

# MSF UK STRATEGIC DIRECTION 2026-31



# Contents

<b>1</b>	<b>Context of the Strategic Direction 2026-2031</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Our vision</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Our culture</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Our strategic priorities</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>How we will measure our success</b>	<b>17</b>

Front Cover: An MSF team treats a seriously war-wounded patient inside the intensive care unit of the MSF medical train during the journey from Pokrovsk, eastern Ukraine to Lviv, in western Ukraine. Photograph ©Andrii Ovod/MSF. Left: MSF physiotherapist Rula Marahfeh helps 11-year-old Ahmed to walk after he was injured in an explosion in Yemen. Photograph © Peter Bräunig/MSF.

# 1 Context of the Strategic Direction 2026-2031

MSF UK is part of an associative movement of over 70,000 people worldwide who are bound together by a commitment to MSF's charter and social mission: to provide medical assistance to people affected by conflict, epidemics, disasters or exclusion from healthcare.

We act in the name of humanity and universal medical ethics and are guided by principles of impartiality and neutrality, observing the right to humanitarian assistance on the basis of need and without discrimination. Medical action is the heart of our social mission, and bearing witness is inseparable from that. We bear witness to what we see and do, particularly when others are silent, and advocate for change to uphold the rights and safety of those we serve.

MSF's social mission is being enacted in a world that is currently marked by intensifying conflict and violence, climate-related disasters, public health emergencies and political instability – all of which are increasing in frequency, complexity and humanitarian and human impact. Armed violence continues to drive displacement and restrict access to healthcare and basic means of survival, while climate change is exacerbating the spread of disease, fuelling food insecurity and compounding the vulnerability of already at-risk populations. The relevance of MSF's approach of providing independent, principled, person-centred medical assistance to people facing crisis around the globe, while simultaneously bearing witness to their experience, is stronger than ever.



Team members sit in the back of an MSF Land Cruiser during a four-day visit to cattle-herding communities in Labarab, South Sudan. Photograph © Manon Massiat/MSF



A seven-year-old girl (centre), with her brother (left) and physiotherapist Pierre Moreau (right), wears a 3D-printed compression mask as part of her treatment at MSF's reconstructive surgery hospital in Amman for injuries sustained during an explosion in her hometown of Fallujah, Iraq. Photograph © Hussein Amri/MSF

The UK context presents both significant opportunities and challenges to the global MSF Movement. As one of the world's largest economies, the UK continues to offer a strong base for fundraising, with a generous public that consistently supports humanitarian causes despite broader economic pressures. It also hosts a highly skilled and diverse workforce in healthcare, research, communications, and humanitarian response, making it a valuable source of expertise for MSF's global operations. The UK has a vibrant civil society and media landscape that can amplify advocacy efforts and is home to English-language media organisations with huge international reach. Additionally, as one of the five permanent members of the UN Security Council, a signatory to major international treaties—including the Geneva Convention, the Refugee Convention, and the Genocide Convention—and a member of both the International Criminal Court and the International Court of Justice, the UK has a strong global influence.

The UK has played a leading role in global health and development initiatives, co-founding the Global Fund, Gavi, and the Child Nutrition Fund, and serving as a hub for global health research, prestigious academic institutions, and cutting-edge innovation in nutrition, pharmaceuticals, biomedical science, and biotechnology research and development (R&D). Charities registered in the UK must navigate a robust regulatory environment focused on accountability and safeguarding, which ensures transparency but also adds operational considerations for organisations like MSF.

Geopolitical volatility and the rapidly changing global humanitarian landscape present both risks and opportunities. While MSF is not directly impacted by UK government cuts to Official Development Assistance (ODA) spending, increased competition for regular giving and philanthropy is likely as other organisations shift toward private income to offset ODA shortfalls. Conversely, some major philanthropists are redirecting donations from US-based organisations toward countries with more stable policy environments, such as the UK, and workforce reductions elsewhere are increasing the level of experience and expertise among applicants to roles at MSF UK. MSF will need to monitor these changes closely and remain ready to adjust actions in the UK and globally throughout this strategic period.



MSF team member Clotilde Manzeza Bilala speaks to HIV patients in the waiting room of the Kabinda hospital in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Photograph © Tommy Trenchard/Panos

At every stage of developing this Strategic Direction, we have asked ourselves: Why MSF UK? What is it about our history and context that defines not only what we can contribute to the Movement, but what we should? We have challenged ourselves to focus on activities where we are uniquely placed to make a meaningful contribution, and in the spirit of interdependence and a desire to contribute to the Movement's evolution, to recognise that our role is often to support rather than to lead. These questions and reflections have shaped the goals in this strategy and will guide us as we navigate an increasingly unstable and uncertain world.

The development of this Strategic Direction has also been informed by other strategic reflection exercises within the MSF Movement: Becoming the MSF We Want to Be, the Strategic Planning Accountability and Resource Cycle (or SPARC, which outlines the Movement's collective commitments over this six-year strategic planning period), ongoing discussions around Movement Evolution, the Power Analysis study conducted by MSF UK's Manson Unit, Telling It As It Is (MSF's strategic framework for public communications and bearing witness activities), GPS 3.0 (MSF's strategic framework for fundraising), the development of the 2026-2031 OCA Strategic Plan and MSF Ubuntu's application to become an Operational Directorate.

This purpose of the Strategic Direction is to guide the work of MSF UK. It is not intended to outline a plan for all our work and activity over the coming six years. Instead, it describes our key orientations and tangible goals and outlines how we will attempt to deliver those goals. It should therefore be used as a 'north star' document by teams across MSF UK to inform planning and to hold us to account for delivering on our ambitions and commitments.

## 2 Our vision

Over the six years of this strategic period MSF UK aims to achieve our optimal contribution to the MSF Movement in enabling, implementing, supporting and governing the delivery of MSF's social mission: as a major fundraiser of income and reliable provider of people, prominent in our public communications and advocacy, influential and collaborative within the Movement, and contributing directly to the social mission through our unique expertise, knowledge and experience.



**Clockwise:** Comedy Sans Frontières 2026. Photograph © Fundraising/MSF

An MSF nurse assesses a 10-year-old girl at a follow-up appointment after being treated for extensively drug-resistant tuberculosis in Mumbai, India. Photograph © Atul Loke/MSF



MSF health promoters discuss nutrition during a mobile clinic in the Afar region of Ethiopia. Photograph © Paula Casado Aguirregabiria/MSF

### 3 Our culture

Culture shapes how we work together, make decisions and overcome challenges. A positive shared culture is essential to successfully implement the strategic choices we have made. At MSF UK, we recognise that to achieve our goal of making an optimal contribution to MSF's social mission, we must embed our values and ways of working into everything we do.


While we uphold neutrality and impartiality in the name of universal medical ethics and the right to humanitarian assistance, our fundamental guiding principle is humanity: we do not accept the status quo when it harms the people we serve or each other. Above all, we are committed, bold and human in our work and our actions.

**Committed:** We hold ourselves accountable to our own high standards. Everything we do is focused on the people and communities we aim to serve. We are driven by purpose, acting with integrity, agility and dedication to our social mission.

**Bold:** We are not afraid to challenge the status quo. We adapt to changing needs and are not afraid to take smart risks. We are not afraid to innovate. Where we fail, we learn fast. Where we succeed, we celebrate.

**Human:** We trust, empower, and support each other – encouraging initiative, reflecting on our experiences and learning from our mistakes. We lead with empathy and trust, building a space where everyone's voice is heard and respected, everyone's contribution is recognised, diversity is celebrated and wellbeing is a priority.




 MSF healthcare workers put on PPE to enter the high risk zone of the Ebola Transit Centre in Bunia. Photograph © Pablo Garrigos/MSF

### 4 Our strategic priorities

To realise our ambition to make a purposeful and impactful contribution to MSF's social mission, we will continue to invest in our fundamental responsibilities as a Section while also making the most of the unique strategic value we have, linked to our national context and organisational history.

While we intend to grow activities that support our income generation goals, we will limit growth in other activities that we believe can be, or are already being, delivered by others in the MSF Movement. This will support stronger prioritisation and decision-making, grounded in the question, "Why us?" We will challenge ourselves and our partners to deliver quality and to ensure that every activity we undertake is a relevant and meaningful contribution.



 MSF health workers Smira Abakar Nahar Gria and Madiha Haroon Ali Ishag stand outside a cholera treatment centre in Adré transit camp, eastern Chad. Photograph © Léa Gillabert/MSF



MSF doctor Hasna Hena Mou and assistant Rajib Mazumdar treat a four-year-old boy for an abscess in the MSF hospital at the Kutupalong refugee camp, Bangladesh. Photograph © Ante Bussmann/MSF



## Delivering on the fundamentals

Our fundamental goals relate to the key responsibilities of an MSF Section.

### Goal 1

**We will substantially increase our financial contribution to MSF's medical humanitarian mission by growing our income year-on-year in sustainable and diverse ways, making informed choices, taking intelligent risk and being creative in how we motivate our supporters.**

#### To achieve this, we will:

- Make strategic choices about where and how to invest in our existing fundraising activities and when to develop new ones, prioritising income growth and maximising our financial contribution to MSF's social mission.
- Invest in creating lifelong relationships with our supporters, while also proactively seeking new opportunities to generate income. Develop relationships with a new and more diverse range of organisations and individuals that share our priorities and want to support our ambitions.
- Support our fundraising teams to develop and maintain an in-depth familiarity with the full scope of the MSF Movement's medical humanitarian activities and ambitions, enabling them to propose compelling opportunities for current and potential supporters to make unrestricted and restricted donations to fund all or part of MSF's work.
- Make income generation a shared responsibility, by ensuring everyone across MSF UK is able to describe their work in a human, understandable and passionate way that inspires support.

### Goal 2

**We will bear witness to what MSF staff see and do in our public communications, advocacy and representation. We will take every opportunity to speak meaningfully to the full range of audiences available to us to draw attention to crises and to motivate people in the UK to take action in ways that have a tangible, positive impact for the people we aim to assist.**

#### To achieve this, we will:

- Tell the stories of patients and staff facing crises around the world and, where relevant, motivate people in the UK to take action, with the aim of creating impact for the people and communities we seek to assist that goes beyond the direct medical care and programmes provided by our teams.
- Cultivate and use our influence in the UK to advocate for change and accountability in areas of policy relevant to MSF's medical and operational priorities.
- Increase awareness of the full range of MSF's work by refining content and messaging aligned with Movement-wide priorities and sharing it through UK-based communications and media channels with both national and international reach.
- Broaden, diversify and amplify communication around our research and innovation activities, fostering curiosity about improving patient care, influencing policy and practice within MSF and externally, and building wider support for our work.



MSF laboratory technicians test blood samples of HIV patients for signs of liver and kidney dysfunction in the Kabinda Hospital in Kinshasa, Democratic Republic of Congo. Photograph © Tommy Trenchard/Panos Pictures





MSF nurse Hoda El Hefnawi prepares a mobile clinic for internally displaced people in Saida, Lebanon. Photograph © Maryam Srour/MSF

### Goal 3

**We will recruit and maintain a diverse UK and Internationally Mobile workforce whose expertise, attitudes and behaviours meet MSF's medical humanitarian and internal operational needs; we will ensure they are well-prepared and supported in their work.**

**To achieve this, we will:**

- Draw on the particular strengths of the UK labour market to effectively build staff groups who are able to respond to operational priorities and support our staff to further develop their autonomy and operationally relevant skills.
- Support our workforce with proactive talent management, enabling effective career development and succession planning, including ensuring MSF experience is recognised as a valuable part of career development for medical and non-medical professionals.
- Build a workforce that is resilient, inclusive and effectively supported through mental health and trauma-informed approaches.
- Act to make a positive contribution toward the diversity of MSF's global and UK workforces, supporting career progression among groups that are underrepresented in the Movement, particularly in leadership positions.

### Delivering a unique contribution

Beyond our fundamental work, we will invest in areas where there is clear need and demand from the MSF Movement and where MSF UK is uniquely positioned to add value.

#### Goal 4

**Using our distinct experience, network and multidisciplinary approach, we will lead and collaborate on research and innovation projects that benefit MSF's patients of today and patients and communities beyond MSF in the future.**

**To do this we will:**

- Combine medical humanitarian experience with research expertise, centred within the Manson Unit, to conduct meaningful, person-centred participatory research and inclusive innovation in collaboration with operational teams and people affected by crises.
- Broaden our collaboration with individuals and teams across the MSF Movement and invest in partnerships beyond MSF to develop and deliver research and innovation projects that have transversal impact.
- Champion and promote interdisciplinary approaches to person and population-centred care across MSF programmes.



MSF teams set up a tent during a cholera outbreak in Adré transit camp, Eastern Chad. Photograph © Léa Gillibert/MSF



Zainab sits with her 10-month-old son, Nura, who is being treated for malnutrition at the Kofar Suari Inpatient Therapeutic Feeding Centre, Katsina, Nigeria. Photograph © Abba Adamu Musa/MSF



### Goal 5

**We will use our strengths and relationships in the UK to improve and develop programmes that support the delivery of MSF's social mission internationally.**

#### To do this, we will:

- Through the Leadership Education Academic Partnership (LEAP) and Global Health and Humanitarian Medicine (GHHM) course, provide access to prestigious and highly relevant postgraduate qualifications to MSF colleagues from across the Movement who might not otherwise have the opportunity.
- Use our knowledge and experience of integrated governance, strategic management, and safeguarding and accountability practice to provide support in this area to others in the MSF Movement, in alignment with accountability aspirations of the SPARC.
- As an integral part of OCA's Public Health Department, work alongside medical humanitarian programmes to provide contextualised support that helps translate requests into improved responses that are better matched to the specific needs and contexts of the patients and populations we serve.
- Use our specific expertise and multidisciplinary approach to support the medical operational choices of the new Operational Directorate, MSF Ubuntu.
- When an MSF Operational Directorate chooses to conduct medical humanitarian operations in the UK, we will engage proactively in the planning and running of those operations, including supporting their delivery.

### How will we enable MSF UK to deliver?

To enable the social mission, we will work as effectively and efficiently as we can for ourselves and in our partnerships, and we will proactively contribute to the leadership and governance of the MSF Movement and the Operational Directorates of which we are part.

### Goal 6

**We will increase opportunities for Association members to be engaged contributors to the social mission.**

#### To do this we will:

- Engage association members with the right information and opportunities at the right time to be able to participate meaningfully in discussions concerning the identity and social mission of the MSF Movement.
- Support and facilitate Association members to participate in MSF UK's campaigning and fundraising work in ways that will amplify our impact.
- Ensure MSF UK's Board Members are well informed about their responsibilities as UK Charity Trustees and the diverse views and opinions within the UK Association and across the wider movement, enabling them to act with integrity in fulfilling our rights and responsibilities as both an institutional member of the MSF Movement and as a UK dual registered charitable company.



MSF staff and caregivers help children regain lost developmental skills using psycho-stimulation techniques at Kafin Madaki General Hospital in Bauchi, Nigeria. Photograph © Abdulkareem Yakubu/MSF



## Goal 7

**Partnership is central to our success; we will actively engage as a committed partner in the MSF Movement and beyond, contributing to collective progress and supporting positive transformation in line with the MSF Movement's shared goals.**

### To do this we will:

- Continue to partner with MSF Netherlands, Germany, Canada, Sweden and South Asia to form OCA, including taking part in the executive and associative governance and leadership of the OD.
- Partner with MSF Southern Africa, Eastern Africa and Spain to form the new Operational Directorate MSF Ubuntu, including taking part in the executive and associative governance and leadership of the OD.
- Play an active role in the leadership and governance of the Movement through participation in the international association (via the IGA) and the ExCom, and by volunteering our support and expertise to other international platforms and projects when relevant.
- Collaborate with and support other entities in the MSF Movement where MSF UK can add value because of our expertise, or where there is an opportunity to improve accountability or patient safety and quality of care.
- Develop a robust model of strategic partnership with key institutions external to MSF to support the delivery of projects that support the social mission, medical humanitarian operations and research and innovation initiatives.

## Goal 8

**We will take a transformational approach to encourage and support all parts of MSF UK to be more effective and efficient at delivering our support to the social mission.**

### To do this we will:

- Strengthen and develop our enabling functions to be efficient and user-centred, so they can effectively support the delivery of this strategic direction and enable MSF UK to grow sustainably.
- Improve coordination and collaboration across our enabling functions to ensure integrated, efficient and responsive support for the organisation's goals across MSF UK and MSF Ireland.
- Empower our enabling function teams to use their expertise to facilitate improved efficiency and effectiveness of processes and tools across all teams in the organisation.

# 5 How we will measure our success

Monitoring progress is essential to understanding whether we are delivering the impact we set out to achieve. At a strategic level, this requires a balanced approach using both quantitative and qualitative indicators. These indicators will act as key signals throughout the six-year period, helping us assess whether adjustments in our approach or direction are needed to remain responsive, adaptive and focused on meaningful impact in a changing internal and external environment.

Our monitoring framework will operate across different levels of the organisation with the aim to establish team-level key performance indicators wherever useful and possible. Compound metrics have been identified to act both as an indicator of our progress towards achieving our strategic goals and as an early warning system to alert us that management action may be required. These metrics will be reported to the MSF UK CoDir and Board periodically.

Our approach to metrics is likely to evolve and become more sophisticated over time. The compound metrics that we intend to report on are [attached at Annex A](#). For some of these metrics, we will need to build the systems and processes required to report against them and confirm that they are practicable. We will also need to keep under review the relevance and usefulness of the metrics as we move through the strategic period in informing management interventions. We will review our metrics annually and update Annex A accordingly.



MSF's Dr Moshin treats an elderly patient during a mobile clinic following floods in the Dadu district, Sindh, Pakistan. Photograph © Asim Hafeez



MSF mobile teams return from a health post in Afar, Ethiopia, where they screen and treat children for severe acute malnutrition. Photograph © Paula Casado Aguirregabiria/MSF



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