

NATIONAL LOGISTICS WORKING GROUP

CONCEPT NOTE



WHAT IS AN NLWG?



A national logistics working group (NLWG) is a permanent mechanism for coordinating national immunization supply chain and logistics (iSCL) activities as well as supply chain investments made by government agencies and development partners. NLWGs provide guidance, expertise, and technical assistance on all matters concerning supply chain operations and improvement initiatives. NLWGs engage with key stakeholders in the process to share information, evidence, and lessons learned; to identify and overcome program bottlenecks; to explore opportunities for innovation; and to make optimal use of resources. NLWGs operate as leadership groups to improve iSCL in countries.

WHY NLWGs?

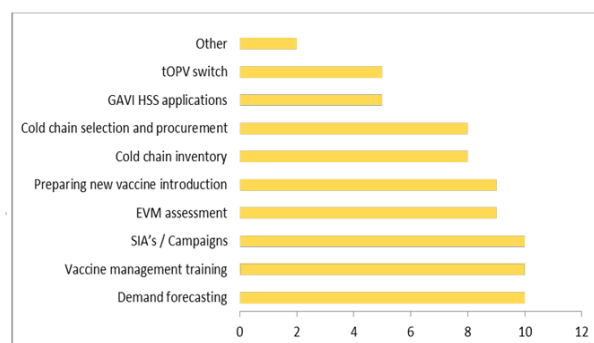
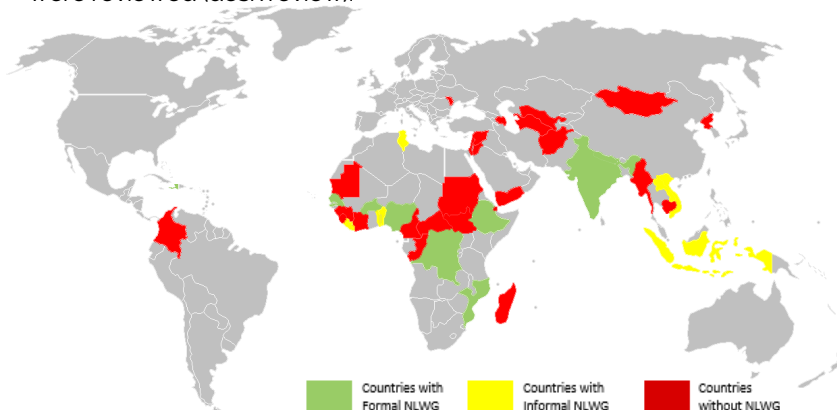
There are critical barriers related to iSCL: inventory predictability, inadequate cold chain capacity, insufficient funding, insufficient coordination of interventions, and low interest in iSCL policy. The best solution to address these impediments to life-saving vaccines is to unite national stakeholders, opinion-formers, and decision-makers to rally behind a shared vision for the country's immunization supply chain. The effort should be in alignment with priorities to strengthen national immunization health systems. National ownership and leadership are essential to foster the commitment and collaborative atmosphere that are needed to enable country-led change. This can happen with structured and powerful NLWGs chaired by the ministry of health.

LANDSCAPE ANALYSIS OF NLWGs

The WHO-UNICEF Immunization Supply Chain Hub has conducted a landscape analysis study to document the situation of NLWGs. Its key findings are the basis for developing an action plan that focuses on empowering ISC at the country level.

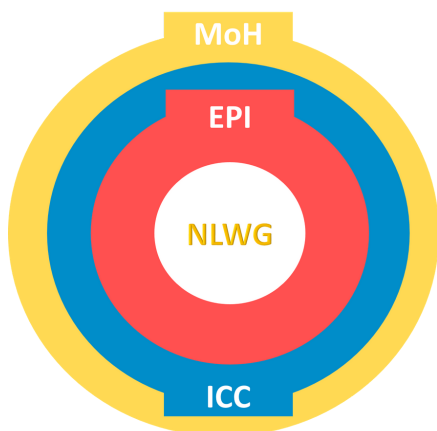
Forty-three countries participated in the study (consultation and survey); and best practices from five different technical working groups were analyzed. In total, there are 63 documents, materials, and tools collected from the countries and five technical groups were reviewed (desk review).

Three levels of maturity for NLWGs were determined including: countries with a formal NLWG, countries with an informal NLWG, and countries with no NLWG. These leadership groups may take different forms and names; however, each group aims to improve coordination among partners and to implement national immunization supply chain priorities.



Greatest achievements of the NLWGs

NATIONAL LOGISTICS WORKING GROUPS



CASE STUDY

Ten countries with formal NLWGs were analyzed from a governance perspective based on their mandates and areas of intervention. The NLWGs operate under the governance of the Ministry of Health such as the EPI or the ICC. Most of the time, the group is chaired by a logistician.

MANDATE

The key responsibility of NLWGs is to identify priorities to strengthen the management of the supply chain and to coordinate support from partners in this area. NLWGs also provide recommendations based on convincing data from governmental officials such as the EPI director, other MoH departments, other immunization groups, and other logistics groups.

CHALLENGES OF NLWGs

- Low interest in iSCL among logistics managers or officers
- Unclear understanding of the roles and values of NLWGs
- Lack of specialized human resources and capacity at national level
- Lack of systematic and clear mode of functioning
- Size of countries and number of partners

EMPOWERING NLWGs

Specific activities need to be performed at country level to empower NLWGs:

- Advocating for iSCL and formal NLWGs
- Reinforcing capacity and knowledge in supply chain management
- Implementing institutional integration and acknowledgement of NLWGs
- Using formal written terms of reference (ToR) and modes of operation
- Defining basic indicators for monitoring and evaluating NLWGs
- Creating Regional Logistic Working Groups for small countries

PARTNERS' APPROACH TO SUPPORT NLWGs

- Strengthening partners' coordination at global level
- Providing technical assistance to establish or strengthen NLWG
 - * Direct technical support at country level
 - * Regional workshops
 - * Trainings
- Providing guidance and toolkit
 - * Process for establishing and strengthening the operation of NLWGs
 - * Unit operating tools, such as ToR, work plan, and list of indicators

