

Why invest in IR? ^{1, 2, 3, 4}

Decision makers must prioritize how and when to use scarce resources for investments in health systems, interventions, and research. With so many competing ideas and challenges, it is important to emphasize why investing in IR should not be overlooked.

IR helps course correct, while accelerating progress towards set national and global goals. [In Nigeria](#), IR helped identify the problem, find a simple solution to mitigate smallpox outbreaks and address vaccine shortages, while accelerating towards the global goal of smallpox eradication. The successful strategy, dubbed “selective epidemiologic control”, was subsequently repeated in 20 African countries and in India, and adopted as part of the global smallpox eradication campaign.

IR produces timely results. The perception is often that research takes time and that results are not available when needed to influence policy decisions, but [Government-led IR in 10 LMIC](#) demonstrate that IR was able to answer critical implementation questions and produce results within one year.

IR is cost effective. [Researchers in Ghana found that investing in Government-led IR:](#)

Compares well to other investments in primary health care - IR accounted for only 3.1% of total primary health care costs (average annual per capita cost of just \$0.60)

Helps achieve significant health impact in a 3-year period - Infant mortality reduced by 50% more in intervention districts than in control districts.

IR is good value for money.

Investing in discovery research for new interventions is estimated to reduce U5MR by 22%.

[Investing in IR can reduce under five mortality rates \(U5MR\) by 63%.](#)