

Unitaid and the UK Government:

Driving innovation to save lives faster

Unitaid's collaboration with the UK Government has consistently proved to be a high-impact, value-for-money investment advancing the UK's policy objectives. Recognising that new products and innovations are needed to drive progress towards global health goals, the UK co-founded Unitaid in 2006 and sits on Unitaid's Executive Board.

Unitaid saves lives by making health products accessible, available and affordable for people who need them most – fast. We identify challenges that are slowing progress towards global health goals, find and invest in innovative products and solutions, address the market barriers that are holding them back, then work with countries and partners to take them to scale so people everywhere can benefit.

Unitaid's key results:



300 million+ people use Unitaid-supported health products every year



100+ ground-breaking products introduced since 2006



Our approach helps reach global health targets **three years faster**



Delivering **£46** of impact for every **£1** invested with savings of **£6 billion** by 2030

Photo: Led by the Malaria Consortium, Unitaid and partners introduced the world's first preventative malaria treatment for children under 5. Today, the treatment is a critical tool in the fight against malaria, protecting 49 million children each year. © Malaria Consortium/Sophie Garcia.



Supporting the UK’s Global Health Framework and the Sustainable Development Goals

To reach the health-related Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), countries and scale-up partners need better, faster, cost-effective medicines, diagnostic tests and health products. That’s what Unitaid does. A joint study with the Global Fund showed that by fast-tracking the development of the most effective, affordable products, Unitaid helps the Global Fund reach global HIV, TB and malaria targets three years faster and to achieve 16% higher health and economic gains for every pound invested in the three diseases.

Unitaid supports the UK government’s objectives of tackling the most pressing global health challenges. We invest in high-potential treatments, vaccines, diagnostics and health products to address HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria; improve women’s and children’s health; and strengthen global health security. We also invest in cross-cutting areas that strengthen health systems, including improving access to medical oxygen, increasing regional manufacturing of health products, addressing the health impacts of climate change, and contributing to universal health coverage.

Strengthening global health security

Since we were created in 2006, we have unlocked access to more than 100 ground-breaking health products, from the latest HIV treatments to next-generation mosquito nets to protect families from malaria. Every year, more than 300 million people in low- and middle-income countries benefit from the treatments, tests and tools we’ve helped roll out.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores a trend of escalating global health emergencies. Antimicrobial resistance is on the rise and the health impacts of climate change are intensifying, making people more vulnerable to illnesses exacerbated by increased pollution, extreme heat, drought and famine, and

increasing the spread of infectious diseases like malaria. Unitaid works to strengthen global health security by:

Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response:

Our rapid response to COVID-19 highlighted our essential role in introducing new health products and improving access to tests and lifesaving treatments during pandemics. Our efforts are now focused on strengthening health systems against future pandemics, enhancing regional manufacturing of essential health products, and ensuring the sustainable, affordable supply of critical treatments like medical oxygen.

Antimicrobial resistance (AMR): Unitaid is a global leader in introducing new drugs to treat people with drug-resistant forms of diseases like TB – a deadly form of antimicrobial resistance that infects 450,000 people every year – and new tools and tests to monitor and prevent the spread of drug and insecticide resistance. More than 60% of our investments tackle AMR.

Climate change: Our Climate and Health Strategy aims to develop “climate-smart” health products that are not harmful to the environment, resilient, responsive to climate change and locally adapted. Our recent report, “From milligrams to megatons”, outlines 20 technical solutions that could make health products more resilient to climate change and reduce carbon emissions by 70% at little or no additional cost.

Key highlights:



Multi-disease diagnostic testing machines for TB that can test for new pathogens including COVID-19

1st

New dual-insecticide mosquito net to counter insecticide resistance

100+

ground-breaking tests, treatments and tools introduced since 2006

Reforming global health architecture

Hosted by the World Health Organization (WHO), Unitaid coordinates with partners to address market and policy failures in global health, supporting the Future of Global Health Initiatives and the Lusaka Agenda. We also support the WHO to improve coordination between all health actors. During the COVID-19 pandemic, we played a leading role to accelerate access to COVID-19 tools through a ground-breaking, WHO-led collaboration of global health partners. Together with the Global Fund and UK-based Wellcome, Unitaid led the global effort on therapeutics, and we co-led market shaping efforts which dramatically increased access, affordability and availability of COVID-19 self-tests.

To address the critical shortages of medical oxygen, we launched the Oxygen Emergency Taskforce with the Global Fund, which raised more than US\$1 billion to boost access to medical oxygen, expand production, negotiate for better pricing, and provide technical advice to governments. We negotiated unprecedented price reductions of 22% for liquid oxygen and 43% for cylinders and cylinder filling, paving the way to long-term sustainability of supply. To continue this critical work, Unitaid and the Global Fund co-founded and now co-chair the Global Oxygen Alliance (GO₂AL), a partnership of 20 health partners and representatives from civil society and communities.

Key highlights:

160+ **Research studies since 2017 to inform product approval and scale-up**

60+ **New WHO policy recommendations or guidelines based on Unitaid's research**



global leader in decentralizing health care, giving people more control over their own health

Strengthening health systems and improving women's and children's health

Strong health systems are the foundation for achieving universal health coverage, tackling infectious diseases including HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria, ending preventable deaths in mothers and babies, and responding to pandemics. Unitaid invests in integrated health services, bundling tests and treatments for multiple diseases together to save time and money and improve success rates. Unitaid works to strengthen health systems and prevent deaths of women and children by:

Protecting women and mothers: We invest in women-specific health conditions, such as cervical cancer and safe childbirth, and conditions that disproportionately affect women, such as HIV. We are pioneering innovative cervical cancer self-tests, enabling women to take control of their own health and finding cases that otherwise would have gone untreated.

We're increasing access to a range of options for HIV prevention for women, including long-acting injectable treatments and a vaginal ring. When the market fails to address women's needs, we fund clinical trials to ensure new drugs – like the best-in-class HIV medication, dolutegravir, that Unitaid helped bring to scale-up – are safe to use for pregnant and breastfeeding women.

We are addressing post-partum haemorrhage – the leading cause of maternal mortality worldwide – by investing in lifesaving new drugs that can be used in low-resource settings. We're investing in a community-based approach to deliver antimalarial medicines to pregnant women that, when taken to scale, will prevent an estimated one million cases of malaria in pregnancy, 180,000 babies born with a low birth weight and 40,000 maternal and newborn deaths each year.

Improving child survival: Unitaid works with researchers and manufacturers to introduce medicines and health products that are tailored to children and babies. We tested and introduced new devices to deliver oxygen to newborns in respiratory distress, the first-ever HIV and TB medications formulated for children, and preventative treatment for malaria for children under 5 – products that are now used as the gold standard in low- and middle-income countries. We’re also increasing equitable, sustainable access to medical oxygen, which is critical for treating pregnant women with complications, newborns with breathing problems, and children with pneumonia. A stable supply of medical oxygen can reduce child mortality in hospitals by 25%.

Key highlights:



Women screened for cervical cancer – a preventable disease that kills a woman every two minutes



children receiving preventative treatment for malaria every year



TB and HIV treatments for children, now used in 100+ countries

Advancing UK leadership in science and technology

Unitaid has partnered with world-leading UK universities, product development partnerships and industry to deliver results and impact. Unitaid invests in different stages of the health product access value chain, typically from late-stage clinical development to product scale-up, on areas including clinical research, quality assurance, operational delivery models, demand generation, shaping supply chains, and demonstrating affordability and cost-effectiveness of health products and approaches.

Key highlights:

- **The first-ever dual insecticide mosquito net and new classes of indoor residual sprays to counter insecticide resistance** that we estimate will avert at least 50 million malaria cases and 100,000 deaths while saving more than £100 million in treatment costs by 2027. Partners: Innovative Vector Control Consortium, Imperial College London, the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine, the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and MedAccess.
- **Creation of the Centre of Excellence for Long-acting Therapeutics (CELT)** at the University of Liverpool funding work to develop long-acting medicines to prevent malaria and TB and a single-injection cure for hepatitis C.
- **Same-day CD4 HIV testing technology** now available in over 130 countries for less than £3.50 per test – the lowest price in the world – thanks to price negotiations with Omega Diagnostics.
- **Unitaid is investing nearly £250 million in UK universities** over a 10 year period to advance life sciences and health technologies.



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