WHO Categorization of Vaccines by Public Health Priority  
Terms of Reference (Draft 10.08.07)

Introduction

To provide policy makers and international partners with more information to appropriately decide on introduction of vaccines into national immunization programs, WHO is undertaking a programme of work to categorize, by public health priority, existing and new vaccines not yet recommended for universal routine use in national immunization programmes.

The work undertaken will be led by a Task Team which will:

1. develop a landscape analysis which summarizes both quantitative and qualitative characteristics of vaccine-preventable diseases for which vaccines are currently available (but not yet recommended for universal routine use) or expected to be available (licensed) within the next five years (by 2012),
2. develop options for carrying out the categorization, and then after review by SAGE, fully develop the selected categorization method; and
3. apply the landscape analysis and the categorization method to categorize vaccines by public health priority.

The landscape analysis will be based upon available data on vaccines and diseases, and include input from WHO vaccine focal points and other experts. Developing and validating the categorization method will include reviewing available methods and obtaining input from countries and stakeholders on criteria by which vaccines should be assessed. Feedback will also be obtained from key stakeholders on the overall product (categorization of vaccines by public health priority).

Work will be done concurrently on developing the landscape analysis and developing options for the categorization method. The final categorization product will be presented to Strategic Advisory Group of Experts (SAGE) at the 6-9 November 2007 meeting for review and decision.

Activities

1. Development of the landscape analysis
   - Activities
     • Develop a list of diseases for consideration in the landscape analysis (i.e. diseases for which vaccines are currently available but not recommended for universal routine use and those for which vaccines are expected to become available in the next five years (by 2012)).
     • Develop a broad list of quantitative and qualitative characteristics regarding the vaccines and the disease(s) the vaccines prevent/control.
     • Collate available information on the diseases and vaccines, with clearly documented referencing (published information should be the priority, but where the information is not published, expert opinion will be used).
     • Review by external experts
2. Categorizing vaccines by public health priority
   - Activities
     - Develop a framework of options for doing the categorization, outlining potential methodologies that could be used, the strengths and weaknesses of each, as well as the implications in terms of "cost" (expected timeframe, time commitments required by participants, and financial investment) and "benefits" (robustness, acceptability, validity).
     - Decide on which option to pursue for categorization, after consultation with SAGE.
     - Using information from the landscape analysis apply the method to produce a categorization of vaccines by public health priority, resulting in a draft report.
     - Distribute draft report to stakeholders for input, and to SAGE, for review at the SAGE meeting
     - Finalize the report based on SAGE and stakeholder feedback for eventual publication by IVB.

Expected outputs:
   - Paper on options selected for categorization
   - Landscape analysis paper
   - Vaccine categorization paper