Global Oxygen Alliance

access to medicine FOUNDATION

MEETING REPORT

Global Oxygen Alliance Community of Practice: Improving medical oxygen access in low-and middle-income countries

On the sidelines of the 78th World Health Assembly, Geneva

FRAMING THE ROUNDTABLE

The Global Oxygen Alliance (GO_2AL) Community of Practice (CoP)* is a collaborative platform facilitated by the Access to Medicine Foundation on behalf of GO_2AL to unite key stakeholders from the medical oxygen sector, aiming to improve access to medical oxygen in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs).

As part of this initiative, a recent roundtable in Geneva brought together the medical gas industry and GO_2AL to strengthen collaboration, share best practices and co-develop solutions for sustainable oxygen access. The session focused on tracking industry progress, exploring new partnerships and assessing energy-efficient technologies.

KEY DISCUSSION POINTS

Ethiopia's journey to better oxygen access

Oxygen gap (2016)	Actions	Outcomes	Remaining unfulfilled demand and supply gaps
11% of health centres had oxygen access Low production capacity	Development of 5-year oxygen implementation strategy Directive enabling health facilities to sell oxygen and collect revenue Training manuals for clinicians, biomedical engineers and hospital directors Increased number of oxygen plants	• Oxygen access x10 • Thousands of clinicians and biomedical engineers trained • Total of 59 oxygen plants, with 24 additional PSA plants being procured • Increased production capacity (5000 m³/h)	• Financial infrastructure constraints • Not enough skilled persons that can manage oxygen plants or new technologies

East Africa Programme on Oxygen Access

The programme takes a holistic systems approach to expand oxygen production through public-private collaboration, aiming to reduce costs by 25–30% and strengthen long-term coordination. It involves governments, funders, implementers and gas industry partners across Kenya and Tanzania. Read more about this initiative here and here.

Solar electrification

The Clinton Health Access Initiative's (CHAI's) solar financing programme aims to solarise 500+ health facilities in Eswatini, Kenya, Malawi and South Africa and develop a replicable blended finance model to support nationwide health electrification. Read more about this initiative here.

Benefits of solar power for health facilities	
Remote & off-grid compatibility	Solar systems can be installed directly at health facilities, even in remote or off-grid areas
Reliable backup	When paired with batteries, solar systems can provide backup power during grid outages and reduce reliance on diesel generators, cutting fuel costs.
Cost savings & long-term cost efficiency	Solar power can cut oxygen production costs by 10–15% and overall electricity costs by 15–25%, with further savings expected from battery storage, falling Power Purchase Agreement prices and rising grid tariffs.

Identified needs from oxygen industry stakeholders to improve oxygen access

- **Training, maintenance, spare parts and stock management services:** Many oxygen plants, mobile concentrators, and related equipment procured or installed during the COVID-19 pandemic are now non-functional due to poor planning and lack of long-term maintenance. To ensure sustainability, donors, NGOs, suppliers and governments must prioritise service contracts, local ownership, sustainable financing, and explore models like leasing oxygen systems to ensure ongoing reliability and support. Strengthening the local private sector is also critical, as many areas lack small- and medium-sized enterprises that can provide hospitals with reliable maintenance, training and operational support, creating a "missing middle" between bulk production and end users.
- **National oxygen strategies:** Clear national oxygen strategies are needed with government and partner commitments, resource mapping, defined roles and reliable baseline data to help countries plan, cost and improve oxygen access based on existing systems and functionality.
- **Optimising collaboration:** To improve oxygen access efforts, a combination of global alignment and country-level bottom-up analysis is needed. Clear goals and coordination among all actors, along with well-defined roles across the oxygen value chain, are essential. Strengthening dialogue, transparency and accountability through shared data, lessons and success stories will help build trust and improve collaboration.
- **Regulatory simplification, harmonisation and inclusion:** Fragmentation caused by varying standards, certification processes, and safety requirements for medical oxygen production, distribution and use, combined with high costs and administrative burdens, make it complex for the gas industry to ensure oxygen access.

IMMEDIATE ACTIONS TO ENABLE A LONG-TERM STRATEGIC ROADMAP

The discussion points above highlighted the need for a combination of global alignment with a bottom-up approach, mapping out local production and distribution capacities while aligning efforts and improving coordination among stakeholders to support sustainable, country-led solutions.

In the coming weeks, the **selection of priority LMICs** will be initiated in collaboration with GO_2AL. A **survey** will be sent out to CoP members to gather data on the regions where organisations are active, the scope of maintenance and training services offered, willingness to collaborate and other key metrics.

Following this, **oxygen ecosystem mapping** will begin in the selected countries. This will involve assessing oxygen production and distribution capacity, identifying key stakeholders, reviewing existing strategies and pinpointing critical oxygen gaps. Survey data will be compared against these gaps to determine where the strengths and capabilities of organisations can be matched to country-specific needs.

These early steps will lay the foundation for a long-term strategic roadmap focused on country-level action and sustainable impact in oxygen access.

**The Global Oxygen Alliance (GO_2AL) Community of Practice (CoP) was previously named the Medical Oxygen Community of Practice.*