

TDR SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE AND SCIENTIFIC WORKING GROUP

Terms of Reference

Preamble

The World Health Organization (WHO), as the Executing Agency of the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), and the TDR Joint Coordinating Board (JCB), are advised by worldwide experts on TDR's strategic approach and the implementation of its workplan. The aim is to harness the best global knowledge in an open, transparent fashion and to help TDR to make sound decisions.

The Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee (STAC) is TDR's overarching advisory body, as foreseen in the Memorandum of Understanding, which oversees the scientific and technical strategies, directions and priorities of the Special Programme. STAC provides its recommendations to the JCB and the TDR Secretariat.

In addition, the TDR Secretariat convenes a Scientific Working Group (SWG) to review and provide advice on the prioritization of proposed activities and the selection of projects for funding, to review and evaluate progress. The SWG is created to support implementation of the six-year strategy of the Programme.

Below are the Terms of Reference for both STAC and the SWG.

Scientific and Technical Advisory Committee¹

Functions

STAC provides external scientific and technical input in the planning, prioritization and review of TDR's activities. More specifically, STAC:

- Reviews, from a scientific and technical standpoint, the content, scope and dimensions of the Special Programme.
- Recommends priorities within the Special Programme, including the establishment and disestablishment of the SWG, and all scientific and technical activities related to the Special Programme.
- Provides the JCB and the TDR Secretariat with a continuous independent evaluation of the scientific and technical aspects of all activities of the Special Programme.

¹ Refer to the TDR Memorandum of Understanding for further information on the administrative and technical structures of the Special Programme [document [TDR/CP/78.5/Rev.2013/rev.1](#)]

Responsibilities

As part of its functions, STAC has the following responsibilities:

- Review and provide advice on TDR's vision and strategy, and the content, scope and dimensions of the Special Programme from a scientific and technical standpoint.
- Review and advise on the prioritization and balance of the various disease and other portfolios, entry/exit decisions and programme implementation, taking into account TDR's overall comparative advantage and performance.
- Examine the interface and level of collaboration between TDR and WHO departments, both at headquarters and at the regional level, and between TDR and key external stakeholders, and advise on best approaches for synergizing complementary activities to increase impact.
- Nominate the co-Chairs of the SWG from among current STAC members, to be confirmed by SWG members.

Composition and duties

- STAC is comprised of up to 15 experts with diverse technical expertise who serve in their personal capacities, not as a representative of their institution or government, to cover a broad range of disciplines required for TDR's activities.
- To maintain the independence and objectivity of STAC, members cannot be current recipients of TDR funding. STAC members will be asked to declare any possible conflict of interest by completing the WHO Declaration of Interests form and may be requested to excuse themselves from any discussion(s) related to the area(s) in question.
- Members are expected to make active contributions, by bringing their individual experiences and points of view, and be prepared to discuss and ultimately endorse collective recommendations.
- STAC composition should be balanced for technical expertise, gender and with equitable geographical representation.

Nomination and terms of appointment

- As per paragraph 4.2.1 of the Memorandum of Understanding, members of the STAC, including the Chair, shall be appointed to serve for a period of two years, and may be eligible for reappointment for one or more additional terms of one or two years each, not exceeding six years in total. Whenever possible, to maintain continuity of membership, the expiration of the initial terms of office of members of STAC will be staggered.
- Members are nominated by the TDR Secretariat, in consultation with the Standing Committee, and with the endorsement of the JCB.
- When four or more members need to be replaced, TDR could issue an open call for interest, screen and propose a shortlist of candidates based on experience and expertise needed.
- In case of less than four STAC vacancies, suggestions of candidates may be obtained from STAC members and TDR staff.
- As much as possible, STAC membership will be staggered to ensure continuity.
- Proposed membership will be presented for discussion and approval by the JCB.

Chair

- The Chair of STAC is selected by the TDR Secretariat, in consultation with the Standing Committee, and with the endorsement of the JCB. In selecting a Chair, preference is usually given to a member of STAC who has been in good standing for at least one year and has demonstrated leadership and a broad understanding of the Programme. The Chair has the following functions:
 - to chair the meetings of the STAC; and
 - to liaise with the TDR Secretariat between meetings (including with regard to the preparation of draft agendas and other documents to be submitted to the STAC).

The Chair of STAC is also a member of the TDR Standing Committee which meets twice a year, and participates in the meetings of the JCB as an observer.

- In case of unexpected resignation or inability of the Chair to attend a STAC meeting, the TDR Secretariat will select a temporary replacement from among the existing members, in consultation with the Standing Committee and the Chair of the JCB.
- Whenever possible, there should be an overlap between the outgoing and incoming Chairs in one meeting to ensure continuity.

Rapporteur

- A Rapporteur is appointed by the STAC at the beginning of each meeting.
- The Rapporteur is responsible for developing a timely and accurate report of the STAC meeting, with assistance from the TDR Secretariat.

Operations

- STAC meets at least once each year.
- TDR provides the Secretariat to STAC, including sustained scientific, technical and administrative support. In this regard, TDR shall provide the members of STAC with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers in advance of each meeting.
- The Rapporteur, supported by the Secretariat, ensures that all recommendations are captured correctly and endorsed by the STAC at the end of the meeting. The Rapporteur, with assistance from the Secretariat, prepares a report of the meeting, which should contain the main meeting outcomes as well as the recommendations. The report will then be shared with the TDR Secretariat and through the Standing Committee, with the JCB.

Scientific Working Group

A Scientific Working Group is established by the TDR Secretariat (having considered the advice of STAC) to correspond to TDR's disease and other portfolios and to support implementation of the six-year strategy of the Programme. This group is responsible for giving advice to the TDR Secretariat on specific areas of TDR's workplan, and for providing an independent assessment of specific projects and initiatives.

Function

- The issues to be addressed by the SWG are decided upon by TDR, having considered the recommendations of STAC. They may include:
 - o review and prioritization of proposed activities;
 - o screening and selection of projects;
 - o recommendations for funding; and
 - o follow-up of progress and evaluation of results.

- Ad hoc groups may be established by the TDR Secretariat to review specific documents or to review and make funding recommendations in respect of specific projects. Members of ad hoc groups are selected by the TDR Secretariat, in consultation with the SWG, and may include members of the SWG if appropriate.
- All advisory groups report to the TDR Secretariat.

Composition and Chair

- Members of the SWG are selected by the TDR Secretariat in consultation with STAC. The co-Chairs shall be STAC members. STAC members may remain as members of the SWG even after their term on STAC has expired, however the co-Chairs must be current STAC members.
- The SWG shall preferably have a minimum of eight and a maximum of twelve members, including the co-Chairs.
- Members must have expertise in one or more of the disciplines relevant to the current strategy of TDR.
- To maintain independence, members cannot be current recipients of TDR funding. They will be asked to declare any possible conflict of interest by completing the online WHO Declaration of Interests form and may be requested to excuse themselves from any discussion(s) related to the area(s) in question.
- Members, including co-Chairs, shall be appointed to serve for a period of one or two years and may be eligible for reappointment for one or more additional terms of one or two years each. Whenever possible, to maintain continuity of membership, the expiration of the initial term of office of members will be staggered.
- Membership terms shall not exceed six years.
- Ad hoc members may be appointed for a specific meeting.

Operation

- The SWG will normally meet at least once a year. TDR may convene additional meetings, including virtually, on an ad hoc basis. TDR may furthermore request members to carry out activities between meetings.
- In order to facilitate reporting, the SWG will follow a harmonized reporting process.
- The SWG works closely with the TDR Secretariat to provide advice and make suggestions.
- The TDR Secretariat is responsible for establishing working procedures for the organization of meetings, including the preparation of draft agendas and other documents.