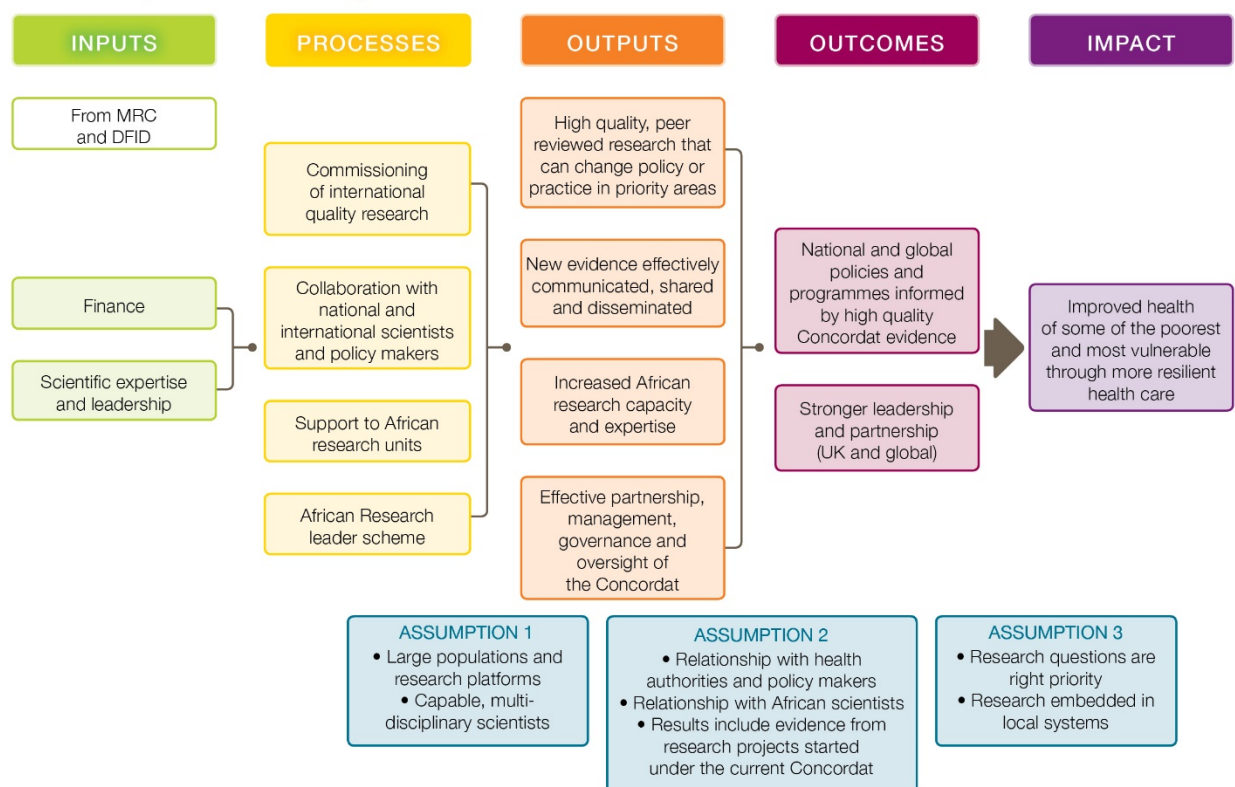


Theory of Change

The theory of change for research projects is well established. Basic inputs are funding for research, scientific expertise, and influencing and partnership activities. Researchers will use existing evidence to guide the development and evaluation of relevant interventions. They will develop key partnerships with a range of academics, policy makers, service delivery organisations, communities and NGOs. Research may (or may not) show positive new findings that can influence policy and practice, requiring proactive dissemination to promote uptake of evidence. Unrestricted funding allows for a more flexible response to crises or to new emerging priorities.

Theory of change



Assumptions underpinning theory of change

There is strong evidence, based on experience, that the assumptions will hold true.

- (i) Large populations and research platforms – the MRC, through its relationship with its two African units, has access to large populations and a number of research platforms. There is strong evidence that the Concordat has the capacity to support a large portfolio of research.
- (ii) Capable, multi-disciplinary scientists – the Concordat provides the opportunity for multi-disciplinary research. Collaborations are central to addressing complex and multi-disciplinary research questions as they allow the necessary expertise, materials and facilities to be assembled, potentially from participating partners across the world. As evidenced above, the UK has a strong background of international collaboration in research and the MRC is a key contributor to that.
- (iii) Relationship with health authorities and policy makers, and relationships with African scientists – the MRC has strong relationships around the world through the research it funds and the scientists and institutions it supports. Research proposals undergo external peer

review and many members of expert boards and panels are LMIC policy makers and scientists. The African research units facilitate close relations with policy makers in those countries.

(iv) Research questions are the right priority and the research is embedded in local systems – the African units are critical to ensuring research is feasible and relevant. In addition, the MRC's governance structure ensures the latest evidence is taken into account when setting priorities and new calls for proposals.

Given the lead time between new research being commissioned and results being available, outputs and outcomes under this new Concordat will include new evidence from projects that started being funded under the old one.