

## Vaccine Supply Group (VSG)

*Ratified Terms of Reference [Approved: September 3, 2021]*

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### Purpose

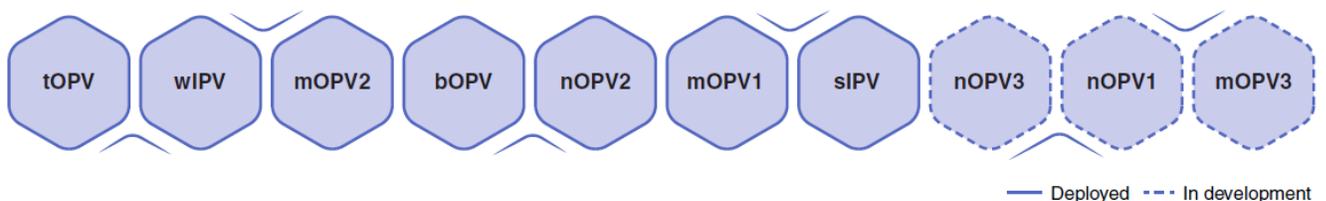
Securing the supply of poliovirus vaccines is a key enabling function and a critical component of the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

The Vaccine Supply Group (VSG) is leading the GPEI efforts to ensure uninterrupted supply of required types of vaccines and other supplies necessary to conduct quality immunization campaigns against the polioviruses as well as establishing and updating procedures and normative guidance to ensure timely and predictable vaccine delivery and their management in the field.

The group is accountable to the GPEI Strategy Committee (SC) for the attainment of the following key objectives:

- Lead GPEI efforts to ensure supply of a mix of effective and affordable bivalent (bOPV), trivalent (tOPV) and monovalent OPVs (mOPV & nOPV) (Fig 1), accepted for importation and use in countries, to stop endemic polio transmission including outbreaks and to mitigate the risk of transmission in non-endemic countries;
- Establish and maintain a global stockpile of OPVs to respond to poliovirus outbreaks that may occur after global certification of eradication and after OPV withdrawal from essential immunization; and
- Lead GPEI efforts to ensure a supply of a mix of inactivated vaccines to protect populations from polio-induced paralysis.

**Fig. 1. Polio vaccines, current and future (2022–2026)**



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bOPV = bivalent oral polio vaccine; mOPV1 = monovalent oral polio vaccine type 1; mOPV2 = monovalent oral polio vaccine type 2; mOPV3 = monovalent oral polio vaccine type 3; nOPV1 = novel oral polio vaccine type 1; nOPV2 = novel oral polio vaccine type 2; nOPV3 = novel oral polio vaccine type 3; sIPV = Sabin inactivated polio vaccine; tOPV = trivalent oral polio vaccine; wIPV = wild-strain inactivated polio vaccine

### Responsibilities

By virtue of these Terms of Reference, the VSG is empowered and expected to do the following:

- 1. To plan for, secure and manage the supply capacity and product availability and allocation of polio vaccines as well as other required supplies for implementation of quality immunization campaigns against polio, the VSG shall:**

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<sup>1</sup> Please note that mOPV3 has been available in the market and no development is required

- Analyze global polio vaccine demand and supply trends and maintain an updated vaccine forecast for the near- (<6 months), medium- (6-12 months), and long-term (>12 months), which will be updated weekly and shared via a dashboard;
- Develop supply plans and budget forecasts for the supply of polio vaccines and other supplies as necessary towards cessation, in collaboration with the Polio Research and Analytics Group when relevant;
- Advise relevant GPEI groups and vaccine manufacturers on emerging shifts in global polio vaccine supply and/or demand in line with production lead times;
- Work with manufacturers to coordinate the production and delivery of sufficient vaccines and other supplies as applicable to eradicate polio, including articulating budget requirements and timing for vaccine supply to avoid stockouts and support robust availability of all needed polio vaccines;
- Collect, analyze, and disseminate information on the robustness of the polio vaccine supply chain;
- Develop and recommend appropriate risk mitigation measures to collectively ensure uninterrupted availability of polio vaccines for GPEI decision making;
- Advise Regional Operations (RO) and relevant Global Program Support (GPS) groups on OPV supply issues as they relate to SIA planning and execution;
- Forecast, plan for, establish, and maintain polio vaccine stockpiles in preparation for potential outbreaks, before and after cessation; and
- Work closely with the Polio Research Group, nOPV Working Groups and other relevant teams on deployment of new polio vaccines and technologies for their delivery.

**2. To provide normative guidance and capacity building assistance in support of regional and country-level vaccine management activities, the VSG shall:**

- Conduct regular evaluations of vaccine utilization in priority countries of vaccines deployed from stockpiles;
- Advise RO groups about the issues affecting effective vaccine management and recommend potential mitigation measures;
- Develop, update, and disseminate guidelines and tools to:
  - Monitor country-level polio vaccine management;
  - Strengthen polio vaccine management at the global, regional, and country levels;
- Partner with RO groups to conduct advocacy aimed at strengthening polio vaccine management at the country and regional levels; and
- Coordinate with other GPS groups to ensure that vaccine management is appropriately reflected in relevant guidelines and training materials produced by the GPEI.

Gender Perspective

Gender mainstreaming (the process of assessing implications for women and men of any planned action, in all areas and at all levels) is an integral dimension to the achievement of gender equality, which is considered a powerful determinant of health outcomes and a major factor in the movement towards polio eradication.

The VSG is responsible for supporting gender mainstreaming and the GPEI gender strategy within the group by:

- Dedicating time to develop and undertake activities to mainstream gender in their respective group, in conjunction with the Gender Mainstreaming Group (GMG), on an annual basis, and ensuring completion of activities (e.g., training via webinars, coaching, and/or mentoring).
- Leveraging technical support from the GMG, where feasible and applicable, throughout the course of activities (i.e., across program planning, design, implementation, monitoring, evaluation) to ensure that a gender equality lens is being applied.
- Being aware of GPEI's Gender Equality Strategy KPIs and implementing actions to help meet the expected results, leveraging support from the GMG, where needed.

## Composition & Secretariat

### Leadership

- The VSG shall be led by a Chair and Vice-Chair. UNICEF Supply Division will always hold either the Chair or Vice-Chair role.
- The SC will appoint the named parties for the roles of Chair and Vice-Chair after soliciting feedback from the VSG members, using coordination support from the SC Secretariat. It is recommended that the individuals nominated to these two roles do not come from the same organization.
- The term for each role is 12 months, with the option for rotation (preferred) or renewal at the discretion of the SC.

### Additional Vaccine Supply Group Member Selection & Roles

- Additional membership of the VSG shall consist of as many individuals as the co-Chairs deem necessary to efficiently and effectively fulfill the group's responsibilities.
- The SC shall assign individuals from partner agencies to the VSG in accordance with the needs communicated by the co-Chairs and in alignment with these Terms of Reference.

### Membership Expectations

In general, individual members of the VSG have the following responsibilities:

- Be familiar with the charge and work of the VSG.
- Have pertinent expertise (e.g., epidemiology, business) and/or represent the perspective of an agency or stakeholder group.
- Attend 70% of all meetings (and for the entire duration of the meetings).
  - A committee member who misses two consecutive meetings, when the member has not made a case for exception to the Chair, may be replaced.
  - If replacement of a member is required, the Chair will flag the issue with the pertinent agency and make the request.

- Be actively engaged at all meetings and provide relevant and focused comments (e.g., ensure that you have read circulated pre-read materials and have developed perspective on the topic area prior to attending the meeting).
- Dedicate time to participating in and/or leading work/activities, outside of planned meeting times.
  - The specific amount of time is to be estimated by the Chair and Vice-Chair and discussed with individual members at the start of the year but is generally expected to range from 10 to 20 hours/month.
- Demonstrate flexibility in unanimity building discussions and take different perspectives into account.
- Relay discussions and updates on work undertaken, back to the member's respective agency, to ensure coordinated efforts across GPEI and the agency (e.g., to minimize duplicative activities).
- Efforts will be made to guarantee gender balanced representation of members (ideally 50% women and 50% men) and to alternate among different level positions (to avoid appointing only junior positions).
- All core members will be offered additional gender training opportunities according to their needs/competencies.

For groups that have distinguished Core Members vs. Non-Core Members in their respective TOR:

- For Core Members, the above applies.
- For Non-Core Members (i.e., Supplementary or Liaison Roles), the Chair determines the responsibilities.

For partner agencies that propose individual member names to serve on the VSG, the above must be taken into consideration. The recommendation is to discuss capacity with the potential candidate, prior to a proposal to serve on the VSG.

#### Secretariat Selection & Role

- The Secretariat role shall be determined by the Chair.
- There shall be one individual designated as the primary contact for the Secretariat, regardless of how many individuals actively work to support the VSG in its activities.
- The Secretariat supports the VSG with the following, as needed:
  - Facilitating work in collaboration with the Chair and Vice-Chair;
  - Scheduling meetings;
  - Planning logistics;
  - Compiling agendas;
  - Distributing meeting materials (pre-reads and post-discussion), including meeting minutes;
  - Tracking action items and coordinating on progress to closure of action items;
  - Scheduling and preparing progress reports, in conjunction with the Chair and Vice-Chair;
  - Coordinating with other groups; and
  - Maintaining responsibility for relevant documents (e.g., knowledge management / information management/online portal for sharing materials).

## Accountability

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- The VSG is accountable to the SC via the EMU.
- Individual VSG Members serve in their roles at the nomination of the SC and the VSG Co-Chairs.

### Reporting

- The VSG, led by the Co-Chairs, shall report progress against key performance indicators to the SC on a quarterly basis and as requested by the EMU; or ad hoc based on urgency for guidance or decision making.
- In coordination with the EMU, the VSG shall also contribute to status reports for the POB as requested.

### Decision-Making

- Unanimity is the ideal for all decisions made by the VSG and should be pursued wherever possible.
- If unanimity cannot be reached, a majority vote will be the deciding factor. Each agency stipulated in the TOR with voting rights (e.g., core member) gets one vote.
- If a majority vote cannot be reached, the Chair of VSG will escalate to the EMU. The EMU will determine the appropriate next step on the escalation path (e.g., mediation attempt, escalation to SC).
- For decisions with significant strategic impact, if a member dissents with a particular decision, escalation may be made to the EMU. The EMU decides whether a further review is required by the SC, on a case-by-case basis; if escalated to SC, their decision will be final.

## Rhythm of Business

### Meeting Scheduling & Participation

- The VSG will meet quarterly. Additional ad hoc teleconferences will be arranged by the Secretariat as required.

### Interdependencies/collaboration

The VSG operates in collaboration with and depends on input from the research and analytics group and ad-hoc preventive SIA group under EMU, as well as the FMG and Regional Groups. Furthermore, a close collaboration and alignment is required with the certification work stream to ensure alignment across plans, to allow for sufficient lead times in case of changes in demand (preferably 18 months).

### TOR Ratification

- By February 28, 2022, this TOR is to be reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair; this timing equates to ~6 months after initial ratification by the SC.
- Post-February 28, 2022, this TOR is to be reviewed by the Chair and Vice-Chair, on an annual basis, at minimum.

- After reviews by the Chair and Vice-Chair, any proposed amendments to the TOR must be submitted to the EMU, for approval by the SC. Amendments can be submitted on an as needed basis.