ESG index - Innovation and access

Our R&D teams are dedicated to discovering and developing new treatments for diseases including cancer, heart disease and neurological and immunological conditions. We aim to register our innovative treatments across different geographies to improve access to medicines and health outcomes for patients.

In this section: Commitment to patients and caregivers | Access principles | Global health and neglected diseases | Clinical trials | Animal welfare | Intellectual Property

Commitment to patients and caregivers

Novartis works with the patient community around the world to discover new ways to improve and extend people's lives. The four pillars of our commitment to patients and caregivers are: respecting and understanding the patient community perspective; expanding access to our medicines; conducting responsible clinical trials; and recognizing the importance of transparency and reporting.

Relevant links

- Novartis commitment to patients and caregivers
- Access
- Clinical trials
- Patients and Caregivers
- Position on Collaborating with Patient Organizations (PDF 0.2 MB)

Access Principles

Improving access to medicines remains one of the world's greatest healthcare challenges. Through the Novartis Access Principles, we seek to expand access to our medicines to underserved patient populations across high-income and low- and middle-income countries, while addressing major global health challenges. For all our medicines, we aim to implement access strategies based on the following three principles:

- **Research and development (R&D):** We assess our R&D portfolio against the unmet needs of underserved populations. Findings are integrated, as appropriate, into our discovery and development processes. We anticipate potential access barriers and enablers for our investigational medicines in both developed and developing markets early in the development process.

- **Affordability and pricing:** We use a combination of approaches to help patients across the income pyramid access our medicines. In pricing, we take a value-based approach, tying the price of a medicine to outcomes for patients, society and Novartis. We believe this helps improve access, while incentivizing healthcare systems and providers to deliver effective and sustainable treatment. We also make our medicines available through specific patient support programs, as well as managed access—also known as compassionate use—programs.

  Managerial responsibility for value-based programs resides with the relevant members of the Executive Committee of Novartis, who review access strategies for all product launches prior to their implementation.

  Pricing transparency varies across markets. For the US, the manufacturer list price (Wholesaler Acquisition Cost) is published in the Red Book, and updated every year, including annual price increases. For other countries, if reimbursed, the list price is published in the official gazette, as well as on the authority/agency's website (e.g., G-BA in Germany, AIFA in Italy and NICE in England) according to local rules and regulations.

- **Health systems strengthening:** A medicine is only as good as the system that delivers it. Improving access to healthcare requires long-term investments in healthcare infrastructure. We therefore seek opportunities to lower local barriers to healthcare delivery, working in collaboration with governments and other partners to support quality patient care in areas where we can have the greatest impact.

To reinforce our commitment to expanding access to our medicines in low- and middle- income countries (LMICs), we issued a EUR 1.85 billion sustainability-linked bond (SLB) in 2020. We report on our progress against the SLB targets in the Update on Public Commitments 2025, available in the Reporting and transparency hub.

See ESG Data Summary 2025 (PDF 0.1 MB) for metrics including: patients reached; new medicines launched with a global access strategy; projects in research and development; submissions; approvals; countries with products sold.

Relevant links

- Novartis access principles
- Position on Access to Medicines (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Access to Medicine 2024 Novartis Report Card
- Research & Development
- Patents and Licensing
- Position on Post-Trial Access (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Position on Medicines for Patients with Rare Diseases (PDF 0.1 MB)
- Novartis Position on Access to Unauthorized Novartis Products through Managed Access Programs (MAPs) (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Affordability
- Position on value-based healthcare (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Creating sustainable business model
- Health system strengthening framework

Global health and neglected diseases

Our work on global health is aligned with our overall efforts to expand access to our medicines. We follow an integrated approach for the control or elimination of neglected diseases where there has been market failure and little investment in research and development such as malaria, leprosy, dengue, leishmaniasis, Chagas disease and sickle cell disease. In 2022, Novartis endorsed the Kigali Declaration on neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) and announced a five-year financial commitment of USD 250 million to the fight against NTDs and malaria.

See ESG Data Summary 2025 (PDF 0.1 MB) for metrics including: patients reached; investment in R&D for malaria and neglected tropical diseases; countries with community health initiatives launched.

Relevant links

- Global Health
- Sickle cell disease
- Chagas disease
- Malaria
- Leprosy
- Other neglected and infectious diseases
- Novartis Foundation

Clinical trials

Clinical trials are at the heart of our work to bring innovative medicines to people with a particular disease or condition. These studies ensure that an investigative medicine is effective and safe, and rely entirely on patients and healthy volunteers. For every Novartis clinical trial our primary responsibility is to protect the safety, wellbeing and legal rights of all participants, and ensure adherence to the highest ethical standards for clinical research.

Relevant links

- Clinical trials
- Clinical Trials Results
- Commitment to patients and caregivers
- Clinical Study Transparency: Clinical Study Registration, Results Reporting and Data Sharing (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Commitment to Diversity in Clinical Trials (PDF 0.1 MB)
- Position on Investigator Initiated Trials (IITs) and Investigator Initiated Research (IIRs) (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Position on Responsible Clinical Trials (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Ethics in Clinical Trials
- Position on Post-Trial Access (PDF 0.2 MB)
- Position on Scientific Publications (PDF 0.2 MB)

Animal welfare

Often, animal studies are required by regulatory agencies around the world to better understand complex disease mechanisms and to prove that medicines are safe and effective. Our animal research is governed by our Animal Welfare Policy, which applies to all Novartis-sponsored studies, whether internal or external. The policy commits us to applying the 3Rs principles—to replace animals with other methods where possible; to reduce the number of animals needed in our studies; and to refine study methods to improve animals' experience. We have a grant program to prospectively fund 3Rs research projects.

See ESG Data Summary 2025 (PDF 0.1 MB) for metrics including: animal research.

Relevant links

- Animal Research
- Animal Welfare Policy (PDF 0.3 MB)
- Position on animal research (PDF 0.2 MB)

Intellectual Property

Our approach to intellectual property (IP) derives from our broader purpose to reimagine medicine to improve and extend people's lives. We use patents and other IP rights as a means to enable the discovery and development of breakthrough medical innovations, to facilitate their delivery to the patients who need them, and to promote scientific and technological progress for patients and society.

Novartis recognizes the unique socio-economic challenges faced by the world's poorest countries, including challenges that may interfere with the proper functioning of market-based incentives like intellectual property rights. Accordingly, Novartis does not seek or enforce patents in least developed countries (LDCs, as designated by the United Nations), low-income countries (LICs, as designated by the World Bank), or in around 80% of the lower-middle income countries (LMICs, as designated by the World Bank). In the small number of LMICs where we do seek or enforce patents, we aim to limit them to those patent applications covering new molecular entities. In addition, we are committed to granting nonexclusive licenses to qualified third parties for supply of our patented products exclusively to LDCs or to LICs.

Relevant links

- Patents and licensing
- Position on Intellectual Property (PDF 0.3 MB) which includes our support of the Agreement on Trade Related

Aspects of Intellectual Property (TRIPS)

- Position on regulatory data protection (PDF 0.2 MB)

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