (AT6), rather than a strictly biomedical focus.

4.1.3 Government ministries and public agencies

Government ministries and public agencies, from development co-operation agencies to ministries of health, agriculture, science and the environment, display some of the broadest thematic portfolios in the dataset, though most activity remains concentrated in AT2–AT5. Some of these institutions, such as the US Centres for Disease Control (CDC) and Prevention, and Defence Threat Reduction Agency (DTRA), combine high numbers of assignments to AT2 and AT3. The CDC also has substantial activity in AT1 and AT4 (see Supplementary Data Table 1), reflecting their mandates for system strengthening, outbreak response and regulatory stewardship.

Other public health bodies, such as the Public Health Agency of Canada, are particularly strong in AT2, but also contribute to AT4–AT6. Ministries of science and technology in China, Germany, France and Spain sit at the intersection of AT3–AT5, sometimes paired with sizable investment in AT6. Agricultural and food authorities, especially those in China, Italy, Germany and the USA, contribute strongly to AT3 and AT4, with some activity also in AT2 and AT6.

Development-oriented agencies, including the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) and Canada's International Development Research Centre (IDRC), are among the public actors that most visibly link AT1–AT3 to AT5,

using OH investments to support cross-sector, zoonoses and AMR-focused programmes.

4.1.4 Multilateral and intergovernmental organizations

Similar to government agencies, multilateral and intergovernmental organizations display broad thematic coverage, but this coverage varies by institution (see Supplementary Data Table 1). For instance, the European Commission stands out as the single most thematically comprehensive funder in the entire dataset with very high absolute numbers of assignments across all six ATs (AT1–AT6). This includes notable contributions to AT2 (96 assignments), AT4 (99), AT5 (97) and a comparatively large footprint in AT6 (79). By contrast, the strongest engagement from WHO lies in AT1 (41), AT2 (34) and AT3 (39), consistent with WHO's role in global governance, standards and public health emergency management. WHO's presence in AT4 (9) and AT6 (10) is more limited, though not absent, reflecting a mandate that emphasizes human health security more than food systems or ecosystem-level interventions.

Other multilaterals show similar specialized portfolios. The European Cooperation in Science and Technology (COST) supports cross-country research networking, with activity across AT1–AT3 and a modest presence in AT6. Various United Nations agencies demonstrate broad but low-volume engagement, frequently contributing to AT1 and AT2, with more selective involvement in AT3 or AT5.

In short, multilaterals collectively provide the broadest thematic span of any funder type, but only the European Commission systematically invests across all six ATs at scale, while others remain more closely aligned with their institutional mandates. Across multilateral funders, AT2 and AT3 dominate, with slightly less coverage in AT1, AT4 and AT5, and, despite the European Commission's strong showing, a notably smaller footprint in AT6 relative to the scale of their activity in other domains. This suggests that environment and ecosystem health remain the least consistently funded areas even among institutions with cross-sector mandates.

4.1.5 Private-sector funders

Private-sector funders account for approximately 2% of acknowledged publications, but the thematic profile is highly heterogeneous with contributions across all six OH JPA ATs. Generally, companies participate in governance, environment and technological domains depending on their sectoral role and strategic interests, but their activity is most concentrated in AT3 and AT4 along with some contributions in AT1, AT5 and AT6 (see Supplementary Data Table 1). This result suggests that private-sector contributions to OH-labelled research are broader and more multi-dimensional than is commonly assumed.

Large life science companies tend to show engagement in AT1, AT3 and AT4, and a few have very broad footprints with activities across all AT1–AT6. Industry research laboratories similarly contribute to AT2–AT4, while companies in the animal health and

pet food sectors show engagement in AT1 and AT6. Additionally, financial institutions have contributions in AT3–AT6, typically through corporate social responsibility- (CSR-) linked research programmes or environmental sustainability initiatives.

4.1.6 Academic, university and hospital-based funders

Academic, university and hospital-based funders account for only 3% of acknowledged publications and show a highly fragmented profile. Most activity is focused on AT3, AT4 and AT5, reflecting the dominant orientation of academic research towards laboratory science, epidemiology and food safety. However, these funding contributions are scattered across dozens of institutions and lack the concentrated thematic investment seen among national science funders or multilaterals. As a result, they do not meaningfully shape the global thematic balance of OH-labelled research.

Biomedical and clinical institutions, such as hospitals and medical research institutes, predominantly contribute to AT3 and AT4, with a focus on pathogen-focused laboratory research, clinical epidemiology, diagnostic science and health security-adjacent inquiry. A number of broad-spectrum universities across Europe, Asia and Latin America display contributions in AT3–AT5 with occasional entries into AT1 or AT2. AT6 is minimally represented among this group. These patterns reflect diversified disciplinary portfolios and offer niche inputs in the research landscape rather than a deliberate OH strategy. However, the overall volume remains extremely small compared to national research councils or government agencies.

4.1.7 NGOs / not-for-profit organizations

NGOs and non-profit organizations represent a relatively small share of overall OH funding (2% of acknowledged publications) but show a wide thematic spread that reflects their diverse institutional missions (Supplementary Data Table 1). Their portfolios span all six ATs and include organizations with a range of support for basic science and conservation to sector-based research and interdisciplinary initiatives. They are comparatively strong in AT4 and AT6 relative to their overall scale, helping to fill gaps in food system and environmental research that are less consistently supported by other funders. Meanwhile, their presence in AT1–AT3 is more uneven and often mission-driven. While they do not shape the global OH agenda at scale, NGOs add thematic breadth, disciplinary diversity and specialized expertise, particularly in ecosystem health and conservation, that would otherwise be thin or absent in the wider OH-labelled funding landscape.

Science academies and research-promotion bodies, most prominently the Japan Society for the Promotion of Science, engage across AT1–AT6, with substantial activity in AT4 and AT5. Others, such as the Royal Society, the Academy of Medical Sciences and the British Council, behave much like small research councils in that they support investigator-led science, cross-disciplinary collaboration and training, rather than narrowly defined OH programmes. Their contributions to AT2 and AT6, although

smaller in absolute terms, are more frequent than those of many other NGO sub-groups. On the other hand, broad-scope societal and interdisciplinary organizations, such as academies of arts and sciences, private and region-specific NGOs, have more modest and dispersed funding portfolios, typically contributing to AT1, AT3 or AT5, and tend to support cross-cutting initiatives rather than core OH domains.

Environmental and ecological NGOs show a concentration in AT6 with lesser contributions to AT4 and AT3, reflecting their involvement in wildlife health, ecological monitoring, food safety and zoonotic interface research. Within the NGO sector, they provide a consistent environmental and ecosystem-oriented presence. Sector-based associations, such as apex and sub-sector (livestock) farmers' associations (dairy, pork), exhibit narrow portfolios focused almost entirely on AT4, with occasional contributions to AT6 or AT3. Their thematic pattern follows the needs of agricultural production systems, especially livestock health, food safety and supply chain issues. They bring industry-linked perspectives into the OH landscape, but their contributions remain applied and tightly bounded. Altogether, NGOs and non-profits are small but strategically important contributors to the OH-labelled funding landscape.

4.2 Country-level thematic and equity patterns

When AT assignments are examined at country level, clear national thematic profiles emerge, shaped not only by substantive research priorities but also potentially by different rates of funding acknowledgements. Overall, AT2–AT5 form the backbone of OH-funded research globally. At the same time, AT1 is a leading or co-leading track in several high-income countries, and AT6 represents a substantial component of the OH portfolios of multiple countries across both high-income and upper middle-income groups. That being said, acknowledged OH research funding remains concentrated within a relatively small number of countries, with limited visibility of lower income country funders.

The US and UK show balanced distributions across all ATs. For the US, AT1, AT2 and AT3 are almost identical in magnitude (315, 317 and 300 assignments, respectively), alongside substantial engagement in AT6 (197) and smaller activity in AT4 (179) and AT5 (142). However, even as the largest funder of OH-labelled research, the country has a relatively modest acknowledgement rate (51%) suggesting that parts of its thematic footprint may be underreported. The UK exhibits a similarly balanced profile across AT1, AT2, AT3 and AT5 (166, 189, 203 and 167 assignments, respectively), with smaller contributions to AT4 (120) and AT6 (67).

Most European countries show distinctive thematic clusters (see Supplementary Data Table 1 for all countries). For example, Portugal focuses on AT4 (46 assignments), AT5 (60), and AT6 (52), while Italy and Spain concentrate on AT4 (28 and 64 assignments, respectively). It is worth noting that Portugal has the highest acknowledgement rates in the dataset with 81%. Germany is most active in AT3 (52), AT4 (64), and AT5 (59), France is most active in AT2 (41), AT3 (51), and AT6 (38), and

Switzerland, which also has a high acknowledgement rate of 68%, invests heavily in AT1 (55), AT2 (58), and AT3 (60).

Among upper middle-income countries, China and Brazil display broad thematic engagement. China's portfolio is dominated by AT5 (139), but is supported with notable activity in AT4 (79), AT3 (66), and AT2 (64). It also has a very high acknowledgement rate of 74%. On the other hand, Brazil has a very balanced profile with high levels of activity in AT2 (80), AT3 (88), AT4 (142), AT5 (105), and AT6 (90).

India is the only lower middle-income country with a sizable OH-labelled funding footprint, and its portfolio is concentrated in AT5 (36) and AT3 (35). However, India has a very low acknowledgement rate of 37%, which suggests that its apparent thematic gaps may partly reflect under-reporting rather than limited funding.

Across these diverse national patterns, several equity-related insights emerge. High-income countries overwhelmingly dominate the volume of funded OH-labelled research and the breadth of thematic coverage. Despite the centrality to global OH challenges of low-income countries, none appear among those with significant acknowledged funding. This near-absence of low-income countries in acknowledged OH-labelled funding underscores persistent structural inequities where many institutions in low- and middle-income countries participate primarily as data-collection partners within externally funded projects, rather than as hubs of domestically funded, thematically broad OH research. This reliance on external funders influences not only the volume of research produced but also the thematic priorities pursued, reinforcing long-standing disparities in global scientific capacity and agenda-setting (Mwatondo *et al.*, 2023).

5. Discussion

5.1 Primary OH research funders and themes

The mapping of more than 600 funders acknowledged in OH-labelled publications reveals a global funding landscape that is both uneven in structure and extensive in scale. Perhaps the most visible structural characteristic of the OH research ecosystem is that it is dominated by public sector institutions. More specifically, national research councils (35%), government agencies (31%) and multilaterals (12%) account for nearly four-fifths of all acknowledged OH-funded publications. Furthermore, these funders are concentrated within a relatively small number of major research economies, namely the US, UK, Brazil, China and EU. Hence, the largest individual funders identified in the study—including the European Commission, the National Natural Science Foundation of China, major Brazilian public science funders, and WHO—can be found in these public sector funding systems.

At the same time, four of the six ATs form the backbone of the acknowledged OH research funding: emerging and re-emerging zoonotic diseases (AT2), zoonotic,

neglected tropical and vector-borne diseases (AT3), food safety (AT4) and antimicrobial resistance (AT5). In other words, these four ATs appear to constitute a relatively stable core of what is currently recognized and funded as OH research. This pattern is not surprising as these ATs align with the dominant architectures of national science systems, biomedical research and development, public health institutions, and international research initiatives. Furthermore, the dominance of public sector funders is fairly consistent with the structure of scientific research systems more broadly i.e. not unique to OH. Public sector institutions are typically responsible for national research funding programs, competitive grant schemes, research infrastructure and international scientific collaboration, and publication outputs are often an explicit objective of these investments. Consequently, when public sector institutions have a collective effort in advancing the technical aspects of biomedical and public health domains, they tend to be the most acknowledged and visible funders of OH-labelled research under AT2–AT5.

5.2 Different funders, different roles

Although public sector institutions dominate the OH research funding landscape, the analysis also reveals that different categories of funders play distinct roles within the wider OH ecosystem. Rather than contributing interchangeable forms of support, different funder types appear to occupy specific functional niches within the OH research ecosystem. For example, government agencies (accounting for 31% of acknowledged research) place comparatively more emphasis on governance, preparedness, surveillance and system strengthening, often linking OH capacity strengthening (AT1) with zoonotic disease surveillance and control (AT2 and AT3) to operational policy priorities. Similarly, multilateral organizations (12%) perform a distinct coordination role, such as the WHO's portfolio which is also heavily concentrated in AT1–AT3, reflecting its role in global governance, standard setting and public health emergency management.

Interestingly, thematic specialization is quite evident among funders that account for relatively small shares of acknowledged publications. Philanthropic foundations (15%) often display broad portfolios spanning vector-borne diseases (AT3), food safety (AT4), antimicrobial resistance (AT5), and integrating the environment (AT6), while NGOs and non-profit organizations (2%) are disproportionately active in food safety (AT4) and integrating the environment (AT6), sustaining research themes that receive less consistent support elsewhere. On the other hand, private-sector actors (2%) concentrate much of their activity in zoonotic diseases (AT2 and AT3), but also have some presence in all other ATs, suggesting a considerably broader engagement with OH research than perhaps is often assumed.

The only individual funder with substantial activity across all six ATs is the European Commission. Otherwise, national research councils and public science funders, who comprise the largest proportion of the public sector funders mentioned above (and

account for 35% of acknowledged publications), fund the majority of OH-labelled research across the four most funded ATs (AT2–AT5).

Taken together, these specialized roles suggest that the OH funding ecosystem is characterized by institutional complementarity rather than simple differences in funding volume. Different categories of funders support different dimensions of the OH agenda, and this diversity of institutional roles helps sustain a broader range of OH priorities than would be possible through any single group of funders alone.

5.3 National profiles reveal different models of OH funding

In a similar manner, the country-level analysis shows clearly that there is no single model of OH funding. Instead, distinct national profiles reflect scientific infrastructures, policy priorities, and research cultures. The US, UK, Canada, Australia and Switzerland show diversified portfolios, with multifocal aims to strengthen capacities (AT1), reduce risks from zoonotic diseases (AT2 and AT3), and curb antimicrobial resistance (AT5). The US has the most thematically balanced funder ecosystem, while European countries demonstrate more specialized orientations, being strong in food systems (AT4) and antimicrobial resistance (AT5), with some engagement in vector-borne diseases (AT3) and integrating the environment (AT6). Portugal is exceptional for its concentration in food safety, antimicrobial resistance and ecosystem health (AT4–AT6). This concurs with findings from Szomszor *et al.* (2025), which show that Portugal's OH research focus is exceptional as compared to its European counterparts. This might be due to the country's land type and climate, which renders it susceptible to disease outbreaks and disease transmission (Lourenço *et al.*, 2022; Geraldès *et al.*, 2024), or to greater socialization of OH in local research institutions (Szomszor *et al.*, 2025).

Among upper middle-income countries, Brazil and China display some of the broadest and strongest OH engagement in the Global South. Brazil's high activity in all ATs except OH capacity strengthening (AT2–AT6) reflects a mature research system, while China's profile is dominated by antimicrobial resistance (AT5) and food safety (AT4) but supported by significant focus on zoonotic diseases (AT2 and AT3). Lower middle-income countries remain thinly represented. India is the only lower middle-income country with notable OH funding acknowledgements, dominated by antimicrobial resistance (AT5) as well as vector-borne and neglected tropical diseases (AT3) but with markedly lower engagement in integrating the environment (AT6). No low-income country appears among those with significant acknowledged OH-funded outputs, underscoring deep inequities in the distribution of global research funding.

These national patterns demonstrate that countries are funding different versions of OH itself. Some place greater emphasis on governance and capacity strengthening, others on innovation and scientific development, and others on food systems or environmental health. The result is a global funding landscape composed of multiple overlapping models of OH, each shaped by various national priorities, institutional

capabilities and scientific expertise, but working together to produce the full spectrum of OH research.

When the funder-type and country-level analyses are considered together, a clearer picture emerges of how the broader dimensions of the OH agenda are sustained. Although capacity strengthening (AT1) and integrating the environment (AT6) account for fewer assignments than the other ATs, with 907 and 883 assignments respectively, both represent substantial components of the global OH research portfolio. More importantly, both ATs are supported by particular combinations of countries and funders rather than being a primary focus of the broader OH research funding. For example, OH capacity strengthening is particularly prominent in countries such as the US and Switzerland and receives meaningful support from research councils, government agencies and multilateral organizations. Meanwhile, integrating the environment appears more dependent on a narrower coalition of actors, including Portugal, Brazil and China, alongside environmental research councils, NGOs, selected philanthropic organizations and some private-sector actors.

This suggests that OH research funding is notably active beyond the core funding priorities of OH (AT2–AT5). However, funding for OH capacity strengthening (AT1) and integrating the environment (AT6) is not evenly embedded across the system, instead relying disproportionately on a smaller coalition of countries and institutions whose mandates extend beyond the more frequently funded OH themes of zoonotic diseases, food safety and antimicrobial resistance.

5.4 Geographic concentration creates inequities and vulnerabilities

Despite the diversity of thematic priorities and national approaches, the overall funding landscape remains highly concentrated. Of the 642 funders identified in the dataset, 82% are headquartered in high-income countries, while 14% are located in upper middle-income countries and only 4% in lower middle-income countries. No funders headquartered in low-income countries appear in the dataset. This mirrors patterns identified by Mwatondo *et al.* (2023).

Furthermore, the acknowledged funding is dominated by a relatively small group of actors centred around the US, UK, EU, China and Brazil. In fact, co-funding results point to strong *intra*-continental co-operation while *inter*-continental funding links tend to be more selective. Multi-country funding programmes appear to be facilitated by major hubs, such as the EU and the US, while other funders engage in narrower partnership configurations that likely reflect existing scientific networks and institutional alignments. When put into the context of where the funded studies are conducted, the current flow of OH-labelled research funding appears to channel most activity towards domestic and continent-level priorities. As a result, both funding volume and thematic breadth remain clustered among a small number of institutions and countries.

These patterns have important equity implications. Funding concentration helps determine who generates OH evidence, which topics receive sustained support, and which actors participate in agenda-setting. While researchers and institutions in low- and middle-income countries make substantial contributions to OH knowledge generation, the acknowledged funding landscape suggests that financial power remains concentrated elsewhere. This funding system risks reinforcing a model in which low- and middle-income countries act as sites of data extraction rather than co-leaders in OH innovation, governance and environmental stewardship.

The concentration of funding also raises questions about the resilience of the OH research pipeline. Since 2018, growth in funding acknowledgements has been driven largely by several prominent funders, most notably in the US, Brazil, EU and China. The UK is the main exception to this pattern, showing a marked decline after 2022. Although the exact reasons for this exception cannot be determined from the dataset alone, the UK experience highlights that the future visibility and direction of OH-labelled research could be affected by changes in the priorities of a small number of major research economies. Recent funding cuts in early 2025 by the US government could likely further illustrate this point, but the dataset for this study goes only as far as 2024, so more recent publication data would be needed to confirm whether these changes have indeed affected OH research funding.

Nevertheless, the current OH funding landscape is characterized by an important tension. It is thematically diverse and supported by a range of institutional funders, yet the countries and institutions that sustain this diversity remain concentrated. This concentration not only risks reinforcing longstanding inequities in global research systems but may also have consequences for the long-term resilience of the OH funding architecture.

5.5 Acknowledgement gap and hidden actors

While the previous discussion points have examined the visible architecture of OH-labelled research funding, publication acknowledgements capture only part of the wider OH funding ecosystem. This is evident from the fact that only 42% of OH-labelled publications contain a formal funding acknowledgement, making it plausible that many publications have one or more unacknowledged funders. A low acknowledgement rate may reflect differences in reporting practices, but it also raises broader questions about which forms of OH funding are most likely to become visible through published research outputs. Drawing on the OH expertise of the authors, several reasons are proposed as to why certain actors and funding pathways remain only partially visible, or entirely absent, from the analysis.

Part of the gap can be attributed to variation in acknowledgement rates between countries. Portugal reported funding acknowledgements in over 80% of publications, compared with around 74% in China, 51% in the US and 37% in India. These differences suggest that funding visibility is shaped not only by investment patterns

but also by how consistently funding is reported. Another part of the gap may reflect a common reality in lower-income settings, as illustrated by the Nigeria validation exercise. The manual review identified OH-labelled publications that appeared to have received support but did not include formal funding acknowledgements. While anecdotal, this suggests that publication-based analyses are influenced as much by reporting practices as by funding itself. By the same token, reporting practices in many high-income countries might feasibly be shaped by a requirement to acknowledge the funder as part of grant awards, effectively making this a default approach for researchers working in these countries.

At the same time, it is important to consider the broader OH funding landscape, which includes activities beyond producing OH-labelled research. Perhaps the clearest example is OH implementation. Many OH investments support programme delivery, technical assistance, workforce development, institutional strengthening and operational partnerships. These activities can have significant impacts on OH outcomes while generating few peer-reviewed publications and making them less visible in bibliometric datasets, even though they might produce grey literature such as policy briefs, project summaries and updates. The limited visibility of the UK Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO) illustrates this challenge. FCDO supports numerous OH-relevant activities through international development, agriculture, health and capacity-strengthening programmes, yet only one funder acknowledgement was identified in this study. This contrasts with UK research councils such as Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (84 acknowledgements), Medical Research Council (71) and Economic and Social Research Council (25).

Similar challenges likely apply to implementation-focused organizations such as Unlimit Health, which did not appear in the dataset. Their work contributes substantially to OH objectives and their staff might be involved in peer-reviewed outputs as co-authors (Unlimit Health, 2026), but those outputs tend not to have been funded by Unlimit Health specifically. On the other hand, Wellcome Trust emerges as a significant contributor to OH-relevant research despite not explicitly adopting a One Health approach (Wellcome Trust, 2026). More broadly, these patterns suggest that publication outputs may underrepresent actors such as NGOs and the private sector, whose contributions often occur through programme implementation, operational partnerships, product development, technical expertise or service delivery.

A final illustration comes from three of the Quadripartite institutions: FAO, WOA and UNEP. Despite their central roles in global OH governance through OHHLEP, these organizations are largely absent from the acknowledged funding landscape. One explanation is that many of their outputs take the form of technical guidance, assessments, policy products, implementation frameworks and other forms of grey literature rather than peer-reviewed publications. As a result, publication-based analyses may underestimate the importance of organizations whose primary

contributions lie in OH governance, coordination and implementation rather than research production.

Altogether, these examples suggest that the broader OH funding landscape is larger and more diverse than publication records alone imply. While this study highlights a funding system centred on a small number of countries, institutions and thematic priorities, it also shows that different actors contribute to the OH agenda in different ways. Therefore, mapping acknowledged funders provides an important, but necessarily partial, view of how OH activities are financed and sustained in practice.

6. Recommendations

Mapping the global OH funding landscape reveals a research ecosystem that is active and diverse but structurally imbalanced, with clear geographic, thematic and institutional patterns that both enable and constrain the effective implementation of the OH JPA. Several recommendations follow from these findings.

Recommendation #1: Broaden support for capacity strengthening and integrating the environment

A first priority is the need to strengthen investment in areas that remain persistently under-represented in acknowledged OH research funding relative to their strategic importance, most notably research-linked capacity strengthening (AT1) and integrating the environment (AT6). This does not imply that capacity strengthening is generally unfunded: in practice, much support is likely to sit on the implementation side of OH programming rather than in research portfolios. However, these activities appear less prominently in the research funding landscape than other Action Tracks. Expanding dedicated programmes that connect capacity-building with research (e.g. implementation research, embedded evaluation, environmental monitoring and institutional learning) would help rebalance portfolios towards prevention, resilience and long-term risk reduction. Given that public-sector funders account for nearly 80% of acknowledged OH research funding, such rebalancing will depend primarily on shifts in the portfolios of national research councils, government agencies and multilateral organizations.

Recommendation #2: Invest in governance and policy research

A second priority is to increase governance and policy-oriented research. Although AT2 features strongly in several high-income countries, it remains comparatively limited elsewhere. This is particularly relevant to Pathway 1 of the OH JPA, which recognizes the importance of governance, financing and political commitment in creating the conditions for sustained cross-sectoral collaboration and coordinated action. Strengthening this domain is essential if scientific advances in OH are to translate into system preparedness that reduce the risk of zoonotic epidemics and pandemics. Funding that supports cross-sector policy analysis, institutional design

and regulatory alignment would expand the evidence base needed for operationalizing OH surveillance for zoonoses at national and regional levels.

Recommendation #3: Strengthen leadership and funding in low- and middle-income countries

Addressing persistent geographic inequities is equally urgent. The acknowledged funding landscape is dominated by a relatively small number of countries, while lower middle-income countries remain under-represented and low-income countries are effectively absent.

These gaps point to the need for sustained domestic funding mechanisms in low- and middle-income countries. Potential approaches include national OH research funds, regional OH research hubs and multilateral support arrangements that insist on, and resource, low- and middle-income leadership. The objective should not simply be greater participation in OH research, but greater involvement in agenda setting, program leadership and knowledge generation.

Moreover, funding arrangements should recognize that countries operationalize OH differently according to their scientific capacities, institutional structures and policy priorities, rather than assuming a single model of OH funding. Supporting diverse national pathways that remain aligned with broader OH principles may be more effective than promoting a uniform approach across all settings.

Recommendation #4: Build a more resilient OH funding ecosystem

A further area for action is to improve the resilience of the OH funding ecosystem. Recent growth in OH-labelled research has been driven by a relatively small group of major funders and research economies. While this concentration can support coordination and scale, it also increases vulnerability to shifts in national priorities and funding availability.

Broadening the base of active funders would help to sustain and stabilize the recent growth, ultimately reducing risk. Medium-term co-funding arrangements could aim to pair leading funding institutions with additional, inter-continental partners to help maintain current momentum while also reducing sensitivity to short-term shifts in the national priorities of a small number of countries. Such arrangements would also create opportunities for funders and research institutions in regions that appear less frequently in acknowledgement patterns to participate more fully in OH-labelled research activity.

Cross-sector fragmentation also places limits on the integrative ambition of OH research. Thematic clustering by funder type (biomedical science agencies focusing on AT3, agricultural ministries on AT4, environmental agencies on AT6) shows that many funders continue to work within disciplinary or institutional silos. More joint calls, cross-ministerial funding arrangements and interdisciplinary research frameworks

would encourage more integrated portfolios that reflect the interconnected nature of OH risks.

Recommendation #5: Improve visibility and coordination of OH funding

Finally, the study highlights the importance of improving the visibility and coordination of OH funding. Significant variation in funding acknowledgement practices between countries limits the completeness of the visible funding landscape, while many implementation-oriented investments remain largely absent from bibliometric analyses.

Improving the completeness and accuracy of funding acknowledgements across journals and institutions would enhance transparency and allow more reliable benchmarking of global OH-labelled investment. Stronger guidance and automated reporting mechanisms could help ensure that research contributions, particularly from low- and middle-income funders, are properly captured. At the same time, future efforts could consider systematically capturing implementation-oriented investments, technical assistance programs and institutional support mechanisms alongside research funding. Developing a more complete understanding of these funding pathways would help reveal the contributions of actors whose impacts on OH outcomes may be substantial despite generating relatively few funding acknowledgements in peer-reviewed publications.

More co-ordinated mechanisms to understand and track OH investments may help. For example, a pooled OH funding platform, potentially hosted by a multilateral entity, could be considered as one long-term option to help align investments with the OH JPA, fill persistent thematic gaps (especially in AT1 and AT6), support multi-country and interdisciplinary collaborations, and ensure more equitable geographic distribution of resources. Such a mechanism would complement, rather than replace, existing national and sectoral funding channels, but it would provide a coherent structure for addressing cross-sector and transboundary issues that individual funders often struggle to support alone. A current example is the AMR Multi-Partner Trust Fund-established Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR to support low- and middle-income countries in implementing and strengthening multi-sectoral AMR National Action Plans (FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOAHA 2026). Although the focus of this fund is primarily antimicrobial resistance (AT5), it can serve as a model for creating a pooled-funding mechanism that supports OH investments more broadly.

Taken together, these recommendations point to a need for a more balanced, equitable and co-ordinated OH-labelled research funding ecosystem, especially one that is capable of supporting both scientific innovation and the governance, environmental and system-strengthening foundations required to realize the full ambition of the OH approach.

7. Conclusion

This study provides the first comprehensive mapping of the funders acknowledged in OH-labelled research and offers new insights into how the global OH research ecosystem operates. By examining more than 600 funders acknowledged across over 2,000 funded publications, the mapping provides a clearer picture of who finances OH-labelled research, the thematic priorities they support, and how these dynamics shape the global evolution of the OH agenda.

The findings show that acknowledged OH research funding is built around a common core of priorities centred on biomedical and public health domains, namely zoonotic disease surveillance and control (AT2 and AT3), food safety (AT4), and antimicrobial resistance (AT5). However, the funding landscape is not characterized by a single model of OH. Public sector institutions remain the dominant funders of OH-labelled research, but different categories of funders contribute different forms of support across the OH agenda. Similarly, countries appear to operationalize OH in different ways according to their scientific capabilities, institutional arrangements and policy priorities. Taken together, these differences create a funding ecosystem in which various types of funders contribute to OH through complementary but distinct roles.

The analysis also demonstrates that OH capacity strengthening (A1) and integrating the environment (AT6) are meaningful components of the OH research landscape, even though they receive less widespread support than the dominant and traditional OH themes. Rather than being absent from the funding system, these ATs are sustained by combinations of countries and funders, suggesting that the broader dimensions of OH depend disproportionately on a relatively small coalition of actors whose mandates extend beyond the more frequently funded areas of zoonotic diseases, food safety and antimicrobial resistance.

Despite this thematic breadth, the institutional and geographical landscape of OH funding remains highly uneven, with a strong concentration of influential funders in a relatively small number of high-income countries and public sector funding systems. This concentration shapes not only the volume of funding available for OH research, but also who generates evidence, which priorities receive sustained support and which actors participate in agenda-setting. Furthermore, co-funding patterns remain largely regionally bounded, suggesting that opportunities for more extensive inter-continental collaboration are not yet being fully realized.

Such an imbalance risks reinforcing a system where low-income countries are effectively absent from formal funding acknowledgements, despite being central to many of the most pressing OH challenges. Researchers and institutions in these settings make essential scientific, contextual, and agenda-setting contributions, but remain structurally dependent on externally funded programmes and are less visible as funders, conveners or institutional leaders in the formal funding landscape. More broadly, these patterns reflect persistent structural inequities within global research

systems and raise important questions about the long-term resilience of a OH research pipeline that depends heavily on a relatively small number of countries and funding institutions, especially as OH discourse emphasizes equity, integration and global relevance.

Ultimately, the findings of this study need to be interpreted within the broader context of OH financing. The analysis provides insight into the organizations that support the production of OH research and evidence, but research funding is only one part of the wider OH ecosystem. Many investments in implementation, technical assistance, institutional strengthening and policy support may not generate peer-reviewed publications or formal funding acknowledgements. Moreover, support for OH implementation may be delivered through financing mechanisms beyond grants or domestic budgets, including concessional loans and co-financing arrangements that are not readily captured through publication-based analyses. As such, this study offers a map of the visible OH research funding landscape, while also highlighting the need for further work to better understand the wider funding arrangements that support OH in practice.

7.1 Looking ahead

As the current OH JPA approaches its conclusion in 2026, this study provides a timely evidence base for considering how future OH strategies and financing arrangements might evolve. The mapping shows a field that is expanding, diversifying and maturing, but doing so within a global architecture that remains uneven. Strengthening the diversity of funders, supporting a broader range of national pathways to OH, improving the visibility of funding flows, and addressing persistent geographic inequities will all be important for building a more resilient and inclusive OH ecosystem. That being said, the ambition of the OH JPA cannot be fully realized without addressing these structural asymmetries in who funds OH-labelled research and which themes receive sustained investment. Therefore, a more equitable, co-ordinated and strategically balanced OH funding landscape is essential to operationalizing OH as a genuinely integrated and globally relevant approach to safeguarding health across human, animal, plant and environment systems.

Several areas for future research emerge directly from the findings of this study:

- Research into how OH-labelled research without explicit funder acknowledgement is funded, including institutional cross-subsidization, internally generated university or hospital funds, philanthropic block grants and others. Such work should assess whether ‘unacknowledged’ funding reflects financial autonomy, structural underfunding, limited access to competitive grants or differences in reporting norms across regions.
- Conduct longitudinal co-authorship and institutional network analysis to examine patterns of collaboration in OH-labelled research. This should be integrated with

analysis of funding flows to determine how different funder types shape collaboration structures, research direction and downstream policy influence.

- Conduct comparative analysis of domestic public-sector funding for OH research across regions, examining funding volume, thematic allocation, cross-ministerial co-ordination mechanisms, stability over time and degree of alignment with global OH frameworks. This should identify structural drivers of divergence between high-income and low- and middle-income settings.
- Carry out political economy research to determine how funding concentration among a limited group of major funders influences thematic priorities within OH, and whether these priorities reflect the real disease burdens and environmental risks in lower- and middle-income countries.

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9. Annexes

Annex 1: Location of Supplementary Data Table 1

Supplementary Data Table 1: One Health-labelled research publication (funder, type of funder, location of funder, income group of funder and year of the publication): https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/10Ytw5k8rPXyZnuNS_5Ys0qyMGLdKTvw0/edit?gid=610260496#gid=610260496

Annex 2: OH-labelled thematic footprint of research councils

Table A1. Research councils with OH thematic footprint.

Country	Research councils with OH thematic footprint
Australia	National Health and Medical Research Council (NHMRC) Australia Research Council (ARC)
Brazil	Conselho Nacional de Desenvolvimento Científico e Tecnológico (CNPq) - Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development Coordenação de Aperfeiçoamento de Pessoal de Nível Superior (CAPES) - Brazilian Federal Agency for Support and Evaluation of Graduate Education Fundação de Amparo à Pesquisa do Estado de São Paulo (FAPESP) - São Paulo Research Foundation
Canada	Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council of Canada (NSERC)
Europe	Swiss National Science Foundation (SNSF) Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft (DFG) - German Research Foundation Vetenskapsrådet (VR) - Swedish Research Council Centre national de la recherche scientifique (CNRS) - French National Centre for Scientific Research
UK	Biotechnology and Biological Sciences Research Council (BBSRC) Medical Research Council (MRC) Natural Environment Research Council (NERC) Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)
USA	National Institutes of Health (NIH) National Science Foundation (NSF)

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