

# GSK Public policy positions

## CSO procurement of vaccines

### The issue

An effective response to healthcare challenges in the developing world embraces many elements, including improved infrastructure, funding, political will, health policy solutions, vaccine confidence and affordability of products.

Improving sustainable access to medicines and vaccines is core to GSK's overall strategy and is prioritised at the highest levels of the company. Our access strategy focuses on areas where we can make the most difference through our core business activities, skills and resources. We focus our global health efforts on fighting infectious diseases that impact children and young people in the developing world – in particular, malaria, TB and HIV/AIDs.

Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) have a key role to play in improving health and supporting development through various activities, including vaccination campaign implementation. GSK operates an access-driven tiered pricing approach to vaccine procurement by governments and UN agencies. This paper outlines how we interact with CSOs within our access strategy with a focus on accessing vaccines during humanitarian crises resulting in displaced populations.

### GSK's position

- CSOs play an important role in global health and development; GSK actively partners with CSOs, such as Save the Children, on projects ranging from education and awareness, R&D, and improving access to vaccines.
- Vaccination programmes are most effective when they are implemented locally, are stable and sustainable. Government-led programmes offer the best opportunity for achieving this. In addition, by providing reliable procurement forecasting, governments enable manufacturers, like GSK, to improve scalability of manufacturing and sustainability of supply, and all in the most cost-efficient way.
- We recognise that humanitarian crises will sometimes compromise a government's ability to provide a sustainable and stable vaccination programme, particularly for displaced populations, and that sometimes a CSO may be better able to temporarily step in.
- Under these circumstances, GSK has on occasion donated a small amount of vaccines or supplied at a nominal cost to CSOs. An example is our 2019 donation of over 350,000 doses to support the Government of Colombia's vaccination programme for Venezuelan refugees. However, the long and complex manufacturing process means that vaccines cannot easily be supplied on an ad-hoc basis. Equally, ad-hoc and uncertain supplies create major challenges for CSOs operating in these situations; they understandably want to be able to procure vaccines in a timely and sustainable way to support their immunisation programmes.
- In 2017 GSK committed to providing our pneumococcal vaccine at our lowest global price through the WHO Humanitarian Mechanism to CSOs that fund and deliver immunisation programmes for refugees and displaced populations. We hope to expand this commitment to other essential vaccines in the future.
- We work with our partner organisations (such as WHO and UNICEF) to help coordinate, manage and respond to vaccine requests from CSOs in a pragmatic and timely manner.
- For CSOs implementing vaccination programmes in non-crisis environments, we encourage them to include their vaccine requirements in government tenders or through any applicable Gavi, UNICEF or WHO procurement mechanism. In this way, CSOs can access the tiered price available in that country.

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## Background

### GSK's Commitment to Health

GSK recognises that global challenges facing access and delivery of vaccination are multifaceted, whether it is the lack of infrastructure to deliver the vaccines to those in greatest need or budget decisions and political will of governments to invest in national immunisation programmes.

We are committed to researching and developing vaccines and medicines addressing unmet medical needs and to improving access to those products. GSK works with academics, Public Private Partnerships and healthcare development organisations to navigate the complex scientific and ethical environment surrounding the R&D of new vaccines and of those vaccines requiring adaptation to meet the needs of the developing world.

- Of the 770 million vaccine doses we distributed in 2018, over 70% went to developing countries, which include lower middle and low-income countries.
- Our drive is to make vaccines available to everybody who needs them, no matter where they live or their ability to pay, as part of this, GSK operates a tiered pricing approach to vaccine procurement that is based on a country's GNI.
- We do more than just deliver vaccines. We have a strong track record of supporting countries to build the capacity and develop the infrastructure necessary to support high quality immunisation programmes.

### The Role of CSOs

CSOs play an important role in global health and development through health service delivery, education and awareness building and advocacy at local, national and global levels. For example, the CSO community is widely credited with shepherding through the 1978 Alma Atta Declaration - the first international Declaration underlining the importance of primary health care, which called on all governments to protect and promote the health of all people. GSK applauds and supports the CSO's vital role of giving a voice to patients and often reaching those most difficult to reach.

Our experience over many decades has taught us that working with governments and Ministries of Health offers the best opportunity to achieve the sustainability that is essential to the success of immunisation programmes. We recognise that a crisis will sometimes compromise a government's ability to provide a sustainable vaccination programme and a CSO may be best positioned to temporarily step in offering immediate help to those in need.

### Acute Humanitarian Crises

Acute humanitarian crises, such as natural disasters, political conflict or war resulting in large displaced populations, can impact a government's ability to provide a sustainable immunisation programme.

Refugee crises can leave displaced people vulnerable and unable to access healthcare. Since 2012, GSK has been working with partners to help protect refugees' health and wellbeing through healthcare provision and child protection. Through our partners, we are addressing immediate needs – such as access to shelter and food – as well as strengthening the long-term capacity of local infrastructures to support refugees and host communities.

Access to affordable vaccines can often be an essential element of any response to a humanitarian crisis. However, it can also be a major challenge for CSOs operating in these contexts, as manufacturing processes are such that ad-hoc requests from CSOs to vaccine manufacturers do not always lead to reliable and timely responses. GSK has therefore committed to provide our pneumococcal vaccine to CSOs at our lowest global price to the WHO Humanitarian Mechanism. This mechanism launched in 2017 aims to facilitate timely access to affordable vaccines in humanitarian crises by any CSO entity with procurement capacity to purchase vaccines directly from the manufacturer for speed and efficiency. CSOs without procurement capacity can access the vaccine through UNICEF.

### Non-Crisis CSO Programmes

For non-crisis situations, we encourage CSOs to engage with governments to generate the necessary political backing to develop sustainable, government immunisation programmes. We also encourage CSOs to include their vaccine requirements in government tenders or through any applicable Gavi, UNICEF, or WHO procurement mechanism. In this way, CSOs can access the tiered price available in that country. We believe that a tiered pricing approach which recognises a country's ability to pay is the most responsible way to drive access. We have therefore embedded this principle in our [tiered pricing model](#). It reflects the fundamental value of immunisation as an investment in health and wealth and GSK's desire to enable countries to maintain and expand upon their commitment to immunisation as their economies grow. This in turn provides the framework that allows GSK to work with the CSO and host government to develop and supply high quality vaccines ensuring consistent access for patients.

### UNICEF

UNICEF is the largest global vaccines provider (both in terms of volume and value) and GSK has been the leading vaccines supplier to UNICEF for the last decade. This partnership covers four different types of programmes:

1. UN programmes related to children
2. supplies for Gavi countries
3. country programmes where UNICEF, on request, is acting as the procurement agency for the government
4. the Global Polio Eradication Initiative - a global initiative aimed at meeting the WHO objective to eradicate polio by 2023. GSK has been a key partner in this initiative and since 1988 we have contributed over 17 billion doses of oral polio vaccine (OPV)

Through these different programmes, UNICEF has been able to develop reliable forecasting which contributes to the sustainability of this long-lasting partnership. To further these benefits, GSK encourages CSOs to work with UNICEF on procurement when possible and appropriate.

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