

# **Pfizer's Relationship With Chinese Government & Investigations**

Pfizer has several documented financial relationships with China. The key distinction is that some payments were charitable donations, some were business investments, and some involved improper payments to Chinese government-employed doctors. These activities had different purposes and occurred in different years.

## **1. Why Pfizer sent money to China**



## 1. Charitable and medical donations

Pfizer's Chinese subsidiary was listed by Harvard's China Philanthropy Project as donating 67.18 million yuan in 2021 to charitable causes. The database identifies the China Primary Health Care Foundation as a recipient. This was reported as charitable giving, not a political contribution.



Pfizer Investment Co.,Ltd



## 2. Business investments and drug development

Pfizer partners with Chinese biotechnology companies to develop medicines and obtain commercialization rights. In May 2026, Pfizer announced a collaboration with China's Innovent

Biologics valued at up to \$10.5 billion, including an initial \$650 million payment from Pfizer to Innovent. The agreement covers cancer-drug development and potential future milestone payments.



Reuters



### 3. Improper payments to doctors

In 2012, the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission filed an enforcement action concerning Pfizer's overseas subsidiaries. The complaint alleged that Pfizer China employees provided cash, gifts, travel, and other benefits to doctors employed by Chinese government healthcare institutions to influence prescribing and purchasing decisions. These allegations concerned improper commercial inducements, not charitable donations.



SEC

## 2. What was Pfizer getting in return?

The business rationale for operating in China includes access to a large pharmaceutical market, relationships with local research companies, drug-development opportunities, and the ability to sell

medicines in the region. Pfizer's 2026 Innovent agreement illustrates the commercial scale of these relationships.



Reuters

The SEC case is a separate issue because it concerned alleged efforts to influence medical professionals to benefit Pfizer's sales.

### 3. Where to examine the records

- [Harvard China Philanthropy Project](#) — reported charitable donations by Pfizer Investment Co., Ltd.
- [SEC enforcement complaint concerning Pfizer](#) — allegations involving overseas subsidiaries, including Pfizer China.
- [Reuters: Pfizer and Innovent's \\$10.5 billion agreement, May 28, 2026](#) — commercial collaboration and payment structure.

Bottom line: The available records show that Pfizer's financial activity in China has included charitable donations, commercial transactions, and a documented U.S. enforcement case involving improper payments. Those categories should not be treated as interchangeable, and the evidence does not establish that every payment went to the Chinese government itself.