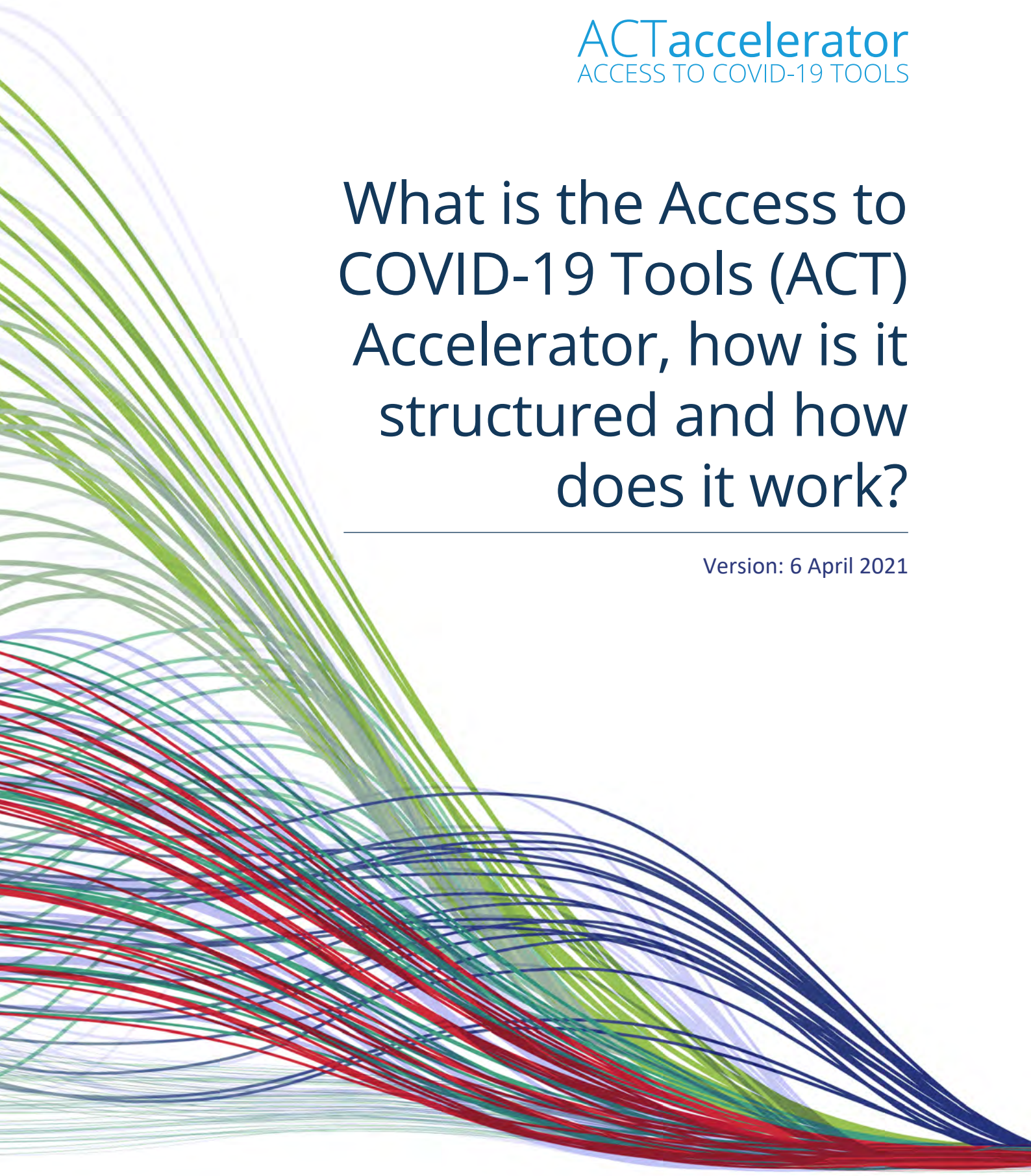
ACTaccelerator
ACCESS TO COVID-19 TOOLS

What is the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, how is it structured and how does it work?

Version: 6 April 2021



Gavi The Vaccine Alliance · CEPI · Bill & Melinda Gates foundation · unicef · World Health Organization · wellcome · FIND Because diagnosis matters · The Global Fund · Unitaid

Working with governments, civil society and industry

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Design and layout: Studio FFFOG

Printed in Switzerland

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I. Overview of the ACT-Accelerator partnership

The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator is a time-limited global collaboration designed to rapidly leverage existing global public health infrastructure and expertise to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines in order to expedite the end of the acute phase of the COVID-19 pandemic.

ACT-Accelerator brings together the diverse expertise of multilateral and global health institutions, academic researchers and the private sector, including manufacturers. The co-conveners and partners of ACT-Accelerator bring world-class knowledge in research and development (R&D), manufacturing, policy development, regulatory procedures, market shaping, procurement and delivery.

Since its launch in April 2020, it has supported the fastest and most coordinated global effort in history to develop tools to fight a disease. It is now scaling up access to COVID-19 tools in all parts of the world. Achieving this requires an active partnership with all countries.

The ACT-Accelerator is co-convened by leading global health organizations through adherence to a single framework for collaboration. The framework, consisting of three pillars supported by a Health Systems Connector and a country Allocation & Access workstream, facilitates joint problem-solving and knowledge sharing. Each ACT-Accelerator Pillar is managed by 2-3 partner agencies working together:

- **The Vaccines Pillar** – also known as **COVAX** – is co-convened by the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI), Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, and the World Health Organization (WHO), with UNICEF as a key delivery partner. It aims to rapidly scale up the delivery of at least 2 billion doses of vaccines in 2021 to cover initial high-risk target groups, while accelerating and expanding the research and development agenda to address new and emerging risks due to COVID-19 variants.

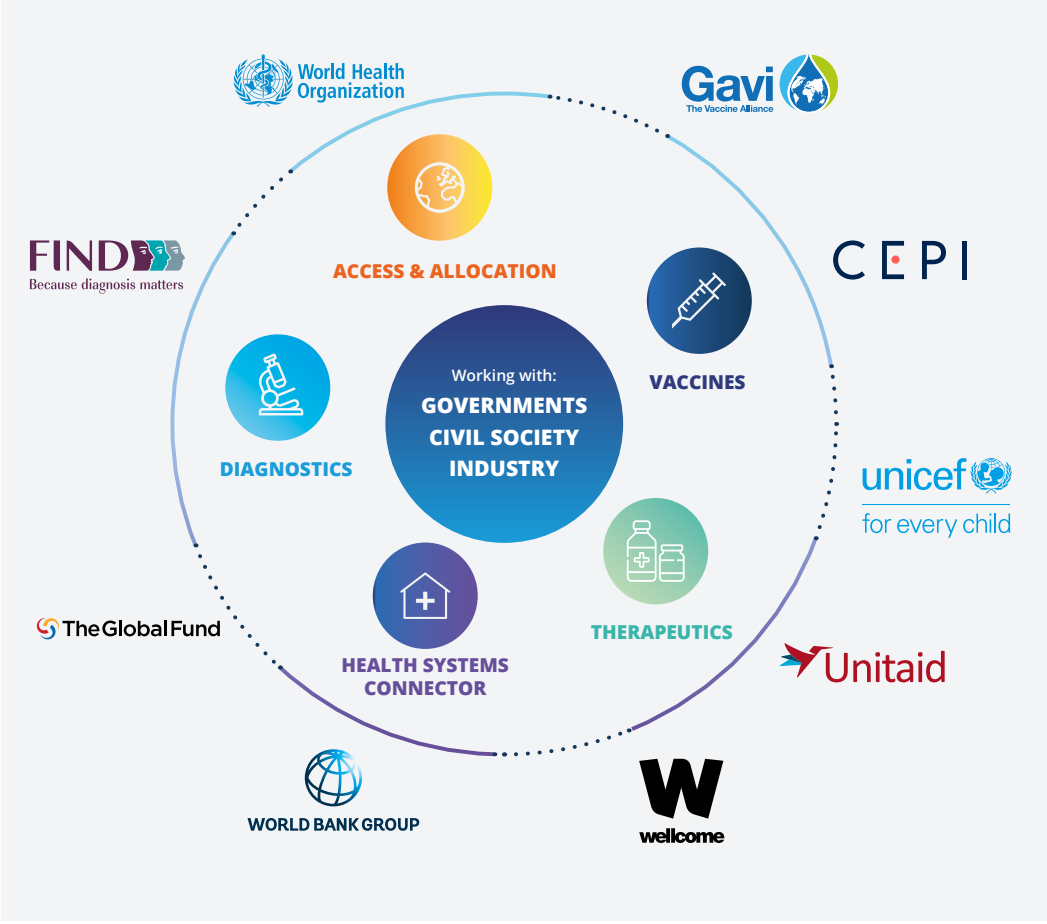
- **The Diagnostics Pillar** is co-convened by the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) and the Global Fund, with WHO leading on regulatory policy, product procurement and allocation, and country access and support, while supporting R&D efforts. It aims to rapidly identify game-changing new diagnostics for the world, and deliver 900 million affordable, high quality diagnostic tests by the end of 2021 for populations in low- and low-middle income countries.

- **The Therapeutics Pillar** is co-convened by Unitaid and the Wellcome Trust, with WHO leading the policy and regulatory work, and the Global Fund leading work on procurement and deployment. It seeks to advance research for effective treatments, support countries to optimize clinical care, including use of corticosteroids and medical oxygen for severe and critical patients, introduce new therapies, once proven effective, and procure and distribute up to 100 million treatment courses for populations in low- and middle-income countries.

- **The Health Systems Connector (HSC)** works across the three product Pillars and is co-convened by the Global Fund, the World Bank and WHO, with support from The Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF). It aims to rapidly identify and address country-specific health systems bottlenecks to ensure readiness and enable rapid scale up and delivery of COVID-19 tools. It also aims to accelerate availability and use of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) as a crucial tool for protecting health workers and ensuring the resilience of the health system.
- **The Access & Allocation** workstream is led by WHO and directs ACT-Accelerator's work on global equitable access and allocation.

Civil Society and community engagement is integrated across all the pillars.

Figure 1 - *ACT-Accelerator Pillar co-conveners and leads*



II. Boards and committees of each co-convening and lead organization

ACT-Accelerator is a collaborative and coordinated effort, not a new legal organization or decision-making entity. Given the timebound nature of ACT-Accelerator's work, and the well-established nature of the organizations involved, the explicit intention at the outset of ACT-Accelerator was not to develop new governance mechanisms, where possible. Formal governance for each of the Pillars/HSC (including transparency of administration, financial management, and accountability for resources raised and used) is provided by the existing Boards and governing bodies of each of the co-convening and lead organizations. The co-conveners of each Pillar are fully accountable for the development and oversight of the workplans and investment case for that area of work. Grant management and financial reporting to donors is managed by the receiving entity.

To learn more about the governance and accountability structures for each ACT-Accelerator co-convenor and lead agency, please visit the links below:

Pillar	Co-leads
Vaccines Pillar (COVAX)	CEPI, Gavi, WHO
Diagnostics Pillar	FIND, Global Fund, WHO
Therapeutics Pillar	Wellcome, Unitaid, WHO
Health Systems Connector	Global Fund, World Bank, WHO
Access & Allocation	WHO

III. Inter-agency coordination and workstreams

Each of the above five areas of work is fully empowered to make decisions regarding the coordination and management mechanisms required to support its work. Each has established (a) coordination mechanisms to facilitate the joint work across the co-convening organizations of that Pillar and the relevant WHO lead; and (b) a technical workstream structure and schedule of regular meetings for collaboration both within and across workstreams, including regular meetings of the relevant agency Principals.

Within the Vaccines Pillar (COVAX) specific new mechanisms and coordination bodies have been created for the day-to-day work of the Pillar, and – separately – for the governance of the COVAX Facility given its unique role in securing vaccine deals, navigating a complex regulatory environment, developing policy, and determining allocation, some of which could not be carried out through existing mechanisms. A detailed description of these structures and mechanisms (both new and previously existing) can be found in *COVAX: the Vaccines Pillar of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator – structure and principles*.

The *Platform for ACT-A Civil Society and Community Representatives* supports the coordination of civil society and community representation across all the ACT-A Pillars and within Pillar workstreams.

Pillar-level Coordinating Committees

Each Pillar/HSC has a Coordinating Committee comprising representatives of the co-convening organizations, WHO and the workstream leads. The Coordinating Committee defines the strategy, principles, policies, key targets and resource mobilization priorities across the Pillar, monitors progress, and coordinates actions and decisions on the day-to-day work amongst partners. Meeting frequency and participation is defined by the co-convening and lead agencies of each Pillar/HSC.

Workstream-level technical coordination

The work within each Pillar/HSC is divided into workstreams; each workstream is led or co-led by 1-2 organizations who are responsible for convening and coordinating the relevant work of the stream through interagency working groups. Organizational participation in these working groups extends beyond ACT-Accelerator co-convening and lead organizations to optimize expertise, efficiency and impact. Each workstream is responsible for drafting its own workplan and budget. The workstream working groups meet on a regular basis (usually weekly or biweekly, as defined by the individual workstream). Figure 2 provides an overview of the workstreams and lead agencies within each Pillar/HSC.

Figure 2 - *ACT-Accelerator structure, with Pillar co-conveners and leads*

IV. Cross-Pillar strategic alignment

Coordination and strategic and operational alignment across Pillars are managed through several mechanisms.

A Principals Coordination Group

The Principals Group is comprised of the Principals of the co-convening agencies as well as lead agencies, such as UNICEF and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. The Principals of ACT-Accelerator agencies meet weekly, coordinated by the ACT-Accelerator Executive Hub and co-chaired by the WHO Special Envoys. The Principals Group discusses key developments and challenges, the overall strategic direction of ACT-Accelerator and pillar-specific priorities, and addresses and aligns on cross-cutting issues and key bottlenecks. Representatives of key industry groups, such as the International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers & Associations (IPFMA), International Generic and Biosimilar Medicines Association (IGBA), and Developing Countries Vaccine Manufacturers Network (DCVMN), participate as relevant.

WHO Special Envoys for the ACT Accelerator

Sir Andrew Witty and Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala served as WHO Special Envoys for the ACT-Accelerator. Both have been instrumental in advocating for the ACT-Accelerator and amplifying the global call for solidarity in accelerating the development of and equitable access to new COVID-19 tools. In April 2021, Carl Bildt was appointed to succeed Dr Ngozi Okonjo-Iweala and Sir Andrew Witty in this Special Envoy role and will help lead collective advocacy to mobilize support and resources to deliver against the ACT Accelerator 2021 Strategy. The Special Envoys co-chair the weekly Principals Coordination Group calls, provide the Pillars with guidance on key strategic issues, and facilitate high-level advocacy and political engagement, both directly and through the Facilitation Council.

ACT-Accelerator Executive Hub

A small ACT-Accelerator Executive Hub, hosted by WHO, plays a central coordination function and aims to facilitate synergies across the partnership by hosting cross-Pillar coordination meetings (including the weekly/biweekly Principals Group call and the Facilitation Council co-chairs meeting), developing key strategic joint publications and partnerships (such as with CSOs, the International Chamber of Commerce, G7 and G20) and tracking and reporting on the overall ACT-Accelerator financing status. The Hub also hosts weekly resource mobilization and communications calls with ACT-Accelerator partners to coordinate efforts, providing lift to individual Pillar/agency outreach. In its role as Secretariat for the Facilitation Council it supports the regular and intersessional work of the Council Co-Chairs and the convening of the Council itself.

V. ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council

The **ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council** is co-chaired by the Governments of Norway and South Africa and co-hosted by WHO and the European Commission. It is comprised of ACT-Accelerator founding donor countries, major market shaper countries and current chairs of regional cooperation groups, with non-governmental partners [the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, Wellcome Trust, World Economic Forum, and World Bank (observer)] and standing invitation from civil society, communities, and industry. The Council provides high-level advice and guidance to ACT-Accelerator Pillars, Principals and partners, along with global leadership and advocacy with particular emphasis on ensuring the full financing of the work of ACT-Accelerator and addressing barriers to the equitable allocation of COVID-19 tools. For more information, see *ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council Terms of Reference*.

VI. Donor support

Donors are invited to contribute directly to the agencies that make up ACT-Accelerator. Non-governmental donors also have the option to support the most urgent needs across Pillars and agencies via the ACT Together Fund.

The Vaccines Pillar – also known as **COVAX** – is convened by CEPI, Gavi, and WHO, with UNICEF as a key delivery partner.

To support the work of the Vaccines Pillar, please be in touch with:

CEPI:	ACTA@cepi.net	cepi.net/get_involved/support-cepi/
Gavi:	covax@gavi.org	www.gavi.org/covax-facility www.gavi.org/gavi-covax-amc
WHO:	acta-support@who.int	www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator

The Diagnostics Pillar is co-convened by FIND and the Global Fund with WHO leading on key aspects.

To support the work of Diagnostics Pillar, please be in touch with:

FIND:	actadiagnostics@finddx.org	www.finddx.org/covid-19
Global Fund:	gf_acta@theglobalfund.org	www.theglobalfund.org/en
WHO:	acta-support@who.int	www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator

The Therapeutics Pillar is co-convened by Unitaid and the Wellcome Trust with WHO leading the policy, regulatory and related work.

To support the work of the Therapeutics Pillar, please be in touch with:

Unitaid	unitaid@who.int	https://unitaid.org/#en
Wellcome Trust:	epidemics@wellcome.org	https://wellcome.org/what-we-do/our-work/coronavirus-covid-19
WHO:	acta-support@who.int	www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator

The Health Systems Connector (HSC) works across the three product Pillars and is co-convened by the World Bank, Global Fund and WHO.

To support the work of the Health Systems Connector, please be in touch with:

Global Fund:	gf_acta@theglobalfund.org	www.theglobalfund.org/en
WHO:	acta-support@who.int	www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator

UNICEF is a leading cross-cutting partner of the ACT-Accelerator, providing programmatic support and procurement of supplies for countries across all Pillars, as reflected in the ACT Accelerator Strategy & Budget for 2021.

To support UNICEF's contributions to the ACT-Accelerator, please be in touch with:

UNICEF:	humanitarian.ppd@unicef.org
	www.unicef.org/appeals/access-covid-19-tools-accelerator-act

Gavi
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