

Unpacking COVAX

COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access

Frequently Asked Questions

Why was COVAX created?

The world's experience with H1N1 in 2009, when a small number of wealthy countries bought up almost the entire global vaccine supply, made it clear that the mistake of excluding most other countries needed to be avoided. COVAX (COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access) was formed in 2020 to prevent lower-income economies from ending up at the back of the queue. The aim was to secure life-saving vaccines and to ensure vaccines reach all people, recognising that the pandemic would not end until the virus is contained globally.

What is the role of COVAX?

COVAX, the vaccines pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is co-led by CEPI, Gavi and WHO. It partners with developed and developing country vaccine manufacturers, UNICEF, PAHO, the World Bank, and others. COVAX is the only global initiative that works with governments and manufacturers to ensure COVID-19 vaccines are available worldwide to both high-income and lower-income countries.

Who are the COVAX co-leaders and what are their functions?

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance: leads on vaccine procurement and delivery worldwide for COVAX. As part of this role, Gavi hosts the Office of the COVAX Facility coordinating its operation and governance. Gavi holds financial and legal relationships with 193 Facility participants. It manages the COVAX Facility deals portfolio: negotiating advance purchase agreements with manufacturers of promising vaccine candidates to secure doses on behalf of all COVAX Facility participants.

The Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) supports vaccine research, development and manufacturing scale-up from the lab to the production facility.

The World Health Organisation (WHO) provides guidance on vaccine policies, safety, regulation, and vaccine allocation. In addition, the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO) manages vaccine procurement and distribution in the Americas.

UNICEF coordinates procurement and distribution of vaccines to COVAX participants and supports in-country delivery of vaccines.



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What does the COVAX facility do?

The COVAX Facility is the global procurement mechanism of COVAX. It makes investments across a broad portfolio of vaccine candidates to make sure that if any manufacturing issues arise, other candidates are available. By pooling purchasing power from all participating countries, COVAX gets access to doses of safe and effective vaccines as soon as they receive regulatory approval. Guided by an allocation framework developed by WHO, the COVAX Facility then distributes these doses to help protect populations in participating countries. Gavi coordinates the development and implementation of the COVAX Facility.

What is the Gavi COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC)?

The AMC is an innovative funding mechanism that procures COVID-19 vaccines for lower-income countries. Doses are acquired through the COVAX Facility but are paid for via the Gavi COVAX AMC, which is largely funded through Official Development Assistance (ODA). This includes contributions from the private sector and donations from higher-income countries. In 2020 Gavi endorsed the eligibility of 92 countries and economies for support through the AMC.

The Gavi COVAX AMC's role is to leverage the scale assured by the participation of higher-income economies to ensure that lower-income ones are also able to participate. The Facility funds volume guarantees to specific manufacturers for vaccine candidates before they are licensed. It also provides market-wide demand guarantees to all manufacturers in the longer term. Once vaccines are licensed and prequalified by the World Health Organisation, AMC funds pay for the purchase of doses for all the participating economies.

What steps are taken from when COVID-19 vaccines become available to when they arrive in countries?

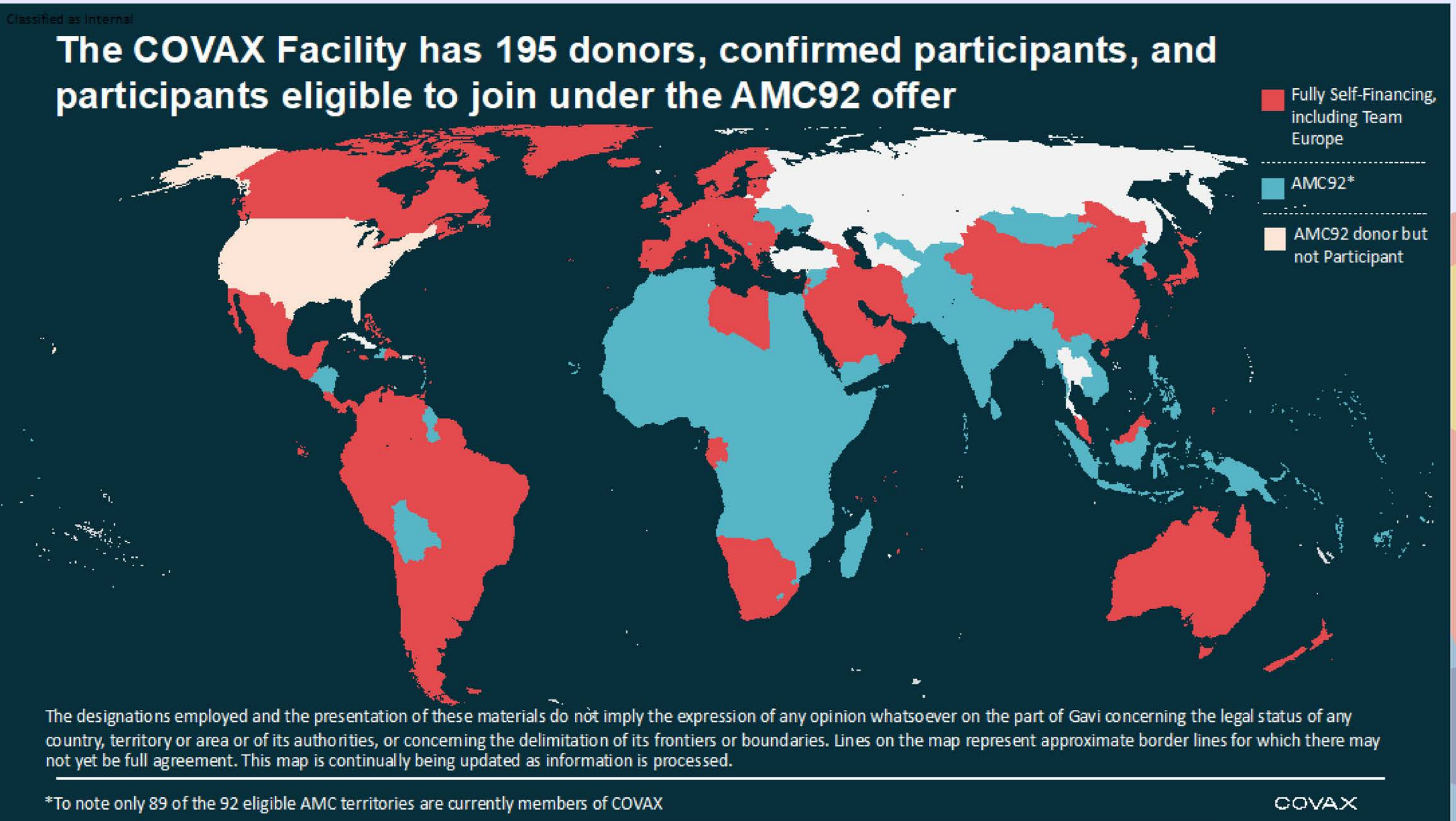
[Real-time information on COVAX deliveries to countries is available under the "Deliveries" tab of the UNICEF COVID-19 Vaccines Market Dashboard.](#)



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How large is COVAX's COVID-19 vaccine portfolio?

COVAX has a diverse and actively managed portfolio. There are currently 11 vaccines in the portfolio:

1. SII: Covovax
2. SII: Covishield
3. Pfizer/BioNTech
4. Moderna
5. Clover Biopharmaceuticals:
6. Sinovac
7. Novavax
8. Janssen J&J
9. AstraZeneca
10. Sinopharm
11. Sanofi-GSK (not yet been issued by the World Health Organization emergency use listing (EUL))

Who can journalists contact, in their own countries, for comment from COVAX?

Journalists can reach out to the Gavi media team at: media@gavi.org. The media team has seven members (four in Geneva, one in Washington, one in Nairobi and one in Kigali).

Journalists can also find Gavi media contacts at [this link](#).



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How transparent is COVAX with information about vaccine prices and deals with manufacturers?

Agreements with manufacturers include detailed confidential and financial information, which is proprietary and therefore COVAX does not have a unilateral right to publish deals in full.

Regarding prices, the UNICEF Supply Division has published the prices of vaccines in COVAX portfolio here. As the main procurement agency for Gavi, publishing prices is standard practice, and a reflection of Gavi's commitment to price transparency as a core element of healthy markets.

This is true of both Gavi's traditional portfolio of vaccines as well as COVID-19 vaccines secured on behalf of COVAX. As the COVID-19 vaccine market begins to stabilise, Gavi commends the manufacturers who have agreed to disclose prices in support of this commitment.

Do participating countries have a say in how the COVAX Facility is run?

Yes, self-financing economies form part of the COVAX Shareholders Council, while the 92 economies eligible for support through the COVAX Advanced Market Commitment (AMC) form part of the AMC Engagement Group. Both groups are self-organising bodies that support real-time information exchange and provide strategic guidance and advice to the Office of the COVAX Facility such as issues relevant for management and oversight of activities, including tools necessary for monitoring progress and achievements.

What is the COVAX Facility doing to increase the manufacturing capacity of COVID-19 vaccines?

Diversifying the global supply base for vaccines and developing regional manufacturer hubs in lower-income countries is critical for countries to become more self-sufficient and Gavi commends the efforts to increase vaccine manufacturing in the African continent.

Gavi's model has long been a strong driver of vaccine supplier diversification: in 2001, Gavi was procuring vaccines from only five vaccine manufacturers, most of them based in Europe and North America; this number has increased to 17 vaccine manufacturers in 2019, with 11 based in Africa, Asia and Latin America.

Gavi's long-established relationships with Institut Pasteur de Dakar in Senegal has also significantly contributed to supply security of Yellow Fever vaccine.

However, Gavi does recognize that more needs to be done in specific regions, especially Africa, and is committed to buying Africa-produced vaccines wherever possible in future procurements.



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Does COVAX have a role in changing laws on intellectual property rights so that vaccines are affordable for all? If not, does it plan to motivate for changes to the laws?

Gavi's job is to negotiate purchase agreements that provide value for money for the countries they serve and raise the funds from public and private donors to pay for the vaccines they secure through those deals. Gavi welcomes the decision by governments to use all mechanisms to increase global equitable access to COVID-19 vaccines. We need to do everything in our power to increase production, which means encouraging manufacturers to share not just their intellectual property with other manufacturers, but also crucially the technical knowledge that is so vital in producing vaccines.

COVAX has two technology transfer deals involving Serum Institute of India (SII). Agreements such as these recognize that the role of expertise and capital-intensive start-up costs alongside intellectual property are effective in shaping markets, as Gavi has successfully proven over the past twenty years.

What is COVAX doing to diversify vaccine supply so that access to COVID-19 vaccine is increased in low-income countries?

A key part of COVAX's goal has been to build a large and diverse portfolio of 10-12 vaccines to ensure suitability for all contexts and to reduce risks of over-reliance on specific sources in case there are issues related to failure at the R&D stage, regulatory hurdles, or supply challenges. This will also be important to ensure we can adapt to the evolving needs as the pandemic continues to evolve, for example as new variants emerge.

COVAX has secured enough doses and is able to offer predictable, long-term supply to countries. Its focus now is to help governments turn vaccines into vaccinations, while continuing to preserve flexibility to protect against future unknowns. [This includes helping a select group](#) of lower-income countries address bottlenecks related to delivery of COVID-19 vaccines (from both COVAX and non-COVAX sources.)

What is COVAX doing to address vaccine hesitancy in lower-income countries?

Gavi is working closely with its traditional Alliance partners UNICEF and WHO to develop a globally coordinated approach to Social Listening and Engagement, leveraging its growing relationships with social media companies and content developers to undertake sentiment analysis as well as scaling up efforts to systematically collect behaviourally focused demand-side data in country-level and multi-country surveys.

Gavi - thanks to its donors - has also made US\$800 million available to countries, WHO, UNICEF, and others to accelerate preparedness and implementation of key requirements for successful vaccine rollout.



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**Let's Talk
Vaccines**

A free course to help journalists translate the language of vaccine science and the promise of vaccine access into compelling human stories. [ENROLL](#).

