

The **second WHO Global Summit on Traditional Medicine**, held in New Delhi, India, on 17–19 December 2025, has the theme of “Restoring balance: The science and practice of health and well-being”. The Summit aligns with the [Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034](#), which recognizes Traditional Medicine as a living science that contributes to universal health coverage, health equity and sustainability. The Summit serves as a global platform to accelerate implementation of the new strategy, foster partnerships, and translate pledges and commitments into concrete action.



For more information, contact: [tmcentre@who.int](mailto:tmcentre@who.int)

## Parallel session 2.A

### Translating the WHO Traditional Medicine Research Roadmap into global action

Plenary 2 and associated parallel sessions will focus on how advancing research, innovation and investment in Traditional Medicine can bring balance for both people and planet, as aligned with the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034 and global declarations.

This parallel session will translate key findings from the WHO Traditional Medicine Research Roadmap into actionable insights that support the implementation of the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034. The session aims to strengthen the global research ecosystem for Traditional Medicine by addressing complexity, codification and capacity-building through regionally diverse case studies and expert presentations. It will explore how Traditional Medicine research can align with the Sustainable Development Goals, support people-centred and culturally responsive care, and contribute to health system integration and economic evaluation. Through a moderated panel discussion, the session will foster cross-sector dialogue and global collaboration, empowering researchers, policy-makers and communities to co-design inclusive, sustainable and impactful research agendas.

### Rationale

Translating the WHO Traditional Medicine Research Roadmap into global action requires aligning Traditional Medicine with the Sustainable Development Goals, planetary health and equity priorities (1,2). Effective integration demands navigating complex, non-codified knowledge systems through culturally responsive methodologies, robust reporting standards and frameworks such as WHO’s conceptual framework on integration of traditional, complementary and integrative medicine into health systems (3–5). People-centred research that reflects patient values, community needs and epistemic justice is critical, supported by co-design approaches that empower Indigenous and local communities while ensuring ethical practices and equitable benefit sharing (6,7). Sustainable Traditional Medicine ecosystems depend on leadership, capacity-building and participatory governance models (8). Research evidence can only be generated by a workforce existing within an ecosystem that ensures its members are appropriately trained and supported to grow and advance methodologies and insights (9). Balancing codification and standardization with cultural integrity safeguards diverse knowledge systems, while regulatory frameworks support the safety and relevance of Traditional Medicine interventions (10), facilitating appropriate integration into health systems and meaningful global action.

### Objectives

- Showcase successful initiatives and regionally grounded case studies demonstrating how Traditional Medicine research can be conducted with quality, cultural sensitivity and policy relevance.
- Highlight lessons learned from diverse contexts, explore innovative approaches to managing complexity and codification, and identify opportunities for future research, capacity-building and policy development.
- Surface practical insights into how Traditional Medicine can be better aligned with global health priorities, including the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034.
- Identify opportunities to enhance equity and inclusiveness in Traditional Medicine research through community engagement, culturally responsive methodologies and support for diverse knowledge systems.

## Guiding questions

1. **Balancing global integration and local relevance (social and systemic balance):** How can Traditional Medicine research better align with the Sustainable Development Goals and the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034? What lessons can be drawn from successful regional initiatives that demonstrate this alignment? What models of leadership and capacity-building have supported long-term success in Traditional Medicine research, and how can these be adapted across regions and contexts? What kinds of partnerships, funding mechanisms or policy shifts could help address remaining gaps and sustain research ecosystems?
2. **Balancing scientific rigour with traditional complexity (epistemic and methodological balance):** What approaches have proven effective in managing the complexity of Traditional Medicine systems? How can reporting standards and methodological innovation improve research quality without oversimplifying traditional knowledge? What gaps remain in the global Traditional Medicine research landscape?
3. **Balancing cultural integrity, equity and inclusion (social and cultural balance):** What are the risks and benefits of codifying traditional knowledge and standardizing Traditional Medicine products and practices? How can equity, inclusiveness and cultural integrity be safeguarded in this process? How can Traditional Medicine research be designed to reflect patient values, cultural diversity, knowledge equity and community needs?
4. **Balancing leadership and workforce capacity-building in an emerging field (infrastructure and capacity balance):** How can research capacity be built and sustained for Traditional Medicine? What initiatives and activities can overcome gaps in infrastructure for existing and future researchers? How can Traditional Medicine research leaders be developed and supported, particularly in settings and regions with an underdeveloped research ecosystem?

## Session format

The proposed session format begins with brief framing remarks, followed by expert presentations highlighting key WHO Traditional Medicine Research Roadmap themes and their implications for policy, innovation and equity. These presentations will lead into a moderated discussion designed to encourage cross-regional reflection and practical insights. Interactive audience participation will invite attendees to contribute perspectives, ask questions and help co-develop actionable strategies for advancing culturally grounded, evidence-informed Traditional Medicine research globally. Panellists will conclude by outlining one or two key research investment or capacity-building commitments that directly support Direction 1.1 or 1.2 of the Global Traditional Medicine Strategy 2025–2034.

## References

1. Patwardhan B, Wieland LS, Aginam O, Chuthaputti A, Ghelman R, Ghods R et al. Evidence-based traditional medicine for transforming global health and well-being. *J Ayurveda Integr Med.* 2023; 14:100790. doi.org/10.1016/j.jaim.2023.100790.
2. Steel A, Gallego-Perez DF, Ijaz N, Gall A, Bangpan M, Dos Santos Boeira L et al. Integration of traditional, complementary, and integrative medicine in the institutionalization of evidence-informed decision-making: The World Health Organization meeting report. *J Integr Complement Med.* 2025; 31:388–394. doi:10.1089/jicm.2024.0837.
3. World Health Organization. Integration of traditional, complementary and integrative medicine into health systems: conceptual framework. Geneva: WHO; 2025 (<https://iris.who.int/server/api/core/bitstreams/0c74b1b8-f0bb-4553-8bec-1bdeb2739c87/content>).
4. Heinrich M, Lardos A, Leonti M, Weckerle C, Willcox M, with the ConSEFS advisory group et al. Best practice in research: Consensus statement on ethnopharmacological field studies - ConSEFS. *J Ethnopharmacol.* 2018; 211:329–339. doi:10.1016/j.jep.2017.08.015.
5. Mortazavi MS, Ince F, Irannejad S, Zargaran A. Challenges in verifying historical ophthalmological texts: the case of a Turkish book derived from a Persian source. *J Res Hist Med.* 2025; 14(Suppl. 1):31–36. doi:10.30476/rhm.2025.108947.1372.
6. Tolo CU, Ogwang PE, Weisheit A. Pharm-BioTechnology and Traditional Medicine Centre: an eastern and southern Africa Higher Education Centres of Excellence project at Mbarara University of Science and Technology. *RUFORUM Working Document Series.* 2016; 14:97–110.
7. Steel A, Baker K, Adams J, Foley H, Carter T, Charnaud S et al. Global research funding for traditional, complementary and integrative medicine. *Bull World Health Organ.* 2025; 103:649–661D. doi:10.2471/BLT.25.293527.
8. Global traditional medicine strategy 2025–2034. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2025 (Health Systems Performance Assessment (HSPA) toolkit for universal health coverage).
9. Hartvigsen J, Kawchuk G, Breen A, De Carvalho D, Eklund A, Fernandez M et al. Leadership and capacity building in chiropractic research: report from the first CARL cohort. *Chiropr Man Therap.* 2021; 29:9. doi:10.1186/s12998-021-00363-8.
10. Acharya R. National Medicinal Plants Board: catalyzing conservation and research innovation in India. *J Drug Res Ayurvedic Sci.* 2025; 10:337–340. doi:10.4103/jdras.jdras\_314\_25.