

**PANDEMIC INFLUENZA DEPLOYMENT WORKSHOP AND EXERCISE: ENSURING
TIMELY ACCESS, DISTRIBUTION, AND DELIVERY OF PANDEMIC SUPPLIES,
MEETING REPORT**

Hanoi, Viet Nam
11–12 December 2019



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List of acronyms

| | |
|---------------|---|
| AEFI | Adverse events following immunization |
| APDES III | Asia Pacific Strategy for Emerging Diseases and Public Health Emergencies |
| CDC | Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA |
| FPP | Finished pharmaceutical products |
| GDMP | General Department of Preventive Medicine, Ministry of Health in Viet Nam |
| IHR | International Health Regulations |
| IVAC | Institute for Vaccines and Medical Biologicals, Viet Nam |
| NVDP | National Deployment and Vaccination Plan |
| NMRAs | National medicines regulatory authorities |
| NRA | National Regulatory Authorities |
| PIP Framework | Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework |
| WHO | World Health Organization |
| WPRO | World Health Organization Regional Office for Western Pacific |
| WHO HQ | World Health Organization Headquarters in Geneva |

Executive summary

Lessons learned during the 2009 H1N1 pandemic resulted in stronger commitment of the World Health Organization (WHO) and its Member States to pursue a more systematic planning for access, availability and deployment of the pandemic influenza vaccines. To support Member States strengthen their pandemic preparedness and response capacity, WHO advocates for countries to develop national deployment and vaccination plans (NDVP). Following the WHO recommendation, General Department of Preventive Medicine (GDPM), Ministry of Health in Viet Nam, in partnership with the WHO Country Office in Viet Nam, developed the draft NDVP.

To understand current capacities for effective deployment of pandemic vaccines in Viet Nam and test the draft NDVP, the WHO Country Office convened a national “Pandemic Influenza Deployment Workshop and Exercise: Ensuring Timely Access, Distribution, Use and Delivery of Pandemic Supplies” from 11 to 12 December 2019 in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The workshop was attended by 19 national experts representing a range of health institutions, from the Ministry of Health and Drug Administration to national and regional offices of CDC Viet Nam, Pasteur Institute, agencies responsible for immunization, vaccine manufacturer as well as 11 experts from WHO Headquarters, WHO Regional Office for Western Pacific (WPRO), WHO Country Office in Viet Nam and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, USA (CDC).

Over the course of two days, participants learned about global and regional regulatory and operational frameworks and tools for influenza pandemic preparedness in general, and pandemic vaccine deployment in particular. Presentations by WHO representatives from Headquarters, WPRO and Country Office in Viet Nam set the stage for productive discussions and knowledge transfer.

The simulation exercise offered by the adapted table top game “PIPDeploy” created an enabling environment for the workshop participants to test the draft National Deployment and Vaccination Plan and provide their constructive feedback and suggestions for further strengthening and finalization of the Plan. Participants appreciated the participatory and interactive nature of the exercise in which they learned about the crucial components of the vaccine deployment process: planning, vaccine registration (in emergency situation), deployment and shipment, communication, and monitoring of adverse events following immunization.

The General Department of Preventive Medicine (GDPM) at the Ministry of Health - an agency leading the national efforts for development and implementation of the Vietnamese NDVP – welcomed participants’ feedback on the draft Plan and appreciated recommendations for its improvement.

Discussion sessions after each presentation and game section offered ample opportunities for participants to exchange knowledge and ideas, obtain expertise and recommendations from the Ministry of Health in Viet Nam and WHO experts.

The following recommendations are highlighted:

- A key area of capacity strengthening concerns **regulatory processes to ensure rapid evaluation, licensing and importation of pandemic influenza vaccines from various sources in a timely manner**. Current legislation stipulates 60 days to approve importation of medical products.

- Considering the country's capacity to manufacture vaccines, IVAC and the Ministry of Health should have a **coordinated strategy on domestic production (including forecast availability) of pandemic influenza vaccines in the event of a pandemic.**
- As part of readiness for different scenarios, **estimations should be calculated to understand the needed number of vaccine doses and ancillary products in the event of a pandemic.** Participants expressed that tourists and migrants in certain parts of Viet Nam can constitute high risk groups, hence immigration agencies should be part of the NDVP structure.
- A detailed **flow chart of responsibility starting from the central level, down to the regional, provincial, district and community levels, respectively highlighting the responsible agencies, respective roles and responsibilities** would enable greater clarity on coordination and collaboration pathways.
- Once the responsible agencies across all levels of the vaccine deployment cascade are determined, the **necessary infrastructure and transportation need to be identified:** number, location and owners of available warehouses; necessary means of transportation and providers thereof; all the components of the cold chain (thermocontainers, coolants, etc.) and their sources; vaccine storage and post-vaccination waste management infrastructure at immunization points. It is crucial to assess the capacities of the health care system to meet the infrastructure and transportation needs that will be required during a pandemic, and plan alternative means and sources, such as contracting services unavailable or insufficient within the public health care system, or mobilizing non-health sectors such as military, disaster management or aviation.
- The NDVP for Viet Nam would benefit from a section **describing the waste management strategy including the capacity of the health care system to manage hazardous medical waste.** Health care staff involved in immunization campaigns need to be informed on good practices for waste management and provided with standard operating procedures on waste management during a pandemic influenza vaccination campaign.
- A comprehensive **pandemic communication approach for deployment and vaccination operations should be enclosed and should consider several target audiences and means of communication.** In addition to public communication aimed at providing clear and reliable information about the disease, prevention measures, available vaccines and potential adverse effects thereof, it is also crucial to ensure clear internal communication with all the involved stakeholders from health and other sectors.
- The **post-deployment surveillance approach should ensure that both active and passive surveillance approaches** are considered and the NDVP links to all available documentation and guidance.
- The NDVP should make provisions for **capturing and documenting lessons learned from deployment and vaccination operations**, including challenges faced and factors that facilitated the processes. A monitoring and evaluation framework should be in place before commencement of the deployment and vaccination response to facilitate capturing key indicators from the onset of the response, and after-action reviews should be considered to facilitate future learning.

1. Introduction

This report summarizes the results and discussions of the national “Pandemic Influenza Deployment Workshop and Exercise: Ensuring Timely Access, Distribution, Use and Delivery of Pandemic Supplies ” organized between 11-12 December 2019 in Hanoi, Viet Nam. The aim of the workshop was to assess national capacities and capabilities for effective and efficient deployment of pandemic vaccines, and test the draft National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) using the WHO board game PIPDeploy based on a progressive simulated scenario of an emergency situation to facilitate discussions about emergency response, coordination of intersectoral efforts and underlying legal and regulatory frameworks.

Specific objectives of the workshop were:

- To review the process of national deployment and vaccination in the event of a pandemic in Viet Nam against five essential components: planning, vaccine registration (in emergency situation), deployment and shipment, communication, and monitoring of adverse events following immunization (AEFI);
- To identify gaps in the draft NDVP and analyse the existing national capacities for each essential component;
- To provide recommendations on the draft NDVP and key areas of capacity and capability necessary for finalization of the NDVP and its effective implementation.

The workshop welcomed 19 key stakeholders in Viet Nam involved in the cascade of vaccine deployment operations, from accessing the product to administration at point of care and monitoring adverse events following immunization. More specifically, participants included the national focal point for pandemic preparedness from the General Department of Preventive Medicine, lead and other representatives from the national Expanded Programme on Immunization, national experts from departments responsible for logistics and vaccination operations, regulatory authorities’ representatives responsible for registration and pharmacovigilance activities (National Regulatory Agency) and the local vaccine manufacturer. Further participants included 11 experts from WHO Headquarters, WHO Regional Office for the Western Pacific, WHO country Office in Viet Nam and the CDC (USA).

Presentations by regional and national experts familiarized participants with the framework for the pandemic influenza preparedness in the Western Pacific region and Viet Nam, specifically. An opening presentation by the General Department of Preventive Medicine (GDPM) at the Ministry of Health – the lead agency for development and implementation of the Vietnamese Pandemic Influenza Vaccine Deployment Plan - introduced the draft version of the Plan. In the practical exercise over the course of the following 2 days, participants immersed themselves in a

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