Technologies & Logistics Advisory Committee (TLAC)
Proposed Terms of Reference

Background:
The successful implementation of the Global Immunization Vision and Strategies (GIVS) will help to achieve the Millennium Development Goals in reducing child mortality, improving maternal health and combating disease. The achievement of GIVS goals and targets will require WHO to develop policy guidance that supports countries to overcome barriers in access and service delivery.

In order to increase access and introduce new vaccines, the national immunization programmes need optimal technologies and vaccine delivery mechanisms as well as evidence-based operational management strategies. SAGE and other policy making bodies primarily focus on immunization policy and disease control strategies. An advisory group that focuses on technology and operations is needed to facilitate field implementation of SAGE recommendations.

Purpose:
The TLAC will advise on the formulation, execution and impact of EPI policy on field implementation, with specific focus on diminishing operational and technical barriers in service delivery. This includes addressing technological constraints as well as programme implications, and may include research and regulatory aspects that would facilitate policy implementation. More specifically, as numerous public sector groups are involved in developing delivery systems that could impact on vaccine delivery logistics and gather data to support the introduction of such systems, the TLAC will also serve as a coordination body to minimize duplication of efforts and ensure consistency in evidence collection.

Furthermore, TLAC will review recommendations and outputs from TechNet Consultations to identify where field policy may need to be further articulated.

Reports to:
TLAC advises the IVB Director and makes specific recommendations regarding:

1. Operational strategies and policies related to logistic and cold chain systems that need to be intensified to facilitate reaching additional children with high-quality vaccination and achieve the goals of the Global Immunization Vision and Strategy (GIVS);
2. Technological innovations to be developed, assessed or accelerated to strengthen routine immunization programmes and prepare pathways for new vaccine introduction;
3. Rate-limiting steps such as evidence gaps or capacity constraints that need to be overcome to strengthen overall field logistic systems and safely accelerate vaccine introduction and delivery.

As with other IVB advisory committees, TLAC will regularly report its meeting conclusions to SAGE.

Potential Topics of Review:
The potential topics of review include technological and operational aspects of WHO's work that would optimize the outputs of applied GIVS strategies.
A) Technological/Systems Innovations and Research

- Logistics and transport systems
- Cold chain equipment (storage capacities, energy sources, solar energy, new equipment...)
- New vaccine product presentation profiles (aspects of vaccine presentation and packaging, but not formulation)
- Ideal product presentations or equipment specifications
- Vaccine management (vaccine handling, thermostable vaccines, vaccine vial monitors, temperature indicators...)
- New delivery systems (intradermal, jet injector, aerosol...)
- Stock management (computerization, tool development)
- Waste management (needle removers, alternatives to incineration...)

B) Operational/Programme

- Multi-dose vial policy
- Use of vaccines out of the cold chain
- Measures to prevent freezing
- Field evaluation of the quality of the vaccine, e.g. shake test
- Measures to reduce vaccine wastage
- Technologies for tracking and monitoring (stock, patients, programme indicators)

C) Coordinating evidence to support policy

- Evidence gaps that must be overcome to advance development of new strategies or technologies
- Procedures to collect evidence that would support policies relating to vaccine delivery systems
- Consolidate public-sector activities in delivery system innovations in order to synergize activities and identify overlaps or gaps

E) Regulatory/safety

- Identification of regulatory barriers and pathways

Composition:
The TLAC comprises no more than 12 expert members, who shall serve in their personal capacity and represent a range of disciplines. The membership includes recognized experts in the fields of public health, research, regulation, programme management, operations, cold chain, logistics and transport systems, engineering, information management, waste management and immunization delivery.

Members are selected in their personal capacities for their scientific and technical knowledge and experience, as well as for their commitment and willingness to volunteer the necessary time and effort.

The overall composition shall strive to reflect the following skills sets:

- 2 regulatory oriented
- 2 research oriented
- 2 technology oriented
- 2 EPI management, logistics, or operations
- 2-4 others from academia, technical institutions, government bodies, public health departments, and/or immunization programmes.
Efforts will be taken to ensure a representation that is geographically diverse and gender balanced.

Additionally, WHO may invite additional representatives from within WHO, from United Nations partners, GAVI, non-governmental organizations, technical or donor agencies, governments, public health institutes, equipment or vaccine manufacturers to serve as observers as needed and where relevant to the agenda.

**Membership process:**

There will be an open call for nominations of members to fill TLAC seats. TLAC members, including the Chairperson, shall be appointed by the IVB Director, with consultation with WHO Regional Offices and other relevant stakeholders. Nominations will be reviewed by the selection panel, which will include designees by the Coordinators of the respective units within the IVB Department (Initiative for Vaccine Research/IVR; Quality, Safety and Standards/QSS; Expanded Programme on Immunization/EPI). TLAC members will be selected against eligibility criteria, including their ability to contribute to fulfilling TLAC's main purpose.

All nominations for new TLAC members, as well as renewals and discontinuations, will be approved by the IVB Director. Prior to being appointed as members of the TLAC, nominees will be required to complete and submit a WHO declaration of interest form and a confidentiality agreement. All papers presented to TLAC, which may include pre-publication copies of research reports or documents of commercial significance, shall be treated as confidential. A register of members' signed declarations of interest and confidentiality agreements will be maintained by WHO.

Members, including the Chairperson, shall be appointed to serve for an initial term of two years, which can be renewed again once for a period of three years.

**Roles and Responsibilities of Members:**

Members of TLAC have a responsibility to provide WHO with rigorous, well-considered advice and recommendations on matters that are reviewed. Members play a critical role in ensuring the reputation of TLAC as an internationally recognized advisory group in the field of immunization operations, logistics and technologies. It shall provide strategic advice and technical input to the IVB Director in EPI policy development and propose ways forward to increase impact of field strategies as enunciated in the GIVS.

TLAC members will review output from Technet meetings and identify issues for further elaboration and development, including the need to create or gather further evidence to institute sound EPI operational policies. The recommendations of TLAC will be reported back through the TechNet communication channels. Additionally, TLAC recommendations will be regularly presented at SAGE meetings for update and where relevant, for endorsement.

In addition to attendance of twice yearly meetings, active participation will be expected from all TLAC members throughout the year as needed. This may include participation in technical working committees, video and telephone conferences as well as interactions via e-mail. Review of documents may also be solicited. TLAC members may be requested to participate as observers in other important WHO departmental or cross-departmental meetings.
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The TLAC has no executive or regulatory function. Its role is solely to provide advice and recommendations to the IVB Director, and includes providing advice and recommendations on urgent matters as needed.

TLAC members may be approached by non-WHO sources for their views, comments and statements on particular matters of public health concern and asked to state the views of TLAC. TLAC members shall refer such enquiries to WHO.

Membership in TLAC may be terminated for any of the following reasons:
1. failure to attend two consecutive TLAC meetings;
2. change in affiliation resulting in a conflict of interest; or
3. an act which demonstrates a lack of professionalism; for example, a breach of confidentiality

Meetings and Procedures
TLAC will be scheduled to meet twice a year, typically one meeting prior to and one meeting subsequent to (or in conjunction with) a global TechNet meeting. The frequency of meetings, however, may be adjusted if required.

Additionally, small working committees may be established to address or review specific issues in order to increase the effectiveness of TLAC deliberations by providing evidence-based information and options for recommendation, which can be further discussed in public forum. These working committees are established on a time-limited basis and under special situations to address specific questions identified by TLAC when an issue is particularly complicated and needs closer reflection. The need and charge for a working committee is discussed and agreed during TLAC meetings, and they will operate under specific terms of reference.

Agendas for TLAC meetings will be developed by WHO in conjunction with TLAC members and Technet Secretariat.

TLAC will be kept informed by WHO of progress in implementation of strategies and the attainment of objectives at regional and country level. WHO, with input from TLAC, will determine which policy recommendations or information from other WHO technical advisory groups should be brought to the attention of TLAC.