Ten officials from Ministry of Health, Timor-Leste working at National, District and Divisional levels visited Sri Lanka for skill development on immunization programme strengthening under the thematic area on Vaccine Procurement, vaccine management and supply chain management from 7th to 20th January 2019. They visited relevant units, institutions, districts and fields to familiarize and develop skills on immunization programme management.

The learning objectives of the thematic area were as follows.

Orientation and familiarization with Sri Lanka’s vaccine annual forecasting, specification and procurement processes and tools.

Orientation to Sri Lanka’s vaccine and supplies stock (and distribution) management system at each level (national, district, divisional and facility)

Exposure to cold chain maintenance and monitoring system

The group had an orientation course to Health System in Sri Lanka and National Immunization Programme at the Epidemiology Unit. The resource persons from Epidemiology unit provided first hand experience on vaccine forecasting procedure and self-procurement procedure practiced in Sri Lanka by the National Immunization Programme. The coordinated procedure of different sectors attending on vaccine procurement procedure and quality assurance were highlighted with experience for their skill development on the subject.

They visited and were provided with information by the Medical Supplies Division, State Pharmaceutical Corporation, National Medicinal Regulatory Authority, Procurement Unit of the Ministry of Health and Vaccinology Unit of the Medical Research Institute to observe registration, procurement, and quality assurance of vaccines delivered through the National Immunization Programme.

They had exposure to National, District (Kalutara) and Divisional level cold chain monitoring and maintenance system related to the immunization programme at field level (Rathmalana- Colombo, Galigamuwa- Kegalle). The school health programme vaccination procedure with vaccine stock management and cold chain maintenance were experienced by the team.

Finally, strategic action plan including objectives for each strategy, monitoring indicators, outcome expected and time plan were developed by the training team and experts in the Epidemiology Unit for them to implement in Timor-Leste for improvement of the National Immunization Programme, Timor-Leste.