



# NIS.COST

A new approach for estimating the costs and budgeting requirements  
of a National Immunization Strategy

Ulla Griffiths, Charu Garg, Eric Laurent | UNICEF  
Saurabh Aggarwal | Community Systems Foundation

TechNet-21 webinar,  
February 2022

# Webinar agenda

1. Background and introduction to NIS.COST: Ulla Griffiths, UNICEF
2. Overview of NIS.COST application: Saurabh Aggarwal, CSF
3. Lessons learned from country experiences: Charu Garg and Eric Laurent, UNICEF consultants
4. Questions and answers

# Evaluations of planning and budgeting for immunization during 2017-2020

## Assessing the comprehensive Multi-Year Plan (cMYP) approach

M M  
MOTT  
MACDONALD



### Rapid Stocktaking and Support to Revising the cMYP

Final Report  
31 July 2017

### National strategic and operational planning for immunization

*A review of best practices for optimized planning*

Version 12 August 2019

*Eric Laurent (laurent.emj@gmail.com)*

*Ulla Griffiths (ugriffiths@unicef.org)*

### Strategic and operational planning for immunization

*Landscape analysis in Gavi eligible countries*

Version 07 October 2019

*Eric Laurent (laurent.emj@gmail.com)*

*Ulla Griffiths (ugriffiths@unicef.org)*

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### REVIEW OF COSTING, BUDGETING & FINANCING TOOLS FOR STRATEGIC AND OPERATIONAL PLANNING WITH A FOCUS ON IMMUNIZATION

OCTOBER 2021

Charu C. Garg and Ulla Griffiths

### Budget line items for immunization in 33 African countries

**Ulla K Griffiths<sup>1,\*</sup>, Jennifer Asman<sup>2</sup>, Alex Adjagba<sup>1,3</sup>, Marina Yo<sup>4</sup>, James O Oguta<sup>3</sup> and Chloe Cho<sup>5</sup>**

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Accepted on 8 April 2020

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## National Planning and Budgeting for Immunization

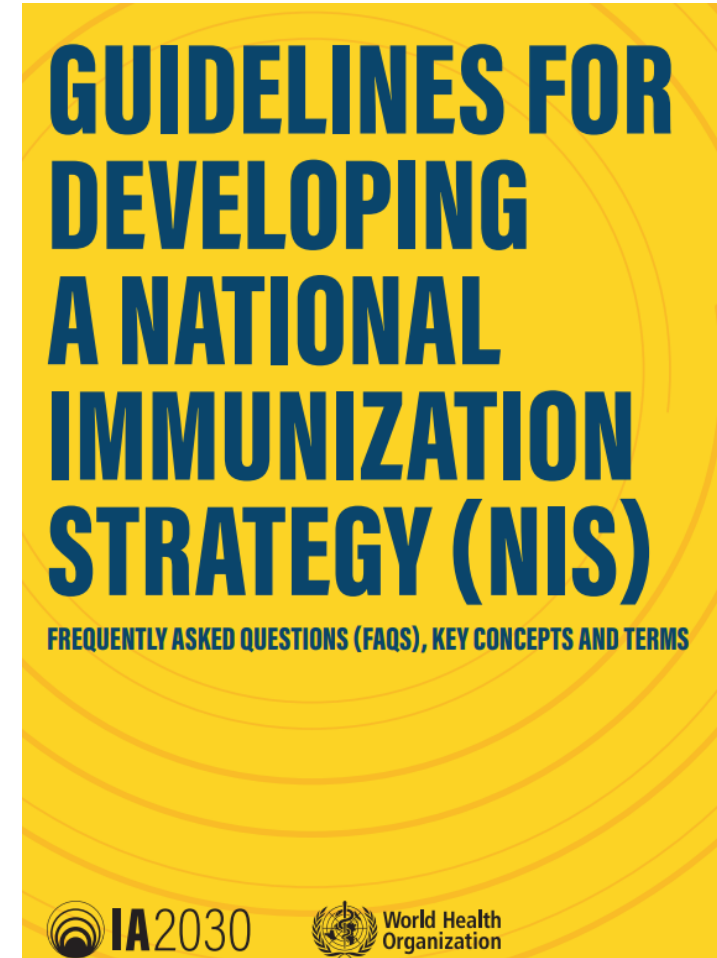
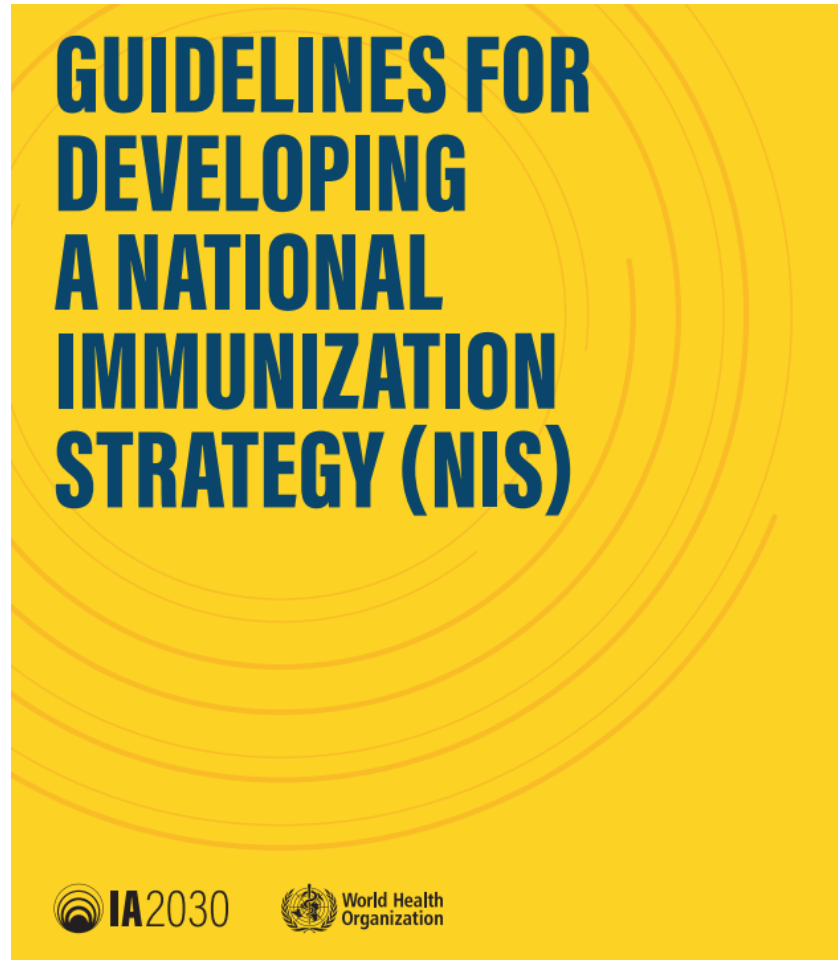
Effective planning is essential to align resources around common goals and strategies, support the ability to make strategic choices, and strengthen the accountability framework. As part of the transition to sustainable public financing of immunization, it is important that immunization plans align with national planning and budget processes

During the past two decades, the comprehensive multi-year planning (cMYP) process has been the cornerstone of strategic planning for immunization as part of the Global Vaccine Action Plan (2011-

# NIS guidance issued by WHO in August 2021 as replacement of 2013 cMYP guidance

## Key differences between NIS and cMYP

1. NIS aims to be more strategic than cMYP
2. NIS should be feasible – resources should not exceed those likely to be available
3. The NIS document should be streamlined and relatively short (max 30 pages)



1. ROADMAP

2. COSTING

3. BUDGETING

4. FINANCING

5. REPORT



# NIS.COST Approach

- NIS.COST should be completed alongside development of the NIS
  - Facilitates adjustment of the strategy according to predicted available resources
  - Can help budget negotiations and funding proposals
- NIS.COST should be viewed as an approach – not just a ‘costing tool’
- NIS.COST is closely linked to what is in the NIS
  - We are costing the NIS and not the overall EPI programme
- It is not only about costs
  - The budgeting process and past expenditures for immunization needs to be understood
  - Financing sources should be mapped

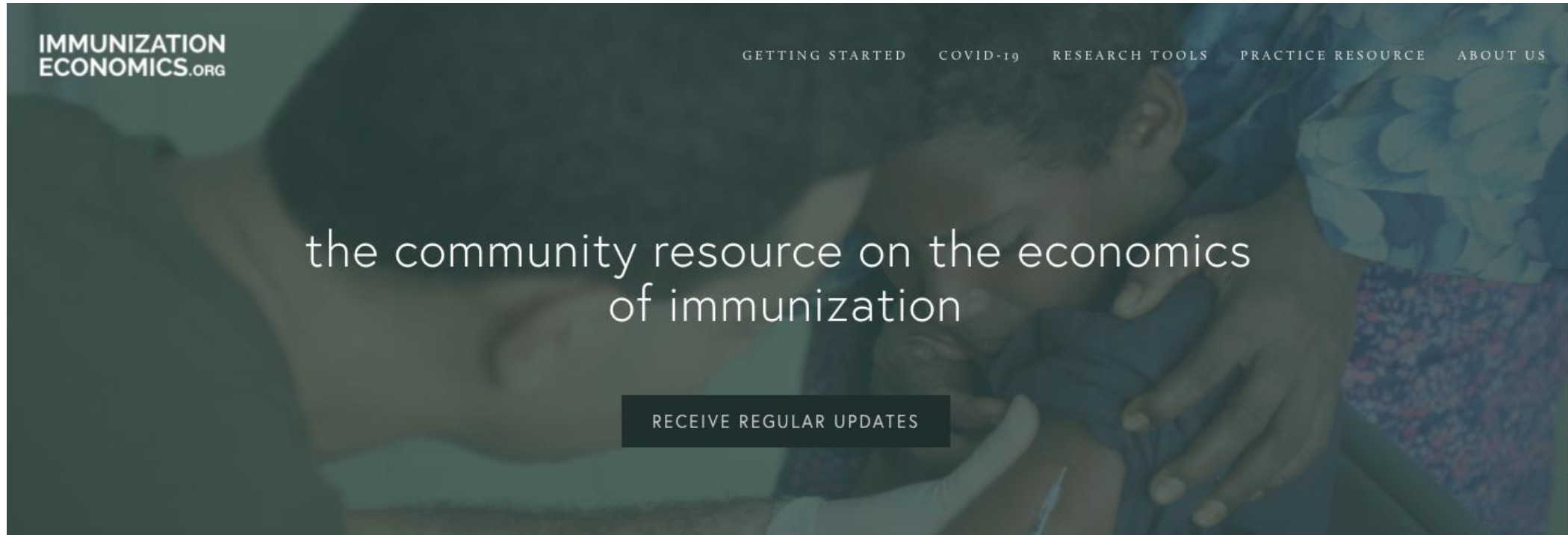
# NIS.COST Approach: Specific features

- Resources needed for implementing the NIS are structured according to standard components of the Expanded Programme of Immunization
  - Management, supply chain, service delivery, data management, disease surveillance, demand generation
- Resources categorized according to shared costs or those specific to immunization
  - Shared costs with other primary health care interventions are not monetized, but the importance of these are crucial to assess
    - Human resources, vehicles, buildings, electricity
- Resources are categorized according to continuing or ‘new’



# NIS.Cost App - Access

Step 1: Go to <https://immunizationeconomics.org/unicef-niscost> - a resource for organizations and individuals to conduct research on immunization value, costing, financing, and efficiency.



Current features and news



# Step 2: At the bottom of the page, select "National Planning and Budgeting" option under the "UNICEF" option

The screenshot shows the Immunization Economics website. At the top left is the logo "IMMUNIZATION ECONOMICS.ORG". A navigation bar at the top right contains links for "GETTING STARTED", "COVID-19", "RESEARCH TOOLS", "PRACTICE RESOURCE", and "ABOUT US". The main content area has a light blue background. On the left, there is a paragraph of text about the resource collaborative and a search box with a magnifying glass icon and the word "Search". On the right, there is a "Receive Monthly News" section with a sub-header and a brief description. Below this is a dark grey menu with the following items: "UNICEF HOME", "COST ANALYSIS", "NATIONAL PLANNING AND BUDGETING", "PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT", "SUSTAINABLE IMMUNIZATION FINANCING", "POLITICAL ECONOMY ANALYSIS", "IMMUNIZATION IN MIDDLE-INCOME COUNTRIES", and "PUBLICATIONS". At the bottom of the page, there is a dark grey footer with a navigation bar containing links for "ABOUT", "EPIC", "ICAN", "VOVRN", "TVEE", "IMFIN", "DOVE", "UNICEF", and "MEDIA CREDITS". Below the navigation bar is the copyright notice: "© 2015-2021. Management Sciences for Health, Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation." and "All Rights Reserved". At the very bottom left, there is a URL: "https://immunizationeconomics.org/unicef-national-planning-and-budgeting".

IMMUNIZATION ECONOMICS.ORG

GETTING STARTED COVID-19 RESEARCH TOOLS PRACTICE RESOURCE ABOUT US

This resource collaborative is housed at the Management Sciences for Health and jointly managed by: Harvard University (EPIC & VoVRN projects), Thinkwell (ICAN project), Johns Hopkins University (TVEE, DOVE, and VERSE projects), R4D (IMFIN project), and UNICEF. This work is made possible with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation.

Search

Receive Monthly News  
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https://immunizationeconomics.org/unicef-national-planning-and-budgeting

# Step 3: Click on the link provided for "National Immunization Strategy costing application (NIS.Cost)"

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## National Planning and Budgeting for Immunization

Effective planning is essential to align resources around common goals and strategies, support the ability to make strategic choices, and strengthen the accountability framework. As part of the transition to sustainable public financing of immunization, it is important that immunization plans align with national planning and budget processes

During the past two decades, the comprehensive multi-year planning (cMYP) process has been the cornerstone of strategic planning for immunization as part of the Global Vaccine Action Plan (2011-2020). However, a series of reviews highlighted persistent challenges. During 2016-2017, a rapid **assessment** of immunization planning recommended improving strategic and annual operational planning for immunization, including making the cMYPs more strategic, ensuring direct linkages between cMYP and annual operational plans, and simplifying the cMYP costing tool.

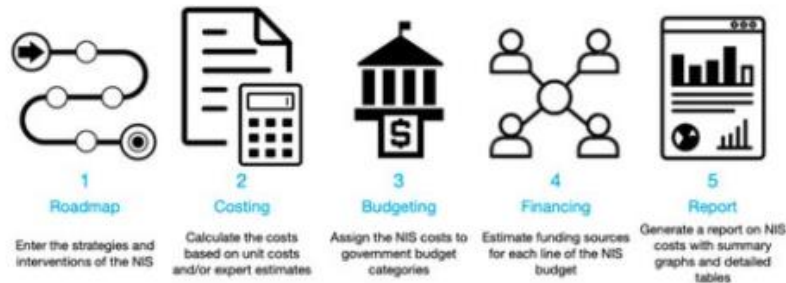
Following a review of existing costing tools and a consultative process involving a Steering Committee, a new approach has been developed; the **National Immunization Strategy costing application (NIS.COST)**. This new approach has been designed for easy use and better integration with the national immunization strategic plan and the overall budgeting processes.

Or directly go to  
<https://immunizationeconomics.org/unicef-niscost>

Step 4: Select an option that best suits your need. You can either go for a demo version to try out the app, or request a country specific application by emailing at the given address

### What is NIS.Cost?

The NIS differs from the existing Comprehensive Multi-Year Plan (cMYP). The aim of the NIS is to introduce new strategies to strengthen the immunization programme and to describe the roadmap of how to implement these strategies along with a realistic budget negotiated during the development of the NIS.



### + Explore NIS.Cost demo

Open the below link on your browser:

[NIS.Cost App version 1.0.1 - Demo Version](#)

We recommend using Google chrome or Microsoft Edge

If you are already logged into a google account please change your login to the following account:

Email: [demo@niscost.org](mailto:demo@niscost.org)

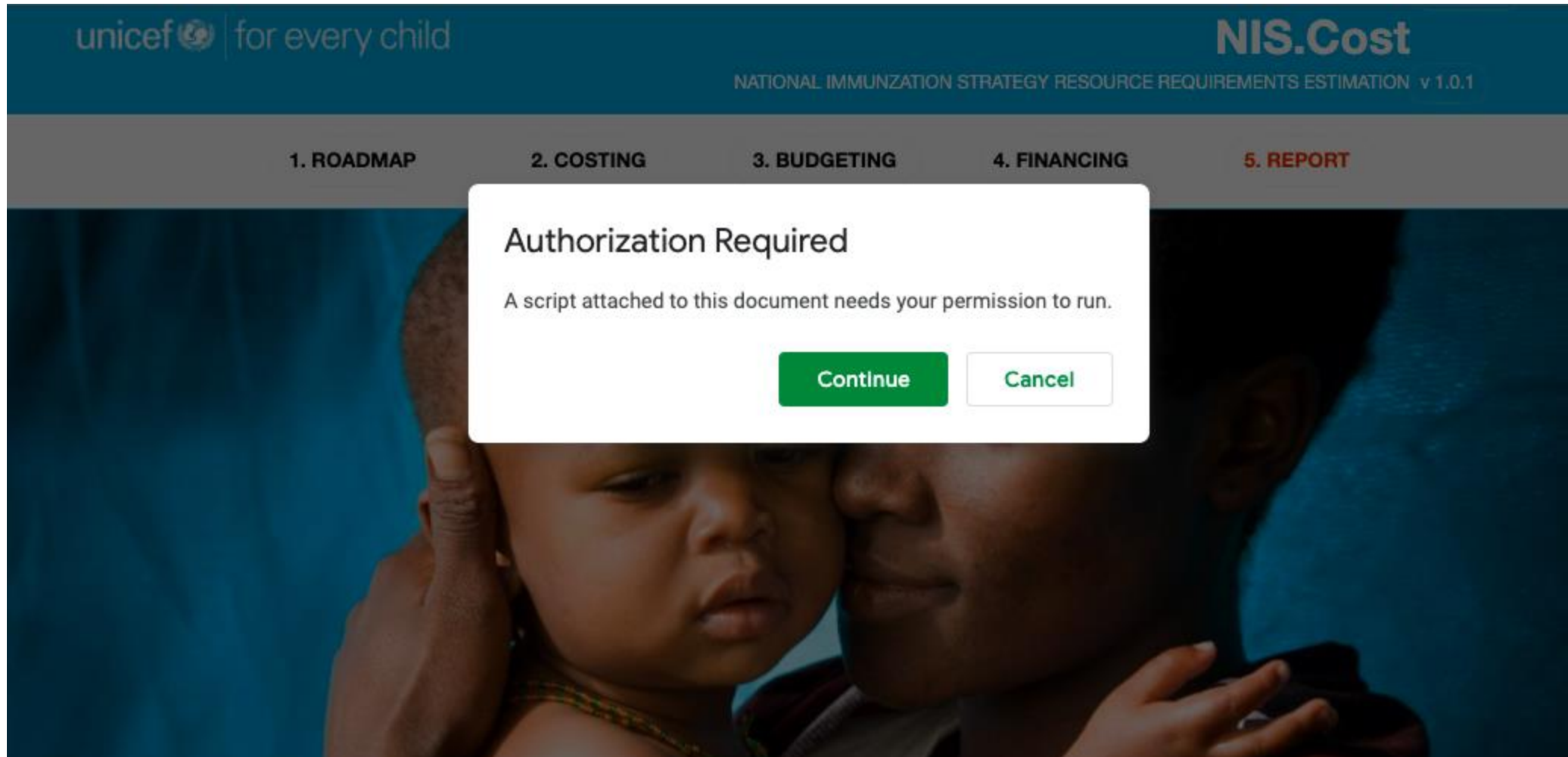
Password: Testing@2021

### + Request country-specific NIS.Cost

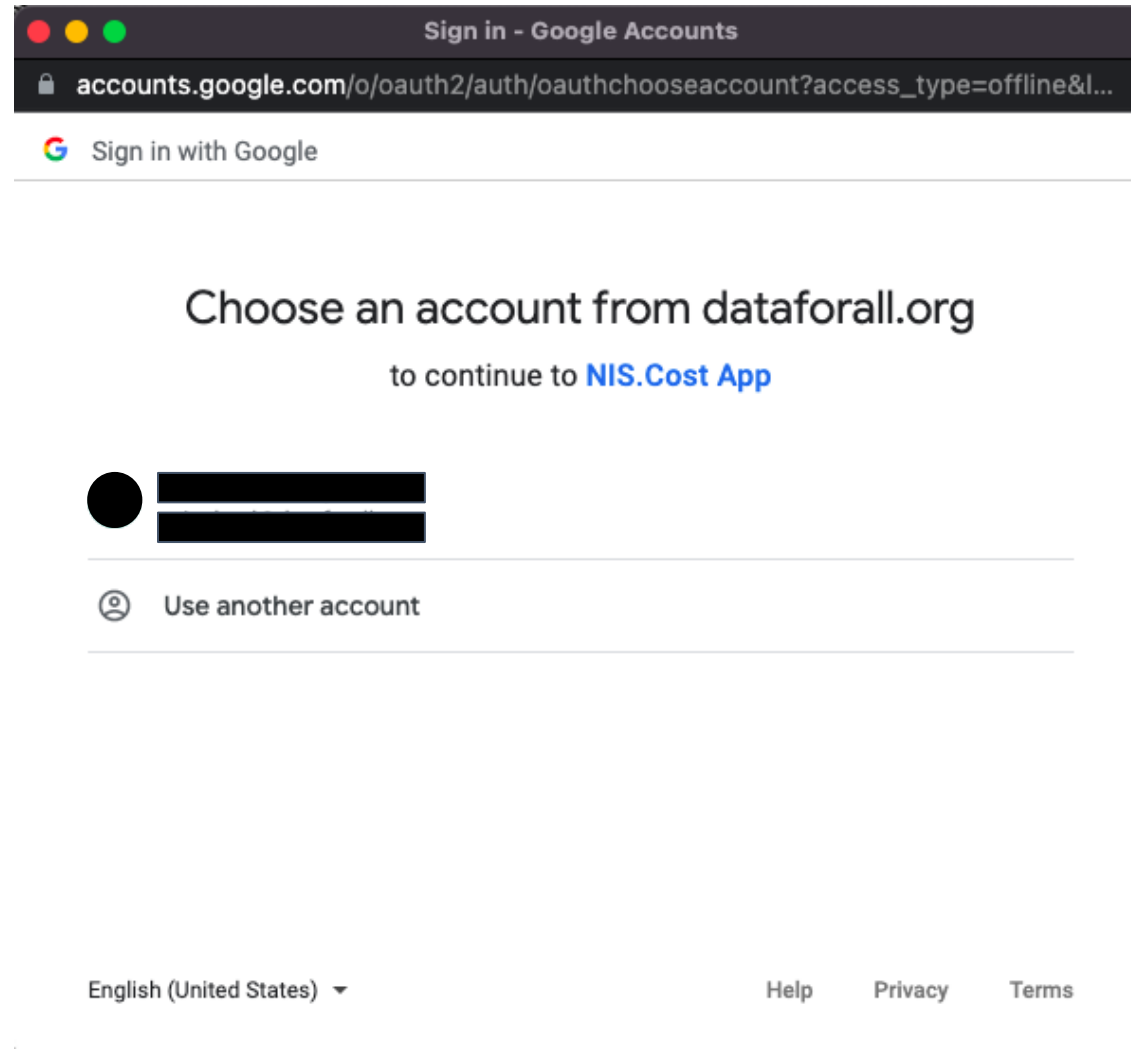
For a country specific implementation, we can create a country version of the app and establish a country login. Please [email us](#) to get access to country login credentials.

# NIS.Cost App - Authorization

Step 1: If you try to open a module in the application, you may receive a pop-up window like the one below, stating that you need the authorization to use the app. Click "Continue" to continue working.

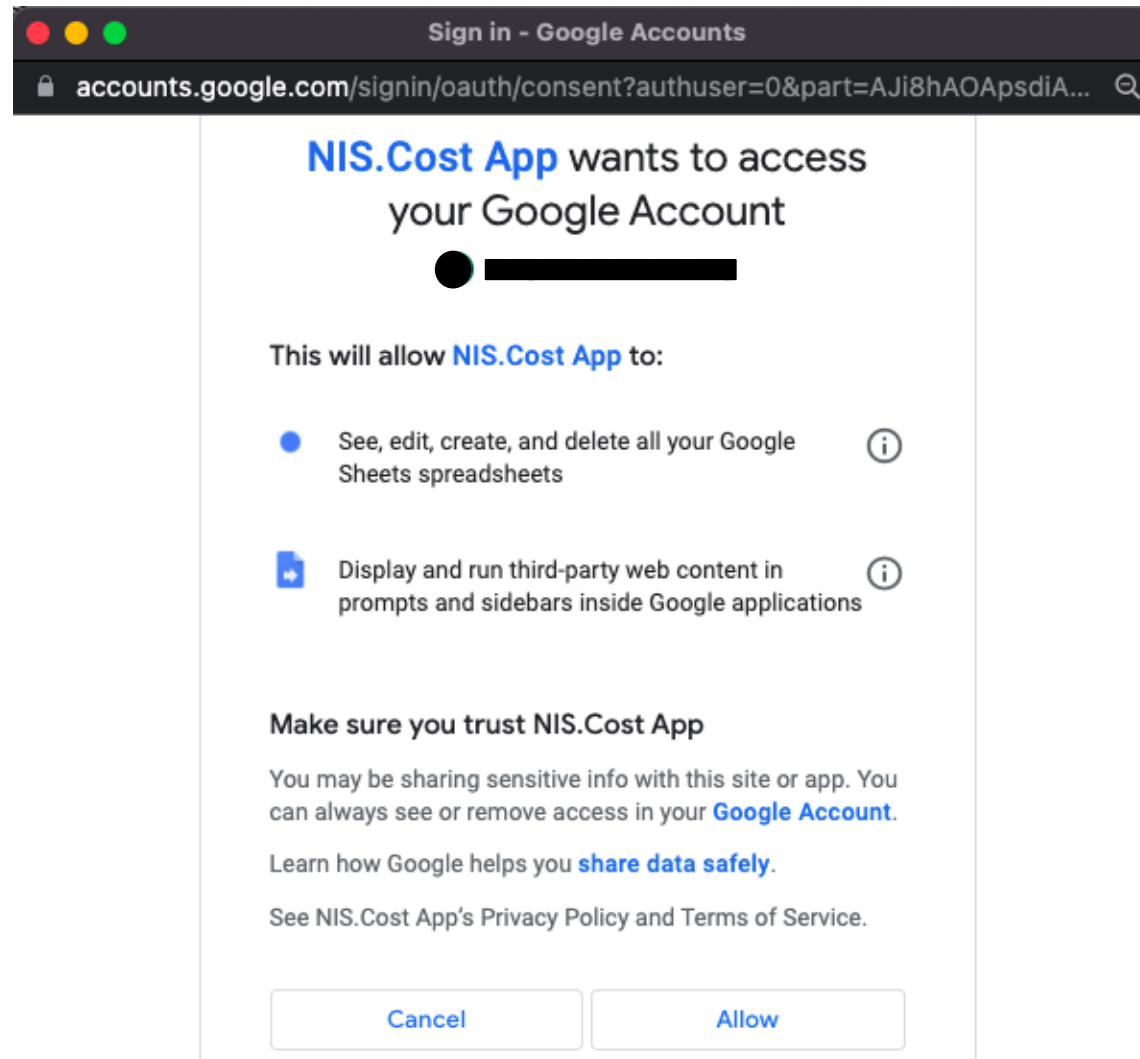


Step 2: Then select the account that has been registered to use the demo or country-specific application.





Step 3: Read the terms and conditions, and if you agree with them, then click "Allow."



Step 4: Once you have been given the authorization, you will be able to use the app and access all the modules.

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**NIS.Cost**  
NATIONAL IMMUNIZATION STRATEGY RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS ESTIMATION v 1.0.1

1. ROADMAP    2. COSTING    3. BUDGETING    4. FINANCING    **5. REPORT**



# National Immunization Strategy (NIS) costing

## Lessons learnt from country experiences

*Charu C. Garg, Eric Laurent, David Sulaberidze*  
*UNICEF & WHO Consultants*  
*February 8 and 10, 2022*

# Country experiences on NIS costing

- 12 countries initiated the NIS development
- 8 countries received a detailed orientation on NIS.Cost
- Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan have completed detailed costing for their NIS
- Papua New Guinea, Cambodia, Zimbabwe, Uzbekistan got support from an international expert on costing/budgeting/financing
- For Cambodia, a national economist was contracted to collect all financial data (from MOH, MOF, Treasury, stakeholders)
- Two countries already finalized their NIS (Papua New Guinea, Cambodia)
- WHO HQ is tracking the NIS development

# Lessons learnt – Papua New Guinea & Cambodia

- First 2 countries to develop their NIS – Cambodia 1<sup>st</sup> country to use the NIS.Cost application, with the application in its piloting phase (Sept. 2021)

## *Positive outcomes*

- Many stakeholders, including all provinces, participated in NIS development
- New NIS approach for national immunization strategy well received by all stakeholders
- After Cambodia NIS development, using NIS.Cost results, Full Portfolio Planning (FPP) started

## *Challenging outcomes*

- Costing process started too late, only after objectives/strategies were developed
- Almost 6 weeks necessary to collect and process financial data into NIS.Cost
- Financing part of the NIS costing not finalized in Cambodia
- MOH very busy (COVID-19 response, Gavi HSS reprogramming, etc.) – Still difficulties to put priority
- NIS.Cost application had several technical issues to be solved in its early version (Aug. 2021)

# Lessons learnt - Zimbabwe

- NIS.Cost application very user friendly in working out our NIS budget
- Zimbabwe NIS development still in progress so we would request any further technical support
- Zimbabwe noted that if you delete information on the Framework worksheet and shift the information to close the blank spaces, information on subsequent worksheets tends to be distorted – UNICEF/CSF (Community System Foundation) will help to fix
- On Costing details worksheet, one just needs to be careful not to delete formulas – Most of the formula cells are frozen, some have been left in case the user has country specific changes
- Vaccine Supply, Quality and Logistics under Costing, there are 2 sections, one for vaccines and one for devices. Apparently, the 2 worksheets contain the same data and we are not sure on reasons of having the 2 worksheets – UNICEF/CSF will help to fix

# Lessons learnt - Uzbekistan

- Data collection, especially financial data was challenging and time-consuming
- Short horizon of funding information made impossible to plan for 5-year period, which leads to the need for projection of year 4 and 5 through using assumptions
- Frequently changing costing and financing landscape caused by COVID-19 pandemic will require more frequent revision of the NIS
- New format of the NIS costing and financing analysis tool (Google-Sheet), may lead to the complications, as instead of the excel file with the analysis of the NIS, the country will receive link to the web-site controlled by the third party
- Country does not have sufficient capacity to conduct costing and financing analysis independently without involvement of the external technical assistance
- Lack of the detailed guidelines for using the costing and financing tool

# Best practices for processing NIS costing

- Active participation of all stakeholders in the discussion and elaboration of the key structure of the NIS is absolutely essential to ensure that all stakeholders share and agree with strategic decisions included in NIS
- NIS costing is a complete and integrated process, i.e. involving financing stakeholders, collecting financial data, processing data quality, then using NIS.Cost application for costing, budgeting and financing, and finally holding budget discussion/negotiation
- The NIS costing process must start from the early beginning of the NIS development
- The principle is to have rough costing estimates right after objectives and strategies are defined, and therefore to be able to hold budget discussion/negotiation => budgeting and financing are part of the dynamic process
- Financial data and information are key and stand every where – NIS costing team to have sufficient bandwidth to get the data from different sources, e.g. MOH, MOF, Treasury, GAVI, WHO, UNICEF, WB, ADB, UNICEF SD, etc.
- The NIS costing team must be an integral part of the core NIS team – A lot of back and forth is necessary between them => very dynamic process
- A national economist (consultant contracted) will be essential to collect all financial data (MOH, MOF, Treasury)
- The support of international for NIS development and NIS costing/budgeting/financing will be necessary for some countries



# Best practices for using NIS.Cost

- **Ownership, access** – Several users can connect at one time, but only one person can enter the data at a time => One responsible person should lead the data entry
- **Privacy** – Country specific NIS. Cost files created and provided through Google account – Versions history remains accessible – Demo versions are also available
- **Orientation and Technical assistance** – provided remotely with NIS.Cost support team (UNICEF, CSF)
- **Preparatory work** – Finalize unit costs for rates before delving into NIS.Cost as later changes can lead to duplicate work
- **Coordinated work** – While FRAMEWORK and DIMENSIONS are being finalized by NIS core team, data for SETUP can simultaneously be entered by NIS costing team
- **Offline Excel sheets** can be used with the same format as NIS.Cost for internet challenged areas and sharing with team. Information needs to be later pasted back in the tool
- **Shared costs** – In traditional sense, not a part of NIS.Cost – In DIMENSIONS tab can be used when activities are repeated across different objectives and interventions

# Technical aspects for using NIS.Cost

- Deleting-adding activities in FRAMEWORK => Remember to hit button RECALC
- Information on budgeting for past years, in BUDGET tab => Should be entered during setup process, as the categories are used in the COSTING for activities
- Do not delete formulas from the cells => Cells where data needs to be entered is highlighted in yellow
- OTHER DATA under SETUP => Terminology can be changed as per country requirements for the REPORT and data available
  - FRAMEWORK terminology – Objectives, strategies, outputs, interventions and activities
  - Costs components – Vaccines, training, supervision, etc. can be added and deleted
  - Rates categories – Used for activity costing
- Activities under FRAMEWORK should be at the lowest level, e. g. mention all vaccines names procured and for which costs are estimated as different activities