



Data Review Teams:

A Promising Practice to Improve
Data Use and Strengthen
Immunization Supply Chains

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Brief

Well-performing immunization supply chains (ISC) are critical to ensure vaccine availability, and rely heavily on data visibility and data use to function properly. As access to more and better quality data increases, Data Review Teams (DRTs) are an approach to ensure that data are used to make decisions. DRT meetings are an opportunity for stakeholders from across supply chain tiers to review key ISC performance indicators, identify and assess performance issues, and develop actionable solutions to address them. DRTs help build a culture of data use and improve supply chain performance.

In partnership with governments and communities, the **Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI)**, **John Snow, Inc. (JSI)**, and **VillageReach** have developed and implemented different types of data review teams across multiple health programs in a number of countries. The evidence from these interventions suggests that data review teams lead to improved data visibility, improved stock availability, and reduced wastage.

Making Data Review Teams Work: 8 Recommendations

I. Standardize the meeting structure and tools

- ✓ *Integrate DRTs into existing performance review and monitoring meetings to minimize start-up effort and promote sustainability.*

Integrating DRTs into existing meeting structures increases the likelihood that they are sustained. While there are tradeoffs to consider (such as the momentum generated by a new meeting versus making an already lengthy meeting longer), integration works best when ISC data review is incorporated into meetings that are well established, well attended and occur frequently. Planning for transition from a partner-supported model to a fully owned government meeting is essential to the long-term success of data review teams.

- ✓ *Create or enhance decision support tools that teams can use to measure performance, track progress, and identify problems.*

Implementers should invest time and effort in enhancing data analysis tools and standardizing presentation formats for use in data review team meetings. Decision support tools that are simple but efficient and align with existing team capacity may be adopted more quickly and used more consistently than overly complex ones.

- ✓ *Cover four essential processes during data review team meetings: Key Performance Indicator (KPI) review, problem identification, problem cause analysis, and action planning.*

All team meetings should prioritize Key Performance Indicators (KPI) review, problem identification, problem cause analysis, and action planning. Plan for how best to facilitate these activities and ensure that members have the information and tools required to carry them out. Refer to the Gavi Alliance's recommended KPIs [Dashboard for Immunization Supply Chain \(DISC\) indicators](#) for potential indicators.

II. Choose team members and orient them to their roles

- ✓ *Adapt team composition to the context and goals of the data review team intervention.*

Data review meetings work best when the participants are from multiple disciplines and include those who are close to the problems (e.g. local cold chain and logistics officers), and those with decisionmaking, financial and administrative authority (e.g. EPI managers and program directors).

Please note: In some instances, the presence of senior leadership inhibited candid discussion of issues. Discuss tradeoffs during the design phase and revise as you go.

- ✓ *Provide orientation to generate buy-in and build the capabilities of the data review team members.*

Training is essential to ensure that data review team members can successfully analyze data and develop solutions. During orientation, clarify roles, responsibilities, and expectations. Most importantly, tailor training to the skills and proficiencies of team members. Supplemental training may be required to address skills gaps that surface during implementation, so implementers should plan for it in advance to the extent possible.

- ✓ *Start with the data you have, and use the data review meeting to highlight and address data quality issues.*

Even if pre-existing data are limited, all data review processes must start somewhere. Implementers can call health facilities and collect data manually or verify the credibility of data by checking it against several different sources. Over time, scrutinizing imperfect data will improve both data quality and strengthen supply chain performance.

III. Nurture teams' motivation and accountability

- ✓ *Include strategies to build motivation and accountability in the DRT design.*

In order to be successful, data review interventions must include motivational and accountability mechanisms for driving behavior change. Some successful methods included rules, supervision, peer pressure, accountability, public declarations, peer recognition and financial incentives. No matter how it is generated, motivation is an essential component of these interventions and implementers

should choose the appropriate strategy for the given context. NB: Financial incentives should be carefully considered before implementation as they can have negative implications for sustainability of meetings during and after transition to government.

- ✓ **Cultivate Champions and Leaders Who Can Help Generate Buy-In for Data Use.** Leadership and champions who will advocate for DRT are essential, as they can validate and motivate stakeholder participation and empower decisionmaking. They should be included: (1) during the initial kick-off phase to promote and publicly support the intervention; (2) during regular check-ins to demonstrate continued interest and increase accountability; and (3) when support is required to unblock issues and address challenges beyond the authority of the DRT.

Figure: Key Components of Data Review Team Interventions



The Bottom Line

Data review teams alone are not cure-alls for strengthening vaccine supply chains. Governments and their partners must continue to make other critical investments in human resources, infrastructure, policies, and technology. But experience shows that data review teams—equipping individuals at all levels of the supply chain to work with and improve the information that they have—can have powerful and in some cases remarkably swift impacts that can ultimately help to ensure that we continue to close the gap on immunization coverage for the world’s poorest people.