

Multiregional Workshop on developing policies, guidelines and SOPs for effective vaccine management

Bangkok, Thailand, 9–13 December 2024

Report of the meeting



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Abbreviations and acronyms

EVM	effective vaccine management
EVM E 1–9	vaccine management functions
EVM M 1–4	supply chain management functions
EVM R 1–6	resource management functions
EVM ST	strategic planning
IA2030	Immunization Agenda 2030
iSC	immunization supply chain
MoH	Ministry of Health
SOPs	standard operating procedures
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
UNICEF EAPRO	UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office
UNICEF ROSA	UNICEF Regional Office for South Asia
WHO	World Health Organization
WHO HQ	WHO headquarters
WHO-SEARO	WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia

Executive summary

The Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) and its regional translation for the WHO South-East (SE) Asia Region, Strategic Framework for Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030, as envisioned in its Strategic Priority 1 (SP1) related to immunization for primary health care/universal health coverage, seek to “secure high-quality supply chains for vaccines and related commodities and effective vaccine management, within the primary health care supply system” as part of the Strategic Priority Objective 1.4 (SPO 1.4) of IA2030.

Designed to help progress towards achieving SPO 1.4, the objectives of the Multiregional Workshop on developing policies, guidelines and SOPs for effective vaccine management (EVM), held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 9–13 December 2024, were to:

- (1) understand effective vaccine management benchmarks and identify the gaps in countries’ immunization supply chain (iSC) evidence, policies, guidelines, standard operating procedures (SOPs) and job aids;
- (2) develop a strategy and time-bound action plan to fill any gap related to iSC policy, guidelines and SOPs, and put in place a system for managing them;
- (3) understand where useful reference resources, country examples and technical assistance can be found; and
- (4) elicit country input on EVM SOPs and job aids template, and build an online community of practice around iSC evidence, policies and SOPs.

The meeting was jointly conducted by the WHO headquarters (WHO HQ), the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia (WHO-SEARO), the United Nations Children’s Fund Regional Office for South Asia (UNICEF ROSA) and the UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional Office (UNICEF EAPRO). It was attended by participants from WHO and UNICEF country offices, and ministries of health in 13 nations – Afghanistan (WHO, UNICEF), Bangladesh [WHO, UNICEF, Ministry of Health (MoH)], Bhutan (MoH), the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea (DPR Korea) (UNICEF only), India (WHO, UNICEF), Indonesia (MoH, WHO), Maldives (MoH), Myanmar (WHO, UNICEF), Nepal (MoH, WHO, UNICEF), Pakistan (WHO, UNICEF), Sri Lanka (MoH, UNICEF), Thailand (MoH) and Timor-Leste (MoH).

The meeting concluded with the following outputs and the way forward:

- (1) Each country team has developed an action plan, which will be reviewed within the country, involving various stakeholders, and will be finalized by 15 January 2025 and shared with the Secretariat.
- (2) Countries that are willing to share the available SOPs, guidelines and job aids with the global community have uploaded the respective documents in the shared drive created for the purpose. Eight countries have already shared these documents, which will be added to the global repository by WHO HQ.
- (3) WHO-SEARO, UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF EAPRO will follow up on the action points in Q3 of 2025 with the respective country teams.

1. Introduction

The Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030) and its regional translation for WHO South-East Asia Region, Strategic Framework for Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030, places particular emphasis on reaching marginalized and vulnerable populations, striving to ensure universal vaccine coverage for all children.

As envisioned in the Strategic Priority 1 (SP1), related to immunization for primary health care/universal health coverage, SPO 1.4 focuses on the need to “secure high-quality supply chains for vaccines and related commodities and effective vaccine management, within the primary health care supply system”. This is further elaborated on in the Key Focus Area 1.4 (KFA 1.4), related to supply chain and logistics, which envisions:

- strengthening supply chains to ensure that high-quality vaccines are always available in the right quantity and form at the right time, in the right place, and stored and distributed under the right conditions;
- promoting integration with other supply chains for more effective delivery of primary health care; and
- investing in systems and infrastructure to safely manage, treat and dispose vaccine waste to reduce their environmental footprints.

The immunization supply chain encompasses a wide array of components, including equipment, technologies, personnel, policies, procedures and capacity-building initiatives. These elements collectively play a pivotal role in ensuring the availability of vaccines at all levels of the supply chain.

Given the critical importance of the immunization supply chain, effective vaccine management (EVM) tools are utilized to assess and enhance its functionality. Originally introduced as EVM 1.0, this tool has been instrumental in conducting numerous validated assessments worldwide and has significantly contributed to the evolution of the immunization supply chain system. In 2019, a more advanced version of the tool, EVM 2.0, was launched, enabling more thorough, independent and unbiased assessments of the immunization supply chain. The effective vaccine management assessment, owned by the Ministry of Health (MoH), employs various criteria and categories to evaluate the performance of the supply chain, providing valuable insights into its effectiveness.

Initiated several years ago, the EVM assessment has been instrumental in driving progress within the immunization programme; it is indispensable for ensuring the success of immunization efforts and the resilience of the supply chain system. While EVM scores highlight issues, they often lack guidance on how to address the corrective measures effectively. There is a need to prepare guidelines, SOPs and job aids to implement improvement plans, which will be developed post EVM assessment. Gaps in awareness of the differences between policy, guidelines, SOPs, job aids, and community of practices and their availability have also been identified.

2. Objectives of the workshop

The overall objective of the workshop was to strengthen effective vaccine management in the countries of the regions concerned.

The specific objectives of the workshop were to:

- (1) understand effective vaccine management benchmarks and identify the gaps in the country's iSC evidence, policies, guidelines, SOPs and job aids;
- (2) develop a strategy and time-bound action plan to fill any gap related to iSC policy, guidelines and SOPs, and put in place a system for managing them;
- (3) understand where useful reference resources, country examples and technical assistance can be found; and
- (4) elicit country input on EVM SOPs and job aids template, and build an online community of practice around iSC evidence, policies and SOPs.

3. Organization of the workshop

The workshop was held in Bangkok, Thailand, on 9–13 December 2024.

The meeting was jointly conducted by WHO HQ, WHO-SEARO, UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF EAPRO. It was attended by MoH/WHO/UNICEF participants from 13 countries – Afghanistan (WHO, UNICEF), Bangladesh (WHO, UNICEF, MoH), Bhutan (MoH), DPR Korea (UNICEF only), India (WHO, UNICEF), Indonesia (MoH, WHO), Maldives (MoH), Myanmar (WHO, UNICEF), Nepal (MoH, WHO, UNICEF), Pakistan (WHO, UNICEF), Sri Lanka (MoH, UNICEF), Thailand (MoH) and Timor-Leste (MoH) (list of participants in Annexure 3)

The meeting had four key components:

Component 1 (Day 1): Evidence, policies, SOPs and the effective vaccine management framework;

Component 2 (spread over Days 2, 3, 4): Presentation on some good practices by the countries with regard to the components of effective vaccine management;

Component 3 (spread over Days 1, 2, 3, 4) – group work to:

- understand the various effective vaccine management benchmarks
- (ST, R1–R6, E1–E9, M1–M4) through group work, one in each area;
- identify the need for policy, guidance, SOPs or job aids to achieve these benchmarks; and
- identify the priority SOPs required and provide inputs to develop generic SOPs;

Component 4 (Day 5): Preparation of a country action plan on the development of effective vaccine management SOPs, policies and guidelines (programme of the meeting in Annexure 1).

Prior to the meeting, a country survey form was filled in by all countries; it was used to build on the details of the meeting.

During the meeting, each country team reviewed all components of effective vaccine management benchmarks and identified the gaps in policies, guidelines and SOPs in each of the areas related to ST, R1–R6, E1–E9 and M1–M4.

Feedback from the participants was received using Mentimeter; it demonstrated high appreciation. The details of the feedback are in Annexure 2.

All meeting resources are available in the links below.

- A. All slide decks and workshop materials, including the Excel sheets of work carried out by the countries, are available on the workshop SharePoint:

https://worldhealthorg-my.sharepoint.com/personal/khanals_who_int/_layouts/15/onedrive.aspx?id=%2Fpersonal%2Fkhanals%5Fwho%5Fint%2FDocuments%2F0%2ESudhir%20Drive%2FMeetings%2F2024%2F13%2EEVM%20SOP%2FMeeting%20resources&ga=1

- B. All global EVM policies, SOPs and guidelines are available in the link below:

https://worldhealthorg.sharepoint.com/sites/ws-ivb_department/isc-km/Evidence%20Policies%20SOPs/Forms/AllItems.aspx

4. Outputs and the way forward

- (1) All country teams reviewed the various components of effective vaccine management, such as ST, R1–R6, E1–E9 and M1–M4, and identified the gaps in policy, guidelines, SOPs and job aids, related to each of these areas.
- (2) There was significant cross-learning across countries during the group work and plenary session on country practices.
- (3) Each country team has developed an action plan, which will be reviewed within the country, involving various stakeholders, and finalized by 15 January 2025 and shared with the Secretariat.
- (4) Countries that are willing to share the available SOPs, guidelines and job aids with the global community have uploaded the respective documents in the shared drive created for the purpose. Eight countries have already shared these documents, which will be added to the global repository by WHO HQ.
- (5) WHO-SEARO, UNICEF ROSA and UNICEF EAPRO will follow up on the action points in Q3 of 2025 with the respective country teams.
- (6) WHO and UNICEF are to prepare and share guidance on how to manage iSC policies and SOPs, template SOPs and job aids, and example SOPs and job aids as a community of practices.

Annexure 1

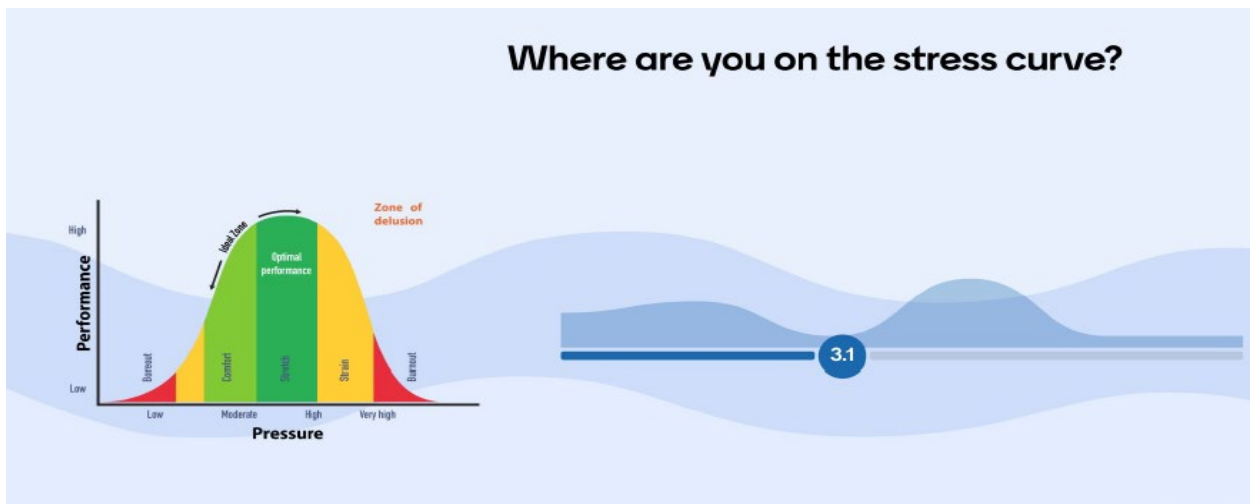
Programme of the meeting

Day 1	
Time	Activity
08:30–09:00	Registration
09:00–09:45	Opening session
09:45–10:15	Understanding policies and SOPs: iSC key concepts
10:15–10:45	Evidence, SOPs, policies and the EVM framework
11:15–11:30	Insights from EVM assessments: Availability of policies and SOPs
11:30–12:00	Decoding the data: Analysis of the pre-workshop survey
12:00–12:30	From concept to implementation: Developing and managing national policies and SOPs
12:30–13:00	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstration: Tool for reviewing national evidence, policies and SOPs • Demonstration: Tool for finding relevant policy guidance
14:00–14:20	Group exercise 1, introduction: ST + R1–R6 evidence, policies and the EVM framework
14:20–15:30	Group exercise 1: Review national ST + R1–R6 resources
16:00–16:45	Group exercise 1: Contd.
16:45–17:00	Wrap-up and reflection
Day 2	
09:00–09:10	Morning warm-up session
09:10–10:30	Group exercise 1 presentations: Results from ST + R1–R6 policy reviews, insights and reflection – plenary discussion
11:00–11:30	Country presentation: India and Myanmar best practices and challenges in iSC (ST and R1 to R6)
11:30–12:00	Introduction of Group exercise 2: Mastering the approach for E1 to E5 components of EVM
12:00–12:30	Country presentation: Bangladesh and Pakistan – best practices and challenges in iSC E1 to E5
12:30–13:30	Group exercise 2: Mapping policy needs – E1 to E5
14:30–15:30	Group exercise 2: Contd.
16:00–16:45	Group exercise 2: Contd.
16:45–17:00	Wrap-up and reflections
Day 3	
09:00–09:10	Morning warm-up session
09:10–10:30	Group exercise 2 presentation: Mapping policy needs – E1 to E5 insights and reflections – plenary discussion
11:00–11:30	Introduction of Group exercise 3: Mastering approach for E6 to E9 components of EVM
11:30–12:00	Country presentation: Nepal, Sri Lanka – best practices and challenges in iSC E6 to E9
12:30–13:30	Group exercise 3: Mapping policy needs – E6 to E9

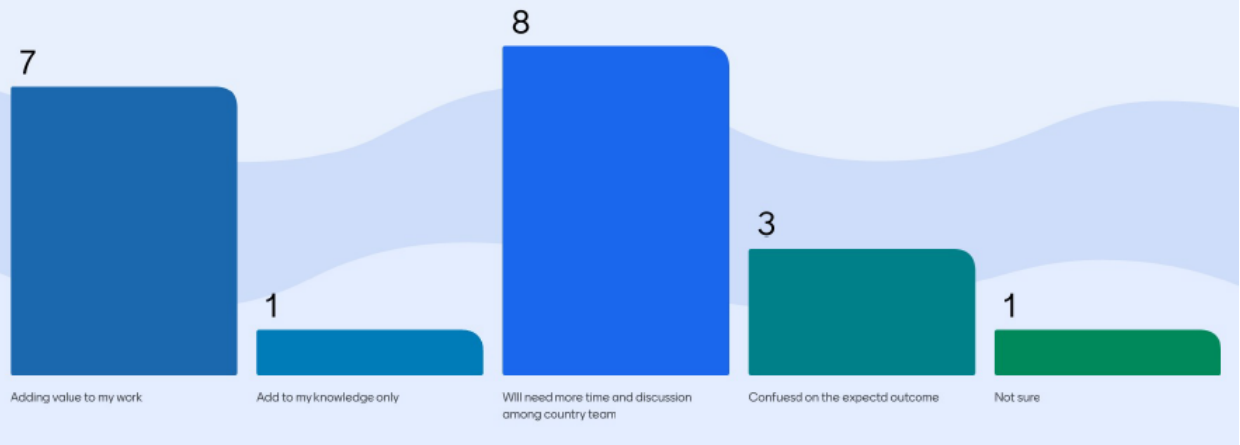
Day 3	
14:30–15:30	Group exercise 3: Contd.
16:00–16:45	Group exercise 3: Contd.
16:45–17:00	Wrap-up and reflections
Day 4	
09:00–09:10	Morning warm-up session
09:10–10:30	Group exercise 3 presentations: Mapping policy needs – E6 to E9, insights and reflections – plenary discussion
11:00–11:30	Introduction of Group exercise 4: Mastering approach for M1 to M4 components of EVM
11:30–12:00	Country presentation: Afghanistan and Myanmar – best practices and challenges in iSC M1 to M4
12:00–13:30	Group exercise 4: Mapping policy needs – M1 to M4
14:30–15:30	Group exercise 4 presentations: Mapping policy needs – M1 to M4, insights and reflections – plenary discussion
16:00–17:00	Developing templates for SOP, guidelines and policies
17:00–17:15	Wrap-up and reflections
Day 5	
09:00–09:10	Morning warm-up session
09:10–10:30	Country exercise: Action plan for priority areas on effective vaccine management SOPs, policies and guidelines
11:00–12:00	Country exercise – contd.
12:00–13:30	Showcase session: Presentation of country action plans (10 minutes per country) a) Afghanistan b) Bangladesh c) India d) Sri Lanka e) Nepal f) Pakistan g) DPR Korea h) Myanmar
14:30–15:30	Showcase session: Presentation of country action plans (10 minutes per country) i) Bhutan j) Maldives k) Timor-Leste i) Thailand
15:30–15:50	Progress review framework: Strengthening accountability through quarterly updates
15:50–16:00	Closing reflections and vote of thanks

Annexure 2

Participants' feedback on Mentimeter



How was the group work in the last two days ?



What was the most useful part of the group work? What worked well and what did not ?



Annexure 3

List of participants

Ministry of Health

Bangladesh

Dr Md Saiful I. Majumder
Senior Assistant Secretary
Ministry of Health, Bangladesh
Email: m_saiful2004@yahoo.com

Dr Md Safikul Islam
Deputy Programme Manager – EPI
Ministry of Health, Bangladesh
Email: dpmpnsepi@gmail.com

Bhutan

Dr Tashi Dawa
Deputy Chief Programme Officer, CDD
Ministry of Health, Bhutan
Email: tdawa@health.gov.bt

Indonesia

Ms Uduria Marito Sitanggang
Health Administrator
Directorate of Pharmaceutical
Management and Services
Ministry of Health, Indonesia
Email: uduriams@gmail.com

Mr Reza Isfan
Epidemiologist
Immunization Department
Ministry of Health, Indonesia
Email: rezaisfan7@gmail.com

Maldives

Ms Nashiya Abdul Ghafoor
Director, Public Health and
National Immunization Programme
Ministry of Health, Maldives
Email: nashiya@health.gov.mv

Nepal

Dr Abhiyan Gautam
Deputy Health Administrator
DoHS, Ministry of Health, Nepal
Email: gautamabhiyan@gmail.com

Sri Lanka

Dr Nimal S. Gamagedara
Consultant, Epidemiology Unit
Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka
Email: nimal74@gmail.com

Thailand

Mr Natthabodin Kaewkum
Pharmacist
Ministry of Public Health, Thailand
Email: natthabodin.kaewkum@gmail.com

Timor-Leste

Ms Natalia de Araujo
Sr Professional, Immunization
Ministry of Health, Timor-Leste
Email: dearaujonn40@gmail.com

Ms Aida Dos Santos Simões
EPI Data Management
Ministry of Health, Timor-Leste
Email: aidadossantossimoes@gmail.com

UNICEF country offices

Afghanistan

Ms Chidiebele Ifeoma Nwajide
Immunization Specialist for Cold Chain
Email: cnwajide@unicef.org

Dr Mohammad Wazir Sadiqi
Cold Chain Officer
Email: mwsadiqi@unicef.org

Bangladesh

Dr Farhana Rahman
Health Officer – Coverage and Equity
Email: farharahman@unicef.org

Dr Md. Jahid Hossen Shahed
Health Officer – eEPI
Email: mshahed@unicef.org

DPR Korea

Dr Asha Pun
Chief of Health
Email: apun@unicef.org

India

Dr Ashish Chauhan
Immunization Specialist
Email: achauhan@unicef.org

Mr Vivek Mudgal
Supply Chain Specialist
Email: vmudgal@unicef.org

Myanmar

Dr Hsu Myat Myo Naing
Health Specialist
Email: hmyo@unicef.org

Dr Tay Zar Soe
Health Officer (iSC)
Email: tzsoe@unicef.org

Nepal

Dr Fazil Ahmad
Immunization Specialist
Email: faahmad@unicef.org

Mr Prakash Chandra Joshi
Health Officer (Immunization)
Email: pcjoshi@unicef.org

Pakistan

Dr Naeem Asghar
Immunization Specialist
Email: nasghar@unicef.org

Dr Misan Emmanuel Jacdonmi
Immunization Specialist
Email: mjacdonmi@unicef.org

Sri Lanka

Dr KTG Manjula P. Kariyawasam
Immunization Consultant
Email: kkariyawasam@unicef.org

Independent experts

Dr Paul Colrain
EVM Consultant
WHO-SEARO

Dr Manish Ratna
Senior Associate, Immunization
William J. Clinton Foundation (WJCF)
New Delhi, India
Email: mratna@wjcf.in

Dr Pyae Sone Win
Cold Chain and Vaccine Management Expert
Yangon, Myanmar
Email: pyaesonewin92@gmail.com

WHO country offices

Afghanistan

Dr Sayed Mehraban Shah Sayedzai
NPO – Immunization
Email: sayedzais@who.int

Bangladesh

Dr Chiranjit Das
NPO – EPI and VSQ
Email: dasch@who.int

India

Dr Vineet Goyal
AEFI Surveillance Focal Point
Email: goyalv@who.int

Indonesia

Dr Chavia Trufani
NPO Immunization
Email: trufanic@who.int

Myanmar

Dr Raveesha Mugali
Medical Officer, EPI & VPD Surveillance
Email: mugalir@who.int

Nepal

Dr Dipesh Shrestha
Immunization Monitoring Focal Point
Email: shresthadi@who.int

Dr Smriti Lama
Surv. and Immunization Medical Officer
Email: lamas@who.int

Pakistan

Dr Waqar Ahmed Soomro
Technical Officer – EPI
Email: soomrowa@who.int

Secretariat

Dr Souleymane Kone
Team Lead
Vaccine Supply Chain and Logistics, WHO HQ, Geneva
(UHL/IVB/EPI)
Email: kones@who.int

Dr Sudhir Khanal
Regional Adviser, Accelerated
Disease Control, IVD/CDS
WHO-SEARO, New Delhi, India
Email: khanals@who.int

Mr Daniel Brigden
Technical Officer
WHO HQ, Geneva (UHL/IVB/EPI)
Email: brigidend@who.int

Dr Maricel Castro
Technical Officer
WHO HQ, Geneva (UHL/IVB/EPI)
Email: castroma@who.int

Dr Ridwan Gustiana
Regional Health Specialist,
Immunization, Health Emergencies and Digital Health

UNICEF East Asia and Pacific Regional
Office (UNICEF EAPRO)
Email: rgustiana@unicef.org

Dr Paritosh Panigrahi
Immunization Specialist
UNICEF Regional Office for
South Asia (UNICEF ROSA)
Kathmandu, Nepal
Email: ppanigrahi@unicef.org

Mr Rajiv Maken
Executive Assistant, IVD/CDS
WHO-SEARO, New Delhi, India
Email: makenr@who.int

The effective vaccine management (EVM) workshop, jointly organized by WHO and UNICEF, was attended by participants from 13 countries, who reviewed the various EVM benchmarks, identified the gaps in policies, guidelines, SOPs and job aids, and developed respective country action plans to fill these gaps. This meeting report outlines the proceedings and outcomes of the workshop conducted in Bangkok, Thailand, in December 2024

