



eVPPEF 2020 Report

Engaging with countries planning
to procure the COVID-19 vaccines

Supply Division

15th and 16th December 2020



Introduction

The first virtual UNICEF Vaccine Procurement Practitioners Exchange Forum (eVPPEF) was held on December 15-16th 2020. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and travel limitations, the forum was held virtually for the first time; It allowed for the engagement 314 participants from 67 countries, making it **the largest VPPEF to date**. Staying true to the VPPEF's philosophy – the aim of the format was, as much as feasible, to provide a platform for country buyers to engage in an interactive and dynamic fashion with the objective to help ensure readiness and support for countries planning with adequate knowledge in procurement of COVID-19 vaccines and vaccine related supplies.

Table 1: Breakdown of participants by organisational representation








UNICEF staff	166	52.9%	
Government or associated staff	142	45.2%	
Multilateral Development Banks	1	0.3%	
Partners	5	1.6%	





Table 2: Breakdown of participating countries

Lower Middle Income	26	38.8%	
Upper Middle Income	23	34.3%	
Low Income	16	23.9%	
High Income	2	3.0%	
AMC92	44	64.7%	
SFC	23	33.8%	
n/a	1	1.5%	

Even before the COVID-19 pandemic, countries were facing challenges with regard to immunization coverage, with approximately 14 million children who receive no vaccines each year, the so called 'zero-dose' children and the communities they live in. The COVID-19 pandemic poses a significant challenge for global and national health systems with unprecedented disruptions of supply chains and children's access to health services including immunizations. UNICEF in collaboration with PAHO the Revolving Fund, are leading the procurement as part of the global effort to ensure accelerated and equal access to countries to the supply of COVID-19 vaccines under the COVAX Facility, led by Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, CEPI and WHO.

The well-established network of the VPPEF, convened through this first eVPPEF facilitated the active engagement of country buyers, UNICEF country office support, and global partners to address challenges in preparing to receive the COVID-19 vaccines.

Table 3: Breakdown of profiles of Government participants

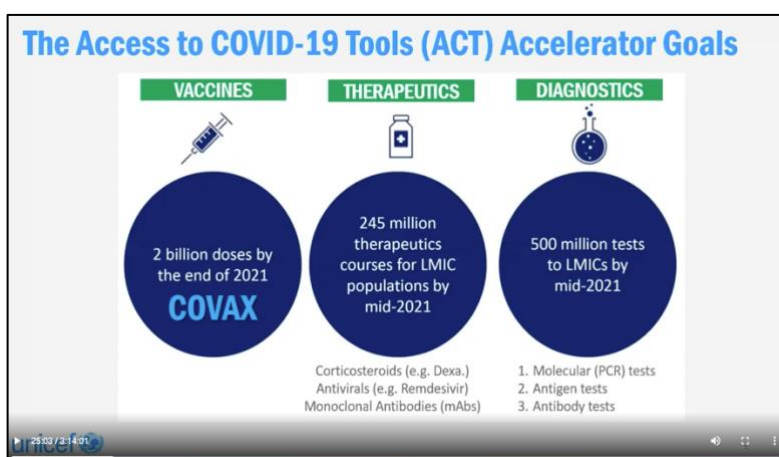
Ministry of Health / Health sector	125	88.0%	
Ministry of Finance	9	6.3%	
Ministry of Foreign Affairs	6	4.2%	
n/a	2	1.4%	

Summary of Activities

Buttressed by effective opening and wrapping-up sessions that worked to frame the meeting's objectives, learnings, and next steps, a total of 18¹ consecutive and parallel sessions took place over two days. The session titles, speakers and foci are summarized below.

Day One

Aimed at providing a comprehensive overview and timely updates of the COVAX Facility to all country participants, Day 1 was held as a full day plenary session enabling a continuous stream of participation throughout the day.



ACT-A/COVAX ACT-A: Gian Gandhi, Coordinator, Supply and Chief of Market Shaping, UNICEF

ACT-A collaborative partnership brings together thousands of stakeholders to promote and accelerate the development, production and equitable distribution of COVID vaccines, diagnostics and therapeutics.



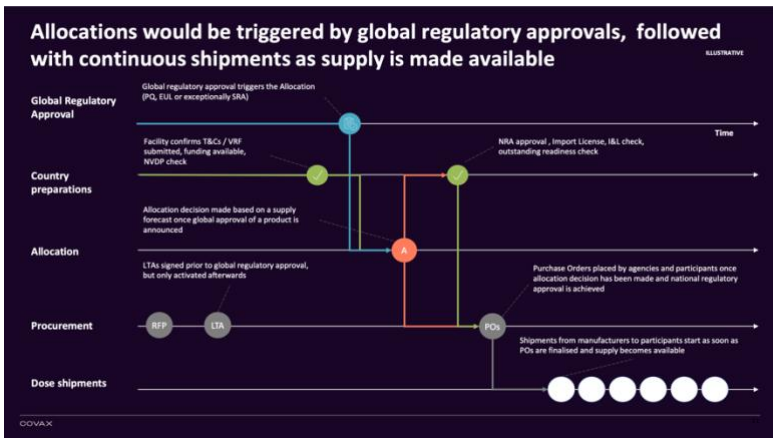
COVAX Facility: Derrick Sim, Director, Supply and Demand, Gavi
Provided an update on the COVAX Facility portfolio including candidates and vaccine availability.



UNICEF's Role in the COVAX Facility: Procurement Coordinator And Procurement Agency Ann Ottosen, Senior Manager, UNICEF

Outlined UNICEF's dual responsibilities in the COVAX Facility as a Procurement Coordinator and as a Procurement Agency

¹ Due to technical difficulties, the **Transportation and Logistics Planning for COVID-19 vaccines: UNICEF** parallel session on Day 2 was aborted and the original number of 19 substantive sessions was reduced to 18 sessions.



Policy and allocation, update, status and next steps: Tania Cernuschi, Team Lead, Global Access of Vaccines, IVB, WHO

Detailed the values that informed policy, policy update, roadmap towards prioritization of target populations, allocation mechanisms for vaccines, requirements from COVAX Partners, and next steps.

Day Two

Building on the core content shared on the first day, Day 2 provided participants with the option to choose from a grouping of critical topics distributed into 14 parallel sessions that were offered over four time slots. For parallel sessions, additional data on number of participants and number of countries represented per session are included below.

UNICEF Cold Chain Equipment for COVID vaccines

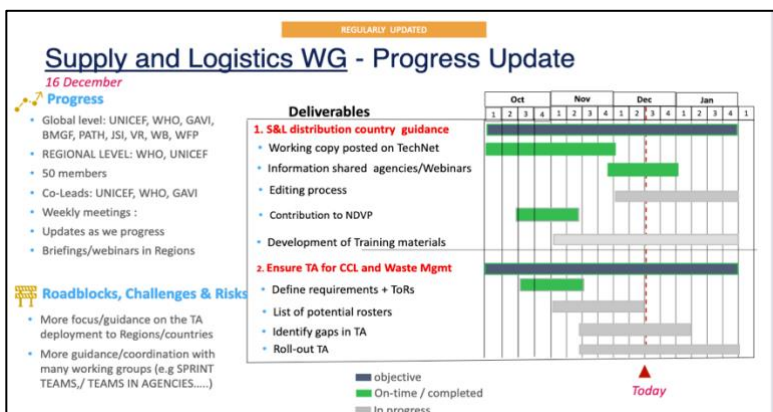
Vaccine storage requirement	Active equipment	Active equipment for large volumes	Passive equipment (transport solution)
2 – 8°C AstraZeneca	Vaccine refrigerators	Walk-in Cold Rooms	Cold boxes and Vaccine carriers
- 20°C Moderna	Vaccine Freezers	Walk-in Freezer	N/A
- 70°C (-60/-80°C) Pfizer/BioNTech	Ultra-low Freezers*	N/A	Ultra-low vaccine carrier*

* No WHO PQS in place

Cold-Chain equipment / capacity: Thomas Sorensen, Senior Contracts Manager, Jan Komrska Contracts Manager and Claudia Melani Contracts Specialist, Supply Division, UNICEF

All types of Cold Chain Equipment are in high demand globally – all UNICEF suppliers are extremely busy. A summary sheet by volume, voltage, ambient temperature to be shared with countries.

105 participants from 43 countries



Update from the COVAX Supply & logistics workstreams: Michelle Seidel, Cold Chain Specialist, UNICEF

COVID-19 vaccines are different products. Key deliverables are to support country readiness guidance such as the NDVP and technical assistance with cold chain logistics and waste management.

80 participants from 24 countries

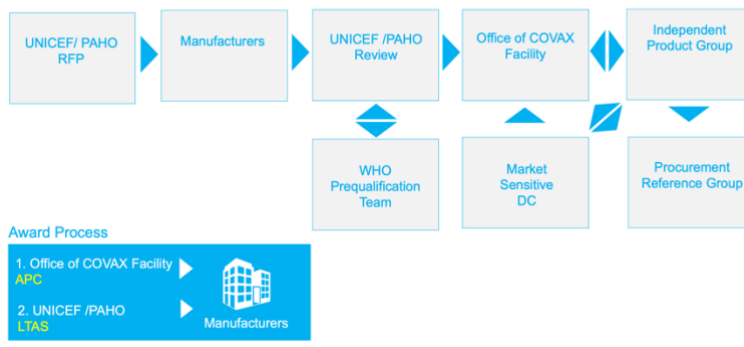
Spirit of the Forum – exchanging experiences and ideas

- Share summary of UNICEF experience in SIE procurement
- UNICEF current thinking on approach to address COVAX injection device supply
- Dialogue around safe injection equipment supply
- Initial list of participants from China, DR Congo, Indonesia, Iraq, Jordan, Botswana, Bangladesh, Turkmenistan

Safe Injection Equipment: Robert Matthews, Contracts Manager, UNICEF

It is important not to forget devices in the planning process, and to keep in mind the longer shipment lead times in order to ensure required devices are available when the vaccine is shipped.
19 participants from 13 countries

High level summary of joint UNICEF/PAHO Tender



Procuring the vaccines through UNICEF: Dorcas Noertoft Senior Contracts Manager, UNICEF and Alekaw Tegegne, Procurement Services Specialist, UNICEF

Outlined the process for COVAX participants procuring as well those NOT procuring COVID-19 vaccines through UNICEF/PAHO; the concept of procurement services, and the cost sharing approach.
92 participants from 30 countries

Shipped to countries:



115.9 million gloves



173.3 million surgical masks



13.1 million N95 respirators



825,713 goggles



2.3 million face shields



4.9 million gowns

Data as of 10 December 2020.
<https://www.unicef.org/supply/covid-19-supplies-shipped>

2020 eVPEF - PPE - UNICEF for every child

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE): Hani El-Jadaa, Contracts Manager and Ehab Atia, Technical Specialist, UNICEF

UNICEF has agreements with several major global manufacturers of PPEs and has built up a large PPE stockpile to respond to future needs. UNICEF PPEs are available to countries through PS.
31 participants from 9 countries

The National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP)

- Intended to guide national governments in developing and updating their national deployment and vaccination plan (NDVP) for COVID-19 vaccines
- Released 16 November 2020
- Built upon existing documents and the core principles of the WHO Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) values framework for the allocation and prioritization of COVID-19 vaccination, the prioritization roadmap, and the Fair allocation mechanism for COVID-19 vaccines through the COVAX Facility and will be continually shaped by the vaccine-specific recommendations
- Available on the WHO website and on the TechNet-21 website as a modular document and will be updated as new information becomes available



Country readiness: National Deployment and Vaccination Plan (NDVP), Vaccine request form: Benjamin Schreiber, Senior Adviser Health, UNICEF

While presently limited, countries are encouraged to plan with information available and to reach out to your regional offices in WHO and UNICEF to receive support. There will be revisions to the plans as the situation evolves.

59 participants from 21 countries

Examples of available tools

E-Course on Strategic Procurement
(coming Q2 2021)

Strategic vaccine procurement assessment toolbox

VPPN webinars/e-discussions

- Maturity model
- Dose per container
- Forecasting
- Etc.

WHO-MI4A <https://www.who.int/immunization/mi4a>

UNICEF unicef.org/supply

PAHO Revolving Fund
<https://www.paho.org/en/resources/paho-revolving-fund>

UNICEF Market Notes

- Market notes per product

WHO MI4A:

- Global Market Studies
- Vaccine Purchase Data Cover Note

UNICEF

- Emergency Stockpile availability
- Price comparisons
- Visibility for Vaccines (ViVa)

WHO

- MI4A Product List
- MI4A Vaccine Purchase Database
- Wastage calculator

PAHO RF

- PROVAC
- Forecasting Tool: PAHO 173
- Revolving Fund Capital Account

World Health Organization | unicef for every child

Tools and opportunities to increase program efficiencies: Johanna Fihman, Technical Officer WHO and Krista Hund, Planning Specialist, UNICEF

Leveraged existing and complementary tools developed by WHO/ UNICEF to make informed decisions while choosing the right products and assessing your needs. 24 participants from 16 countries

Questions to stimulate discussions

- Given the current pandemic, are there emergency provisions in legislation to waive requirements for regulatory approvals and/or rely on regulatory reviews by other NRAs/WHO?
- Is a tender required/mandatory, or will the country be able to place purchase order based on a Term Sheet?
- The COVAX Facility will provide model provisions for an Indemnity and Liability agreement to be entered into between country and manufacturers as a precondition for delivery – are responsible lead identified for review and signature?
- Has budget been confirmed for vaccine purchase, immunization supplies, cold chain expansion (if required) and shipment?
- Given the time sensitivity to place a purchase order with the manufacturer within e.g. 4 weeks, what do you expect would be the bottlenecks?
- Other key issues of concerns?

UNICEF’s engagement with COVAX participants that are considering to self-procure: Kristina Grace Lorenson, Senior Contracts Manager, UNICEF and Ann Ottosen, Senior Manager UNICEF

UNICEF, as COVAX Procurement Coordinator, establishes key basic terms that COVAX self-financing self-procuring participants reference in their supply agreements with manufacturers 18 participants from 11 countries

Goal & objectives



Goal of this WHO work: to optimize access & availability to safe, efficacious, quality-assured COVID-19 products by further aligning regulatory processes

Objectives of today’s presentation:

- Explain and update on WHO’s roadmap for aligning regulatory processes impacting access to COVID-19 vaccines

<https://www.who.int/publications/m/item/roadmap-for-evaluation-of-astrazeneca-azd1222-vaccine-against-covid-19>

- Collaboration with National regulatory authorities.
- Packaging and labelling updates.

UPDATE from WHO Pre-qualification Team: WHO PQ, EUL updates, Packaging and labelling updates, Collaboration with SRAs and NRAs: Carmen Rodriguez, Head of the Vaccine Prequalification Team, WHO

Update on WHO’s roadmap for aligning regulatory processes impacting access to COVID-19 vaccines; Collaboration with National regulatory authorities; . Packaging and labelling updates. 27 participants from 10 countries

1 What is the investment?

2 What does it cost the Facility to make this investment?

3 What does it cost for participants?

COVAX Financing mechanisms: Jonathan Mitchell Weiss, Chief of Procurement Services, UNICEF and Maria Isabella Paez, Consultant, Office of the COVAX Facility, Gavi

Funding options of the COVAX facility with AMC countries, including the cost-sharing portion, and brief overview of what the cost would actually look like. Questions focused on funding streams, i.e., other options that might be available to countries to fund their COVAX needs, with a focus on the “beyond the first 20%”.

53 participants from 29 countries

Context

- COVID-19 pandemic requires the **fastest and largest deployment of a novel vaccine in history**
- Vaccine deployment must be global and ensure equitable access across SFPs and AMC92 Participants
- Even under normal circumstances, vaccines that are approved for general use may nevertheless, in rare cases, cause unexpected serious adverse events (SAEs)
- Given the unprecedented nature and scale of the COVID-19 pandemic, **normal risk transfer solutions (insurance or self-insurance) will not be available to manufacturers from the outset**
- Without addressing this risk, manufacturers are reluctant to deliver COVID-19 vaccines, **threatening timely access to life-saving vaccines**
- The **COVAX Facility is doing everything possible to find a practical solution that:**
 - can be **implemented rapidly before deployment,**
 - is **equitable for all stakeholders, and**
 - **mitigates anticipated financial risks to AMC92 Participants**
- **COVAX will not compromise on safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines** supplied through the COVAX Facility
- In addition to the rigorous processes that will be followed by COVAX, the COVAX Facility will rely on regulatory authorities to ensure the safety and efficacy of COVID-19 vaccines

COVAX Speed, Scale, Access

Indemnity requirements and no-fault compensation mechanism: Anthony Brown, Senior Legal Counsel, Gavi and Rafael La Rotta, Insurance Officer, WHO

It is unavoidable and it is required by manufacturers. This is not a safety issue; it is a requirement for manufacturer to get insurance. For the compensation, we to be aware that this is the first time that such mechanism come into picture at global scale and will be a setting scene for future similar vaccine deployment.

38 participants from 11 countries

COVAX: Monitoring options offered by UNICEF

- As part of the Procurement Agent role, UNICEF COs will have the Dashboard available to be on top of the status of the transactions by COVAX
- As part of the Procurement Agent role, UNICEF SD will provide COs with a Provisional Plan after each round of allocation.
- VIVA will include COVAX vaccines and can support the planning process of COVAX
- An external dashboard is expected to be available displaying allocated vaccine quantities and status of the vaccine in the supply chain, i.e. procured, delivered

Data and Reporting: Gemma Orta-Martinez, Supply Chain Manager, UNICEF

Several monitoring options are/will be offered by UNICEF including: InSight Dashboard, Provisional Plans, Visibility for Vaccines (ViVa) online tool, and a next generation Stock Management Tool.

38 participants from 15 countries

Identifying and addressing these sources of uncertainty



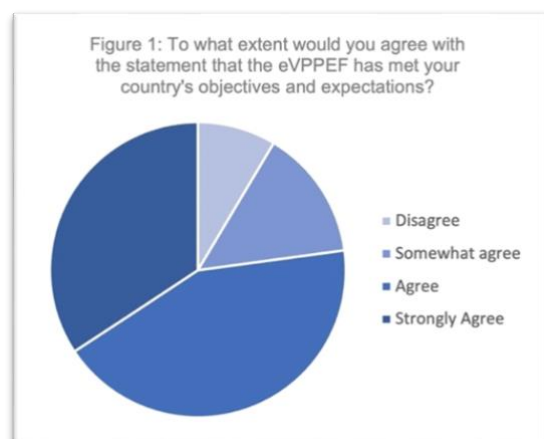
Manage uncertainties of the supply chain: Manuel Celestino Lavayen, Supply Chain Manager, UNICEF

Strategies on program colleagues and supply colleagues can work together to ensure the Supply Chain is fit for purpose.

30 participants from 17 countries

Outcomes of the meeting

An online evaluation survey was shared with all participants by direct email immediately after the meeting and followed up a reminder message after several days; the final response rate was 37 or approximately 12 per cent of the total number of participants with 48% of responses from Government participants, 43% from UNICEF and 9% from Partners (e.g. WHO, GAVI, other organisation).



The aim of the evaluation questions was to assess several dimensions of the event – generally as well as specifically. Feedback on the event overall was very positive. When asked: “Overall, how would you rate the eVPPEF in meeting your country’s objectives and expectations?,” **78% of respondents ‘agreed’ or ‘strongly agreed’²**.

Equally, when asked about the duration of the meeting **75% of respondents indicated it was ‘just right’**, and 14% indicating it was ‘too short’ or 11% indicating it was “too long”.

With regard to structure and content of the eVPPEF, respondents consistently rating sessions on Day 1 as

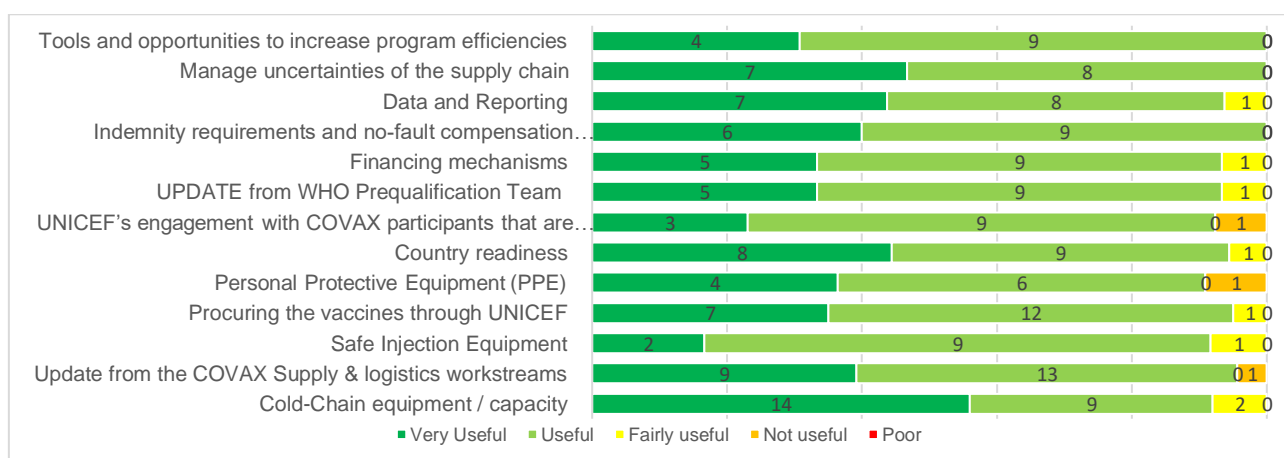
being either **‘very useful’ or ‘useful’**.

Table 4: Breakdown of Day 1 Sessions

<i>Evaluation of the Introduction & Wrap Up</i>	39% very useful, 53% useful
<i>Evaluation of Act-A</i>	50% very useful, 44% useful
<i>Evaluation of COVAX Facility</i>	58% very useful, 42% useful
<i>Evaluation of UNICEF’s role in the COVAX Facility</i>	50% very useful, 44% useful
<i>Evaluation of Policy and allocation, update, status and next steps</i>	39% very useful, 53% useful

Equally, a cumulative breakdown shows that the majority of respondents rated the Parallel Sessions they attended on for Day 2 as **‘very useful’ or ‘useful’**. Also, when asked about the format and clarity of the presentations given and if the presentations easy to follow, **97% of responses indicated ‘good’ to ‘excellent’**.

Table 5: Cumulation Evaluation of Parallel Session, Day 2

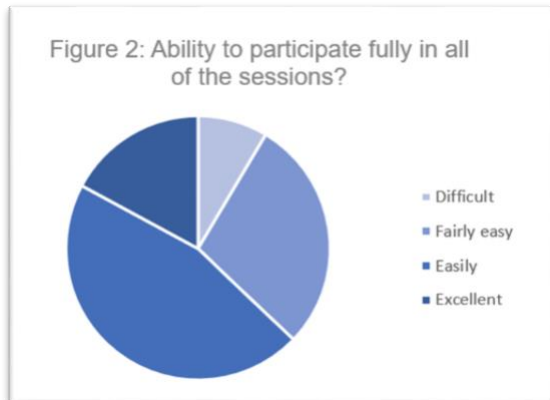


² Respondent chose from a range of 1 to 5 with 1 being strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree. No respondents indicated 1 or Strongly disagree.

When asked: “Overall, how would you rate the quality of the content shared?,” 89% of respondents indicated **excellent**.

As the first virtual, eVPPEF, it is important to acknowledge some technological challenges faced during the second day of the meeting and as such, that some sessions were disconnected and restarted requiring participants to rejoin. With this in mind, garnering feedback on three important elements have provided thoughtful and balanced insights.

Firstly, when asked about the “**overall ease of use of the technology**”, **67% of respondents indicated ‘very good’ or ‘good’** with an additional 19% responding ‘fair’.



Secondly, when asked to about the ability to “**gain access to all the sessions**”, which had clearly been a cause of concern, **58% of respondents still indicated ‘very good’ or ‘good’**, 22% indicated ‘fair’ and 19% indicated ‘poor’.

Thirdly, when asked about the **ability to participate fully in sessions**, a goal of the eVPPEF, **64% indicated ‘very good’ or ‘good’** with an additional 27% indicating ‘fair’.

Lessons Learned and Next Steps

As indicated by the findings of the evaluation, clearly the focus, quality, relevance, format and clarity of the content shared along with the ability engage in a responsive dialogue was highly valued by those who attended the first virtual eVPPEF.

As noted, recognising the potential for future virtual events it is important to note the participants comments that were also included in the evaluation and how we can learn from them moving forward as we build on region iterations of future online meetings.

Key Suggestions and Recommendations:

1) Incorporate countries experiences into the sessions

Recommendation: Pre-survey countries about agenda topics and their experiences prior to the meeting, and incorporate this into the Q&A

2) Managing time differences and language needs

Recommendation: explore options for regional sessions or sessions timed over several days

3) Accessing all knowledge activities offered

Recommendations: Participants suggested offering consecutive instead of parallel sessions; Survey participants on potential agenda topics and prioritise choices before the event

4) Share learning materials prior to the event

Recommendation: Inviting participants to become VPPN members prior to the event

5) Learn from technical issues to prevent frustrations in future meetings

Recommendation: Building on learning, identifying new complexities of virtual events

6) Continue to leverage the VPPN as platform for communicating and sharing

Recommendation: Explore opportunities for VPPN Knowledge Strategy Advisory Group (KSAG) to engage in future activities

The evaluation also provided an opportunity for eVPPEF participants to provide feedback on potential topics they would like to see prioritize in the proposed Regional Clinics that were discussed in the Wrap Up Session, and their preferences are clustered below.

Key topics:

- Supply chain, Cold chain management, consumables
 - Logistics planning/ workstream - region and in-country,
 - CCE, Cold chain storage, data management and analysis
 - Tools for supply chain data visibility
- Visibility for Vaccine which capturing other medical supplies and drugs
- COVID-19 vaccines
 - Updates on efficacy, immunity/herd immunity, storage, immunity, sensitisation, handling, RFP results, procurement through UNICEF, severe adverse events, waste management, transition from emergency to new normalcy
- Financing and Budgeting
 - Procurement service and Vaccine Independence Initiative VII
- Post marketing surveillance and vaccine testing
- Programme effectiveness
- Communication and data sharing

Supporting our Community of Practice



During the two days of the eVPPEF, the role of the Vaccine Procurement Practitioners Network (VPPN) in maintaining connections was reaffirmed.

The VPPN's role as the cornerstone for our community of practice brought together by the first VPPEF in 2015 continues to evolve. Its core goals to be a space for: continuous exchange of theoretical and practical knowledge, joint learning, and collaborative problem solving related to vaccine procurement support a diverse community of approximately 245 peers from over 50 countries. A [key output](#) from the meeting including posting all videos, PowerPoints and other resources from the eVPPEF on the VPPN for members access and use as soon as possible. In addition, an e-discussion space has been created to allow for ongoing follow up, future queries and knowledge sharing opportunities stemming from the meeting.

The development of a Knowledge Strategy Advisory Group in 2021 with regional focal points that will be part of the noted Regional Clinic process will be an exciting step in the VPPEF and VPPN's ongoing evolution.