

Proposed recommendations for the engagement of the private sector and steps to facilitate effective relationships to improve immunization coverage and quality of services and reduce equity gaps

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Conclusions

- Regardless of whether the public sector proactively engages with the private sector, the latter is already playing a role in immunization in most, if not all, countries.
- CSOs, NGOs and FBOs often play several roles in NIPs, e.g., education, advocacy, awareness raising and demand creation, resource mobilization, vaccine-preventable disease surveillance, provision of immunization services.
- In many LMIC there are longstanding arrangements with NIPs to provide vaccination services.

Conclusions

- Information exchange between public and private sectors, particularly for-profit providers, is weak in many countries.
- In many countries the private system is not integrated or non-compliant with reporting.
- In LMICs, mechanisms to enforce quality standards for vaccine storage and administration in the private sector are limited due to human and financial resource constraints.
- A single standard approach to engaging the private sector is not realistic or appropriate.

Development of a guidance document

Aims

1. Present considerations related to private providers potential contributions to NIP coverage.
 - including equity issues, vaccination practices and service quality, program monitoring, and safety and disease surveillance reporting.
2. Propose a framework for facilitating the engagement of private providers.
3. Provide recommendations to support optimal engagement of private providers in immunization service delivery.

Development of a guidance document

- Does not intend to:
 1. prescribe the type of engagement of the private providers.
 2. advocate for a greater or smaller role of the private sector in health care.
- Rather calls for a closer collaboration between the public and private sectors and a stronger contribution of the private sector toward national immunization programme priorities.

Framework for engaging the private sector:

Six aspects

- 1. Assessment of private providers' contribution in immunization service delivery.**
- 2. Determination of optimal model of public private engagement.**
- 3. Development or expansion of collaboration and dialogue to achieve common immunization goals.**

Framework for engaging the private sector:

Six aspects

- 4. Development of collaborative activities, agreements and contracts.**
- 5. Training and capacity building.**
- 6. Regulation, standards and quality control.**
 - Registration and recording new players.**
 - Quality regulatory framework.**
 - Effective enforcement of regulations.**

Recommendations

NIPs should increase collaboration and communication with private providers regardless of the relative contribution of private providers to the delivery of vaccination.

Recommendations

Specific recommendations with respect to:

- i. Assess,
- ii. Optimize service delivery,
- iii. Facilitate dialogue and decision making,
- iv. Ensure adequate data management and reporting,
- v. Provide adequate training and capacity building,
- vi. Facilitate accountability and performance oversight.

Recommendations: Assess

- Countries should conduct an assessment of the current role of private providers in immunization service delivery.
 - including contribution to coverage, immunization advocacy, adverse events surveillance and vaccine preventable disease surveillance.
- An inventory of key players/stakeholders (distinguishing private for-profit, CSOs and international NGOs) should be done to identify problems, strengths and challenges, and to identify what is needed to address the issues identified in the assessment.

Recommendations:

Optimize service delivery

- NIP should determine the optimal model for engagement with the private sector tailored to the country immunization system.
- NIP should ensure that appropriate schedules and high-quality practices are implemented by private providers and that they are held to appropriate vaccine handling and storage standards.
- If vaccines administered in the private sector are provided by the public sector, they should be provided free of charge and providers should comply with national reporting requirements and approved cold chain and vaccine handling practices.

Recommendations:

Optimize service delivery

- Measures should be taken to ensure that all public and private vaccine providers are adhering to the national immunization schedule.
- NIP should consider the feasibility of contracting portions of vaccination service delivery or supply chain to private providers to optimize capacity and efficiency.
- Private and public providers should use all clinical encounters to assess vaccination status and vaccinate clients as appropriate.
- Private providers should educate clients, parents, and caregivers on the importance of vaccination and advocate for vaccination.
 - Communication and advocacy efforts should align with the NIP.

Recommendations:

Facilitate dialogue and decision making

- NIP should provide the private sector with guidance on advocacy, AEFI and vaccine preventable disease reporting, and communication regarding immunization practices.
- Countries are encouraged to include private provider representation in NITAGs both as core members and as liaison members representing professional bodies and NGOs including local grass roots organizations.
 - This will support two-way communication flow and ensure that private sector issues are considered at the time when recommendations and policy guidance are being developed.
- Professional bodies and NITAGs should work with one another to ensure harmonized immunization schedules.

Recommendations:

Ensure adequate data management and reporting

- Governments or professional organizations should develop a database with information on all providers offering immunizations at the district and state level.
 - Health system mapping is important for identification of inefficiencies and the need for additional activities to achieve national immunization goals.
- Countries that provide free vaccines to the private providers for administration should require those providers to report vaccine doses administered in a standard format using data recording tools and reporting processes from the NIP.

Recommendations:

Ensure adequate data management and reporting

- Countries should establish clear reporting mechanisms between private providers and the NIP to ensure that immunizations and related information are reported according to the same standards.
- NIP should provide training and supervision on data recording and reporting to ensure appropriate and timely use by private providers.
- NIP should provide the private sector with adequate supplies of immunization/health cards, recording tools, including home-based records, health-education materials including checklists for systematic screening and vaccination job aides.

Recommendations:

Provide adequate training and capacity building

- NIP should increase communication and collaboration with private providers delivering vaccination services, tailored to the role and contribution of private providers to vaccine delivery.
- Private sector vaccinators should undergo training on immunization. Initial training should be supplemented with refresher courses with competency assessments. If the private sector does not have the capacity for training it should be supported by the NIP.

Recommendations:

Facilitate accountability and performance oversight

- Countries are encouraged to engage the private sector through legislation regarding the development and implementation of immunization policies and laws.
 - Policies and laws should include surveillance, monitoring, reporting, and regulations pertaining to immunization services.
 - Regulations can include vaccine schedules, licensing requirements, price controls, regulation of vaccines, regulation of private insurance, and fee waivers for specific populations.
- In the absence of specific legislation, countries are also encouraged to engage the private sector via contractual agreements or memoranda of understanding (MOUs).

Recommendations:

Facilitate accountability and performance oversight

- Systems are needed to ensure adequate practices in all facilities delivering vaccines,
 - Including proper storage and handling, appropriate use of injections, screening for contraindications, proper recording and adherence to safety measures, and waste management and disposal.
 - This may be managed by the health system through initial and/or periodic public health inspections, or by independent professional bodies.
- Countries should establish a system for the monitoring of quality standards by private providers.

Recommendations:

Facilitate accountability and performance oversight

- There should be regulation and enforcement of adequate training of vaccine providers.
 - This can be done through professional bodies or legislation.
- Vaccines procured by private providers should be held to the same regulatory standards and oversight of the national regulatory authority as those procured by the NIP.
 - Regulatory requirements should not be waived for donated vaccines.
- NIPs should work through professional societies to develop and adopt standards of practice.

Questions for SAGE

- **Do you agree with the proposed framework for a guidance document?**
 - or what are the necessary adjustments?
- **Do you agree with the proposed 6 areas of recommendations?**
 - Assess*
 - Optimize service delivery*
 - Facilitate dialogue and decision making*
 - Ensure adequate data management and reporting*
 - Provide adequate training and capacity building*
 - Facilitate accountability and performance oversight*
- **What are the next steps at global level to facilitate private sector engagement?**