

# Strengthen the Functionality of the National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG)

## Project Information

- ◆ Department: Public Health Programs
- ◆ Unit: Polio and Immunization

## SCOPE OF WORK

The main objectives of this project are:

- 1- The National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG) serves to empower the national authorities and policy makers to make evidence-based decisions to strengthen public health systems
- 2- Utilize EpiShares as a virtual platform to facilitate effective communication among Public Health experts in addition to sharing all the NITAG related documents at the regional and global level.

## BENEFICIARIES

The project's main beneficiaries are NITAG Members and Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) Teams.

## REGIONS OF WORK

This project is being implemented in eight countries: Afghanistan, Iraq, Jordan, Libya, Oman, Saudi Arabia, Syria, and Tunisia.

## PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Priority countries in the region's situation were assessed through light situation analysis, the assessment was designed to evaluate NITAG functionality, transparency, and decision-making roles. The assessment results presented in a regional workshop conducted to present the assessment results, address the major gaps, and draft improvement plan for each country. Targeted countries were followed up and provided technical assistance to implement the developed improvement plans, to mobilize the implementation of development plans a monitoring matrix was developed in which the role of each partners was clearly identified. In addition to the development of a networking guidelines, as well as, conducting the vaccinology training. Countries are encouraged by GHD to use Epishares as a virtual platform to facilitate effective communication among experts. Also, all the NITAG related documents at the regional and global level were shared to the targeted countries through Epishares. All the countries that are using the Epishares received feedbacks and assessed to implement the NITAG improvement plan.

\*EpiShares is a platform powered by GHD/EMPHNET and designed to join public health professionals and experts in a space for sharing information and experiences.

<b>Project Start and End Date</b>	<b>October 1<sup>st</sup>, 2019 – April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2021</b>
<b>Funded by</b>	<b>Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)</b>
<b>Collaborators</b>	<b>National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG), Network for Education and Support in Immunization (NESI), and Ministries of Health in the eight targeted countries</b>

## PROJECT PHASES

The project involves two main phases:

Phase I – Assessment: A light situation analysis to evaluate NITAG functionality, transparency, and decision-making roles was done. Based on the assessment results major gaps were identified and improvement plans were drafted for implementation

Phase II – Providing technical assistance and follow-up: countries have been provided with technical support and follow up to implement the improvement plans. Supported with networking guidelines and vaccinology training

### Currently . . .

GHD assessed priority countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region's (EMR) situation on NITAG functionality, transparency, and decision-making roles. The assessment identified major gaps and drafted improvement plan for each country to strengthen the public health system.

### What's next . . .

Under this project, GHD will provide technical support and networking guidelines on using EpiShares Platform to the selected countries to facilitate the implement of the drafted improvement plans. GHD will also assess the changes that had been made to the NITAG functionality and the impact of the implemented improvement plans on immunization-related policy and program decision making. This action will in return strengthen the public health system in the EMR region.

## OUTCOMES BY NUMBERS

**8** improvement plans were developed

**3** countries (Afghanistan, Iraq, and Tunisia) to be supported technically to implement improvement plans

### **GHD and EMPHNET: Working together for better health**

Global Health Development (GHD) is a regional initiative created to support countries in the Eastern Mediterranean Region strengthen their health systems in response to public health challenges and threats. GHD was initiated to advance the work of the Eastern Mediterranean Public Health Network (EMPHNET) by building coordination mechanisms with Ministries of Health, International Organizations, and other institutions to improve population health outcomes. As an implementing arm to EMPHNET, GHD aligns its strategies with national policies and directions, while serving as a collaborative platform dedicated to support national efforts in promoting public health policies, strategic planning, sustainable financing, resource mobilization, public health programs, and other related services.

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