Update on the WHO Global Malaria Programme strategy refresh

February 2015, Geneva, Switzerland

Introduction

The Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 will be formally considered for adoption during the World Health Assembly in May 2015, and the Global Malaria Programme (GMP) recently recruited a new Director. These two elements provide a unique opportunity to revisit GMP’s role and clarify how GMP will relate to other critical partners and support Member States and their partners to achieve the milestones and targets of the technical strategy.

The GMP strategy review process started at the beginning of December 2014, with the help of a team from the Boston Consulting Group, and will last until the end of March 2015. Building on inputs and feedback from internal and external stakeholders, GMP is reviewing its past and current activities and structure at the three levels of WHO. The aim is to identify areas to increase capacity and articulate how GMP will support Member States and their partners, as outlined above.

The aim of this document is to update the Malaria Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) on this review process and on the reasons that led GMP to undertake it. During the session on 5 March 2015, we will provide a quick overview of the preliminary results of this strategy refresh, and we look forward to participants’ thoughts and feedback.

Background

The Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030 provides a comprehensive framework for countries to develop tailored programmes for accelerating towards malaria elimination. The strategy emphasizes that progression towards malaria-free status does not consist of a set of independent stages. Rather, it is a continuous process requiring a structuring of programmes in line with subnational stratification by malaria risk, based on high-quality surveillance data. It underlines the need to ensure universal coverage of core malaria interventions, and proposes milestones and goals for 2020, 2025 and 2030. It also identifies areas where innovative solutions will be essential to achieve the goals, and outlines the global financial implications of implementing the strategy. The technical strategy was endorsed by the Executive Board of the World Health Assembly in January 2015, and is expected to be adopted by the World Health Assembly in May 2015.

The technical strategy articulated the role of the Secretariat along seven key activities:

- set, communicate and disseminate normative guidance, policy advice and implementation guidelines;

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WHO/HTM/GMP/MPAC/2015.1
• provide guidance to Member States in reviewing, updating and implementing their national strategies;
• track progress and work with countries to improve surveillance and data management;
• monitor regional and global malaria trends;
• promote research and knowledge generation on key topics;
• assess and issue recommendations for products, tests, medicines and vaccines; and
• regularly update and review the technical strategy.

Issues for MPAC consideration: GMP strategy refresh process

Overall process: the approach for this review process follows three phases, each about one month in length.

1. Phase 1: Data analysis and engagement of internal stakeholders (5 December 2014 to 16 January 2015)

The first phase focused on gathering input and collecting data on GMP’s current roles and responsibilities and on its structure. The objectives for the first phase were to:

• analyse current roles and responsibilities
• assess the efficiency of key processes and activities
• highlight interfaces with other entities both within and outside WHO
• identify potential capacity and skills gaps.

The information was largely collected through interviews with internal stakeholders and technical workshops devoted to specific topics. Interviews were conducted with the full WHO headquarters staff, as well as the six regional advisors and a number of country representatives from all six WHO regions. The discussion covered both strategic questions and structural, process-oriented topics.

Following the first phase of interviews, six technical topics were identified for more in-depth work: elimination, surveillance, *Plasmodium vivax*, technical support, capacity-building and implementation research. Specific workshops involving staff members from all units were held to gather data on current activities, identify potential gaps and discuss options for GMP’s engagement.

The first phase was concluded in mid-January through a one-day staff retreat that included regional advisors, to review a summary of the interviews and workshops, and launch Phase 2 discussions on the potential priorities.

2. Phase 2: Opportunity assessment and structural requirements (19 January to 20 February 2015)

The second phase was focused on evaluating and prioritizing potential roles and responsibilities for GMP. It included an assessment of each activity’s strategic importance, of the capacity of GMP to undertake the activities, and the structural implications of each option.

An interview process focused on external stakeholders was then undertaken, to gather key partners’ input on the activities of WHO’s Global Malaria Team. These interviews were focused on current activities and potential options for the future.

In addition to these external inputs, continued discussions were held with GMP staff to evaluate potential impacts and outline the necessary structural changes.
3. Phase 3: Recommendation development

The third and final phase, which is currently underway, will lead to a decision on the strategic adjustments to be made to GMP’s positioning and structure. Key areas of focus will be defined, and interfaces with other WHO entities and partners will be outlined. From the strategy refresh, a new external communication strategy will be derived, and early priorities and main challenges for GMP will be identified. The department structure and available skills will also be adapted to reflect the strategic evolution.

Key deliverables for the GMP strategy refresh

The deliverables for the GMP strategic plan and organization are:

- a clear, concise strategy document describing GMP’s activities, roles and responsibilities in relation to its partners, and high-level structural requirements for implementation;
- key priorities for the next 5 years;
- a new structure for the department; and
- a communication and engagement strategy for internal and external audiences.

Requested action by MPAC

For advice and feedback on the preliminary strategy refresh presented on 5 March 2015.