

# COVID-19 Vaccination: Building Global Capacity

**Q&A for Session 01: National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP) preparation, submission, and review process**

**Tuesday, February 9, 2021**

Thank you for attending the above session for National, regional and global stakeholders. Many questions were submitted by participants, either in the Zoom chat during the session itself, or in the two Telegram channels managed by Technet-21 supporting regions, countries, and partners in preparing for COVID-19 vaccine introduction. In this document, we share the answers from presenters to each question.

Links to the session recordings in all languages and presentations can be found on the [Project ECHO website](#).

More information on COVID-19 vaccine introduction can be found in the resources listed below.

- [General questions regarding the COVID-19 vaccines](#)
- [Preparing for COVID-19 vaccination](#)
- [WHO Coronavirus disease \(COVID-2019\) technical guidance](#)
- [TechNet-21 – The Technical Network for Strengthening Immunization Services](#)
- OpenWHO COVID-19 vaccine trainings:
  - [Orientation to national deployment and vaccination planning for COVID-19 vaccines](#)

In addition, TechNet-21 manages two Telegram channels supporting regions, countries, and partners in preparing for COVID-19 vaccine introduction. In these two spaces - one anglophone and one francophone - you will be able to share your experiences, discuss key questions, and connect with experts from around the world. We'll also share new information and global guidance as it becomes available. Join us today:

- [COVID-19 Vaccine Introduction – TechNet-21 \(English\)](#)
- [Introduction des vaccins contre la Covid-19 – TechNet-21 \(Français\)](#)

### **If a country's NDVP is not accepted at first, is there any way to get through?**

NDVPs are being reviewed by Regional Review Committees. If NDVPs need revision, the regional and country offices will work with the government to resolve the issues. Resolving issues with NDVPs should be completed within two weeks in view of the fact that these are almost exclusively minor revisions.

### **Once a country receives its first doses of vaccines, are we considered fully ready? Is our NDVP final?**

Once the NDVPs are reviewed and assessed to meet the minimum criteria, countries can be allocated vaccines from the COVAX Facility. The assessment of readiness was based on three minimum criteria (policy, cold chain, and vaccine safety), but that all parts of the plan will benefit from taking into account the recommendations made by the Regional Review Committee.

### **How soon will the country be notified if its NDVP is accepted?**

NDVPs are currently being reviewed by the Regional Review Committees. The Ministry of Health will receive feedback on their NDVP through the Partners Platform after 17 February 2021.

### **The NDVP process seems long - but your presentation suggests that there are only three key areas - so are the other areas of the NDVP optional?**

It is important for a comprehensive NDVP to be submitted as the Regional Review Committee will provide inputs on this plan and the plan will be used to guide the COVID-19 vaccine introduction. It will be important to use the NDVP as the basis for a detailed plan of action guiding the introduction of the vaccine in the country, therefore placing equal importance on all aspects of the plan over and above the minimum criteria.

### **Where can I find the status of a certain country regarding the COVAX program and the readiness of that country?**

Country readiness information is being shared directly with the vaccine country administration focal points through the Partners Platform.

### **Do the same rules of the COVAX process apply for self-financing countries?**

AMC92 countries are required to submit a NDVP to be considered for vaccine allocation. Self-financing countries are recommended to submit their NDVP.

### **Do countries have to pay for vaccines supplied under the COVAX initiative?**

COVAX Facility has a cost sharing mechanism for vaccine doses up to 20% of the population and beyond.

### **Are you able to provide further details about the roles of the Joint Allocation Taskforce and the Independent Allocation of Vaccines Group (IAVG) in the NDVP assessment process?**

The Joint Allocation Taskforce is the body composed of staff from WHO and Gavi's Office of the COVAX Facility, responsible for collating all the data needed for allocation and preparing the Vaccine Allocation Decision (VAD) proposals for the IAVG based on allocation model.

The IAVG is composed of 12 independent experts nominated by COVAX members and appointed by WHO. Their main responsibility is to review and validate Vaccine Allocation Decisions based on the JAT proposal, ensuring it is technically informed and free of conflict of interest.

Details on the functions and composition of the IAVG can be found [here](#).

### **Is there a reason why there is 20% of the population in the initial allocation phase, not less than that or more than that?**

The 20% threshold was chosen as for most countries, an allocation equal to 20% of the population would be enough to cover most of the population comprising initially prioritized target groups. WHO recognizes that the percentage of at-risk populations is variable across different countries; and it is important to note that the 20% target is considered a floor for an initial allocation that should increase as soon as more products become available.

### **Most recent developments with the AstraZeneca/Oxford AZD1222 vaccine and new variants of COVID 19 emerging in different parts of the world is worrisome. I have concerns about what this means for our indicative allocation of this vaccine via the COVAX Facility.**

The indicative allocation was performed based on forecasted supply building on production ranges. Therefore, issues of production and subsequent availability of doses may determine a change in numbers at the time of the actual allocations. Also, we do want to stress the other caveats that are mentioned in the communication that accompanied the indicative allocation that may further lead to changes in allocated amounts.

On the variants, the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts on Immunization (SAGE) periodically reviews evidence on the COVID-19 vaccines, including emerging evidence on performance against virus variants.

### **Would vaccine allocation be affected by a country's high level of resistance to COVID-19 information and vaccine? For instance: in Nigeria, only a few states have a COVID-19 response plan. Would this affect the allocation?**

A comprehensive planning of deployment of any vaccine needs to consider addressing issues related to vaccines acceptance and demand. WHO has issued guidance in this respect. Please consider for your perusal Chapter 9 Vaccine acceptance and uptake (demand) from the [Guidance on developing a national deployment and vaccination plan for COVID-19 vaccines](#).

### **How soon will WHO share the deployment plan to Gavi countries? because there will still be need for state or district adoption into the operation plan**

All countries, including countries that are benefiting from GAVI support in their immunisation roll-out, are encouraged to develop a national deployment and vaccination plan. These plans, also known as NDVPs, are developed by the countries themselves, with technical support if needed, from WHO, UNICEF and GAVI.

### **What is COVAX's planned schedule / timeline of regular allocations?**

The round of allocations and start of deliveries linked to COVAX Facility, are dependent on the authorisation of products for use including policy recommendations and availability of supply.

### **When can we expect the first shipment of the vaccine?**

An exceptional first wave distribution of 1.2 million doses of the WHO Emergency Use Listing (EUL)-approved Pfizer-BioNTech vaccine, for Q1 2021 was announced in the beginning of February. Please find more information about these early Pfizer-BioNTech doses [here](#).

### **The vaccines available in the market have different storage and distribution requirements.**

#### **How do you consider the country's supply capabilities in vaccine allocation?**

The capacity of countries to accommodate different logistics requirements is considered prior to allocation, through targeted support and review by multi-partner teams formed of technical experts in WHO, UNICEF and GAVI.

### **Are countries likely to get vaccines from different manufacturers within the COVAX facility?**

Yes, countries may receive vaccines produced by different manufacturers, but this is dependent also on whether they expressly wish so, paired with supply availability. As a general rule, the allocation algorithm optimises to minimize co-circulation of different products.