



ESTABLISHMENT OF THE MALARIA TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP TO THE AFRICAN CONSTITUENCY BUREAU

In a landmark move by African Health Ministers in 2012, the African Constituency Bureau (ACB) for the Global Fund was established, marking a significant step forward in ensuring that the voices of sub-Saharan African countries are heard in one of the world's most crucial forums for health funding and policy-making. The ACB's mission is straightforward yet vital: to streamline the engagement, participation, representation, and consensus-building among the sub-Saharan African countries within the Global Fund's policy-making and governance frameworks.

The Global Fund's governance structure recognizes sub-Saharan Africa through two principal constituencies: Eastern and Southern Africa (ESA) and Western and Central Africa (WCA). These constituencies collectively represent the governments of 46 nations, advocating for the interests and needs of millions who are on the frontline of the battle against some of the world's most devastating diseases.

The ACB plays a pivotal role in this governance ecosystem. By providing high-level technical support, the ACB ensures that the African representatives to the Global Fund Board and its standing committees - Audit and Finance, Ethics and Governance, and Strategy - are well-equipped with a thorough analysis and synthesis of critical background documents. This empowerment enables them to bring the necessary information from their countries to the table, ensuring Africa's interests are adequately represented and advocated for during the Global Fund's biannual board meetings and the tri-annual meetings of its committees.

Addressing the Malaria Challenge in Africa: The Critical Role of Strategic Advisory

According to the World Health Organisation's Malaria Report 2023, the African Region bears the brunt of the global malaria burden, accounting for more than 95% of all cases and 96% of deaths attributed to the disease. This situation persists despite significant efforts and investments by communities, governments, and international partners. Among these partners, the Global Fund stands out for its substantial financial commitment, having invested billions of dollars in the fight against malaria in Africa. This investment aims to strengthen health systems, enhance disease surveillance, and improve access to lifesaving interventions across the continent.

The stark statistics underline the urgency of providing evidence-based advice to African Board members, a cornerstone in the ongoing battle to eradicate malaria. This mission aligns with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goal 3, which, in concert with the Global Fund's objectives, seeks to eliminate HIV, TB, and malaria as public health threats by 2030.

In response to this challenge, the ACB Secretariat established the Malaria Technical Advisory Group (MaTAG) to enhance the ethical, timely, and relevant policy advice for malaria control efforts. MaTAG's role is pivotal, offering strategic advice and technical insights that span the entire



spectrum of malaria control and elimination. The group's foundation is built on principles of transparency, responsiveness, and credibility, ensuring that its recommendations are both strategic and practical.

MaTAG's guidance is designed to dovetail with programmatic and policy initiatives at the country and regional levels, especially within the ambit of the Global Fund's operations and other pertinent global health institutions under the ACB's purview. By aligning our advice with these initiatives, we ensure that our contributions are not just pertinent but also actionable, driving towards the shared goal of improving health outcomes through strategic collaboration with key global health stakeholders

A. RESPONSIBILITIES AS AN ADVISORY BODY

1. **Policy Guidance and Implementation Review:** Offer advice on GF-related malaria policies, focusing on their practical implementation. This should encompass an analysis of data from malaria program implementations, GF malaria grants, and inputs from malaria control partners. Recommendations should be grounded in the review of the best available evidence.
2. **Strategic Positioning:** Advise on the strategic positioning of ACB within malaria-related initiatives. This includes identifying opportunities for ACB to enhance its impact in the global fight against malaria through strategic partnerships and initiatives.
3. **Performance Indicator Challenges:** Identify and analyze major issues or challenges that hinder the achievement of key performance indicators for Global Fund malaria grants. This analysis should lead to actionable insights and recommendations for overcoming these challenges.
4. **Policy and Activity Prioritization:** Propose priority policies and activities designed to address identified challenges. Recommendations should be specific, actionable, and aligned with ACB's strategic goals and capacities.
5. **Contextualized Pre-Consultation Advice:** Provide contextualized advice to ACB ahead of technical consultations on critical malaria-related issues. This advice should help prepare ACB representatives to engage effectively in discussions, negotiations, and decision-making processes.

a) Outcomes:

The MaTAG's advice and recommendations are expected to enhance the effectiveness of ACB's engagement in malaria control and elimination efforts. By providing expert guidance, the MaTAG will contribute to the strategic alignment of ACB's activities with global best practices and the dynamic landscape of malaria control efforts.

b) Reporting:

The MaTAG will report directly to the designated oversight committee or executive body within ACB, ensuring that its recommendations are timely, relevant, and aligned with ACB's strategic objectives.



c) Review and Adjustment:

The Terms of Reference for the MaTAG shall be reviewed annually or as necessary to ensure its continued relevance and effectiveness in guiding ACB's engagement in malaria control and elimination initiatives. Adjustments may be made to reflect the evolving landscape of global health challenges and opportunities.

B. COMPOSITION AND MEMBERSHIP OF THE MaTAG

1. Membership Composition:

The Malaria Technical Advisory Group (MaTAG) shall consist of up to six distinguished members drawn from various disciplines relevant to malaria. These members are expected to serve with dedication and passion in their respective capacities. In the selection process, emphasis will be placed on ensuring a broad distribution of technical expertise, geographical diversity, and gender balance.

Members, including the Chairperson, are to be appointed by the ACB following a transparent and open call for experts. The Chairperson is tasked with leading MaTAG meetings and maintaining regular communication with the ACB Secretariat. Criteria for the Chairperson's selection will include considerations of gender, geographical representation, and availability to fulfill the role's demands.

2. Terms of Appointment:

MaTAG members are appointed for a term of two years, with the possibility of re-appointment for one additional term. The Chairperson, following their term, may also be considered for re-appointment as a member. ACB reserves the right to terminate any appointment at its discretion, should it be necessary for the organization's interests or as outlined in the terms of reference or individual appointment letters. In cases of termination, ACB may appoint a replacement to ensure continuity of expertise and representation.

3. Independence and Conflict of Interest:

MaTAG members are expected to exercise their duties independently, without seeking or accepting directives from any external governments, businesses, or authorities. To prevent any real, potential, or apparent conflicts of interest, candidates for membership must complete the WHO Declarations of Interest form. The continuation of their appointment is contingent upon a favorable evaluation of these declarations by the ACB Secretariat, ensuring no conflict of interest would compromise their participation.

4. Disclosure Requirements:

Members must proactively inform ACB of any circumstances that may lead to a real, potential, or apparent conflict of interest. ACB retains the authority to periodically request members to submit updated WHO Declarations of Interest forms, especially prior to MaTAG meetings or related activities. Participation in these events is conditional upon the submission and satisfactory evaluation of these declarations, affirming that no conflict of interest exists.



5. Remuneration and Expenses:

While MaTAG members do not receive remuneration from ACB for their advisory roles, ACB will cover travel expenses and per diems for in-person meetings, in accordance with ACB's policies and regulations. This provision ensures that members are supported in their contributions to the group's objectives without financial burden.

C. OPERATIONS OF THE MALARIA TECHNICAL ADVISORY GROUP (MaTAG)

1. Meeting Schedule and Format:

The MaTAG is required to convene at least twice annually. These gatherings include a mandatory in-person meeting, preferably in Addis Ababa or another location chosen by ACB, and at least one virtual meeting conducted via video or teleconference. ACB reserves the right to schedule additional meetings as necessary.

2. Meeting Structure:

- **Open Sessions:** Aimed at fostering dialogue and exchanging non-confidential information with the broader malaria community, including technical partners and UN agencies. Observers may be invited to these sessions for knowledge sharing and engagement.
- **Closed Sessions:** Dedicated to decision-making and the formulation of recommendations. Attendance is limited to MaTAG members and essential ACB Secretariat staff to ensure focused deliberations.

3. Quorum:

A quorum for MaTAG meetings is established at two-thirds of the membership, ensuring that decisions are made with broad consensus and representation.

4. Observer Participation:

ACB may invite external individuals and representatives from relevant organizations as Observers to open sessions, at its discretion and following internal protocols. Observers are responsible for their own expenses and arrangements. While they do not participate in decision-making, their insights and perspectives are valued during open discussions.

5. Working Groups:

To address specific issues, MaTAG may form smaller working groups. These groups are not bound by quorum requirements and can conduct their work via various communication methods. Their findings are subject to review and approval by the full MaTAG.

6. Attendance and Conduct:

Active participation is crucial. Members who fail to attend two consecutive meetings may be subject to termination of their membership. Additional grounds for termination include conflicts of interest, breaches of professionalism, or biased behavior contrary to the group's



objectives.

7. Reporting:

Meeting reports should be concise, focusing on key advice and recommendations. The ACB Secretariat will assist in preparing these reports for submission to ACB's Executive Director and Board Chair, ensuring clarity and actionable insights.

8. Decision-Making:

Recommendations are typically made by consensus. In cases where consensus is not achievable, minority opinions will be documented, preserving the diversity of thought within MaTAG.

9. Preparation and Participation:

Members are expected to engage actively, including in preparatory work for meetings and in working groups. This may involve reviewing documents and contributing to discussions and decision-making processes.

10. Communication:

ACB will outline the official modes of communication for MaTAG, ensuring effective interaction between members and between MaTAG and ACB.

11. Representation:

MaTAG members are prohibited from representing or speaking on behalf of MaTAG or ACB to third parties without authorization, maintaining the integrity and official positions of both bodies.

D. SECRETARIAT SUPPORT FOR MaTAG

ACB shall serve as the administrative secretariat for the MaTAG. This support encompasses the following responsibilities:

1. **Pre-Meeting Preparations:** The ACB Secretariat will ensure that MaTAG members receive essential materials well in advance of meetings. This includes the meeting agenda, working documents, and discussion papers necessary for informed deliberation and decision-making. The distribution of these materials to Observers will be at the discretion of the ACB Secretariat. The agenda will detail the nature of each meeting segment, specifying whether it is open or closed and whether Observer participation is allowed.
2. **Material Requests:** The MaTAG is empowered to request additional materials or arrangements from the secretariat to facilitate contextually relevant advice.



E. INFORMATION AND DOCUMENTATION PROTOCOLS

1. Confidentiality and Proprietary Information:

All information and documentation accessed by MaTAG members in the course of their duties are deemed confidential and proprietary to ACB and its collaborating parties. By accepting their appointment, MaTAG members agree to uphold the confidentiality obligations outlined in their appointment letters and accompanying terms and conditions. They also acknowledge that any intellectual property rights arising from their contributions to MaTAG activities are exclusively owned by ACB.

2. Evidence-based Work:

MaTAG's recommendations must be evidence-based, citing relevant sources and references to support each argument and suggestion. The group is expected to deliver contextually aware advice, drawing upon accurate data and examples, and succinctly summarizing findings with clear tables and visuals where applicable.

3. Use of Documents:

MaTAG members and Observers are restricted from using, circulating, or quoting MaTAG documents outside the scope of their duties as defined by these Terms of Reference. This ensures that all deliberations and materials are utilized solely for their intended purpose within the advisory framework.

4. Publication Control:

The ACB retains absolute authority over the publication of MaTAG reports. This includes decisions on whether to publish these reports, reinforcing ACB's control over the dissemination of findings and recommendations made by the MaTAG.