

Update on National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs)

- Introduction

Dr. Abigail Shefer

Immunization Systems Branch

Global Immunization Division

Center for Global Health, CDC

CDC's role in NITAG strengthening

- Technical assistance: Training materials, tools, facilitation (WHO, PIVI, RAVIN)
- Partnerships: WHO quarterly conf calls; annual partners' retreat; Global NITAG Network; support SAGE
- Research—NITAG assessment; links w/ National Certification Committees
- Funding to WHO HQ
 - NITAGs to SAGE, regional TAGs
 - Regional trainings
 - Support NITAG Resource Center during transition
- GID collaborates w/ NCIRD on visits to ACIP



CDC NITAG training activities

in collaboration with WHO and partners

Year	Region	Location	Participating countries	(N)
2009	SEAR	Nepal	Nepal	(1)
2010	EUR	Belarus	Belarus, Moldova, Ukraine	(3)
2011	EUR	Kazakhstan	Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan	(3)
2011	SEAR	Bhutan	Bhutan	(1)
2011-2015	AMR*	Atlanta	Argentina, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Jamaica, Mexico, Panama, Uruguay, Venezuela, Peru	(13)
2013	EUR	Turkey	Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Ukraine, Uzbekistan	(8)
2013	EUR	Serbia	Albania, Bosnia & Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Montenegro, Romania, Serbia, Macedonia, Turkey	(12)
2015	AMR*, AFR	Atlanta	Peru, Democratic Republic of Congo	(2)
2016	WPR	Atlanta , Viet Nam	China, Viet Nam	(2)

*supported by PAHO and the Sabin Vaccine Institute; training conducted in conjunction with attendance at ACIP meeting

CDC NITAG training activities

in collaboration with WHO and partners

Year	Region	Location	Participating countries	(N)
2017	WPR	China	China	(1)
2017	EURO	Armenia	Armenia influenza work group, Georgia, Moldova	(3)
2017	WPR	Vietnam	Vietnam	(1)
2017	WPR	Mongolia	Mongolia	(1)
2017	AFRO		Cote d'Ivoire	(1)
2017	WPR	Laos	Laos	(1)
2018	AFRO	Congo BRZ	Training of trainers from Senegal, DRC, Cote d'Ivoire, Cameroon, Benin, Zimbabwe, Kenya, Uganda, South Africa,	(9)
2018	EURO	Denmark	Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan	(5)

Example of training -- China's National Immunization Advisory Committee (NIAC)

- Established October 2017
- 19 WGs (3 permanent), 27 voting members, 160 WG members
- Training on evidence-based decision making held December 2017; technical assistance and faculty supported by CDC/WHO
- 200+ participants
- 1st NIAC meeting held April 2018 – approved two significant schedule changes
 - 2nd IPV dose; 2-dose mumps schedule

China training faculty, Dec 2017



Assessment tool for NITAGs

- CDC and WHO/partners developed simplified tool to assess NITAG
 - functionality
 - quality of work processes and outputs
 - integration into policy process
- Self-assessment or external
- Pilot testing in 2018

Assessment tool for National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG)

OVERVIEW

This document provides a tool for conducting an assessment of a National Immunization Technical Advisory Group (NITAG) based on the WHO guidance¹ and partners' field experience and inputs. The tool is relevant for either a self-assessment or an externally conducted assessment. Countries may choose to use it at any point on the NITAG's life cycle to systematically assess how the committee functions and advises on immunization policy. A NITAG may choose to use the tool soon after its establishment so it can plan and document processes that will improve the capacity of the NITAG. In some cases, a NITAG may decide to use the tool annually or after recommendations have been made to assess the extent to which the NITAG's functionality, quality of work processes and integration facilitated or hampered the development of evidence-based recommendations. In this way, the assessment could serve as part of a quality improvement process. Another use of the tool could be prior to or as part of a larger immunization program review (e.g., [EPI review](#), [Gavi](#) joint appraisal).

INSTRUCTIONS

1. Define the period of time of assessment
Before using the tool, it is important to define the time period during which the assessment will apply. Suggested timeframes are the past 12 months, or the time period encompassing deliberation and development of recommendations on a particular vaccine. Defining a time period gives specificity to the exercise and allows comparison of assessments.
2. Gather key documents of the NITAG, including:
 - Ministerial decrees/Legislation/Legal Instrument establishing the NITAG
 - NITAG Terms of Reference, Standard Operating Procedures, Policy on Conflict of Interest, NITAG work plan/ budget
 - NITAG evidence to recommendation framework, or similar document
 - NITAG meeting minutes, background documents or similar materials, recommendations made by the NITAG, communication documents between the NITAG and the MOH.
3. Start the assessment (pages 3-12)
The assessment is divided into three modules: 1) Functionality of the NITAG; 2) Quality of work processes and outputs of the NITAG; and 3) Integration of the NITAG into the policy process. Within each module, there are a number of Recommendations. For each Recommendation:
 - Read the Recommendation and associated Description. Consider the extent to which the NITAG has fulfilled each criterion of the Description during the defined time period based on review of key documents and interviews/ discussions with informants, as needed.
 - In the Comments section, comment or highlight issues related to the Recommendation (i.e. convening stakeholders, developing written document, implementing the Recommendation etc)
 - In the Assessment section, select the option that best reflects the situation. For a Recommendation to be considered 'Fully met', assessors should be in consensus that all the items in the Description section have been met. If some, but not all of the items have been met, assessors should consider that item partially met.
4. Summarize the assessment selection on the Summary checklist (page 2)
5. Summarize the overall Strengths, Challenges and Proposed actions (page 13)

¹ Duclos P. National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAGs): Guidance for their establishment and strengthening. Vaccine. 19 avr 2010;28(16):251-255. Supplement 1:A18-25.

Summary checklist TO BE COMPLETED AFTER CONDUCTING THE ASSESSMENT PAGES 4-13

Time period during which assessment applies: _____[mm/yy] through _____[mm/yy]

1. Functionality of the NITAG			
Recommendation	Assessment		
The NITAG is formally established	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
There are written terms of reference (TOR) for the NITAG	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG is defined as an advisory body, and does not make policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG functioning SOP are clearly defined and include the rules and procedures for its operations	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The selection of members and rules for participation follow a transparent process	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG follows a written policy on Conflict of Interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The chairperson and core members are independent and serve in their own capacity	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG adheres to meeting frequency and timing as defined in the SOP; and schedules additional ad-hoc meetings when needed	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG annual work plan is aligned with NIP specific goals and targets	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
Multiple level data and stakeholder input are accessible and consulted if needed for making recommendations	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG receives adequate support from the Secretariat for conducting activities	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG activities are sustainable through secured adequate funding	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
2. Quality of work processes and outputs of the NITAG			
Recommendation	Assessment		
The NITAG has defined and adopted a generic set of criteria as a basis for decision-making	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG follows a well-defined evidence-based methodology to gather and evaluate evidence	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
Recommendations of the NITAG follow a consistent format; with a summary of the evidence supporting the recommendation	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG secretariat and/or a technical Working Group develops a background document or similar materials for each policy question	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
There are minutes taken at each meeting and these are shared with all NITAG members within a defined time period after a meeting	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The decision-making procedure of the NITAG is implemented as defined in the SOP	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
3. Integration of the NITAG into the policy process			
Recommendation	Assessment		
The MOH consults the NITAG on immunization policy questions	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
NITAG recommendations have a positive impact on immunization policy	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
The NITAG is well-recognized by stakeholders	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met
NITAG members collaborate with relevant partners based on interest	<input type="checkbox"/> Fully met	<input type="checkbox"/> Partially met	<input type="checkbox"/> Not met

For more information, contact CDC
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
TTY: 1-888-232-6348 www.cdc.gov

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

