Global monitoring of country progress on addressing antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

Guidance notes to accompany the global monitoring questionnaire on AMR version 1.1

29 September 2016

Introduction

Background to the Global Monitoring on AMR
The Global Action Plan on Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR)\(^1\) was adopted in 2015 by all countries through decisions in the World Health Assembly (WHA), FAO Governing Conference and the World Assembly of OIE Delegates\(^2\). It was further endorsed by heads of states in the United Nations General Assembly meeting in September 2016\(^3\).

At the WHA in 2015, countries agreed to report back to the World Health Assembly in May 2017. FAO and OIE are also seeking information on progress with implementing the Global Action Plan. WHO, with FAO and OIE, are developing a monitoring framework that includes monitoring the implementation of national action plans on AMR. The questionnaire was developed jointly by WHO, FAO and OIE as part of their tripartite work on AMR.

Purpose of this Global Monitoring
The purpose of this monitoring exercise is to review and summarise country progress in implementing key actions to address AMR, for reporting annually at global level. The country responses will also be used to guide follow-up actions and identify areas where assistance and support is required. This is the first year of this approach to monitoring, and it aims to gather baseline data and test the process and questionnaire.

Questionnaire approach
The questionnaire is designed to be completed through self-assessment at country level. Countries are asked to identify their progress under each topic in the questionnaire, across sectors. This will help to provide a picture of the stage the country has reached in building an effective and sustainable multi-sectoral response to AMR, as a basis for global reporting. It may also stimulate discussion at country level on how to increase progress.

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Questions & Answers

1. What is the structure of the monitoring questionnaire?

The questionnaire closely reflects the Global Action Plan on AMR. It starts by identifying focal points across sectors and then asks about multi-sectoral working on AMR (question 4) and on developing a national AMR action plan (question 5). The subsequent questions address four of the strategic objectives of the Global Action Plan that focus on country level action. The four objectives that require country action are:

- Objective 1. Improve awareness and understanding of AMR through effective communication, education and training. *This objective is addressed in questions 6.1-6.5.*
- Objective 2. Strengthen the knowledge and evidence base through surveillance and research (*see q 7.1-7.4*).
- Objective 3. Reduce the incidence of infection through effective sanitation, hygiene and infection prevention measures (*see q 8.1-8.3*).
- Objective 4. Optimize the use of antimicrobial medicines in human and animal health (*see q 9.1-9.3*).

Note that objective 5 of the Global Action Plan, which focuses on investing in development of new tools and building an economic case for addressing AMR, is mainly focussed at global level, and therefore has not been included in this questionnaire.

2. AMR is a multi-sectoral issue, does the questionnaire address AMR across sectors?

Yes, the questionnaire has separate questions for human and animal health for each objective in the Global Action Plan on AMR. The questions on animal health are intended to include terrestrial and aquatic animals. Crop protection and food safety are mentioned in some of the responses. There is also one question on the environment, which asks about the extent of and compliance with legislation and regulations to prevent contamination of the environment with antimicrobials.

The question headings have been colour coded to aid completion:

- Green shading relates to multi-sectoral issues and the environment.
- Yellow shading denotes questions on human health aspects of AMR.
- Blue shading denotes animal health and agriculture questions.

3. What is the recommended process for completing the AMR monitoring questionnaire?

Each country is asked to submit one official response, validated by all involved sectors, which summarises national progress. It is therefore important to involve a multi-sectoral group in assessing national progress and provide consolidated responses agreed by all.

It is recommended that the AMR monitoring process is managed by the national focal point(s) for AMR, calling together key players working on AMR, from across sectors, government, development partners, and civil society, to discuss how to rate progress within the country. Many countries have a multi-sectoral working group on AMR or a national AMR coordinating committee, and this would be the ideal forum for this discussion. It is expected that these meetings to decide the country responses will trigger further discussion on the priorities for moving forward and how to address any barriers that have arisen.

In the absence of national focal point(s) and/or a multi-sectoral national committee, it is suggested that relevant officials from ministries responsible for human and animal health work together to decide on the process for agreeing and submitting the national response.
To assist with completing the questionnaire, there are some questions for discussion linked to each question in the monitoring questionnaire available online on the WHO website (http://www.who.int/antimicrobial-resistance/en/).

4. How do we submit the national response to the questionnaire?

The questionnaire should be completed online with one questionnaire submitted from each country. In order to avoid multiple responses to the online questionnaire, WHO will send a unique electronic key to access the online questionnaire to one national focal point who leads on AMR. It is recommended that the questionnaire is printed out for discussion and agreement among the partners involved, and then submitted online using the electronic access key provided.

Once a country has submitted the final version of the completed questionnaire, the responses will be locked and cannot be further edited. However, if countries wish to amend their response, countries can ask for it to be unlocked by contacting the WHO Secretariat by email at whoamrsecretariat@who.int.

5. What is the rating scale used in most questions?

Most questions ask for a rating of national capacity and progress on a five-point scale (A to E). This format is intended to be a simple way to summarise country progress, with results that can be collated at global level. When the monitoring is repeated it will be possible to look at trends over time. The five step rating approach has been harmonised with the OIE Performance of Veterinary Services (PVS) assessment scale and the tools proposed for monitoring and evaluation of the International Health Regulations (IHR).

The levels are intended to encompass both progress and functionality – whether policies and plans are in place and how far activities are being implemented. The response needs to select one rating for each question. Broadly the levels are defined as follows, with some variation relating to each topic:

A – no policies or plans in place and few or no activities underway.

B – activities have started in some places or for some target groups, and related policies or plans are in development.

C – some activities are underway at national level, and policies or plans have been developed.

D – functional implementation of policies and activities, at national scale.

E – all planned activities are being implemented and functioning at national scale. There is active monitoring and updating of plans.

The levels are intended to correspond to the capacity scale used in the questionnaire for monitoring and evaluating the IHR (where the levels are called: no capacity, limited, developed, demonstrated, and sustained capacity).

The response should be selected at the level that most closely reflects the country situation. Since these are composite measures, there will be some judgement required. Where the country meets all aspects in the rating, then it selects that level. Where almost all aspects are met or are soon likely to be met fully, the partners can agree to apply the rating.
6. Is the country response meant to cover resistance to TB, HIV or malaria medicines as well as antibiotics?

Antimicrobials include a wide range of products including antibiotics, anti-fungals, and medicines for HIV, TB and malaria.

- **On the human health side, the responses should focus on antibiotics** and monitor efforts to minimise the spread of resistance to these critical medicines. This is because many countries are at an early stage of developing a sustainable response to antibiotic resistance. In contrast, many countries that are affected by HIV, TB and malaria have already made plans and some progress towards addressing resistance as part of those disease programmes.

- **On animal health, crops and the environment**, the questions relate to all types of antimicrobials.

7. How should we respond if we lack the information to answer some questions?

Countries that are at an early stage regarding AMR, or have only addressed it in one sector, may not be able to answer all the questions. In that case, you are encouraged to answer as many as you can, including at least **question 4** on whether there is multi-sectoral governance or coordination mechanism for AMR and the extent of One Health working, and **question 5** on the status of the national action plan on AMR.

8. What is the deadline for submission?

**Responses are requested by 15 January 2017** for inclusion in the report on global progress against the Global Action Plan on AMR to the World Health Assembly in May 2017 and for reports to the governing bodies of FAO and OIE in 2017.

9. How will the data be used?

The country responses will be made available online through the WHO website, with open access.

The data will be used for reporting at global and regional level. The responses will also be analysed by WHO, OIE, FAO and other partners to identify countries that may benefit from follow up, for example, with technical support, funding or advocacy.

10. Will this global monitoring continue in future?

The intention is to monitor country progress annually, in order to assess in which activity areas and in which countries progress is being made and where progress is less advanced; and take action to address this.

This is the first round of global AMR monitoring in this format and the questionnaire and process will be reviewed and revised if necessary. Please send any feedback on the questionnaire to **whoamrsecretariat@who.int**

**Other questions?**

If there are questions on the process or the questionnaire, please contact Pravarsha Prakash at WHO at **whoamrsecretariat@who.int**. She will coordinate with FAO and OIE as required.