

Concept Note: Polio Transition Global Vision Stakeholder Forum – 25 - 26 April 2023

Overview: Inspiring the way forward for polio transition post-2023

The Polio Transition Global Vision Stakeholder Forum will take place in Geneva, Switzerland, from 25 – 26 April 2023, bringing together a wide range of stakeholders at the country, regional and global level, including national representatives, key partners and donors, and members of civil society to share their experiences and expertise to co-create the post-2023 polio transition vision.

The forum will build on:

- Lessons learned from the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition (2018 – 2023), the global strategic framework guiding polio transition efforts over the last five years.
- Recommendations of the independent mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Action Plan, which identified particular strengths, as well as areas that need improvement.

The meeting will be interactive and participants are encouraged to come ready to share ideas, drawing on their different experiences and perspectives on polio transition.

As a response to the mid-term evaluation recommendations, the post-2023 vision will be built around a clear ‘Theory of Change’. The structure of the meeting is designed around this specific approach to draw out insights and inspire the next phase of transition post-2023.

Objectives and expected outcomes:

The key objectives of the forum are as follows:

- Reflect on lessons learned and assess the adaptations required to ensure that polio transition efforts post-2023 are impactful and aligned with country needs.
- Review how polio transition contributes to relevant broader public health investments on immunization, primary health care and global health security.
- Align on the parameters, scope and direction of the post-2023 Global Vision.
- Discuss enabling factors for transition, including governance and financing.
- Review roles, responsibilities and accountability of polio transition stakeholders.

The insights from the forum will be used to develop the “Zero Draft” of the post-2023 vision document, which will be refined and finalized through an iterative process in the second half of 2023, to be submitted to the World Health Assembly in May 2024, through the Executive Board.

The vision will inform the development of Regional Action Plans in three priority regions (Africa, Eastern Mediterranean and South East Asia), and a revised Polio Transition Monitoring and Evaluation Framework.

Please note that the forum will be held in English.

Background: A unique public health opportunity

More than thirty years of investment to eradicate polio has created a wealth of knowledge and a wide infrastructure with benefits that go far beyond eradication. As the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) nears its goal, the polio transition process aims to seize the opportunity to repurpose the network and infrastructure developed by the polio programme to maintain a polio-free world and strengthen

broader health priorities, especially essential immunization, disease surveillance and emergency preparedness and response, under the leadership of national authorities.

Since 2018, work on polio transition at WHO has been guided by the [Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition \(2018 – 2023\)](#). Across the span of the Strategic Action Plan, progress has been made towards the sustainable transition of polio assets, with the approach and pace of transition tailored according to national context and local epidemiology. This includes the successful implementation of key aspects of national transition plans in the South-East Asia Region, the introduction of Integrated Public Health Teams as an interim step towards transition in the Eastern Mediterranean Region, and a two-phased approach to transition in the African Region, to protect polio eradication gains. As of 2022, polio staff and infrastructure were integrated into other WHO programmes in a majority of wild polio-free countries in the WHO African, Eastern Mediterranean and South-East Asia Regions, marking an important step towards ultimate transition to national governments.

Nonetheless, there have also been challenges, including delays to transition caused by the COVID-19 pandemic and other health emergencies, the wider political and economic situation in some countries, as well as outbreaks of poliovirus in priority countries for polio transition.

As the Strategic Action Plan comes to an end in 2023, there is an invaluable opportunity to adjust the scope and direction of transition to better align with the evolving polio epidemiology and the public health architecture that is shaping up in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic. This will help to ensure that polio transition serves the public health priorities of national governments and is aligned with national and regional public health agendas and the SDGs.

Reflecting on the findings of the Mid-term evaluation of the Strategic Action Plan

In May 2022, a [mid-term evaluation](#) of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition (2018-2023) was presented to the World Health Assembly, assessing the status and implementation of the Strategic Action Plan. Key findings of the evaluation included the necessity of strengthening coordination between stakeholders involved in transition, accelerating integration of polio functions, and further empowering regional and country offices. The evaluation also made programmatic recommendations, including utilizing the transition process to strengthen integrated surveillance systems, and recognizing the relevance of gender, equity and human rights. These modifications were proposed to align transition planning to changed global, regional and national health contexts in 2023 and beyond.

In its management response presented to the Member States in November 2023, WHO committed to convening stakeholders to align around a common vision for polio transition post-2023, accompanied by Regional Action Plans in the WHO Africa, Eastern Mediterranean and South East Asia regions, and a revised Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Framework, in order to guide the next stage of polio transition. WHO is undertaking this through a consultative process, which captures the views of a wide range of stakeholders involved in transition. The Global Vision Stakeholder Forum represents a critical opportunity to collect these insights.

Preparatory material

Ahead of participation in the Global Vision Stakeholder Forum, attendees may wish to consult the following background resources:

- [Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition \(2018 – 2023\)](#)

- [Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition \(2018–2023\)](#)
- [Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition \(2018–2023\) - Annexes](#)
- [Mid-term evaluation of the implementation of the Strategic Action Plan on Polio Transition \(2018–2023\): WHO Management Response](#)
- [Report on polio transition planning and polio post-certification, 152nd Session of WHO Executive Board](#)
- [Reports of the Transition Independent Monitoring Board](#)
- [GPEI Polio Post-Certification Strategy](#)
- [WHO Polio Transition Programme Webpages](#)

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