Background

With a view to increasing the transparency of the process to approve technical projects for funding using PIP Framework Partnership Contribution (PC) funds, a PC Independent Technical Expert Mechanism (PCITEM) was established in 2017. The PCITEM, comprising eight experts from a variety of relevant disciplines, with regional and gender balance, meets in person once per biennium to review work plans submitted for funding under the PC.

PCITEM reviews and provides scientific and technical guidance and advice to support, improve and finalize the PC funded biennial work plans. PCITEM assesses the appropriateness of projects to contribute to the Outcome and Output targets in the High-Level Implementation Plan 2018-2023 (HLIP II). PCITEM provides inputs to implementing unit focal points, and submits its report to the Director, Department of Global Infectious Hazards (GIH).

Meeting Objective

To provide scientific and technical guidance and advice to the GIH Director, on work plans submitted for funding using PC funds in the 2022-2023 biennium.

Participants

The eight PCITEM members met virtually on 31 August – 3 September 2021 to review progress and the project work plans for 2022-2023.

Four observers from non-State actors including Industry Associations and Civil Society Organizations registered for the open sessions of the meeting on 31 August and 1 September, and the three Industry Association observers attended. The list of meeting participants is available in Annex 1.

Proceedings

The Meeting Agenda is available at Annex 2. WHO technical focal points from headquarters and regional office implementing units presented the project work plans for the 6 HLIP II Outputs. Presentations summarized progress achieved in 2018-2021 and plans for 2022-2023 implementation. The presentations supplemented the pre-meeting reading materials provided to PCITEM members in advance of the meeting.

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1 See PIP PC Preparedness High-Level Implementation Plan II 2018-2023 (who.int)
Rich interactive discussions among PCITEM members, observers and WHO ensued on the appropriateness, relevance and feasibility of each project. Technical focal points addressed all questions to facilitate PCITEM’s deliberations.

PCITEM concluded its deliberations and prepared its report to the GIH Director on 3 September 2021.

PCITEM provided the following summary conclusions to the GIH Director:

- Overall, there has been remarkable progress since 2018 on HLIP II implementation. The capacities strengthened are well aligned with the high-level outcome of the Global Influenza Strategy to have stronger country capacities that contribute to national and global preparedness, response and health security.
- The COVID-19 pandemic highlighted:
  i. The critical contribution of influenza systems and capacities – including human resource capacities in-country and within WHO - to support pandemic response;
  ii. The valuable role of PC investments to strengthen country, regional and global preparedness systems, knowledge and capacities as a foundation for response in the different areas of work;
  iii. The importance of addressing barriers so that the equitable access of developing countries to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies is ensured.
- In 2020-2021, the risks to HLIP II work plan implementation due to the COVID-19 pandemic were managed to minimize impact, where progress was made on the majority (14 out of 19) indicators. As the COVID-19 pandemic continues, human resources for influenza preparedness remain constrained. This poses an ongoing challenge to HLIP II implementation and may become more acute with staff turnover or continued repurposing to COVID-19.
- Lessons continue to be learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic. The 2022-2023 work plans reflect the contextual needs of countries and regions while remaining aligned with HLIP II’s deliverables and outputs. The learnings and gaps identified to date were noted and accounted for further consideration in the development and revision of work plans.
- The inclusion of observers during the PCITEM meeting increases the visibility and transparency on project planning processes and progress. The opportunities provided for observers to comment did not impede technical discussions. The inclusion of observers is aligned with the PIP Framework’s approach for stakeholder engagement.

PCITEM recommended the following:

- For resource allocation in 2022-23, monitor implementation and maintain agility and flexibility in financing areas of need or as lessons are learnt during the COVID-19 pandemic according to the context at country and regional levels.
- Consider adjusting the HLIP II progress measures including indicators, as needed, based on the findings of the mid-term review, COVID-19 lessons and new landscape.
Encourage and identify opportunities for collaboration across the HLIP II projects, especially the cross-cutting role of RCCE to support other areas of work.

PCITEM provided the following broader considerations to the GIH Director:

- A lesson learnt from the COVID-19 pandemic is to engage in broader initiatives, frameworks and processes that help advocate for and assure the availability of vaccines/products at the time of a pandemic for vulnerable/non-producing countries. Options to maximize the commitment and compliance of all parties need to be explored.
- Encourage countries to continually strengthen influenza disease prevention, control and preparedness while maximizing synergy between programmes so that there is coherent longer-term management of all acute respiratory infections.
- Continue to advocate for country ownership of projects, including ways to maximize equitable and ethical principles in influenza preparedness and response capacities and capabilities as promoted by the PIP Framework.
- In the process of evaluating HLIP II implementation and in preparation of HLIP III, consider conducting qualitative assessments and field-based reviews at country level to understand the gains and challenges faced by countries.

Next Steps

WHO will consider and address PCITEM’s inputs and recommendations, including revising project workplans as necessary, before submitting final plans for approval by the WHO Assistant Director-General for Emergency Preparedness through the GIH Director.

A summary of 2022-2023 implementation plans will be incorporated into the ‘What’s Next’ section of the PIP Framework biennium progress report for 2020-2021.

In one year, WHO will provide an update to PCITEM members on the progress of implementation.
Annex 1

PCITEM Members

Silvia Bino
Associate Professor of Infectious Diseases
Head, Control of Infectious Diseases Department
Institute of Public Health
Albania

Joseph Bresee
Respiratory Virus Prevention Program Director
Task Force for Global Health
USA

Josephina Hansen
Independent Consultant, Regulatory Policy
The Netherlands

Senait Kebede
Adjunct Associate Professor, Global Health
Emory University
Managing Director, International Health Consultancy LLC
USA

Mohamed Nour
Public Health Consultant
Public Health Department
Ministry of Public Health
Qatar

Marilda Siqueira
Chief
National Reference Laboratory for Influenza, Measles, and SARS-CoV
Oswaldo Cruz Foundation (FIOCRUZ)
Brazil

Kanta Subbarao
Director
WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza
Australia
P V Venugopal  
Public Health Specialist  
India

Observers (31 August – 1 September, open session)

Paula Barbosa (*attended Day 2 only*)  
International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations

Sam Lee  
International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations

Sangeeta Shashikant (*registered but did not attend*)  
Third World Network

Ted Tsai  
International Federation of Pharmaceutical Manufacturers and Associations

World Health Organization

Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness

Sylvie Briand  
Director, Global Infectious Hazard Preparedness

Christopher Chadwick  
Technical Officer

Sarah Hess  
Technical Officer

Melinda Frost  
Technical Officer

Ioana Ghiga  
Technical Officer

Ann Moen  
Chief, Influenza Preparedness and Response
Global Influenza Programme

Vanessa Cozza
Technical Officer

Julia Fitzner
Medical Officer

Dmitriy Pereyaslov
Team Lead

Katelijn Vandemaele
Medical Officer

Wenqing Zhang
Manager

Regulatory Systems Strengthening

Alireza Khadem
Scientist

Razieh Ostad Ali Dehaghi
Technical Officer

Hiiti Sillo
Team Lead

Regional Office for Africa

Belinda Herring
Technical Officer

Regional Office for the Americas

Angella Smith
Project Support Specialist

Andrea Vicari
Advisor
Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean

Abdinasir Abubakar
Manager

Amgard Elkholy
Medical Officer

Ruba Kawafha
Project Officer

Wasiq Khan
Team Lead

Eman Omran
Programme Assistant

Regional Office for Europe

Michala Hegermann-Lindencrone
Technical Officer

Regional Office for South-East Asia

Pushpa Wijesinghe
Programme Area Manager

Francis Inbanathan
Technical Officer

Regional Office for the Western Pacific

Phuong Nam Nguyen
Technical Officer

PIP Framework Secretariat

Jennifer Barragan
Technical Officer

Hitesh Chugh
Technical Officer
Poonam Huria
Technical Officer

Anne Huvos
Manager

Gina Samaan
Team Leader
Annex 2

MEETING AGENDA

Tuesday 31 August 2021: 13:00 – 16:00 CET *Open session for PCITEM*

13.00 – 13.30  Welcome and meeting introduction
               Overview presentation

13.30 – 14.30  Laboratory & Surveillance Project Presentation

14.30 – 14.40  Break

14.40 – 15.20  Burden of Disease Project Presentation

15.20 – 16.00  Risk Communication & Community Engagement Project Presentation

Wednesday 1 September 2021: 13:00 – 16:00 CET *Open session for PCITEM*

13.00 – 13.40  Regulatory Capacity Building Project Presentation

13.40 – 14.20  Planning for Deployment Project Presentation

14.20 – 14.30  Break

14.30 – 15.30  Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Planning Project Presentation

15.30 – 15.50  General discussions

15.50 – 16.00  Close of open session

Thursday 2 September 2021: 13:00 – 15:00 CET *Closed session for PCITEM members only*

13.00 – 15.00  Discussion, completion of project checklists and preparation of meeting report

Friday 3 September 2021: 13:00 – 15:00 CET *Closed session for PCITEM members only*

13.00 – 14.45  Continued discussion, completion of project checklists and preparation of meeting report

14.50 – 15.00  Close of meeting