Malaria Elimination Oversight Committee

Terms of Reference

I. Background and rationale
The Malaria Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) has been constituted to provide independent advice to the Global Malaria Programme (GMP) of the World Health Organization (WHO) for the development of policy recommendations for the control and elimination of malaria. The mandate of MPAC is to provide strategic advice and technical input aligned with the Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030 as part of a transparent, responsive and credible policy setting process, and extends to all aspects of malaria control and elimination. In addition to the MPAC, standing expert groups have been established to provide WHO/GMP with advice within specific technical areas.

The MPAC recommends establishment of a Malaria Elimination Oversight Committee (MEOC) to provide independent operational and programmatic advice and oversight monitoring of malaria elimination.

II. Role and functions of the Malaria Elimination Oversight Committee
The purpose of the MEOC is to monitor and guide malaria elimination activities as part of a transparent, responsive and effective approach to malaria elimination in countries and regions actively pursuing that goal. The MEOC will review progress towards elimination and the quality and coverage of malaria elimination strategies, in order to provide recommendations on how to accelerate elimination and prevent re-establishment of transmission. The MEOC is constituted by and reports to WHO/GMP.

Responsibilities of the MEOC will be to:

- Evaluate national and regional progress towards malaria elimination according to established milestones and timelines;
- Determine the need for corrective actions to address programmatic or operational bottlenecks, and evaluate plans developed to address such issues;
- Identify any risks to malaria elimination that need to be addressed by WHO, regional initiatives or national programs;
- Provide observations and/or draft recommendations to WHO/GMP with respect to policies or guidance related to malaria elimination, for MPAC consideration;
- Question the status quo and confront difficult issues.

III. Membership of the MEOC
The MEOC will have up to 10 full and two adjunct members. Adjunct members and permanent observers will participate in all aspects of the meeting, including any closed discussions, but will be recused from final drafting of recommendations. MEOC members will serve in an independent, personal and individual capacity. The MEOC composition should strive for appropriate geographical representation and gender balance, and should comprise individuals representing different areas of expertise and experience with disease elimination, malaria, entomology, surveillance, and health systems.

Eight of the 10 full members will be selected using a set of criteria to balance background and experience, gender, and geographic regions from among persons nominated by Regional Offices and the GMP. A selection committee will be appointed by WHO/GMP to review nominations and make selections. Members of the MEOC will be appointed to serve for an initial term of four years, renewable once. Two of the 10 full members will be selected from among current MPAC members.
In addition to the 10 full members, each year on a rotational basis, two national malaria programs in eliminating countries from different regions will be asked to nominate an individual from their national malaria elimination programme or Ministry of Health to attend meetings as one of the two adjunct members of the committee.

Prior to being appointed as committee members and prior to renewal of term, nominees shall be subject to a conflict of interest assessment by WHO, based on the information they disclose on the WHO Declaration of Interest (DOI) form. In addition, MEOC members will have an ongoing obligation throughout their tenure to inform WHO of any changes to the information disclosed on the DOI form. Any relevant interests disclosed by committee members that may be perceived to present real or apparent conflicts of interest will be noted in MEOC reports, which will be made public on the WHO-GMP website. In addition, prior to WHO confirming the appointment of MEOC members, nominees will be required to sign a WHO confidentiality agreement and the standard agreement for WHO temporary advisers.

Members may be asked to visit one or more of the MECs to conduct field assessment as needed or recommended. WHO may terminate membership in MEOC for any of the following reasons:

- Failure to attend two consecutive MEOC meetings;
- Change in affiliation resulting in a conflict of interest;
- A lack of professionalism, for example, a breach of confidentiality.

IV. Responsibilities of MEOC members
Members of the MEOC have a responsibility to provide MPAC with high-quality, well-considered, evidence- or experience-based advice and recommendations on matters described in these terms of reference. Members play a critical role in ensuring the reputation of the MEOC as an independent advisory committee. The MEOC has no executive or regulatory function. Its role is to provide advice and recommendations to WHO/GMP.

MEOC members may be approached by non-WHO sources for their views, comments and statements on particular matters within elimination and asked to state the views of the MEOC or details related to MEOC discussions. MEOC members may provide their personal, expert views on these matters while clarifying that these do not represent the official MEOC or WHO position.

V. Structure
The Chairperson and alternate will be selected by WHO/GMP. The function of the Chairperson will be to work with the Elimination Unit to set the agenda for each meeting, to facilitate each meeting, ensure minutes are captured, and assist in preparing meeting reports. The Elimination Unit, GMP will serve as secretariat for the MEOC.

VI. Working procedures
With the Team Leader of the Elimination Unit, the Chairperson of the MEOC will develop a plan for routine operations of the MEOC. The MEOC will meet once or twice a year: one of the two meetings will be held in conjunction with the annual or biennial Global Forum of Malaria-Eliminating Countries, and the second may be conducted via phone or videoconference. MEOC recommendations will, as a rule, require the consensus of the full members. In the exceptional situation that consensus cannot be reached on a particular issue, the Chairperson shall report the majority and minority views.

At each MEOC meeting, representatives of WHO regions and malaria-eliminating countries will present reports on their progress towards elimination and on specific programmatic or implementation issues identified in regional or country reviews as bottlenecks or problems to be resolved. The MEOC may request more in-depth presentations on specific topics or issues and may
request or commission outside experts to present on new tools, strategies or other issues, budget allowing. Upon request of the GMP and by invitation of the eliminating countries, MEOC members may be asked to undertake country visits or assessments to improve understanding of bottlenecks to elimination. The GMP will work with countries and regions to prepare standardized reports that will assist the MEOC in reviewing progress towards elimination.

Transparency will be ensured through recording of minutes, which will be circulated among MEOC members, approved by WHO, and published on the WHO-GMP website following the meeting. Approved meeting agendas, documents, minutes and recommendations will be archived and remain publicly available and easily accessible on the WHO-GMP website.

A presentation from the Chairperson of the MEOC will be a standing agenda item at MPAC meetings at least annually.

WHO may invite additional observers from bilateral agencies, donors and civil society organizations, among others, to attend the meetings. The MEOC may also invite specific individuals, organizations or countries to present on topics germane to the MEOC terms of reference, depending on availability of funding. Temporary observers and speakers will not participate in closed discussions or in the drafting of recommendations. Relevant staff from WHO headquarters and regional offices will attend as members of the Secretariat.

In order to seek broader input, to allow for the exchange of information and views, and to ensure transparency and inclusivity, the majority of discussions will take place in open sessions. However, the actual deliberations on and development of recommendations may take place in closed sessions in order to protect the committee’s integrity and independence from pressure and undue influence. In addition to attendance at meetings, review of documents may also be solicited from MEOC members throughout the year.

VI. Rules of Procedure
A majority of the full Members needs to be present to conduct a meeting of the MEOC and draft recommendations, and/or to take any other decisions within these Terms of Reference. Decisions of the MEOC will as a rule, be taken by consensus. In the exceptional situation that consensus cannot be reached, the Chairperson shall report the majority and minority views. It is also the Chairperson’s responsibility to ensure that there is clarity for MEOC members on what exactly is being decided.

MEOC members will not receive any remuneration from WHO for their participation in meetings or field visits. However, when attending meetings or field visits by invitation of WHO, WHO will cover airfare/transportation costs and provide daily subsistence allowance during such meetings and missions, in compliance with WHO policies, including its travel policies.

The Elimination Unit of the GMP will act as Secretariat to the MEOC and thereby provide support, including by facilitating its work, preparing agendas and background documents, in consultation with the Chairperson.

VII. Dissolution of MEOC
The relevance and terms of reference of the MEOC will be assessed regularly by WHO/GMP.