



**International Coordination Group on  
Vaccine Provision for Epidemic Meningitis  
Control**

**Report of the Annual Meeting**

**Geneva**

**13–14 July 2017**

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## Table of contents

List of abbreviations.....	iv
Executive summary .....	v
1. Epidemiological update 2016–2017 .....	1
2. ICG response and performance.....	2
3. Stockpile update .....	5
4. Vaccine supply, procurement and forecasting.....	5
5. Evaluation of the ICG.....	6
6. Discussion with manufacturers .....	7
7. Discussion .....	7
8. Action points.....	9
Annex 1. Agenda .....	11
Annex 2. List of participants.....	13

## List of tables

Table 1. Summary of 2017 sub-Saharan meningitis outbreaks .....	2
Table 2. ICG performance against targets .....	2
Table 3. Summary of requests received, responses and performance, February–May 2017 .....	3
Table 4. Summary of meningitis vaccine requests and shipments, 2016–2017 .....	5

## List of figures

Figure 1. Timeliness of outbreak responses, Nigeria, 2017 .....	2
Figure 2. Timeline for the ICG evaluation process .....	6

## List of abbreviations

AFRO	WHO Regional Office for Africa
EMRO	WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean
EPI	Expanded Programme on Immunization
GAVI	Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance
ICG	International Coordinating Group
Nm	<i>Neisseria meningitides</i>
MSF	Médecins sans Frontières
PQ	Prequalification
RF	Revolving Fund
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
SD	Supply Division of UNICEF
WHO	World Health Organization

## Executive summary

International Coordinating Group (ICG) on Vaccine Provision for Meningitis held its annual meeting in Geneva from 13 to 14 July 2017. The aim of the meeting was for partners and stakeholders to review: the 2016–2017 meningitis epidemic season in sub-Saharan Africa; the lessons learned from the 2017 the season; the composition and funding of the 2018–2020 stockpile; and the exchange of information with ICG partners and vaccine manufacturers.

Participants included representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO) headquarters (HQ), including the ICG Secretariat, the WHO Regional Office for Africa (AFRO) and the WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean (EMRO), the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), with participants from both HQ and the Supply Division (SD), Médecins sans Frontières (MSF), and the International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC). Other participants included representatives of Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance (GAVI), and a team of Hera consultants, which has been commissioned to evaluate the ICG.

Representatives of vaccine manufacturers also attended the meeting in order to present their plans for current and future vaccine production and supply.

### Vaccine requests

During the 2017 season, 4 208 505 doses of vaccine had been requested and 2 877 490 had been deployed (including 823 000 doses donated by the United Kingdom). The outbreak season was dominated by *Neisseria meningitidis* (Nm) type C (Nm-C) and other non-Nm-A serogroups (Table 4).

The ICG's meningitis stockpile received 11 requests from five countries (Benin, Cameroon, Niger, Nigeria and Togo). Requests from Cameroon and Nigeria were fully approved, the request from Niger was partially approved, and two from Benin were not approved.

### Vaccine responses

Factors were identified that had had an impact on the magnitude and timeliness of the response to the outbreaks. Vaccine supply is a significant issue related to the continuing global shortage, and the need for manufacturers to have appropriate production lead times and procurement commitments to better accommodate production planning, and reduce producer risk. The ICG underlined the need for an affordable polyvalent conjugate vaccine.

A prompt response is essential to limit the extent of an outbreak. Multiple factors were identified which can cause delays at country level. These highlight the need for stronger epidemiological and laboratory reporting, and early access to technical assistance. Countries should submit the requested information in full to ensure the efficient processing and shipment of campaign vaccines, antibiotics and materials. Requesting authorities should consider in-country importation and logistics procedures as well as the capacity of national preparedness and response committees.

The analysis of these delays revealed that they are usually beyond the control of the ICG, highlighting the need for performance indicators to reflect more accurately the specific and respective responsibilities of the different stakeholders involved in the response.

Nevertheless, overall performance has improved, with a reduction in the average number of days from decision to reception from 13 days in 2016 to 9.8 days in 2017.

### **Stockpile update**

UNICEF SD updated the meeting on its move towards a longer term planning approach to vaccine supply. ICG has requested 5 million doses per year to be available over the next four years. SD will announce a multi-year tender, for the period 2018–2021, now that the GAVI funds have been allocated. The new tender will be issued on 2 August 2017. Awards will be made for the full period and will take into consideration the ICG's need for 5 million doses to be available for the start of each epidemic season.

The ICG decided to replenish the stock of antibiotics for treatment by approving a new quantity of 70 000 vials of ceftriaxone to be made available by 1 January 2018.

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