Leveraging the Private Sector for Improved Health Outcomes

The private health sector is a large and diverse community of non-government entities, both for-profit and not-for-profit, that includes private providers, non-governmental and faith-based organizations and commercial actors. Globally, millions of consumers access information, products and services through the private health sector.

However, due to its complexity, this sector often is not fully understood or integrated into the public health system, resulting in missed opportunities to maximize all available resources and address unmet health needs.

Abt Associates draws upon its strong relationships with local governments and deep understanding of how to navigate the intricacies of the private health sector to achieve positive health outcomes.

We identify opportunities for—and barriers to—integration of the private health sector as part of the total health system and then facilitate strategic partnerships that build on each sector’s comparative strengths and resources. Our partnerships introduce innovative tools and solutions and improve the quality, sustainability and impact of public health interventions. At the same time, we ensure appropriate oversight and stewardship by the government.
Developing Sustainable Interventions to Meet Local Needs

Abt looks at the role of the private sector within the entire health system. We examine public and private sector roles and motivations and pay close attention to the system’s political, economic, social and security context to identify where the private sector can best contribute. We believe in the importance of striking a balance between achieving short-term impact and the need to sustain gains beyond donor funding.

Whether we’re strengthening an existing program or introducing a new policy, service, product or behavior, we consider what will happen when external support ends. We institutionalize our activities by building the capacity of local organizations, transferring skills and establishing frameworks for ongoing learning and knowledge sharing. Our approach allows us to be flexible, foster collaboration and identify local champions and potential partners. Most importantly, it helps us design and implement context-specific programs with realistic objectives and sustainable outcomes.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of more than 30 countries where Abt has completed a private health sector assessment, is a noteworthy example of multi-donor collaboration between USAID, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the World Bank and exceptionally strong local ownership.
Delivering Comprehensive Private Sector Solutions

To help the private sector reach its full potential as a partner in public health systems, Abt provides a wide range of approaches and skills. Our experience spans the entire program lifecycle, often starting with tailored assessments to understand the health landscape and to pinpoint critical barriers to improved health outcomes. We have the depth and breadth of expertise to design and implement strategies that address these context-specific barriers and to respond to changing environments with new and innovative approaches.

That expertise ranges from improving the impact and sustainability of social marketing organizations to building partnerships with pharmaceutical companies and designing health financing schemes that increase access to priority health products and services. We also closely monitor and evaluate our work to ensure successes and lessons learned are shared with key stakeholders and inform the design of future interventions.

More than 47,000 children under 5 received vaccinations in Papua New Guinea through an Abt-led public-private partnership program.
The Abt Advantage

The private sector is a key partner in achieving priority health goals. It serves a wide variety of populations—urban and rural, rich and poor—and offers critical resources such as a skilled health workforce, financing and the infrastructure needed to deliver services. Abt leverages our strong relationships with local governments and deep understanding of the private sector to design context-specific solutions that strengthen and expand these resources to address pressing health needs. We ensure interventions are sustainable and maximize each sector’s comparative advantages because we understand that strategic engagement of the private sector increases access to health products and services, strengthens the health systems and improves overall health outcomes.
Bold Ideas. Real Results.

Abt Associates is an engine for social impact, dedicated to moving people from vulnerability to security. Harnessing the power of data and our experts’ grounded insights, we provide research, consulting and technical services globally in the areas of health, environmental and social policy, technology and international development.

Key Focus Areas

- Education
- Environment & Energy
- Food Security & Agriculture
- Governance & Justice
- Health
- Housing, Communities & Asset Building
- Workforce & Economic Mobility

Cross-Cutting Core Capabilities

- Communications & Behavior Change
- Data Capture & Surveys
- Digital Transformations
- Research, Monitoring & Evaluation
- Technical Assistance & Implementation