

Partnership sees cervical vaccines for poorer countries

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A major campaigner in vaccines for poorer countries announced plans on Thursday for inoculating up to two million women and girls against cervical cancer by 2015.

GAVI, a Geneva-based public-private partnership set up in 2000, said the initiative was approved at a board meeting in the Bangladesh capital of Dhaka.

The scheme depends on price negotiations with manufacturers and assurances from governments that they can distribute the vaccines effectively, it said in a press release.

Nine countries are candidates for the vaccine, although their names are being withheld at this stage, said a spokesman for GAVI, reached by phone from Paris.

The cost of the project cannot be disclosed immediately because of the sensitive nature of the price talks, he added.

The vaccine shields against the [human papillomavirus](#) (HPV), which causes some 275,000 deaths each year from [cervical cancer](#), 88 percent of them in developing countries.

HPV vaccines have been available in rich countries since 2007. It can take 10 or 15 years for advanced vaccines to be rolled out in poorer settings.

"The [HPV vaccine](#) is critical to women and girls in poorer countries because they usually do not have access to screening to prevent cervical cancer and treatment taken for granted in richer nations," said GAVI's chief executive, Seth Berkley.

The GAVI board also agreed to seek funds for vaccines against German measles, also called rubella, a childhood disease which is highly dangerous for [pregnant women](#), leading to miscarriage, stillbirth and [birth defects](#).

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