



## **Roll Back Malaria Partnership**

### **Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Working Group (MERG) TOR**

**Revised Terms of Reference based on review of Accountability Framework and cross-comparison of TORs and best practices of other organizations**

**Revised April 2010**

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## **I. Purpose/ Rationale**

Over the past years, the RBM partners with support from the Secretariat have worked towards developing a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation system to track progress towards the RBM stated goals. In the course of constructing this system, the Secretariat identified a need for an advisory body that could inform RBM on technical questions related to monitoring and evaluation (M&E). This body brings together a group of individuals who are well versed in the science of M&E as well as the programmatic needs and implications to advise on, and advocate for, improved M&E of the RBM Initiative.

In July 2002, representatives of the various RBM Partner organizations met in Washington DC, to discuss M&E issues. This group endorsed the formation of a Monitoring and Evaluation Reference group. The Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (MERG) of the RBM Secretariat will continue to act as an advisory body for the RBM Partnership Board on all matters pertaining to M&E of the Secretariat's initiatives on the international, regional, and national levels. The MERG will provide technical advice on state-of-the-art approaches to M&E of malaria programs. The technical focus of the MERG is on the global indicators to assure consistency and accuracy in national and regional reporting.

The MERG will maintain communications with inter-country teams and WHO and UNICEF regional offices working on process monitoring and country-specific M&E issues but will not address these issues as part of its primary mandate.

## **II. Functions of the Working Group**

The MERG is an advisory body for the RBM Partnership Board. It does not have authority to implement M&E activities on behalf of RBM, nor is it accountable for reporting to the Secretariat on national or regional progress in malaria control. Instead, the M&E work will be implemented by National Malaria Control Programmes with support from the RBM subregional networks and RBM partners.

The activities of the MERG will include, but not be limited to:

- **Convene:** the MERG brings together a group of individuals from institutional partners who are well versed in the science of M&E as well as the programmatic needs and implications to advise on, and advocate for, improved M&E of the RBM Initiative
- **Co-ordinate:** by bringing the Partners together, gives a forum for the Partners to co-ordinate their efforts in M&E. Key functions:
  - Supporting coordination/harmonization of M&E activities (data collection, analysis, dissemination) among the RBM Working Groups and partners
  - Advising on prioritization of tasks and recommendations for outputs or products from Working Groups
  - Identifying critical technical questions arising from M&E activities and organizing smaller Working Groups to address the questions and provide technical feedback on issues
  - Identifying and prioritizing critical action steps for country, regional and global M&E work to assure that action is taken by the relevant group(s) to achieve quality M&E in a timely fashion
  - Identifying and recommending strategies for addressing the needs for capacity building in M&E at all levels
  - Developing and maintaining consensus around M&E strategies across partners and institutions

- Developing and providing technical guidance on selection and definition of indicators for national, inter-country and global reporting
- Providing technical guidance on appropriate data collection methods, analytic strategies, and dissemination of recommendations
- Monitoring changing needs for M&E as country programs, and the RBM Initiative itself, develop further
- **Facilitate Communication:** by bringing Partners together, the MERG is a forum for communication and mutual learning. Key functions:
  - Advising the RBM Board on key performance indicators and associated targets
  - Keeping RBM informed of developments within other institutions and initiatives, such as the Health Metrics Network, the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria, the US President's Malaria Initiative, the World Bank Malaria Booster Programme, and similar initiatives that have relevance for RBM
  - Informally advocating for increased attention to and resources for monitoring and evaluation activities within the RBM Secretariat and the members' home institutions
  - Other activities pertinent to M&E as requested by the RBM Secretariat

### **III. Roles and Responsibilities**

#### **a) Members**

The MERG can consist of two types of members: (1) Core Member and (2) Observer. MERG is a willing assembly of RBM Partners; as such, membership is open to all interested institutional partners, provided that they meet the criteria for one of the membership types.

#### **Core member status**

Core members represent their institutions. Every interested institutional partner can become a core member of the MERG if s/he meets the following criteria:

- Expertise and experience in relevant field for M&E
- Appropriate level of seniority and credibility
- Ability to fund their own participation/ attendance at MERG meetings, unless they qualify for financial support for participation via the RBM Partnership Secretariat or other RBM partners

The group of core members should ideally meet the following criteria:

- Balance of scientific and programmatic knowledge and experience
- Balance of relevant disciplines
- Balanced geographic representation
- Balanced representation of constituencies
- Representation of key organizations/institutions relevant for topic of MERG

Institutional partners who wish to become core members and who meet the criteria can request core membership status. Once the member has adequately demonstrated consistent participation in MERG activities, the co-chairs can approve core member status. The MERG co-chairs may actively approach and encourage individuals/organizations to join the MERG to mirror the ideal composition.

Roles and responsibilities of core members include:

- Participation in each ordinary MERG meeting (or determine alternate if participation not possible)
- Participation in at least 80% of conference calls

- Active participation in the implementation of the MERG work plan
- The role is a voluntary role - there is no remuneration for participating

A core member will maintain that status until:

- S/he resigns
- S/he is unable to perform the agreed upon responsibilities as defined above and agreed upon tasks

### **Observer status**

Interested individuals/ organizations that cannot commit to the same degree as core members are allowed to participate in MERG meetings at the discretion of the co-chairs as observers and contribute as possible. Observers have no voting power (see below).

Other experts in specific fields will be invited to participate in general MERG meetings and taskforces, depending on the agenda and the focus of activities being conducted on behalf of RBM partners.

### **b) Chair /Co-Chair**

Election process:

- Two co-chairs or alternatively one chair and one co-chair (at the discretion of the core MERG members) are elected by the MERG members prior to the mid-year meeting of the RBM Board. Co- chairs are elected for a two year term with potential renewal.
- The election procedure shall be transparent and open to all core members of the MERG with one vote per core member.
- The Secretariat shall send out notifications one month prior to the election, soliciting nominations. Each core member has the right to nominate one person or self-nominate.
- Two weeks prior to the election the Secretariat shall obtain a confirmation from the nominees that they are interested and willing to run for election.
- Prior to the co- chairs' endorsement by the Board, the Secretariat shall obtain an explicit assurance from their employer agreeing to the additional travel and workload related to assuming the role as chair of the MERG.
- The election should be carried out through a secret ballot and can either take place during one of the Working Group meetings or through the use of electronic vote. A simple majority decides.
- The co- chairs are endorsed by the RBM Board at the mid-year Board meeting.

Roles and responsibilities include:

- Preparation and chairing of MERG meetings
- Preparation of annual work plan and budget in collaboration with the RBM Secretariat (see below)
- Coordination and review of monthly progress reports to RBM Secretariat and Executive Committee (see below)
- Review of meeting minutes

### **c) Secretariat**

Roles and responsibilities of the MERG secretariat include:

- Coordination and organization of MERG meetings in collaboration with co- Chairs
- Provision of facilities for meetings (rooms, conference call facilities etc.)
- Preparation and dissemination of meeting minutes
- Preparation of monthly progress reports to RBM Secretariat and Executive Committee (see below)

- Maintenance of MERG homepage, at least update membership list and upload meetings minutes and progress reports.
- Other supporting functions as appropriate

**d) Sub-Working Groups/ Taskforces**

Sub-Working Groups/ Taskforces may be established to work on specific issues of MERG work plan. Responsibilities are dependent on Sub-Working Group/ taskforce tasks. Chairs / co-chairs propose the creation of Sub-Working Groups /Taskforces and the Executive Committee endorses the Sub-working Group /Taskforce at its monthly meeting.

**IV. Working Procedures**

**a) Annual Work Plan and Funding**

Planning:

- The RBM Secretariat supports the development of the annual work plan and budget to ensure consistency across Working Groups.
- Annual work plans will be follow the SMART objectives:
  - S – specific
  - M – measurable
  - A – accountable
  - R – realistic
  - T – time related
- Facilitated by the co- chairs, the MERG will develop a biennium work plan and budget, guided by the GMAP strategic implementation plan commissioned by the RBM Board.
- A distinction is made between the first and second year work plan and budget. The first year work plan and budget will match the funds identified at the mid-year Board meeting and are fixed for the following 12 months after the Board's approval. The second year work plan and budget are indicative, based on funding projections and revised after the first year.
- The biennial work plans and budgets are approved in November by the Board and are subsequently implemented by the MERG.

Preparation:

- Action items will be matched with budget line items to clearly link the activities of the work plan with funds.
- Annual work plans will specify funding raised and clearly assign this funding to specific tasks.
- Dependencies between action items will be recognized and activities need to be prioritized.
- Work plans highlight the necessary interaction with other RBM Partnership bodies (e.g. other Working Groups, Sub-Regional Networks, and individual Partners).
- The work plan and budget will be ready 40 days prior to the end year Board meeting for the RBM Secretariat to compile a partnership work plan that will be reviewed by the Executive Committee.
- The Executive Committee can suggest changes in the work plan if required by the financial situation or to better reflect RBM priorities.

Resource Mobilization:

- Mobilizing resources for Working Group activities is the responsibility of the Working Group.

**b) Meetings**

**Convocation of meetings**

- Ordinary Meetings: The MERG Chairpersons will call the MERG meetings supported by the Secretariat in line with the programme of work, and following informal consultation with the RBM Secretariat and other members on the suitability of proposed meeting dates.
- Ad Hoc Meetings: Meetings on issues requiring the urgent review of the MERG will be organized on an ad hoc basis if called for by the Partnership Board or Secretariat.

**Types of Meetings**

In the interest of efficient use of time and limiting costs associated with meetings, the MERG will complement face-to-face meetings as held at a host partner's site with virtual meetings (i.e. teleconferences and videoconferences) of the MERG as a whole or its sub-Working Group(s) as necessary.

**Frequency of Meetings**

- Ordinary Meetings: A number of ordinary meetings will be organized and held at a host partner's site per annum.
- Ad Hoc Meetings: Such meetings will be organized as stated above (see Convocation of Meetings).

**c) Conduct of Business**

The quorum of the MERG for adopting recommendations will be 80% of the core members. Observers have no voting power.

**d) Minutes**

The MERG Secretariat will draft the minutes on the proceedings of the meetings, including those of Sub-Working Groups. The Chairpersons, and other selected members depending on the subject matter, will review these minutes within two weeks of a meeting. The MERG chair circulates the meeting minutes no later than two weeks after the meeting to the RBM Secretariat and the Executive Committee.

**V. Reporting and Performance Review**

Working groups prepare two types of reports for the Executive Director (or appointed Performance Committee): a monthly progress report that is circulated to the Executive Committee for its monthly meetings and a semi-annual report that is prepared for the semi-annual Board meeting.

**Monthly reporting:** The MERG Secretariat prepares a monthly report for the Executive Director on progress in achieving the work plan objectives, including a financial report. The MERG chair reviews this report.

**Semi-annual reporting:** Reports immediately preceding the Board meetings should summarize progress of the previous six months.

At each Board meeting the Executive Committee should select two Working Groups to report to the Board and to allow an interactive discussion with Board members on issues, challenges, progress to-date and future objectives and work plans.

**VI. Dissolution of the Working Group**

The TORs will be reviewed by the Board on a biannual basis. The review process will be based on specific performance criteria. In other words, MERG will be measured on how well MERG accomplishes the activities and meets the goals and targets defined in annual work plans. If a majority of targets cannot be met in the two year time period of the work plan and there is a low rate of participation among members, if the mandate of the MERG has been completed, or if the Board no longer feels that the mandate of the MERG is relevant to the new Partnership Work Plan, the Board can decide to dissolve the MERG.

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