

COVAX [COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access]

The global vaccine alliance COVAX is in the news because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the vaccination drive conducted across the globe to stop the spread of the pandemic. In this article, you will learn all about COVAX for the [UPSC exam](#).

What is COVAX?

COVAX is an abbreviation for **COVID-19 Vaccines Global Access**. It is a global initiative to ensure the equitable distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance; the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI); and the [World Health Organization \(WHO\)](#).

- The Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT Accelerator) initiative was started by WHO, the French Government and the European Commission in April 2020. COVAX is the vaccines pillar of this tool.
 - The other three pillars are diagnostics, therapeutics and Health Systems Connector.
- UNICEF is a delivery partner of COVAX.
- The objective of the COVAX initiative is to accelerate the development and manufacture of anti-covid vaccines and also to guarantee equitable and fair access of the vaccines for every country on the planet.
- COVAX coordinates world action to make available covid-19 vaccines to low and middle income countries.
- It brings together governments, scientists, global health organisations, private sector, manufacturers and civil society.
- It is an important alliance to ensure that all countries of the world affected by the covid pandemic will have access to vaccines irrespective of their wealth or development status.
- Apart from coordinating R&D and manufacture of vaccines, COVAX is also engaged in negotiating the prices of the vaccines.
- The initial aim is to have 2 billion doses available by the end of 2021.
- COVAX is said to be the only lifeline for many low-income countries as well as high-income self-financing countries that have no bilateral deals with manufacturers.
- The first country to receive vaccines from COVAX was Ghana.
- COVAX is chiefly funded by western governments and charitable organizations.

What COVAX offers?

1. Doses for at least 20% of countries' populations
2. Diverse and actively managed portfolio of vaccines
3. Vaccines delivered as soon as they are available
4. End the acute phase of the pandemic
5. Rebuild economies

By joining COVAX, both funded and self-financing countries will have access to the portfolio of vaccines as and when they are proven safe and effective.

How does COVAX Work?

The COVAX Facility pools participants' buying power by getting vaccine manufacturers to produce the vaccines at scale and make risky early investments in manufacturing capacity. The idea is that by pooling these resources, COVAX will ensure rapid access to new vaccines as they are developed.

COVAX Facility is the vaccine procurement platform of COVAX.

India and COVAX

India joined COVAX through its membership with GAVI. The Serum Institute of India (SII) is the chief manufacturer of the Oxford–AstraZeneca vaccine. In March 2021, India began donating or selling vaccines to countries in North Africa, Eastern Europe, West Africa and the Middle East. India, the world's biggest producer of vaccines, was initially the main source of COVID-19 shots for the COVAX programme, but halted its exports in April 2021 after a massive second wave of COVID-19 infections, having sold or donated 66 million shots. Contribution of vaccines from India to COVAX have been affected by the surge in cases in India and the increased domestic demand for vaccines. It was also affected by a US ban on the export of raw materials earlier.