



POST



HEALTH

Strengthening the value proposition of Posts in delivering health policies, products and services

INTRODUCTION

The pandemic is more than a health crisis. It is fundamentally a human crisis that has laid bare severe and systemic inequalities. No one is untouched. No single individual, sector nor society has been spared. No economy has gone unscathed. Some of the most vulnerable communities have suffered disproportionate impacts. Our response will have consequences not only for all of us but for future generations.

A whole-of-society, whole-of-government and whole-of-the-world approach driven by unity and compassion is required. Global solidarity is not only a moral imperative, it is a practical necessity in an interconnected world, where none of us is safe until all of us are safe.

United Nations Comprehensive Response to COVID-19, September 2020

The global crisis caused by the COVID-19 pandemic is leaving no region or country untouched, and no age group or economic sector is immune from its impact.

The pandemic has had a severe effect on the postal sector, with mail volumes falling significantly throughout the world. At the same time, however, the pandemic has highlighted the support that postal operators provide to communities, national economies and public authorities. Considered by many governments as an essential service during periods of lockdown, postal services have

proven to be key infrastructure by delivering not only their core services, but also a full range of new social and economic services to support populations at risk.

These new services include: adapted access to payment services, such as doorstep cash delivery; timely and reliable access to cash and essential products, including medicines; delivery of personal protective equipment, as well as other medical equipment and goods; and the reverse logistics of collecting test samples and transporting them to laboratories for analysis.

In this current context, the value proposition of Posts and the perception of their role by governments and partners have changed.

As the UN organization responsible for the postal sector, the UPU should lead the way in transforming this new perception into a global narrative on the role of Posts as development partners for governments and multilateral institutions.

One potential, rapid area of support is in the distribution of COVID-19 vaccines, which would offer both the UPU and Posts the opportunity to be part of the solution to a global challenge: ensuring broad-based access to the vaccine.

**NEW ESSENTIAL
POSTAL SERVICES**

**ADAPTED ACCESS TO
PAYMENT SERVICES**

**DELIVERY OF MEDICAL
AND PERSONAL
PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT**

**REVERSE LOGISTICS
OF COLLECTING AND
TRANSPORTING TEST
SAMPLES**



PROBLEM STATEMENT

Access to any vaccine represents a protracted global logistics challenge. With guidance, expertise and advice from the UPU and from global and national health actors, Posts could form part of the solution in support of governments.

In the early stages of vaccine deployment and delivery, there is a need to focus on ultra-cold chain equipment, which only a handful of logistics integrators have the capacity to handle. At present, few Posts have capabilities in cold chain logistics, and even fewer in the ultra-cold supply chain. However, as different vaccines are developed – including, potentially, thermostable vaccines that do not require ultra-cold chain equipment – there will be a need to scale up rapid delivery across the globe.

In addition, mass vaccination campaigns require ancillary medical supplies, such as syringes and sterile saline solutions, and other necessary materials that do not need to be transported via a cold supply chain.

The challenges of delivering these vaccines are likely to be numerous, relating to both the supply chain and regulatory aspects. Potential issues include transport at global and domestic levels, inbound logistics, cross-border management (customs), medical and pharmacological regulatory approval, staff training, security, last-mile delivery, and the provision of information to the population.

Vaccine delivery necessitates multiple partnerships at global, national and local levels with a variety of stakeholders, including medical suppliers, transport providers, and customs and health authorities.

Posts stand to play an important role in the creation and effective operation of such an ecosystem, owing to a number of unique advantages such as the extent of their reach, their expertise in goods transportation, their local knowledge and contacts and, ultimately, their global network under the UPU rules and standards.



In this context, the UPU could play a critical role on various fronts.

As an organization within the United Nations system, the UPU can form global partnerships with public health actors involved in the pandemic response and vaccine supply chains.

In its capacity as an intergovernmental body, the UPU can also reach out to the governmental stakeholders responsible for postal services at country level, so as to accelerate and expedite postal capacity-building projects.

As the organization responsible for the postal sector, the UPU can work with designated operators and the private sector to create synergies in response to the challenges of the universal distribution of COVID-19 vaccines.

And, finally, the UPU can draw on its experience of organizing global health-related campaigns, including previous initiatives with UNAIDS and the Pan American Health Organization (PAHO).

THE VARIOUS SUPPLY CHAIN AND REGULATORY CHALLENGES OF DELIVERING VACCINES INCLUDE:

TRANSPORT AT GLOBAL AND DOMESTIC LEVELS

INBOUND LOGISTICS

CROSS-BORDER MANAGEMENT (CUSTOMS)

MEDICAL AND PHARMACOLOGICAL REGULATORY APPROVAL

STAFF TRAINING

SECURITY

LAST-MILE DELIVERY

PROVISION OF INFORMATION TO THE POPULATION



CREATING SUSTAINABLE SOLUTIONS TO STRENGTHEN HEALTH SYSTEMS FOR THE FUTURE

One of the core advantages of expanding postal capacity for COVID-19 vaccine delivery is that these same logistics chains can also be used to deliver essential medicines and biologicals under normal circumstances.

Leveraging the lessons learned in their emergency response to the pandemic, and through strengthened supply chain capability in health product delivery, Posts would be able to provide the following services with almost no additional investment:

Delivery of essential medicines to homes and primary healthcare facilities;



Delivery of vaccines, biologicals, medical reagents and injection equipment requiring a cold supply chain only (as opposed to ultra-cold chain);



Reverse logistics to collect biological samples from rural areas for delivery to laboratories for analysis, and to take used injection equipment to reprocessing centres;



Advocacy, campaign and mass communication materials to increase health awareness.



PROPOSED APPROACH

While recognizing that a limited number of Posts already have cold or ultra-cold chain logistics in place, the global objective of this initiative is to leverage and mobilize the postal network for the last-mile delivery of COVID-19 vaccines, where feasible, and/or of related medical equipment and materials for advocacy and information campaigns.

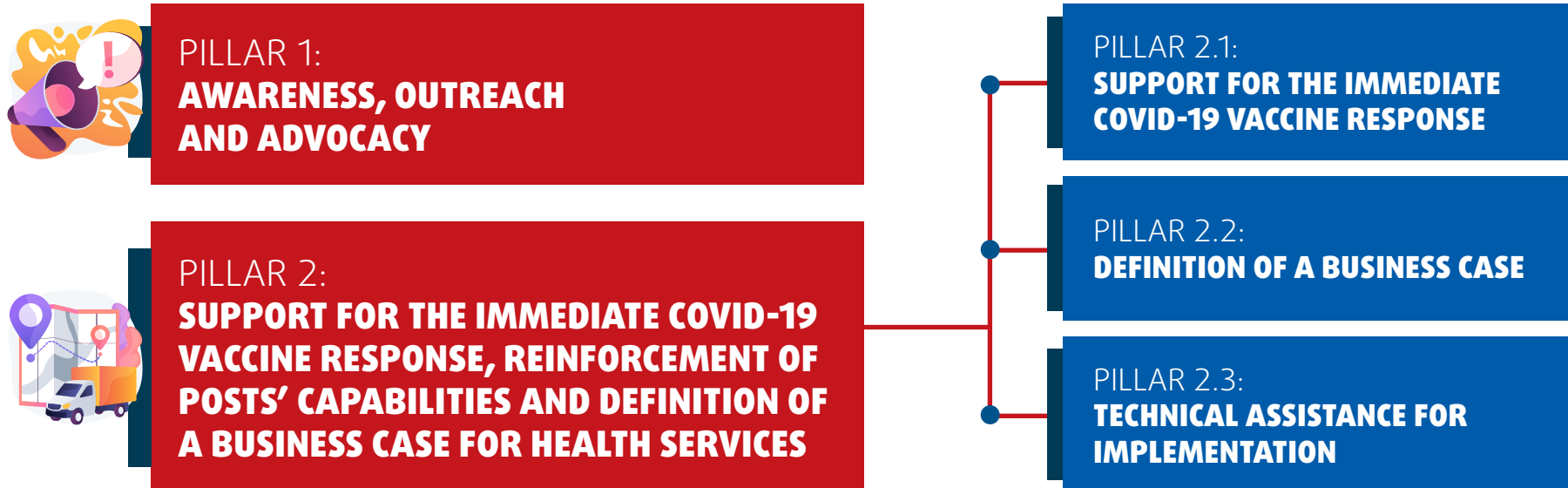
This would constitute a short-term response while Posts build longer-term capabilities in the field of public health.

A two-pillar approach is envisioned in order for Posts to address immediate needs (in relation to the COVID-19 vaccine) and to strengthen public health systems in the longer term.

The UPU will leverage the reach of its localized and extended network to identify designated operators that may be interested in providing such services.

The UPU Post4Health facility has been created to channel support, select and manage projects, and establish results frameworks in agreement with sponsors.

The proposed approach, based on two core pillars, is as follows:



PILLAR 1: AWARENESS, OUTREACH AND ADVOCACY

Awareness, outreach and advocacy are among the core tools used in any mass immunization campaign in emerging and developing economies. Public health authorities could make use of the postal network and postal staff, with their unique footprint and knowledge of local communities, in order to achieve the objectives of mass immunization awareness campaigns.

In recent years, the UPU has led regional and global awareness and advocacy

campaigns of this kind through the postal network, in collaboration with selected partners such as UNAIDS and PAHO.

Furthermore, Posts already provide a number of governmental e-services through their digital platforms. Posts could therefore support the deployment of online services and information-sharing platforms in relation to COVID-19 vaccines.

For this project, the UPU will work with national and international public health authorities to support advocacy and mass communication campaigns, following global best practices issued by the World Health Organization and other public health institutions.



ZIKA VIRUS

Is there a treatment?

There is no vaccine or specific drug against this virus. Only pain and fever can be treated.

Patients with symptoms of Zika infection should:

- Get plenty of rest
- Wear clothing that covers arms and legs
- Take medicine to relieve fever and pain
- Use mosquito nets when napping
- Drink plenty of liquids

If symptoms worsen or complications develop, see a doctor immediately.

Logos: Pan American Health Organization, World Health Organization, UPU, UNIVERSAL POSTAL UNION

www.paho.org/zikavirus

CHIKUNGUNYA

Des gestes simples pour l'éviter

Éliminez les lieux de ponte

- Éliminez les déchets autour de la maison, en particulier les pneus
- Évacuez l'eau stagnante sur les surfaces et toitures plates
- Couvrez les citernes et les puits
- Supprimez les soucoupes
- Changez régulièrement l'eau des fleurs
- Videz ou couvrez les piscines
- Effectuez ces opérations 2 à 3 fois par semaine

Protégez-vous

- Portez des vêtements amples et couvrants
- Dormez sous une moustiquaire, même le jour
- Posez des moustiquaires sur les fenêtres
- Appliquez des produits répulsifs sur les parties découvertes du corps selon les instructions du fabricant
- Protégez-vous à tout moment: les moustiques Aedes piquent surtout pendant la journée!

Consultez votre médecin en cas de symptômes

- Fèvre brutale (supérieure à 38,5°C)
- Maux de tête
- Douleurs musculaires ou articulaires, surtout au niveau des extrémités (chevilles, phalanges et poignets)
- Courbatures et fatigue
- L'usage de l'acide acétylsalicylique (aspirine) est contre-indiqué
- Le chikungunya se manifeste en moyenne 4 à 7 jours après la piqûre infectante. Continuez à vous protéger pour éviter la diffusion!
- Pour en savoir plus: www.paho.org/chikungunya

Nous avons votre santé à cœur: protégez-vous!

Logos: UPU, PAHO, WHO, CAPH



PILLAR 2: **SUPPORT FOR THE IMMEDIATE COVID-19 VACCINE RESPONSE, REINFORCEMENT OF POSTS' CAPABILITIES AND DEFINITION OF A BUSINESS CASE FOR HEALTH SERVICES**



PILLAR 2.1: **SUPPORT FOR THE IMMEDIATE COVID-19 VACCINE RESPONSE**

The urgency of the situation regarding the distribution of the COVID-19 vaccine calls for an immediate global response, in which the postal sector can play a role at the national level.

Through the Post4Health facility, the UPU will identify and support those countries where Posts already play or are set to play a role based on their existing experience in this domain. This role could be in vaccine distribution specifically, or in the wider vaccine ecosystem through the provision of health-related logistics and last-mile delivery of vaccine-related, non-cold-chain equipment, such as syringe units, saline solutions, and necessary medical consumables and equipment, kits, materials and biologicals. Such efforts will require specific equipment and transport capacity, accelerated staff training, physical security, track and trace, delivery route optimization, and deployment of extra staff and resources. The Post4Health facility could provide support in fulfilling some of these needs, thanks to its donors and sponsors.

An accelerated, transparent process

In order to select the best possible projects and provide the necessary support in the most effective and accountable way, the UPU is gathering relevant information from its member countries on the role of Posts in vaccine distribution. Once this information has been collected and analyzed, and the need for support has been identified, a project proposal will be prepared with each country or designated operator involved. Each project proposal will include a support plan from the Post4Health facility for immediate, accelerated implementation, in line with the resources available from donors and sponsors.

Through this short-term and immediate experience, the Post4Health facility will aim to strengthen Posts' longer-term sustainable capabilities in relation to the health sector, through the definition of a Post/health services business case.



PILLAR 2: SUPPORT FOR THE IMMEDIATE COVID-19 VACCINE RESPONSE, REINFORCEMENT OF POSTS' CAPABILITIES AND DEFINITION OF A BUSINESS CASE FOR HEALTH SERVICES



PILLAR 2.2: DEFINITION OF A BUSINESS CASE

A key takeaway from the UPU's experience in delivering technical assistance projects is that there needs to be a strong business case to support any new projects undertaken by the Post. This is particularly true for projects that are funded by external donors, and therefore require greater accountability and results orientation.

In the context of COVID-19 vaccination campaigns, the business case definition must consider the progress of the disease in the country, the government's response strategy, vaccine delivery specifications and postal logistics capabilities, so as to address the following fundamental questions:

If the Post is to play a role in the national vaccine response to the COVID-19 pandemic, what investment is needed to achieve these goals, what capabilities need to be built from this investment, can these capabilities be used to strengthen the health system in the long term, and can the Post's financial situation sustain these capabilities after investment funding dries up?

Will this investment lead to the creation of a profit centre for the Post after the investment period, rather than creating a new cost centre?

To answer these questions, the UPU will work with national and global public health supply chain experts to assess public health priorities and demands, including distribution plans for COVID-19 vaccines and/or other public health needs in the country.

This will enable the experts to identify the logistical challenges and gaps, including:

Human medicine handling, storage and shipping standards;

Capacity building for postal workers operating in this logistics segment with special handling requirements;

Identification of equipment needed to address needs in a specific country;

Cold chain validation processes;

Physical security, track and trace, and delivery route optimization;

Establishment of standard requirements for the last-mile delivery of vaccine-related, non-cold-chain equipment such as syringe units, saline solutions and medical consumables.

Similar but adapted processes will apply to other projects to be supported by the Post4Health facility dealing with health services not connected to COVID-19 vaccines.

To ensure value and scientific rigour in this segment of the work, the UPU will seek advice and scientific guidance from global health experts and institutions, as well as from national health agencies and other available sources of expertise.

PILLAR 2:
**SUPPORT FOR
THE IMMEDIATE
COVID-19 VACCINE
RESPONSE,
REINFORCEMENT
OF POSTS'
CAPABILITIES
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OF A BUSINESS
CASE FOR HEALTH
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PILLAR 2.3:
**TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FOR
IMPLEMENTATION**

Provided there is a justified business case for health-related activities, UPU experts, supported by public health experts, will assist designated operators in developing project concept notes and results frameworks for funding through the Post4Health facility.

The technical assistance projects could also benefit from a twinning approach with experienced Posts.

The scope of the projects could cover the development of a last-mile delivery plan for COVID-19 vaccines or any further needs, or implement a tested last-mile delivery system for existing medicines, equipment or biologicals requiring similar conditions.

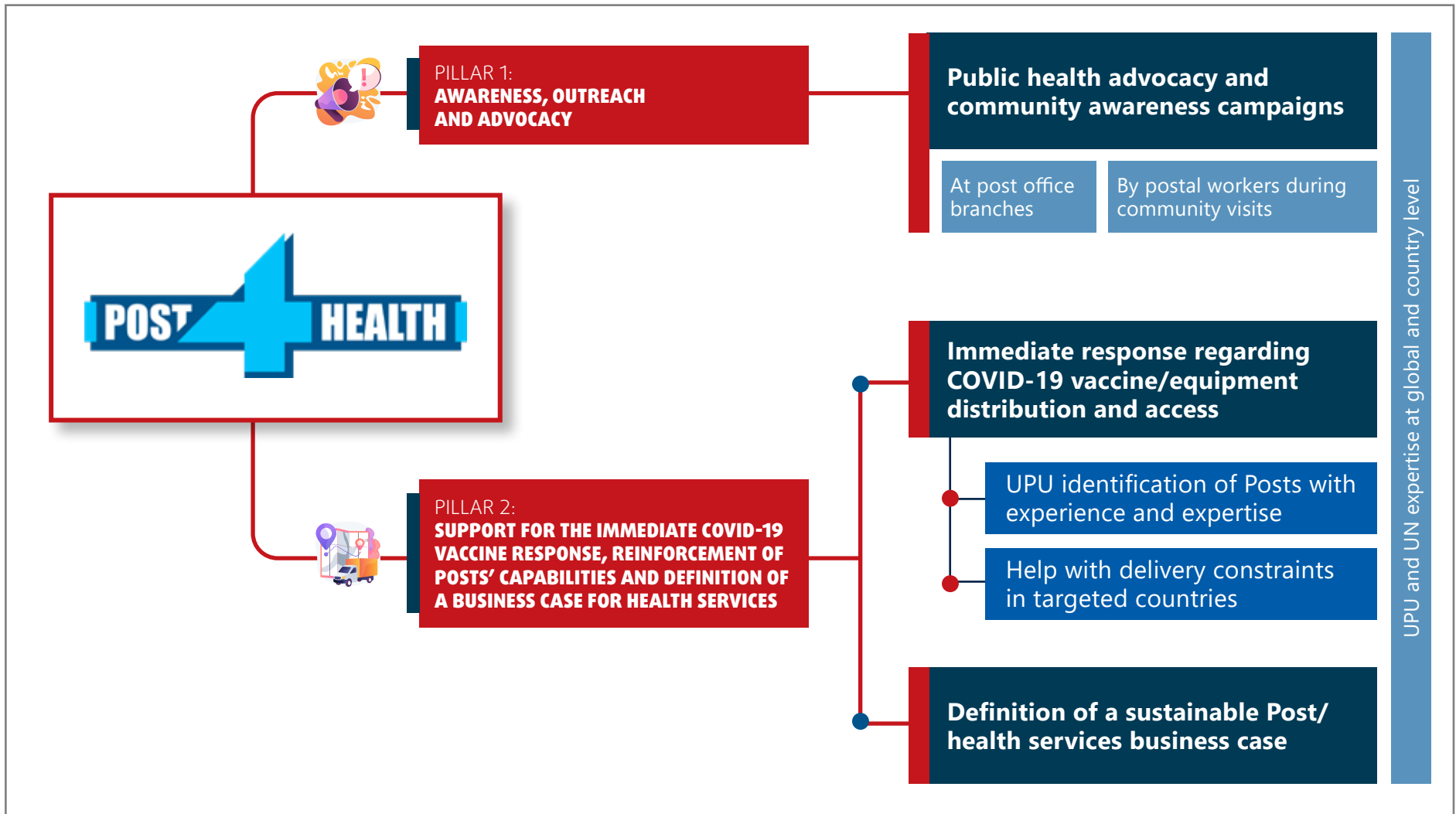
As a final step in the project, the UPU could work with member Posts to develop a resource mobilization strategy, in order to find extra funding for scaling up/mass implementation where resources are not fully covered by the Post4Health facility. Funds may be sourced from the private sector, development partners, UPU member countries, designated operators and other entities.

GOVERNANCE

As a multi-donor fund, the Post4Health facility will be managed by the UPU International Bureau in a transparent, efficient and accountable manner, with the support and involvement of donors and sponsors, and drawing on the UPU's proven experience in administering and delivering voluntary extrabudgetary country funds and multi-donor facilities, such as the Financial Inclusion Technical Assistance Facility.



A multi-stage, multi-stakeholder approach to help meet public health policy needs and provide an urgent response to COVID-19



Enhanced role of postal networks in delivering health policies, products and services

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