

The BID Regional Program Concept Note

Background: The BID Initiative

The BID Initiative is grounded in the belief that better data plus better decisions will lead to better health outcomes. Routine immunizations and new vaccine introductions have proven to be one of the best investments to improving people's health around the globe. But without reliable, easy-to-access, and actionable data on the barriers impeding immunizations, coupled with trained data managers, stakeholders interested in improving immunization coverage are working with limited and often anecdotal data that may not correlate with the actual issues. BID promotes collaborative partnerships and government leadership to enhance immunization and overall health service delivery by improving data collection, quality, and use.

BID initially partnered with Tanzania and Zambia to develop, test, and roll out interventions that addressed some of the most pressing routine immunization service delivery challenges. These included issues of data quality, limited data use capacity, inaccurate or uncertain target populations, poor visibility into vaccine supplies, and difficulty identifying children who default on immunization schedules. BID also embedded an Africa-led peer learning network, called the BID Learning Network (BLN), within the initiative to create a platform for peer interaction, innovation, learning, and the exchange of knowledge, ideas, and experiences among members. Though the BLN is Africa-led, it is open to global participation. For the past five years, the BLN has been convening countries across Africa that face comparable immunization issues to discuss their challenges, explore solutions, and learn from each other.

In its initial phase, between 2013 and 2018, the BID Initiative introduced a holistic package of interventions in Tanzania and Zambia that included information system products, data management policies, evidence-based practices, and capacity building to empower health workers at all levels of the health system toward data-driven action. The key outcomes of this initial phase of BID were:

1. The design and implementation of an electronic immunization registry (EIR) in Tanzania and Zambia.
2. The design and implementation of change management interventions to build the capacity of health workers in the use and application of immunization data.

Introducing the BID Regional Program

Over the past five years, the PATH staff based in Africa that made up the BID team have gained significant experience in the implementation of data quality and use interventions to improve immunization service delivery. This includes deep knowledge about the holistic design, introduction, adoption, and scale up and sustainability of digital interventions.

BID will leverage this experience, in partnership with the BID Learning Network, to introduce a BID Regional Mentorship program. The BID Regional Mentorship program will support African countries as they work to select, introduce, and implement digital health and change management interventions to improve their routine immunization programs. It will include the following activities:

1. Convene digital health innovators and countries that express the need for data quality and use interventions through a series of virtual activities hosted by the BLN.
2. Convene experts from the BID Initiative in Tanzania and Zambia, as well as other digital health and immunization sector experts, to help countries identify their challenges and appropriate solutions.
3. Provide technical support and experience to countries through the BID mentors, in the selection and design/adaptation of digital health and data use interventions for their routine immunization programs.
4. Provide guidance to countries in the selection, development, implementation, and adoption of digital health and data use interventions.

The program will support countries that are interested in data quality and use innovations through a mentorship model that is tailored to their specific needs and realities. Countries will be identified after a rigorous application process that determines their priority immunization data needs, and then pairs participants with BID mentors based in Tanzania and Zambia. The BID mentors have been active contributors to the work underway in Tanzania and Zambia and have direct experience implementing EIRs, change management strategies, and other data quality and use interventions. In addition, the BLN platform will continue to serve as a space for peer learning, allowing countries and partners to share innovations and lessons learned, and to help in the identification of common challenges and solutions. The BID Regional Mentorship program, in partnership with the BLN, will provide a vibrant learning platform and a critical model for country-driven sustainability by building the capacity of country personnel. The program will also contribute to the regional and global knowledge base surrounding data quality and use interventions, while fostering a hub for cross-sharing and learning. Finally, the BID mentors will help validate, develop, and disseminate lessons from the immunization and digital health sectors within countries, which can then be amplified through the BLN.

Objective of the BID Regional Program

The main objective of the BID Regional program is to support African countries as they address their routine immunization program challenges through implementation of digital health and data use innovations. Specific objectives include:

1. Provide African countries interested in digital health with information on a spectrum of digital health innovations to build their knowledge and understanding of existing tools in the market.

2. Give African countries access to targeted expertise to help them identify the appropriate digital health and data use solutions that complement and address their country's immunization challenges.
3. Provide mentorship to African countries and their in-country partners in the selection, design/adaptation, and implementation planning for digital health and data use interventions. This includes helping to ensure they have cost-effective approaches for the adoption, scalability, and sustainability of their identified interventions.

Criteria for Country Selection within the BID Regional Mentorship Program

Countries that qualify for this program will meet the following criteria:

1. Demonstrated country readiness to identify and then take up the innovations for which mentorship is required.
2. In the process of implementing data availability, quality and use interventions with funding support.
3. Conducting activities that fall within the scope of the mentors' areas of expertise.
4. Government commitment to the mentorship program.

Strategic Approach of the BID Regional Program

This program will take strategic advantage of existing regional and country mechanisms to mentor individuals/teams from countries. As the BID Regional program will not be in a position to provide financing for interventions, a core part of the process will be to collaborate with partners such as Gavi, WHO, UNICEF, and other key partners who are financing and supporting in-country immunization programs. To this end, BID mentors will participate in activities such as the country joint appraisal processes, EPI meetings convened by the WHO and so on, in order to ensure that the mentorship program is aligned to country priorities and plans, regional efforts, and is appropriately located within funded activities.

Expected Outcomes of the BID Regional Program

The following are the expected outcomes of the BID Regional program:

- Increased accessibility of appropriate and effective digital health solutions to address the specific immunization challenges facing African countries.
- Reduced time and cost associated with the introduction of digital health and data use innovations in routine immunization programs in African countries.
- Greater alignment between routine immunization challenges and the suite of digital health solutions available to countries.
- Increased adoption and scale up of digital health and data use solutions within routine immunization programs, where appropriate.
- Increased number of countries able to improve immunization program planning, implementation, and monitoring.
- Increased knowledge and lessons learned about the use of interventions to strengthen routine immunization programs.
- An active, country-driven community of practice, focused on improving data availability, quality, and use.