Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030 as aligned with the global Immunization Agenda 2030

In August 2020, the Seventy-third World Health Assembly adopted Decision WHA73(9) endorsing the new global vision and overarching strategy for vaccines and immunization: the global Immunization Agenda 2030 (IA2030). In May 2021, the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly noted the IA2030 Framework for Action, which outlined the route by which IA2030 would be operationalized at the country and regional levels.

During 2020, a Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030 was developed, by adapting the global IA2030 strategy to the regional context. This Regional Strategic Framework was presented to the South-East Asia Regional Immunization Technical Advisory Group (SEAR ITAG) in 2020. The Framework has now been revised (refer to the Information Document SEA/RC74/8, Inf. Doc. 1) to include guidance on coordinated planning, monitoring and evaluation, ownership and accountability, and communications and advocacy provided in the IA2030 Framework for Action that was endorsed by the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly.

The Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030 outlines the approach that will be taken to ensure effective implementation of the strategy through a South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan that will initially cover the period 2022–2026. The Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan is being developed in collaboration with Member States and partners to capture details of the planning and reporting mechanisms, including the regional monitoring and evaluation framework, which will incorporate globally mandated indicators as well as a core set of region-specific country-level indicators.

The Strategic Framework, in conjunction with the Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan, is intended to provide a seamless transition from the current Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2016–2020 (extended to 2021) by maintaining a focus on key regional priorities while introducing new elements that reflect emerging challenges and opportunities.
The Attached working paper and the Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030, as aligned with the global IA2030, was submitted to the High-Level Preparatory Meeting for its review and recommendations. The HLP Meeting reviewed the paper and made the following recommendations.

**Actions by Member States**


2. Collaborate with WHO and partners in developing the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan 2022–2026, under the umbrella of the Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030 and adapt this during the development of national plans for immunization.

3. Initiate urgent actions to improve process of the restoration of immunization services and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance from the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, by applying the principles outlined in the Strategic Framework 2022–2030 to improve immunization coverage and overall vaccine-preventable disease control.

**Actions by WHO**

1. Support the finalization of the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan 2022–2026, under the umbrella of the Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030, incorporating the guidance of Member States on improving coverage and equity, integration of immunization with primary health care while rolling out and scaling up COVID 19 vaccine deployment in the Region.

2. Strengthen existing partnerships to support Members States to adapt and implement the Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030 and its Implementation Plan 2022–2026 through the national multiyear plans for immunization.

The Working Paper and the HLP Meeting recommendations are submitted to the Seventy-fourth Session of the WHO Regional Committee for South-East Asia for its consideration and endorsement.
Introduction

1. In August 2020, the Seventy-third World Health Assembly adopted Decision WHA73(9) endorsing the new global vision and overarching strategy for vaccines and immunization: the global Immunization Agenda 2020 (IA2030).

2. In May 2021, the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly noted the IA2030 Framework for Action, which outlined the route by which the global IA2030 strategy would be operationalized at the country and regional levels. The global IA2030 Framework for Action includes details of the proposed mechanisms for coordinated planning, monitoring and evaluation, ownership and accountability, and communications and advocacy.

3. During 2020, the WHO South-East Asia Regional Office, in consultation with the national immunization programmes of Member States and partners, developed a strategic framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan (RVAP) 2022–2030, adapting the global IA2030 strategy according to the regional context. This Regional Strategic Framework was presented to the South-East Asia Regional Immunization Technical Advisory Group (SEAR ITAG) in 2020.

4. The Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan 2022–2030 has been updated to incorporate new elements of the IA2030 Framework for Action, as endorsed by the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly (see information document SEA/HLP-Meet/3.3, Inf. Doc. 1 for the draft version of the Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia Regional Vaccine Action Plan).

5. Alongside the Strategic Framework, a Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan 2022–2026 is being developed in collaboration with Member States and partners. The Implementation Plan establishes mechanisms to ensure the effective and coordinated implementation of the new Regional Immunization Strategy. In combination, the Regional Strategic Framework and the Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan represent the successor to the South-East Asia RVAP 2016–2020, which has been extended to 2021.

Current situation, response and challenges

6. Since 2016, the South-East Asia RVAP 2016–2020 has provided the strategic framework for guiding action towards achieving the regional immunization goals.

7. Major progress has been made towards the RVAP immunization and vaccine-preventable disease control and elimination targets in recent years. The Region has maintained its polio-free status since 2014, as annually verified by the Regional Certification Commission on Polio Eradication. The elimination of maternal and neonatal tetanus has been sustained in the Region since 2016. Measles elimination has been achieved and maintained in five countries, while two of these countries have also achieved rubella elimination. Four countries have been verified as having achieved the goal of hepatitis B control through immunization. All countries in the Region have introduced between three and five new or underutilized vaccines since 2010.
8. The coverage of immunization with the third dose of diphtheria–tetanus–pertussis (DTP3) vaccine increased to 91% in 2019, compared with 83% in 2010. This is the highest-ever immunization coverage achieved in the Region. Nine countries in the Region achieved DTP3 coverage of 90% or more in 2019: Bangladesh, Bhutan, the Democratic People’s Republic of Korea, India, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka and Thailand. The total number of unvaccinated or partially vaccinated children declined to 3.3 million in 2019, compared with 8.2 million in 2009.

9. The COVID-19 pandemic affected the performance of immunization services and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance in the Region. The monthly coverage of DTP3 as well as of other antigens declined in March 2020, reaching a low point in April (relative differences of 59% in DTP3 coverage compared with April 2019) before coverage recovered in July 2020.

10. Several other immunization challenges remain in the Region. These include improving suboptimal immunization systems and coverage at subnational levels in many countries, to address inequities in access to vaccination, improving surveillance for vaccine-preventable diseases, and enhancing the integration of immunization and other primary health care services.

11. Countries in the Region also face the challenge of introducing COVID-19 vaccination while also at the same time repairing the damage that the COVID-19 pandemic has inflicted on essential immunization services and vaccine-preventable disease surveillance.

12. The Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia RVAP 2022–2030 is intended to provide a seamless transition from the RVAP 2016–2020 (extended to 2021) by maintaining a focus on key regional priorities while introducing new elements that reflect emerging challenges and opportunities. The Regional Strategic Framework retains the global IA2030 vision: “A region where everyone, everywhere, at every age fully benefits from vaccines for good health and well-being”. It also incorporates a Region-specific mission statement: “To ensure and sustain the highest level of political and programmatic commitment and community acceptability for immunization in the South-East Asia Region to enable countries to achieve national and regional immunization goals and targets, with the highest quality technical assistance from regional and country implementing partners”.

13. The Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia RVAP 2022–2030 retains the seven strategic priorities included in the global IA2030 strategy:
   a) immunization for primary health care/universal health coverage;
   b) commitment and demand;
   c) coverage and equity;
   d) life-course and integration;
   e) outbreaks and emergencies;
   f) supply and sustainability;
   g) research and innovation.
14. In order to support regional prioritization within these broad strategic priorities, an analysis was undertaken of national immunization strategies, their comprehensive multiyear plans and recent programme evaluations. A consultation was also undertaken with national immunization programmes and other stakeholders. These exercises identified 13 regional priority “key areas of focus”:

- health workforce;
- supply chain and logistics;
- vaccine-preventable disease surveillance;
- health information systems;
- vaccine safety monitoring;
- immunization integrated into primary health care;
- political commitment and ownership;
- leadership, governance and management;
- low coverage among disadvantaged populations;
- recognizing and addressing barriers to immunization;
- context-specific interventions;
- subnational support and capacity;
- vaccine forecasting, procurement and supply.

15. The guiding principles for implementation of the Regional Strategic Framework include:

a) broad ownership, especially at the country level;
b) leveraging and strengthening existing mechanisms;
c) promoting continuous quality improvement cycles;
d) strengthening stakeholder accountability and technical alignment to address country needs;
e) tailoring technical support according to the state of maturity of each country’s immunization programme.

16. The SEAR ITAG will continue to provide oversight and technical guidance to national immunization programmes during the implementation of the Regional Strategic Framework 2022–2030, while the Regional Working Group on Immunization will be the primary mechanism to ensure coordination across partners at the regional level.

17. A Regional Implementation Plan for 2022–2026, under the Regional Strategic Framework 2022–2030, is being developed in collaboration with Member States and partners. It will include details of planning and reporting mechanisms, as well as the Regional Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. This Framework will include globally mandated indicators for impact goals and strategic priorities, as well as a subset of the options included in the global IAC2030 Framework for Action with a country-tailored approach.
The way forward

18. Finalization of the Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan 2022–2026, under the umbrella of the Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia RVAP 2022–2030, and its adaptation in countries for the development of national plans.


Conclusions

21. Major progress has been made in immunization in the South-East Asia Region since 2016, using the RVAP 2016–2020 as the guiding strategic framework.

22. A new global vision and overarching strategy for vaccines and immunization – the global Immunization Agenda 2020 (IA2030) – has been endorsed by the Seventy-third World Health Assembly, followed by an endorsement of the IA2030 Framework for Action during the Seventy-fourth World Health Assembly.

23. A Strategic Framework for the South-East Asia RVAP 2022–2030 has been developed, adapting the global IA2030 strategy to the regional context. Alongside the Regional Strategic Framework, a Regional Vaccine Implementation Plan 2022–2026 is being developed in conjunction with Member States and partners.

24. The Regional Strategic Framework 2022–2030 is intended to provide a seamless transition from the RVAP 2016–2021, maintaining a focus on key regional priorities while introducing new elements reflecting emerging challenges and opportunities.