



National Immunization Strategy (NIS)

What is NIS and why is it important?

A National Immunization Strategy defines the strategic direction that a country will take on immunization.

It specifies the country's immunization priorities and objectives, identifies the obstacles and organizes the sequence of interventions to get there, within a defined time-frame.

As part of the NIS, countries bring together national stakeholders, partners and donors to, first, develop the immunization strategies, and then, determine the amounts and sources of financing resources needed to reach the objectives identified. By integrating resource mobilization discussions into the NIS development process, a country can ensure that its immunization strategy is not only financially sustainable, but also politically endorsed.

A dedicated and separate *National Immunization Strategy* will help ensure that each of the strategies and interventions is building towards agreed objectives and optimizes use of scarce resources.

A well-designed NIS is comprehensive and streamlined. It reduces the fragmentation in immunization planning and efforts – a problem that has led to challenges and inefficiencies in the past. It seamlessly integrates all components of immunization: from program management, human and financial resources, vaccine supply and cold chain, to delivery of vaccines, immunization data monitoring, disease surveillance, and demand generation and communication.

A country's *National Immunization Strategy* is developed considering *Universal Health Coverage* (UHC) and should be aligned with both its *National Health Sector Strategy*, the *Immunization Agenda 2030* and *Regional Framework*. The NIS provides the foundation for supporting other Primary Health Care (PHC) services. A strong immunization strategy is a mean to strengthen the health system more generally.

Once finalized, the NIS will become an invaluable advocacy tool to hold stakeholders, partners and donors accountable for the commitments they made towards immunization in a country. It also helps prepare countries for internal or external alterations in financing and funding, such as decentralization, new financing opportunities, transition out of Gavi support, out of Global Polio Eradication Initiative or COVID-19 funds.

NIS at a glance

- 01 Vision priorities and objectives**
Where do we want to be at the end of the NIS time-frame?
What priorities and objectives should we set to achieve our vision?
- 02 Main barriers and their root causes**
How and what needs to be achieved to overcome the barriers and effect change?
- 03 Approach, interventions and resources needed**
How do we get there? What are the interventions needed? Which interventions should be prioritised?
What are the resources required?

When should a country develop a NIS?

When a government wants to plan strategically for immunization and improve efficiency

When there is a need to ensure financial sustainability for a country's immunization program – either as a sole proactive decision, or in response to changes in the funding and financing landscape

At the end of a period covered by the previous immunization strategic plan (e.g. cMYP)

At the time of any major change that requires a review and an update to priorities and available resources

With the need to align with the National Health Sector Strategy, IA 2030, and Regional Framework

NIS development timeframe

A National Immunization Strategy includes 7 key steps, as part of a highly consultative process.



How to cost the NIS?

NIS.Cost is an online application for estimating the costs of the NIS. It follows the roadmap of the NIS and is structured according to standard immunization service pillars.

How NIS.Cost App works

- Supports planning, costing, budgeting and financial analysis during NIS development.
- Easy to populate with country-specific NIS roadmap, including activities, timelines and unit costs.
- Supports the budget negotiation process during the NIS development.
- Enables country teams to work on prioritization scenarios aligned to different resource levels.
- Could be used on a rolling basis when developing and costing annual operational plans.
- Has a service desk function that allows access to support in real time.

NIS alignment with global, regional and national plan



Which stakeholders and technical bodies should be engaged in NIS?

In each country, the NIS development process should be led by a dedicated core team, with oversight from a steering committee. UNICEF and WHO are offering technical assistance to countries to help create and refine their NIS, and translate them into roadmaps.

The NIS is developed by, and intended for, key stakeholders at national and subnational levels:

- Decision-makers in the country's health sector
- Decision-makers in other relevant Government sectors, like the Ministry of Finance
- Immunization partners at national, regional and global levels (e.g. WHO, UNICEF)
- Immunization program managers
- Local and international non-governmental organizations and civil society organizations
- Policy-making bodies, such as National Immunization Technical Advisory Committee
- Oversight committee, e.g. Interagency Coordination Committee, Health Sector Coordination Committee

For additional resources



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