



ATOM
Access to Oncology Medicines



A UICC-led
initiative

PRESS RELEASE

Key commitments to improve access to oncology medicines, as ATOM Coalition marks second anniversary

Geneva, Switzerland, 22 May 2024. The Access to Oncology Medicines ([ATOM](#)) Coalition, led by the Union for International Cancer Control ([UICC](#)), commemorates its second anniversary by announcing significant strides in expanding access to essential cancer medicines in low- and lower middle-income countries (LLMICs).

Bristol Myers Squibb (BMS), in its strategic collaboration with the ATOM Coalition, will work to broaden the reach of their innovative immuno-oncology therapy nivolumab to patients in select LLMICs, with plans to extend access to additional countries by 2025-2026 and beyond.

The medicine is used to treat cancers such as non-small cell lung cancer, gastric/oesophageal cancer, and certain types of advanced colorectal cancer. It will be made available via indirect commercialisation, one of the ATOM Coalition access pathways.

Target nations will initially include Pakistan, Rwanda, and Zambia, aligning with the ATOM Coalition's mission to enhance the availability of life-saving cancer treatments in a scalable and sustainable manner.

In collaboration with partners, the ATOM Coalition focuses on four medicines access pathways:

1. Licensing (with Medicines Patent Pool)
2. Humanitarian access (with The Max Foundation)
3. NCDconnect (an innovative platform run by IDA Foundation)
4. Indirect commercialisation (also with IDA Foundation)

NCDconnect and indirect commercialisation are new pathways, co-created with IDA Foundation, that have the potential to increase access to cancer medicines in LMICs at a scale never seen before. IDA Foundation has already made 70 cancer medicines on the WHO Essential Medicines List available through NCDconnect and will soon add 14 cancer diagnostics. Customers such as governments, hospitals, and treatment centres will be able to strengthen and fine-tune their cancer care accordingly. The available medicines include around 20 of the most requested cancer medicines in LMICs.



IDA Foundation, with its presence and network in LMICs, enables the indirect commercialisation pathway by offering services that address the lack of commercial viability across fragmented markets. These services include registration, quality assurance, warehousing and logistics to the last mile. This approach ensures that cancer medicines can be made accessible to those who need them most while fostering a sustainable model that benefits both the industry and the customers.

"As we mark the second anniversary of the ATOM Coalition, we're proud of the progress we've achieved together with our partners in expanding access to life-saving cancer medicines. Initiatives such as these to make innovative therapies available in select low- and lower-middle-income countries will have a real impact on people's lives."

– **Dr Cary Adams**, CEO, Union for International Cancer Control, UICC

UICC, on behalf of the ATOM Coalition, also [recently signed a Memorandum of Understanding \(MoU\) with the Mongolian Ministry of Health](#) to improve the availability, affordability, and appropriate use of oncology medicines. The ATOM Coalition partners will work closely with the Mongolian government and other stakeholders to strengthen the country's health system implement this initiative. Similar engagements are underway in Zambia and El Salvador.

Other key achievements of the ATOM Coalition over the past two years include the [first-ever voluntary licensing agreement for a cancer medicine](#), nilotinib, between Novartis and the Medicines Patent Pool, facilitating the production of affordable generic versions in many LLMICs.

In addition to prioritising essential and critical innovative cancer medicines, the ATOM Coalition has also initiated technical assistance activities in selected countries to enhance regulatory pathways, supply chain hurdles, diagnostic needs and healthcare infrastructure.

The ATOM Coalition was established in May 2022 in response to the urgent need to address the fact that less than 50% of the cancer medicines listed on the WHO Model List of Essential Medicines were available in LLMICs. With more than 3.5 million new cancer cases diagnosed annually in these countries, and an estimated 2.3 million premature deaths attributed to cancer, the need for action was clear. The ATOM Coalition now consists of more than 40 partners – all of whom share a passion and commitment to improve the availability of cancer medicines in LLMICs.

For more information on the ATOM Coalition and its partners, please visit the [Access to Oncology \(ATOM\) Coalition webpage](#).



About the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC)

The Union for International Cancer Control (UICC) is the largest and oldest international cancer organisation. Founded in 1933, UICC has over 1,100 member organisations in 170 countries and territories. It enjoys consultative status with the United Nations Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC) and has official relations with the World Health Organization (WHO), the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) and the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC). UICC has over 50 partners, including associations, companies and foundations committed to taking action against cancer. UICC is a founding member of the NCD Alliance, the McCabe Centre for Law & Cancer and the International Cancer Control Partnership (ICCP). UICC established the City Cancer Challenge Foundation in January 2019 and the Access to Oncology Medicines (ATOM) Coalition in 2022.

UICC's mission is to both unite and support the cancer community in its efforts to reduce the global cancer burden, promote greater equity and ensure that cancer control remains a priority on the global health and development agenda. It pursues these goals by bringing together global leaders through innovative and far-reaching cancer-control events and initiatives, building capacities to meet regional needs and developing awareness campaigns.

About the ATOM Coalition

Launched in 2022, the Access to Oncology Medicines (ATOM) Coalition is an innovative partnership, leading global collective action to increase access to essential life-saving cancer medicines and diagnostics in low- and lower-middle income countries (LLMICs). Established by the Union for International Cancer Control (UICC), the ATOM Coalition brings together more than 40 expert organisations from civil society, and the public and private sectors, in a shared ambition: "To reduce suffering and deaths caused by cancer in low- and lower-middle income countries through improved access to and use of essential cancer medicines."

www.uicc.org/atomcoalition