

# Pacific Infection Prevention and Control Network Meeting

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2023 PACIFIC INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL NETWORK MEETING,  
24 – 26 May 2023, Nadi, Fiji

## Agenda Item N°1.4

### REGIONAL INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

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Since 2020, the Pacific Community (SPC) has been working with Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to support IPC focal points with COVID-19 support and develop IPC capacity and programs at both the national and facility level. Over that time, significant progress has been made in a number of countries, including appointment of IPC Focal Points and the development of national guidelines and operational plans for IPC.

Globally, there is a lack of implementation of the core components of IPC programs. This is impacted further by a lack of data available at the regional level to track progress on the implementation and achievement of WHO's minimum requirements. Ongoing commitment to capacity-building, support and advocacy for IPC will be essential to meet these standards.

## 1. BACKGROUND

1. The World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all member countries should implement the minimum requirements for IPC which includes a functional national and healthcare facility level IPC programme, national IPC guidelines, IPC education and training, Healthcare Associated Infection (HAI) surveillance, Multimodal strategies, monitoring/audit of IPC practices and feedback, and supporting the built environment, materials and equipment for IPC [1].
2. The 2022 WHO Global Report on IPC provides a situational analysis of the status of IPC programs globally, and highlights lack of implementation of the minimum requirements for IPC worldwide. The data in this report has very low representation of LICs/MICs, and no representation of with Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) [1], reflecting the lack of data available on IPC across the region.
3. Since 2021, the Pacific Community (SPC) has been working with PICTs to develop IPC programs and capacity at both the national and facility level. Our aim is for PICTs to have functional IPC programs which are essential to strengthening national capacity to respond to outbreaks and health emergencies and prevent AMR. The collection of data and monitoring of progress toward the achievement of minimum requirement forms an essential component of this work.

## 2. PROGRESS AND ACHIEVEMENTS

### Pacific Community IPC Capacity Building

4. In collaboration with key personnel from PICTs, SPC's IPC Adviser has undertaken the following activities to-date:
  - Supported and updated national IPC Guidelines for 4 PICTs, with 2 PICTs currently in development.
  - Supported the development of national operational IPC plans for 7 PICTs.
  - Trained over 32 IPC focal points (from 9 PICTs as Gold Standard Hand Hygiene auditors.
  - Supported 9 PICTs with standardized methodology, data collection tools and definitions for Surgical Site Infection (SSI) Surveillance.
  - Developed Standard Operating procedures and audit tools for standard and transmission-based precautions.
  - Carried out IPC workshops and training activities in 10 PICTs.

**PICTS IPC Assessment Survey**

5. In 2022/23, a survey was distributed to 15 PICTs in order to establish a preliminary assessment of the status of the IPC core competencies in each country. The IPC assessment survey tool was adapted from the WHO IPC assessment framework at the facility level [2]. Responses were received from all 15 countries (21 individual responses inclusive of both health ministries and facilities). The data collected is self-reported and preliminary, requiring further collaboration and analysis with countries in order confirm baselines and track progress. However, the current results provide important indications on the status of IPC programs across the region.

6. As of April 2023, PICTs indicated having a number of the core components required of IPC programs in place:

- 67% of PICTs surveyed have a National IPC Program and Annual Workplan in place.
- 87% of PICTs surveyed have appointed a National IPC Focal Point .
- 80% of PICTs surveyed have National IPC Guidelines in place that have been updated within the last 5 years.

7. However, there are a number of core components that are yet to be established:

- Less than half of PICTs surveyed (40%) have an allocated budget for IPC from the Ministry of Health.
- Only 20% of PICTs surveyed have annual mandatory in-service training provided to health care workers (however 53% reported non-mandatory annual training).
- Though 60% of the PICTs surveyed have HAI as a defined component of their national IPC program, capacity for, and implementation of, surveillance for HAI in PICTs remains limited. Less than half of the PICTs reported monitoring infections in vulnerable populations (40%) and healthcare workers (40%).
- 80% of PICTS reported that they carry out monitoring/audits of IPC practices, However, only 20% reported monitoring across all key processes and indicators indicated in the survey, with varying levels of monitoring activity across PICTs.

### 3. CHALLENGES

- Translation of National IPC Guidelines into practice.
- IPC leadership, IPC resources
- Difficulty to adapt or contextualize national IPC guidelines.
- Insufficient monitoring, evaluation and feedback.
- Strengthen multimodal strategies for implementation of IPC interventions.

### 4. FUTURE DIRECTIONS

8. Aligned to WHO's key recommendations from the WHO 2022 global report and the minimum requirements for core components of IPC programs, ongoing key priorities for SPC in the support provided to PICTs for progressing IPC program implementation include:

- Development of a Regional IPC Monitoring Dashboard that will allow countries to visualise their progress towards the minimum requirements for IPC. It is hoped that with the ability to visualise data and monitor the status of IPC core competencies, PICTs will be motivated to strengthen their national IPC programs and deliver on IPC targets.
- Support to IPC programmes with development and implementation of annual plans and dedicated budgets at the national and facility level, to ensure the sustainability of IPC and WASH infrastructure and resources.
- Advocacy and support to ensure all PICTs prioritise the IPC minimum requirements including a political commitment to the development of policies that address financing, legal frameworks and accreditation systems for IPC.
- IPC capacity-building and training for the development of IPC expertise in both clinical and public health settings.
- Support for the development of systems to monitor, report and act including HAI surveillance and monitoring of IPC indicators.

## References

- [1] W. H. Organization, "Global report on infection," World Health Organization, Geneva, 2022.
- [2] World Health Organization, "Infection prevention and control assessment framework at the facility level," November 2018. [Online]. Available: <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/WHO-HIS-SDS-2018.9>. [Accessed 2020].
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