

Memorandum on the follow-up mission the implementation of the corrective action plan following the 2022 audit in the Republic of Congo

The attached report sets out the findings of the follow-up mission on the implementation of the corrective action plan developed by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) of the Republic of Congo following Gavi's programme audit conducted in 2022. The primary objectives of this mission conducted by Gavi's programme audit team in October 2024 (two years after the audit) were to assess the progress made in implementing the actions planned by the MOHP against the initially agreed timeline, and to identify potential areas for improvement.

The key highlights of the executive summary (page 3) are as follows:

1. The vast majority of actions (77%) planned by the MOHP in response to the 2022 programme audit recommendations have only been partially implemented or have not been implemented at all, resulting in persistently high risks across most components of the Gavi-supported Expanded Programme on Immunisation.
2. The audit team made three new findings that point to the lack of effectiveness of recommendation follow-up mechanisms, lack of diligence in the physical management of vaccines, and inappropriate use of cold storage units.
3. The management of Gavi support to the MOHP was assessed as **ineffective**, meaning that "internal controls, governance and risk management practices are inadequately designed and/or generally ineffective. The nature of these issues is such that the achievement of objectives is seriously compromised."

The results of this follow-up mission were shared with the MOHP, which subsequently developed an updated corrective action plan (Annex 2, page 45), with an extended implementation deadline set for December 2025.

By letter of 8 April 2025, the Gavi Secretariat formally notified the MOHP of the mission's findings, as well as the questioned expenditure pending reimbursement.

The Gavi Secretariat continues to work with the MOHP to ensure that the commitments made are implemented and that all questioned amounts are fully reimbursed.

Geneva, August 2025

PROGRAMME AUDIT

Report of the Follow-up Mission on the 2022 Audit Corrective Action Plan

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

April 2024

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1. Executive Summary

1.1. Mission findings

This report sets out the status of implementation of the corrective action plan developed by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) following the audit of Gavi’s support to the country in 2022. The audit identified several internal control weaknesses, resulting in the issuance of 21 recommendations, 17 of which were classified as essential. In response, the MOHP formulated a corrective action plan comprising a total of 66 actions, of which 58 were scheduled for completion by 30 June 2024.

The follow-up mission carried out by the Gavi audit team in October 2024 assessed the progress made in implementing the corrective actions. The key findings are summarized in the table below:

| Category | Actions not yet due | Expired deadline actions | | | Total |
|---|---------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|-------|
| | | Implemented / no longer applicable | Partially implemented / in progress | Not implemented | |
| Committed corrective actions following the 2022 audit | 8 | 7 | 32 | 19 | 66 |
| Implementation rate | 12% | 11%* | 48% | 29% | 100% |

(* of which only 5% of recommendations were implemented.

As of the date of the mission, 77% of the corrective actions planned by the Ministry of Health and Population (MOHP) had not been satisfactorily implemented. Consequently, the following major weaknesses identified in the 2022 audit report remain unresolved:

- Irregular functioning of the Interagency Coordinating Committee (ICC) and the National Immunization Technical Advisory Groups (NITAG),
- Inefficient management of Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) personnel, including lack of clarity in roles and responsibilities and absence of a performance appraisal mechanism,
- Lack of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to ensure effective management of vaccines and cold chain operations across the country,
- Deficiencies in the physical and administrative management of vaccines at the central EPI level and in the regions,
- Lack of accountability for significant vaccine dose losses,

- Absence of a biomedical waste management plan for EPI at each level of the health system,
- Lack of an adequate maintenance plan for cold chain equipment to sustain major investments funded by Gavi,
- Limited effectiveness of the national system for monitoring and ensuring the accuracy of vaccination data,
- Quantitative and qualitative insufficiencies in supportive supervision from higher to lower levels of the health system,
- Absence of a budget consolidation procedure across directorates and programmes, preventing the MOHP from obtaining a cross-cutting view of planned activities and their implementation,
- Lack of an effective accounting system within Gavi-supported structures, hindering their ability to autonomously manage allocated resources, and,
- Delays in the development and implementation of the EPI administrative and financial procedures manual.

In addition, the mission led to new findings, two of which present a high level of risk and require immediate action by the MOHP:

- Absence of an effective and permanent mechanism for monitoring the implementation of recommendations arising from various programme evaluations (see Finding 3.1),
- Significant losses of vaccine doses resulting from a careless stock management (see Finding 3.2),
- Inappropriate use of cold storage facilities funded by Gavi (see Finding 3.3).

1.2. Overall audit opinion

The audit team determined that the management of Gavi’s support by the Ministry of Health and Population is **ineffective**, meaning that “internal controls, governance and risk management processes are not adequately designed and/or are not generally effective. The nature of these issues is such that the achievement of objectives is seriously compromised”.

To mitigate the risks associated with the newly identified findings listed above, the audit team issued three (3) additional recommendations. These are to be implemented alongside the outstanding recommendations from the 2022 audit and require a revised corrective action plan (see Annex 2 of this report).