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Gilead allows sublicense of HIV drug to generic firms

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Singapore: HIV drug developer, Gilead Sciences has partnered with Medicines Patent Pool (MPP) to expand access to Gilead's investigational drug tenofovir alafenamide (TAF) for HIV and hepatitis B contingent on the medicine's US regulatory approval.

Under the agreement, MPP can sub-license TAF to generic drug companies in India and China, who may manufacture and distribute it in 112 developing countries.

"The Medicines Patent Pool plays a critical role in efforts to expand access to HIV treatment in the developing world," said Mr Gregg H Alton, executive vice president for corporate and medical affairs, Gilead Sciences. "By expanding our partnership to include TAF, we hope to lay the groundwork for the rapid introduction of generic versions should it receive regulatory approval."

The new agreement expands on Gilead's previous licensing partnership with the MPP. In July 2011, Gilead became the first pharmaceutical company to join the MPP, and today six Indian pharmaceutical companies hold MPP sub-licenses for Gilead HIV medicines.

"As the Medicines Patent Pool's first pharmaceutical industry partner, Gilead has played a vital role in increasing treatment access for people living with HIV in the developing world," said Mr Greg Perry, executive director of the MPP. "We welcome this expansion of our partnership, and we look forward to working with our sub-licensees to provide access to low-cost, high-quality versions of TAF and other Gilead antiretroviral medicines."

In addition to its agreement with the MPP, Gilead has direct partnerships with 11 generic manufacturers. Due to competition among these generic drug manufacturers, the lowest price of a Gilead HIV medicine has fallen 80 percent since 2006, to $4.00 per patient per month. Currently 5.4 million people are receiving Gilead HIV medicines in low and middle-income countries through the company's access initiatives - more than half of all people on HIV therapy in these countries. 99 percent of these people receive versions produced by generic partners.