



NATIONAL EXPANDED PROGRAM ON IMMUNIZATION NETWORK

*Implemented by the National Expanded Program on Immunization
Technical support provided by AMP (Agence de Médecine Préventive)
Grant awarded by the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs.*

I. Context and Rationale

Since 1985, the Vietnam Expanded Program on Immunization (EPI) has made remarkable achievements in the delivery of vaccination services to prevent from dangerous and common communicable diseases in Vietnam. Despite the great achievements of 25 years of EPI in Vietnam, challenges still need to be addressed:



- the continuing process of maintaining and increasing successful protection of under five children
- the financing of new vaccines that are costlier than the existing ones
- the insufficient immunization coverage of children in poorest and remote areas in Vietnam
- the lack of available, skilled and motivated human resources for immunization
- the vaccine, material supply and cold chain

In the perspective to support the Vietnam National EPI, the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs awarded the Agence de Médecine Préventive – AMP - a grant to extend the support to the existing global international immunization network called “EPIVAC network” from Africa (11 Subsaharan countries are members) to Vietnam.

From January 2012 to July 2013, AMP and the National EPI jointly cooperated to design and implement the NEPINET (National EPI network) project to reinforce immunization performance in Vietnam.

II. Objectives

The goal of NEPINET is to improve immunization performance in Vietnam.

Specific objectives are to:

- strengthen capacity to provide with immunization information to health workers and the community,
- enhance the knowledge and skills for EPI officers at all levels, including immunization management capacity,
- mobilize the support from policy-makers, partners and the community for immunization,
- disseminate results of researches on vaccines and immunization.

III. Key Components



The project is structured into four work packages (WP):

- **WP I:** Building capacity of EPI management, increasing effectiveness of financial sources
- **WP II:** Development of a web-based platform on immunization
- **WP III:** Development of distant learning platform and modules on immunization
- **WP IV:** Dissemination of immunization models, SOP, practice guidelines, immunization statistics

Figure 1: Work packages of NEPINET project





IV. Key Achievements

1. Improving capacities of Immunization staff through South-South Cooperation

Cooperation with Sri Lanka has been built to enable Vietnamese immunization staff to learn from this GAVI graduating country. This consists in comparing the 2 immunization systems and more particularly on the following topics:

- mechanisms to improve vaccination systems
- monitoring of vaccination coverage
- logistic management of vaccinations
- management and respond to Adverse Events Following Immunization (AEFI)
- utilization of a Web Immunization Information System (IIS)
- quality assurance mechanisms for vaccines and immunization
- decision-making process for the introduction of new vaccines (NITAG)

NEPI staff has identified solutions from Sri Lanka to be adapted to Vietnam and implemented in the near future.

2. Promoting and advocating for Immunization and vaccines

A dedicated NEPI Web platform www.tiemchungmorong.vn has been developed to enable the general public to access to reliable information about vaccines and immunization in Vietnam. This Website will provide with key messages to advocate for specific vaccines and social mobilization to reinforce confidence of parents and communities in vaccines as lifesaving tools.

A digital library is available to access to specific information, technical guideline on vaccines and immunization topics.

3. Strengthening Immunization workforce in Vietnam

Health workers access to knowledge and best practices regarding immunization service delivery:

- NEPI staff made available on the NEPI Web Platform required procedures, regulations, guide lines, and SoPs related to vaccination. Following SOPs has been developed in the framework of NEPINET project :
 - ✓ Screening for vaccine indication
 - ✓ Preparation for immunization post
 - ✓ Active surveillance in hospital
 - ✓ Report of vaccine and materials
- An E-learning platform has been developed and NEPI staff were trained to develop e-learning modules related to:
 - ✓ Planning and immunization session
 - ✓ Conduct immunization session
 - ✓ Supportive supervision
- The pilot of the e-learning modules has been tested by health workers in 4 provinces and 8 districts.

V. Lessons Learned

The NEPINET project was a great opportunity to reinforce the immunization network in Vietnam and to strengthen the capacity of the NEPI staff in the area of immunization management, immunization workers training using ITCs, and advocacy for immunization and vaccines. NEPI and AMP agreed on this one-year project as a first step to improving quality and equity of immunization services in Vietnam.

Regarding challenges to be addressed in the coming years, NEPI and AMP concluded in the needs to intensify efforts in protecting children and mothers from vaccine preventable diseases. This requires innovating partnerships and approaches to invest in a long term intervention, based on national ownership and coordination of donors.

