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ADB approves $10 M to strengthen COVID-19 vaccination in Maldives

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To help build the human resource capacity of the Expanded Programme on Immunization and national health data centre

The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has approved a $10 million grant under its Asia Pacific Vaccine Access Facility to help Maldives upgrade storage facilities and strengthen the distribution and administration of COVID-19 vaccines.

Through the government's Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI), more than 70% of Maldives' population has received the first two COVID-19 vaccine doses while nearly 30% has received at least one booster shot as of mid-September. Booster vaccination is ongoing and has recently been extended to cover people aged 12–49. The government is also planning to expand initial two-dose vaccination to 5–11 year-olds starting September.

The project will construct a central cold storage facility in Hulhumalè that is climate-resilient and powered by renewable energy, replacing the temporary facility in Malé. This comes with adequate space to properly store vaccines, medical supplies, and laboratory equipment. There will be dedicated areas for repairing and maintaining cold chain equipment, managing vaccine waste, and hosting a backup server for national immunization data.

ADB's financing will promote the digitalization of vaccine information management by providing equipment to set up a national health data centre and mobile devices for public health staff collecting data at all health centers. This will help link the national health networks to all islands, atolls, and the Greater Malè area.