

## ADMINISTRATIVE ARRANGEMENT

BETWEEN

THE WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION ('WHO')

AND

THE EUROPEAN COMMISSION

### ON TECHNICAL COOPERATION RELATED TO THE GLOBAL DIGITAL HEALTH CERTIFICATION NETWORK

#### **Background**

1. One of the key elements in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic has been the development and use of digital COVID certificates. As directing and coordinating authority on international health work, at the onset of the pandemic, WHO engaged with all WHO Regions to define overall guidelines for such certificates.
2. To facilitate free movement within its borders, the EU swiftly established a framework and a system for the issuance, verification and acceptance of interoperable COVID-19 certificates entitled 'EU Digital COVID Certificate' (hereinafter, '**EU DCC**', and the '**EU DCC System**'). The EU DCC System is based on open technologies and has been developed as an open-source project, that also allowed for the connection of third countries' systems that issue certificates according to EU DCC specifications. As such, the EU DCC System has become the most widely used solution, measured by number of public health authorities around the world, for the validation of digital COVID-19 Certificates.
3. WHO wishes to establish a global certification system that takes up the EU DCC trust framework, principles and open technologies under its own structure. This system would be referred to as the WHO Global Digital Health Certification Network or a similar name to be determined by WHO (hereinafter, the '**GDHCN**'). WHO intends to give appropriate recognition and salient visibility to the EU DCC system within the bounds of WHO's rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.
4. The EU DCC System and WHO standards are aligned with each other. The EU DCC System is fully accessible to health care providers, fully tested, broad and comprehensive, supporting three types of certificates (vaccination, test and recovery) issued free of charge in electronic or printed format, open-sourced and adheres to open standards. These features also make it a system that comprehensively corresponds to WHO's vision and needs as reflected in the WHO Digital Documentation of COVID-19 Certificates (DDCC) guidance documents for vaccination status and test results.
5. The aim of the GDHCN is to allow the world to benefit from convergence of digital COVID-19 certificates. WHO is well placed to facilitate aspects of this globally; specifically, standard-setting and validation of digital signatures to prevent fraud.

6. WHO is not to have access to underlying personal data, nor Private Keys, which would continue to be the exclusive domain of governments.

7. To achieve this, the GDHCN intends to provide for a global digital trust framework and infrastructure for the reliable and secure issuance and verification of digital certificates (*e.g.*, COVID-19 vaccination or test results) that also ensures their trustworthiness by confirming their authenticity, validity and integrity, through the use of digital signatures.

8. WHO intends to engage with all regions and build on the EU DCC System at a global level, incorporating other relevant experiences. To facilitate the uptake of the EU DCC by WHO and contribute to its operation, WHO and the European Commission (hereinafter collectively referred to as '**the Sides**' or individually as '**the Side**') intend to partner and collaborate on the activities described in this Administrative Arrangement, without prejudice to already existing forms of cooperation.

### **Objectives**

9. The Sides, within the limits of their respective competences, intend to partner and collaborate in the following areas:

- (a) The uptake of the EU DCC framework, principles, and open technologies by WHO; and
- (b) Further technical development of the GDHCN.

10. The Sides aim to incorporate the following shared values and principles as part of the GDHCN: transparency and openness, inclusiveness, accountability, data protection and privacy (including data minimisation), security, scalability at a global level, and equity (implementable both digitally and on paper).

11. WHO's intention is to include the operation and/or maintenance of the following on a long-term basis:

- (a) A public-key gateway, which will be backward compatible with the EU DCC System gateway;
- (b) Open-source reference implementations for issuance software, wallet app, verification app, verification endpoint service and verification webapp;
- (c) Technical specifications;
- (d) Onboarding procedure with associated tools and documentation;
- (e) Operations and monitoring processes;
- (f) Links to backends in participants connected today to the EU DCC System, which would be willing to join the GDHCN; and
- (g) Facilitating participation in the GDHCN.

12. The Sides intend to encourage global uptake of the GDHCN, including those participants that are connected to the EU DCC System and those not yet connected. The Sides intend to pay particular attention to ensure and promote equitable opportunities for the participation in the GDHCN by LMICs, considering the challenges they may face due to the current COVID-19 epidemiological situation.

13. The Sides intend to further technically develop the GDHCN to cover additional use cases, which may include the digitisation of the International Certificate of Vaccination or Prophylaxis, subject to applicable WHO rules and regulations and decisions of WHO's Governing Bodies.

## Roles and tasks

14. The European Commission intends, in accordance with the applicable legislation, to:
- (a) Share with WHO all documentation on the EU DCC System, except for those elements that may not be shared based on confidentiality obligations towards third parties;
  - (b) Share with WHO relevant contents of the currently operational EU DCC System gateway, such as public keys and configuration data, with the exception of any personal data;
  - (c) Share with WHO relevant information about EU DCC vaccine codes and test devices coding based on the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) database;
  - (d) Provide information to WHO on the EU tools used for access to and monitoring of the EU DCC System gateway, as well as the onboarding procedure;
  - (e) Provide comments and advice on the draft materials prepared by WHO as part of WHO's tasks, when so requested by WHO;
  - (f) Facilitate participation in GDHCN, including by participation in piloting, and by supporting the onboarding process when requested; and
  - (g) Consult the eHealth Network at the request of WHO to seek further advice on matters of technical and semantic relevance.
15. WHO intends, in accordance with its mandate and applicable rules, regulations and policies, and the availability of applicable resources, and subject to the decisions of its Governing Bodies, as appropriate, to:
- (a) Establish, operate, and maintain the GDHCN taking up the EU DCC System (trust framework, principles and open technologies) to ensure continued functioning of corresponding EU DCC compliant COVID-19 certificates, under the same overall technical requirements and conditions necessary for this purpose.
  - (b) Establish a process for onboarding standards and publish documentation describing it;
  - (c) Make the onboarding process as straightforward as possible for participants connected to the EU DCC, considering their already confirmed technical readiness, to ensure their maximum uptake;
  - (d) Deploy test, acceptance and production environments of the GDHCN, with the production environment ready for onboarding by participants connected to the EU DCC on 1 June 2023;
  - (e) Integrate state-of-the-art security into the GDHCN;
  - (f) Provide for technical and semantic backward compatibility with the EU DCC System, including technical validity of EU DCC-compliant certificates issued prior to the establishment of the GDHCN, including taking into account EU DCC vaccine codes and test devices coding based on the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC) database;
  - (g) Provide appropriate support and guidance to onboarding and connected GDHCN participants for operation and maintenance activities, including the deployment of upgrades; and
  - (h) Contribute to building capacities of participants not yet connected to the EU DCC to establish foundations for trusted services that safeguard and promote the standards, values, and main features embodied in the EU DCC in line with the DDCC guidance documents. This includes adopting recommendations to inform and guide new participants towards adherence to defined

architectures, standards, and specifications as the optimal pathway towards their convergence under GDHCN, by utilizing the EU DCC strong trust building mechanisms and processes.

### **Modalities of collaboration**

16. The Sides intend to closely collaborate and coordinate with regard to the activities carried out under this Administrative Arrangement.

17. The Sides intend to facilitate the participation of experts (to be engaged in accordance with the respective rules, regulations, policies, and procedures of the Sides) and organise regular meetings (virtual, in-person or hybrid) on a strategic, project management and technical-operational level to carry out joint coordination activities.

18. Such activities are intended to include jointly shaping the initial phase of transfer of knowledge and the technical and organizational uptake of the EU DCC System into the GDHCN, and the promotion of the onboarding provided to all participants connected to the EU DCC.

19. For the future developments of the GDHCN, given the European Commission's ample technical expertise in trust frameworks and their development, WHO intends to benefit from the European Commission's views, fully considering and drawing upon them, as appropriate, in the management, implementation and development of the GDHCN, pursuant to WHO's governance and decision-making process. This joint work covers *inter alia*:

- (a) Technical information sharing and discussion of best practices, with regard to technical and data governance to the GDHCN;
- (b) Assessment and development of standards and specifications underpinning the GDHCN; and
- (c) Development of mechanisms and processes for informing the priorities and ensuring the security of the GDHCN.

### **Communication**

20. The Sides intend to define and implement a joint communication plan towards respective stakeholders and third parties. The joint communication plan is expected to define clear objectives and content of the communication activities, adapted to relevant target audiences, in the management, implementation and development of the GDHCN and identify joint publications and statements, as needed. The Sides aim to ensure that the necessary capacity and resources are in place to implement the communication plan.

21. The Sides intend to inform in advance and keep each other aware of other communication activities that may be related to the subject of this Administrative Arrangement, if such activities are planned individually by the Sides or by third parties. In communication activities related to the GDHCN, the Sides intend to give appropriate recognition and salient visibility, within the bounds of WHO's rules, regulations, policies and procedures, to the European Union's role in providing its standards and technologies for this global public good, in accordance with their respective rules, policies and procedures and any visibility guidelines agreed between the European Commission and WHO.

## Resources

22. This Administrative Arrangement does not entail any financial commitments on either Side, any relevant financial input being discussed separately.

23. The Sides intend to carry out any activities pursuant to this Administrative Arrangement subject to the availability of appropriate funds and other resources, including human resources.

## Confidentiality

24. If information provided in the context of this Administrative Arrangement is described by the Side providing it as confidential, the receiving Side intends to take all reasonable measures to keep the information confidential and to only use the information for the purpose for which it was provided in accordance with the rules, regulations, policies and practices applicable to that Side, including any legislation, if any, that is applicable to it. The preceding sentence should also apply to the employees and/or consultants of the receiving Side.

25. The Sides intend to continue applying the previous paragraph even after the collaboration under this Administrative Arrangement has come to an end.

## Duration

26. This Administrative Arrangement is to be operational for a period of five (5) years from the last date of its signature or until the Sides agree that the objectives of this Administrative Arrangement have been achieved, unless one Side discontinues its participation in it at an earlier point in time.

## Nature of this Administrative Arrangement

27. This Administrative Arrangement does not intend to create any legal rights or obligations in respect of either Side under international or domestic law.

28. Notwithstanding, the Sides intend to make good faith efforts to implement this Administrative Arrangement.

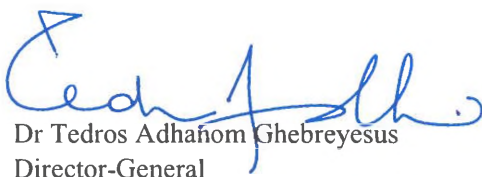
29. Nothing contained herein is to be construed as a waiver of any of the privileges and immunities enjoyed by the Sides under national or international law, and/or as submitting either Side to any national court jurisdiction.

Done in Geneva,

Done in Brussels, 17.5.2023

For the World Health Organization

For the European Commission



Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus  
Director-General

*Electronically signed*    *Electronically signed*  
Sandra GALLINA                  Roberto VIOLA  
Director-General                  Director-General  
DG SANTE                              DG CNECT