


Vaccines for Africa:

Roll-out and production in South Africa (SAVax)

The COVID-19 pandemic in South Africa

The COVID-19 pandemic severely impacted the health system in South Africa. A key area affected was the continuous rollout of vaccinations for preventable diseases. This has resulted in outbreaks such as measles and has negatively impacted the vaccination rate. At the same time there is a recognition that adult vaccinations need to be more accessible. The National Department of Health (NDoH) is undertaking a policy shift to a Life Course Vaccination Programme (LCVP) approach: in future times of pandemic the vaccination service delivery platform in South Africa will be able to respond with speed offering vaccines to everyone when they need it.

The COVID-19 pandemic also revealed Africa's severe dependency on imports of foreign vaccines, highlighting the need for local production to ensure equitable access to safe and effective vaccines. Currently, only 1% of vaccines are produced on the African continent. African leaders, with South African President Cyril Ramaphosa in the lead, have committed to the goal that by 2040, 60% of vaccines administered in Africa are also produced on the continent.

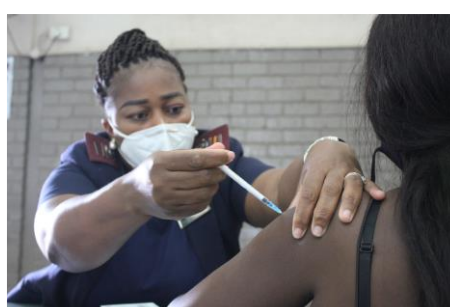
	
Project name	Vaccines for Africa: Roll-out and production in South Africa (SAVax)
Commissioned by	German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)
Project region	South Africa
Lead executing agency	South Africa National Department of Health (NDoH) South African Department for Science and Innovation (DSI)
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Commissioned by the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ), the German Development Cooperation (GIZ) immediately reacted to the call by the South African government in early 2021 to accelerate the COVID-19 vaccine roll-out as well as local manufacturing. With the landscape having shifted to post pandemic, GIZ is focused on (a) supporting the implementation of a recommended vaccination program for adults and pandemic preparedness (b) the government's ambition for sustainable production of vaccines in South Africa for the African continent.

Vaccine roll-out and pandemic preparedness

GIZ and the National Department of Health cooperate on the integration of vaccinations for the South African population into routine health care services. Thereby working towards the goal to make vaccinations available in every health facility in South Africa. Ensuring immunization through the life course does not only prevent deaths from vaccine-preventable disease but also creates the mechanisms to react to future pandemics. So far, SAVax has closely cooperated with DG Murry Trust, University of Pretoria (UP), Ndlovu Medical Trust and Vikelizizwe vaccinating more than 44,000 people in disadvantaged communities or informal settlements. In 2023, almost 500,000 people were reached through direct communication measures and received the message that vaccines save lives.

Through a number of scientific partnerships with CAPRISA, the University of Pretoria, the Ndlovu Medical Trust, Charité University of Medicine Berlin and the Centre for Epidemic Response and Innovation (CERI) at the University of Stellenbosch, SAVax contributes to building capacity on genomic sequencing, provision of scientific evidence on surveillance, immune monitoring, and vaccination responses to inform the development of evidence-based policy.



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SAVax is committed to train the next generation of vaccines experts and to ensure that South Africa improves its pandemic response and is better prepared for future health emergencies.

Training the next generation of vaccine experts

GIZ has supported the local manufacturing of vaccines in South Africa since 2008 by deploying integrated experts at the BioVac Institute in Cape Town, which today is one of the leading manufacturers on the African continent. Today, GIZ and the Department for Science and Innovation cooperate on the development of skills for vaccine development and manufacturing with. SAVax qualifies 240 matriculants with practical skills for the pharmaceutical and agro-processing industry at UVU Bio. Furthermore, with South Africa's leading research organisation Center for Scientific and Industrial Research (CSIR) SAVax is training over 100 professionals from the pharma industry and researchers on the highest biomanufacturing standards and Good Manufacturing Practice.



A German immunologist is deployed at the start-up Afrigen and contributes to its innovative research projects as an integrated expert. Afrigen makes part of the WHO mRNA vaccine technology transfer hub.

Vaccine regulation

The backbone of local vaccine production is an effective national regulatory authority to ensure the quality and safety of vaccines. SAVax supports the development plans of the South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) to reach WHO maturity level 4. This will accelerate the approval of new vaccines in the country. By 2025, 30 employees from SAHPRA will be trained; 50% of whom will be women. The focus areas for training will include: Good Manufacturing Practice (GMP), Inspections of biological medicines and vaccines manufacturers, Clinical Trials Evaluation, Biological and Biosimilar medicines and Vaccine dossier evaluation process, Clinical and Bioequivalence Evaluation and Vaccines lot release.

Vaccine market shaping

Ensuring the development of new vaccines in South Africa goes hand in hand with the creation of the demand for them at continental and global level,

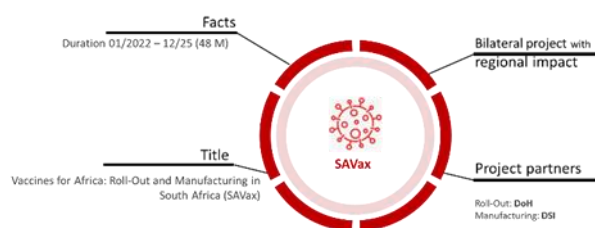


for instance through long-term procurement contracts with other African governments or regional and international organisations like GAVI, through advanced purchase agreements and through the adaptation of national procurement policies. SAVax supports the capacity of South African stakeholders from the public and private sphere for market analysis and market shaping activities related to vaccines produced in South Africa.

When it comes to vaccination, together we are stronger

Vaccine roll-out and production involve a variety of actors from the public and private sector, academia and civil society working together on a joint challenge. GIZ has vast experience in managing multiple stakeholder systems by applying different structures, processes and tools adjusted to the common goals and objectives. Hence, SAVax is implementing its activities according to the spirit of the Sustainable Development Goal on Global Partnerships for coordination and harmonization amongst all actors.

In a nutshell



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