

Report of the

# **Pandemic Vaccine Deployment Workshop**

Dushanbe, Tajikistan, 30 April–2 May 2019



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## Acronyms

CIS	Commonwealth of Independent States
FPP	Finished pharmaceutical products
GNI	Gross national income
IHR	International Health Regulations
NDVP	National Deployment and Vaccination Plan
NIC	National Influenza Centre
NMRA	National Medicines Regulatory Authorities
NRA	National Regulatory Authority
PDS	Post-deployment surveillance
PIP Framework	Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework
SES	Sanitary and epidemiological service
SRA	Stringent regulatory authority
VCM	Vaccine Composition Meeting
WHA	World Health Assembly
WHO EURO	World Health Organization Regional Office for Europe
WHO HQ	World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva

## Key policy issues

The 2009 H1N1 pandemic demonstrated that the global community was faced with several challenges in responding to this health emergency. Major constraints included an inability to assess the severity of the pandemic, failure to effectively communicate risks and recommended actions, and inadequate planning for procurement and deployment of the pandemic vaccines, leading to delays in offering vaccination services to populations at risk. To counteract potential bottlenecks in the deployment of pandemic products and the vaccination of populations in need, WHO advocates that each country should develop a National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) which will ensure operational readiness for such activities.

In order to support Member States to strengthen their pandemic preparedness and response capacity through development of NDVPs, WHO launched a series of training activities with the first workshop on Pandemic Influenza Vaccine Deployment for countries of the WHO Americas Region in February 2019.

These capacity-building activities are part of the broader Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework adopted by the 194 WHO Member States during the World Health Assembly on 24 May 2011. The PIP Framework established the deployment of pandemic vaccines as one of the essential elements of pandemic preparedness and response in countries.

Taking into account that influenza pandemics are an ever-present threat, countries must be prepared to mobilize and respond in a timely and efficient way. National deployment and vaccination plans, regularly updated to integrate continuously evolving evidence, can be an effective tool to ensure adequate response measures to an influenza pandemic.

## Introduction

This report summarizes the results and recommendations of the Pandemic Vaccine Deployment Workshop held 30 April–2 May 2019 in Dushanbe, Tajikistan.

The workshop was attended by 30 participants from Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. All worked in state regulatory and health-care agencies and programmes responsible for immunization and pandemic preparedness.

The overall objective of the workshop was to support countries in developing plans for the deployment of pandemic vaccine. Other workshop objectives included:

- reinforcing the importance of updated NDVPs as part of wider pandemic influenza preparedness planning;
- identifying gaps and weaknesses in existing national pandemic vaccine deployment and vaccination plans; and
- developing an outline of updated national pandemic deployment and vaccination plans.

The interactive format of the workshop was based on the combination of presentations with the specially-designed board game PIP Deploy that uses a progressive simulated scenario of an emergency situation to facilitate participants' learning about emergency response, coordination of intersectoral efforts and underlying legal and regulatory frameworks. The PIP Deploy game was first piloted in a workshop in Washington DC in which nine countries of the Americas Region participated.

The workshop agenda offered a framework for participatory learning; over the course of three days, participants were encouraged to reflect on and discuss the crucial elements, operational steps and enabling factors for effective deployment of pandemic influenza vaccines. Presentations by the subject matter experts provided a solid input on: 1) existing guiding documents for ensuring pandemic influenza preparedness globally and in the WHO European Region; 2) necessary regulatory mechanisms for making a timely approval process possible during a pandemic; and 3) potential challenges and critical requirements for effective pandemic vaccine deployment operations, especially in the light of the experience and lessons learned during the 2009 pandemic.

Facilitated exercises allowed participants to: 1) present country challenges with the national pandemic vaccine deployment and vaccination plans, and define the areas and scope of technical support required from WHO (Annex 3); and 2) perform a situational analysis of their pandemic influenza vaccine deployment and vaccination plans, outline major challenges, enabling factors and immediate and long-term needs, as well as the respective timelines (Annex 4).

Workshop participants were also asked to complete the draft WHO Influenza Vaccine Request Form and to share their feedback and suggestions for improvement with the workshop organizers.

## 1. Key considerations to support preparedness activities for deployment and vaccination operations during a pandemic

The opening of the workshop highlighted the importance of pandemic preparedness and the capacity of countries both to implement timely and effective response measures and to ensure maximum coverage of the risk populations with effective and safe pandemic influenza vaccines. Recounting potential national and transborder health and security threats that an influenza pandemic may pose, the speakers alluded to the 2009 epidemic and the lessons learned as a basis for better planning and preparation in the future. The need to revise national influenza preparedness and vaccination plans was accentuated as one of the immediate actions towards better-prepared health systems and pandemic response mechanisms.

### Global frameworks to tackle influenza

#### Global Influenza Strategy 2019–2030

Workshop participants were introduced to the newly launched *Global Influenza Strategy 2019–2030* and its two high-level objectives – better global tools and stronger country capacities. The four strategic objectives are: 1) to promote research and innovation to address unmet public health needs; 2) to strengthen global influenza surveillance, monitoring and data utilization; 3) to expand seasonal influenza prevention and control policies and programmes to protect the vulnerable; and 4) to strengthen pandemic preparedness and response for influenza to make the world safer. Since the last global influenza strategy was published in 2002, a number of significant events and developments – such as avian influenza viruses with devastating outcomes, the 2009 H1N1 pandemic, the adoption of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework and the WHO Public Health Research Agenda on Influenza – have led to the development of the new strategy. Additionally, the emergence of tools and frameworks – such as FluID<sup>1</sup> (a global influenza epidemiological data-sharing platform), PISA<sup>2</sup> (Pandemic Influenza Severity Assessment), TIPRA<sup>3</sup> (Tool for Influenza Pandemic Risk Assessment) and the 2006–2016 GAP<sup>4</sup> (Global Action Plan for Influenza Vaccines) – has enhanced the potential of the new Global Influenza Strategy to strengthen countries' capacities for planning and implementing national pandemic preparedness and vaccination plans.

#### Seasonal influenza vaccination programmes

The presentation on seasonal influenza vaccination offered participants an overview of crucial elements for sustainable influenza vaccine programmes, such as policy, influenza-specific

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