



JCG Meeting Summary

VTC

September 8, 2020

Attendees (Alphabetical by Last Name)

- Peggy Hamburg (JCG Chair)
- Helen Rees (SAC Chair)

Member Institutions Represented By

- Emanuele Capobianco (IFRC)
- Marco Cavaleri (EMA)
- Emer Cooke (WHO)
- Mark Feinberg
- Ana Maria Henao Restrepo (WHO)
- Marion Gruber (FDA)
- Wilson Mok (GAVI)
- Robin Nandy (UNICEF)
- Aurelia Nguyen (GAVI)
- Mark Page (NIBSC)
- Charlie Weller (Wellcome Trust)
- Sidney Wong (MSF)

Working Groups Represented By

- Daniel Brasseur (Regulatory WG)
- Murray Lumpkin (Assays and Standards WG)

CEPI Secretariat

- Rihana Diabo
- Bjorg Dystvold Nilsson
- Richard Hatchett
- Elen Hoeg
- Frederik Kristensen
- Paul Kristiansen
- Nicole Lurie
- Stephen Mayhew
- Dawn O'Connell
- Shannon Quinlan
- Jim Robinson
- Jodie Rogers
- Svein Rune Andersen
- Melanie Saville
- Debra Yeskey

Guests

- Nicole Herrman (McKinsey)
- Lieven Van Der Veken (McKinsey)

Summary

The JCG met by VTC on September 8, 2020. Peggy Hamburg, Chair, opened the meeting by welcoming everyone and thanking them for their engagement during such a busy time. Richard Hatchett, CEPI CEO, echoed that sentiment.

The JCG then heard updates from its 3 working groups: Regulatory; Assays and Standards; and Sustainable Manufacturing. The Regulatory Working Group shared the work it is currently doing to stand up the COVAX Regulatory Advisory Group (RAG) and to support CEPI's COVID candidates. A suggestion was made to extend the geographic diversity of the RAG, especially in Africa. The Regulatory Working Group agreed to take that on. The Assays and Standards Working Group shared the progress of its current assays across CEPI's priority pathogen or "core" portfolio, as well as for COVID. It also shared a centralized lab network it has established for COVID testing. Suggestions were made to expand the network into Africa and South America and to try to keep it going beyond the COVID pandemic. The Assays and Standards Working Group agreed to pursue both suggestions. Finally, the Sustainable Manufacturing Working Group updated the JCG on its Sustainable Manufacturing work in general, and the acute manufacturing work it has taken on for COVID. The Working Group made it clear that the original Sustainable Manufacturing work it initially took on and had to put on hold for COVID, made it much better positioned to respond quickly to the COVID manufacturing needs.

The JCG then heard an update from Melanie Saville, CEPI's head of R&D, on the state of CEPI's priority pathogen or "core" portfolio. Melanie shared that delays in the portfolio have occurred since COVID for several reasons, most notably that developers are prioritizing COVID work over their other vaccine candidates. While this has slowed down work on the core portfolio, it has had the benefit of validating many different platforms that will serve future candidates including another disease x and it has moved the MERS/coronavirus candidates—in particular—farther along in the process. Melanie concluded that while some progress on the core portfolio has slowed down, the portfolio itself will benefit from the pre-clinical and clinical data being generated to validate the new platforms; the process improvements that have been worked out in the course of the COVID response; and the strengthened partnerships as a result of the pandemic response.

The JCG was then led by Nicole Lurie, CEPI's Strategic Advisor to the CEO and COVID Response Lead, and Lieven Van Der Veken, a McKinsey consultant to CEPI, through a COVID mid-response review. The JCG were asked to consider what has gone well and what could go better in the response in general and regarding CEPI's role in the response in particular. Most rated CEPI's performance strongly with an average of 8.7 out of 10. They cited CEPI's speed in identifying candidates and success in positioning vaccines as a key element of the response as reasons for rating CEPI so successfully. When asked what could have gone better, the answers varied, but included: the need to clarify roles with others (especially Gavi and regional bodies); a need for clarity around vaccine communications in the response; and the need to be sure the right resources are focused on the right topics. When asked whether the JCG was being used in the right way, the members discussed the hazards of duplication and noted that this was not just a CEPI-problem [NOTE: for this reason, the JCG has been careful to focus on the core portfolio so as not trip over those groups organized for COVID.] Finally, when asked what changes needed to be made in the next few months: the group did not offer any. Even without the suggestion of any clear changes that need to be made, the discussion has given CEPI a lot to consider when approaching the response moving forward.

The final session of the JCG focused on strategy and what the emerging infectious disease ecosystem should look like in a post-COVID world. The group agreed that there were still lots of gaps in the ecosystem that needed to be filled, especially in country-readiness to receive vaccines. There were concerns about the governance of the players in the ecosystem and whether one group could/should seek to organize all of the players to be sure the gaps are filled. There was discussion regarding how to

sustain the linkages that have been built during COVID and whether a COVAX-like model might still get tested even if the current model fails as a result of the recent proliferation of bilateral deals. There was also discussion regarding shifting CEPI's focus away from vaccines for particular pathogens and instead focusing on platforms. There was also discussion of CEPI moving beyond vaccines to therapeutics. All agreed that what will certainly live on from the current COVID architecture is the partnership model and the focus on partnerships. This discussion gave CEPI a lot of good things to think through as it considers where it fits in a post-COVID ecosystem.

The meeting wrapped up with a few closing remarks from Peggy Hamburg, Chair, and Richard Hatchett, CEO of CEPI. The group agreed to stay in touch on important issues and convene again towards the end of the year, unless the need arises sooner.

Discussion Questions

Group Discussion on COVID Response, so far

- What has gone well?
- What could go better?
- How can we apply these learnings to the core portfolio?

Post-COVID Global EID Preparedness and Response System

- What should the post-COVID ecosystem look like?