



8th Global Validation Advisory Committee Meeting for elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus
21-23 Sept 2022
Hilton Geneva Hotel and Conference Centre
Geneva, Switzerland

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The global community has committed to the elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT), also referred to as vertical transmission, of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus (HBV) as a public health priority. The global commitment to EMTCT was established due to the continued high global burden of mother-to-child (MTCT), or vertical transmission, of these infections. The purpose of the elimination goal is to ensure the availability of quality reproductive and maternal and child health (MCH) services to reduce and control the transmission of HIV, syphilis and HBV between mothers and their offspring and to provide the best available treatment to the mother, such that incidence is reduced to a very low level and ceases to be a public health concern.

In 2014, WHO released the first edition of the processes and criteria for validation of elimination of mother to child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV and syphilis, and a global validation advisory committee (GVAC) was formed. This guidance document supported the standardization and formal approach to EMTCT validation, including criteria, indicators and targets to be achieved. These formed the basis for foundational requirements for validation in the four areas of (i) data, (ii) laboratory, (iii) programme and (iv) human rights, gender equality and community engagement. In 2021, the updated *Global guidance on criteria and processes for validation of elimination of mother-to-child transmission of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus* brings together the package of interventions and metrics to support the integrated management and monitoring of triple elimination of mother-to-child transmission across a wide range of epidemiological and programmatic contexts. Since then, 16 countries or territories have been validated for having eliminated MTCT of HIV and/or syphilis as a public health problem. In addition, Botswana became the first country to be certified for Path to Elimination of HIV.

Now that the GVAC has had significant experience in validating countries, it is time to take stock of the processes, both at the GVAC and the global secretariat levels. At this meeting, the GVAC will review country applications for maintenance of validation and initial validation. The GVAC will also discuss new draft documents on governance and revised processes for validation exercises. We believe this meeting is an opportunity to strengthen validation processes at national, regional and global levels.

Overview of activities

At the GVAC annual meeting, participants will engage in the following sessions and activities:

- Review 2-4 maintenance of validation reports for
- Review 2-4 Initial validation reviews
- WHO global updates on HIV, syphilis & hepatitis

- Annual presentations from UN agencies and observer organizations
- Panel on RVC strengthening and regional best practice-sharing
- Summary of findings from EMTCT of HBV pilots
- Launch of Governance guidance
- Modules on updated tools and templates for EMTCT validation

To better coordinate and plan the above activities, it is proposed that the GVAC convene for an eighth annual meeting in Geneva on 21-23 Sept 2022.

Objectives

1. To review the status of EMTCT globally, including the integration of the triple elimination agenda and the results of validation pilots for EMTCT of hepatitis B virus
2. To assess country data for elimination of mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B virus and validation criteria for 4-8 country applications for maintenance of validation or initial validation
3. To review progress of countries in the pipeline for validation of EMTCT or Path to Elimination across all WHO regions
4. To discuss and support the strengthening of regional validation processes and best practice sharing for assessing EMTCT at the regional level
5. To launch the *Governance guidance for the validation of EMTCT of HIV, syphilis & hepatitis B virus*
6. To discuss and agree upon GVAC standard operating procedures for assessing country applications for EMTCT and review the GVAC workplan for 2022-2023

Expected Participants

50-60 participants including:

- GVAC members
- Civil society observers
- WHO global and regional validation secretariat staff
- Relevant WHO HQ SRH, HIV and Hepatitis B team leads
- United Nations agencies (UNAIDS, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM)
- Other observers (CDC, Global Fund)

Outcomes

1. GVAC advice to WHO on whether applying countries have met the global criteria for validation or maintenance of validation of EMTCT of HIV, syphilis and/or HBV, and any recommendations for sustaining elimination, as applicable.
2. Finalize the GVAC workplan for 2022-2023
3. Produce a meeting report

Meeting Secretariat

This meeting is convened by WHO in collaboration with UN partners. The secretariat consists of the WHO Global Programme on HIV, Hepatitis and STIs, and WHO colleagues in the regional and country offices, as well as relevant counterparts in UN partner agencies. WHO headquarters will coordinate planning for the meeting and collaborate with colleagues to prepare the background documents.