



**DECISION**

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**RBM Board Meeting** – Veyrier-du-Lac 14-15 Sep 2009

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Summary Notes - Decisions points

RBM Partnership Board retreat

## DAY 1, 14.09.09

### Session 1

#### Purpose of the retreat

The RBM Board convened to discuss the findings of the External Evaluation.

The Board will formally endorse the report during its meeting in December. The principal outputs of the retreat were outlined as follows:

- acknowledge the report and
- set up a process for turning the recommendations of the Board into a costed operational plan to present to the Board meeting in December.

#### External Evaluation Report

A briefing on the evaluation's process and major recommendations was provided by the Performance Subcommittee Chair.

Dalberg presented its methodology, main findings and recommendations.

#### Board reactions to the Evaluation Report

Following Dalberg's presentation, the Board asked clarification questions and noted:

- Dalberg's good work, especially in light of short timeline and budget
- The importance of putting the results of the evaluation in context to avoid misconceptions
- The importance of showing trends in the performance of RBM structures rather than snapshots that no longer reflect reality
- The need for correcting factual errors and illogical conclusions
- The importance of using language consistently and providing definitions and more clarity, as well nuancing specific statements and presenting issues in a balanced way
- The need to move away from anecdotal evidence reflective of the view of a single partner only
- The need to improve the presentation of findings, so as to avoid simplification and capture better positive elements and distortions.
- The significance of revising the Executive Summary so as to ensure that it takes into account the positive curve on which the Partnership currently is and is consistent with the rest of the report.

#### **Actions items:**

- Feedback on the report should be sent to Dalberg within a week's time.
- The request for a Secretariat submission of the final report to the World Bank should be deleted from the list of requested Board actions.

## Session 2

### What model for RBM (Dalberg)

Dalberg outlined areas of consensus within the Partnership, including the shared perception of great progress made in the last years. Dalberg found that a clear vision and consensus were lacking in the following areas:

- The geographic scope of RBM activities
- RBM core roles
- Partnership activities that need to be funded by the Partnership

To start off a discussion on improving delivery against the GMAP, Dalberg presented five models for strengthening the Partnership's performance.

### Clarification questions and Board discussion

A few Board members felt that the Board needed to provide clear guidance on the question of what constitutes the Partnership's core activities vs. activities that can be conducted by individual partners or other groupings.

RBM's core role at the global level was described as "facilitating a process of coordination and bringing partners to work together and share information." It was pointed out that at country level RBM should play the same role.

Many Board members rallied around the view that a flexible model is needed, one that builds on the Partnership's strengths, while taking into consideration IHP+ and the global context. Caution was voiced against adopting an RBM model that is too disease-specific (e.g. styled after UNAIDS). From a resource mobilization viewpoint, it was considered important to position malaria in the context of system-strengthening and advancing the global health agenda.

Several members recommended that the Partnership structures focus more on supporting country-level implementation. Endemic countries voiced a need for strengthening technical capacity at country level and providing technical support to meet the targets.

Board members coalesced around the idea that mapping existing resources, partners and initiatives, country by country will enable the Partnership to clearly see what works and multiply successes.

The Board expressed diverging views on how Working Groups should be funded, in particular whether they should provide for their own funding or be funded by the Partnership.

In terms of preparing recommendations for the next Board, some members proposed that different scenarios be developed so as to guide the Board in choosing a sound model for the Partnership in December.

Another suggestion was to start by developing a strategic implementation plan. It was argued that such a plan would help the Board define what Partnership structure is needed and what model needs to be adopted to move forward on implementing the GMAP.

Dalberg reiterated its view that the RBM Board is not in a position to provide clear direction to SRNs and WGs. In Dalberg's view only strong leadership from the Board (vs. the current bottom-up approach) will provide the structure and strategy that RBM needs to deliver on its targets.

The discussion on what model to choose and how to fund RBM Working Groups and SRNs identified a need for deeper country by country analysis of needs, roles and contributions.

**Decisions:**

-The Board decided to establish three Task Forces to look into priority areas and crystallize recommendations for the next Board meeting in December. Over the course of the rest of the meeting, TORs were developed and Chairs selected (see outcomes below)

**Task Force 1: Focus on planning and implementation.**

Chair: Alan Court

**Key focus areas:**

- sustainable funding and resource-mobilisation strategy
- develop implementation plan for GMAP Phase 1
- define responsibility of partners for actions driven by time-linked targets;
- examine strategic and operational roles of SRNs and support they require to be effective

**Task Force 2: Focus on developing an accountability framework throughout the Partnership, in line with the GMAP.**

Chair: Mikkel Vestergaard

**Key focus areas:**

- Board supervision of budget, workplan, outputs and performance for each RBM mechanism (Secretariat, SRNs, WGs)
- Self-assessment of the Board and mechanisms to ensure accountability of Board delegations to their constituencies
- Accountability mechanism for the relationship between SRNs and countries
- Accountability of countries within the Partnership
- Mechanism for the EXD to regularly report on performance to the Board
- Propose a body to replace the Performance Sub-Committee

**Task Force 3: Review TORs of all Working Groups**

Chair: Robert Newman

- Clarify how Working Groups relate to one another
- Define objectives and time-limited mandates

### Session 3:

#### Evaluation Report: Recommendations

Dalberg presented the recommendations of the evaluation report, summarized as follows:

- **Improving planning, accountability and funding** (all related to the functions of the Board) is a top priority,
- **Developing operational strategy and plan:** the current harmonized work plan process is not sufficient to deliver on the GMAP's targets. (By comparison, health partnerships such as STOP TB and GAVI have developed 3- 5 year operational strategies and 1-2 year operational work plans.)
- **Funding of core activities:** the Board should safeguard the principle that planned activities are fully funded (which means that advanced decisions are required on what constitutes core activities)
- **Regular evaluation** of the EXD, the Secretariat, the Working Groups and SRNs: best practice from other Partnership suggests that this evaluation should be carried out by a subcommittee of the Board
- **Improving hosting arrangement with WHO:** a service-level agreement must be developed
- **Setting operational standards and governing standards for SRNs:** need for clarifying the relationship among SRN, WGs and country-level partnerships: Dalberg is convinced that a model for those relationships cannot be developed from the bottom up but needs decisions at the level of the Board.
- **Resolving hosting and funding issues with regard to SRNs:** Hosting issues at regional levels need to be resolved (e.g. CARN); funding for SRN Focal points should be available for 3 years.
- **Resolving funding issues that impede the Secretariat's work:** clear dialogue is needed between the Secretariat and the Board on the extent to which work plans are realistic and feasible; responsibilities of the Secretariat need further clarification. The demand on the Secretariat staff's time is too high.
- **Avoiding overlap between Working Groups and WHO:** Working Groups with mandates that border on normative issues need to be referred back to WHO (e.g. Malaria In Pregnancy WG)

#### Board discussion

Many members shared the view that an implementation plan needs to be developed before the Board can endorse Dalberg's view of SRNs as a "quick win" and invest more funding in strengthening them.

Further clarification was sought on Dalberg's recommendation for a service agreement between RBM and WHO. It was agreed that this will be clarified and worked out among WHO, the Secretariat and Dalberg.

Several constituencies expressed disagreement with Dalberg's recommendation of referring three Working Groups back to WHO. It was pointed out that these Working Groups focused on implementation, which was well beyond WHO's mandate.

Most members agreed that there was a need for a 3-5 year strategic framework, and an operational plan with a budget, funded by the Board.

A Board member suggested that forecasting and ensuring that funding for mechanisms is not delayed is a responsibility of the Board and that the Board should address this issue creatively.

Another member proposed that a small unit be created within the Secretariat to shepherd the resource-mobilisation process and ensure that funding is available on time to start activities.

Improving the Partnership's internal communication strategies and disseminating information on country-level progress more broadly was highlighted as a priority.

Board members requested clarity on what is meant by an implementation plan. No consensus was reached on prioritizing support for SRNs as many Board members were either not clear on how SRNs contributed to implementing GMAP in countries, or not convinced that SRNs performed well.

It was proposed that the Performance sub-committee be maintained beyond its original mandate to provide recommendations on how an accountability structure can be established on an on-going basis and prepare a paper for the next Board.

A Board member raised the need for making a strategic decision on how to prioritize eligible countries applying for Round 9 (as current funding is not adequate to satisfy the demand). It was agreed that this would be discussed bilaterally and through RBM's representation on the Global Fund's Board.

**Decisions:**

-The Board acknowledged the Evaluation Report, thus acknowledging that Dalberg satisfied its TORs.

**Action items:**

- Dalberg will take into consideration feedback from different Partnership structures submitted by 21 Sept.
- Dalberg will submit the Evaluation report to the World Bank by 30 Sept.
- The Secretariat will publish the Evaluation report on the website by 30 Sept.

## **DAY 2, 15.09.09**

### **Session 1:**

#### **Presentations by Chairs of Working Groups**

During this session, Working Group Chairs presented the outcomes of their one-day long discussions of the Work plan 2010-2011. The Board heard the priorities of each Working Group and their joint recommendations for the way forward.

#### **Response from the Board**

The Board observed that the priorities of the Working Groups were rather broad and that they still needed to be costed.

The Board found that the recommendations made by Working Groups align with the Board's deliberations from the previous day. It was agreed that the recommendations of the Working Groups would be considered and acted upon by the three Task Forces that the Board established.

Some Board members suggested to the MAWG to look carefully at the recommendations of the Evaluation report as they shift the MAWG's role.

### **Session 2 :**

#### **The future of SRNs**

The added value of SRNs was discussed at length. Questions were raised on the SRNs's function and membership and the relationship among SRNs the Secretariat and HWG. Clarity was sought on how SRNs relate to other networks in the field.

Board members were reminded that current funding for SRNs comes mainly from the OGAC PEPFAR Technical Assistance Fund and that SRNs need to be able to demonstrate good use of this funding and convincing results.

Working Group Chairs and representatives and endemic countries from all regions were invited to share their views on the added value of SRNs.

While some Board members expressed serious doubts about the impact SRNs had in subregions, many partners argued that SRNs were a critical Partnership structure. The SRNs were crucial in facilitating the development of 42 country roadmaps over the last 7 months. These roadmaps will guide the Partnership's country support strategy.

SRNs were also portrayed as vital in securing Global Fund resources in countries. It was noted that, due to their intimate knowledge of the region, SRN focal points were in a good position to brief consultants and assist them in providing better technical assistance to countries

Several Board members reported that mechanisms similar to SRNs exist in other regions as well, (e.g. Asia and Latin America) and have proven valuable to endemic countries, especially in the area of information exchange.

Some partners questioned the Partnership's tendency to label SRNs as Partnership structures. It was pointed out that SRNs exist outside the Partnership's architecture, even though they are facilitated by RBM Secretariat staff. More clarity was requested in the Partnership's relationship with SRNs.

Partners agreed that to be able to achieve results, SRNs need to have clear TORs and a mechanism for tracking milestones, reporting results and proactively identifying areas where TA will be required in the future.

Dalberg was encouraged to consult with SRNs and partners in the field and ensure that developments that happened over the next 9 months are reflected in an addendum of the evaluation report.

Board members suggested that the country roadmaps would be an important point of reference in the drafting of TORs for SRN Focal Points and the SRNs themselves.

### **Session 3**

#### **SRNs (discussion continued)**

The Board requested an update on the 2010 targets. The Secretariat presented a summary of country needs for the Central African region (based on the recently developed country roadmaps). The presentation's conclusion was that with funding from Round 9, the RBM Partnership is in a good position to procure and deliver all necessary interventions in Central Africa. The Secretariat underscored the crucial role that SRNs played in the development of country roadmaps in all sub-regions.

Some Board members cautioned against relying exclusively on Round 9 funding to reach the 2010 targets. Others underscored the need to find ways of sustaining funding beyond the 2010 targets to prevent a collapse in the production and delivery capacity of the private sector and possible commodity deficits.

The HWG reported that it is currently conducting a strategic review of the RBM collaboration on accelerating Global Fund grant signatures. The review will be complete for the next Board meeting. Preliminary data shows that the current HWG model relies too much on consultants and does not serve well the long-term needs of countries. Put plainly, hiring a PSM consultant from a roster and sending them in a country has not proven to be as effective as long-term investment and support of a partner or a Partnership structure. SRNs have been and, with support, can continue to be "the eyes, ears, arms and legs of the global Partnership at regional level."

#### **Report by the Oversight Committee on the high-level event coordination process**

MERG has convened three meetings since the Board's request for a high-level reporting event at the end of 2010. In the course of those meetings 5 different types of reports have been discussed.

1. Roadmaps, tracking progress since 2005: a reporting mechanism for that will be developed by partners and presented to the next Board;
2. Lives saved modeling tool, i.e. predicting on the basis of intervention coverage how many lives will be saved (The scientific community will produce an article on progress on modeling)
3. Morbidity and mortality methodology
4. WHO will produce the World Malaria Report
5. The Global Fund will produce reports on malaria funding (The GF has a particular need for replenishment. It will produce a financing and resource unitization report in the beginning of 2010.)

World Malaria Day 2010 and 2011 will anticipate the high level report. The MAWG will glean the messages that are coming from those reports and use them for advocacy purposes.

The Global Fund and the Gates Foundation have shown interest in funding the reporting process and a high-level advocacy event. No need for new data collection is anticipated, as much of the data will already be available. MICS surveys are scheduled for 2009 and 2010, DHS are scheduled in a number of countries; nearly all countries in sub-Saharan Africa are close to collecting data from MIS surveys. The activities that will incur costs relate to assembling existing information and presenting a professional and coherent impression of the global malaria community.

Board members were pleased with this report and suggested that it be included in the report to the Board.

### **Discussion on 3 Working Groups (WIN, CMWG, MIP)**

The Board discussed the added value of the three Working Groups:

A debate emerged on whether the Board should adopt a policy on “inactive” Working Groups, i.e. those that have not met in a long time. It was suggested that they are probably not adding much value to the Partnership’s effort and do not need to exist.

A contrary view was expressed by the Secretariat and vehemently supported by many Board members. The Secretariat pointed out that the efficiency and value added of a Working Group does not need to be measured by the frequency of its meetings but rather by the adequacy of its response to emerging needs. In 2003-2004, for instance, the Partnership needed answers to the question of how to scale up. This guidance was effectively provided by the WIN and CMWG. Working Groups become active in response to shifting agendas and the intensity of their activities depends on the Partnership’s need.

A discussion on whether the three Working Groups duplicate WHO’s normative role and should be referred back to WHO ended in a fragile consensus around the decidedly distinct role of these groups. It was pointed out that WIN and CMWG ensure the implementation of WHO’s policies and guidelines. They are co-chaired by WHO and WHO normative guidance is used to develop the Partnership’s implementation strategy.

It was recommended that better ways of communicating WHO guidelines be developed to avoid unacceptable delays in implementation (e.g. WHO policies on ACTs and shift in bednets policy took 2 years to be implemented in countries).

Board members told Dalberg that presenting the work of the three Working Groups as purely normative was a factual error that needed rectifying. However, the Board agreed that the work of these groups and their added value needed further analysis.

### **Resource Mobilization**

Resource mobilization reemerged as a subject of Board discussions. Board members remarked that no Partnership structure was dedicated to this task.

The MAWG Chair explained that resource mobilization is an activity area that is quite distinct from advocacy and that the MAWG’s mandate was to coordinate advocacy efforts rather than to mobilize resources for the Partnership. The MAWG Chair positioned the MAWG as a coordinating mechanism that ensures that advocacy efforts conducted by various partners are well aligned.

A suggestion for creating a Resource Mobilization unit in the Secretariat did not solicit a clear response from the Board.

### **Conflict of interest**

The Secretariat reminded the Board that a conflict of interest policy was first considered by the Board in 2008. The policy was considered by the EC at its last meeting and sent to WHO for a final approval. The Secretariat committed to circulating the Conflict of interest policy as soon as signed (hopefully by the end of the week).

A Board discussion attempted to address conflict of interest issues in the PSM working group.

Members of the PSM WG who are involved in making suggestions on what technical assistance should be provided to countries are also sometimes involved in providing it. This means that partners can potentially benefit financially from their membership in the WG.

A Board member reported that the private sector constituency asked WG members to sign a conflict of interest declaration prior to being accepted as members. The names of those who signed the declaration are published twice a year in a newsletter.

It was pointed out that a Conflict of interest policy should not only apply to the private sector but other partners as well. Board members agreed that procurement-sensitive issues should be resolved only by people who are not respondents to a bidding process for procurement.

Some of the procurement issues are currently being addressed by the Financiers' Forum. One Board member explained that the Financiers' Forum was originally created because the Procurement Supply Committee was ineffective in harmonising strategies for procurement for donors. The Forum was restricted to 3 organisations only and kept informal to avoid layers of complexity. Discussions of the Forum can be made available to the Board.

A couple of Board members proposed that procurement be separated from supply chain management. As a rationale for this proposal, Board members pointed out that a) procurement is a particularly sensitive issue related to funding and b) most of the bottlenecks in procurement emerge from legal procedures related to buying, which cannot be solved by malaria experts and the PSM Working Group anyway.

To advance on removing legal hurdles, Board members encouraged the Global Fund to convene a cross-sector panel in which these issues could be discussed and solutions explored.

### **Forecasting**

Some Board members clarified that forecasting was a key function of the PSM group. A discussion followed on whether the Partnership should invest or get involved in forecasting.

Some members were of the opinion that this was a) superfluous as industry had their own initiatives on forecasting and b) risky, as forecasting could lead to costly errors. Others said that improving forecasting is critical in areas such as diagnosis and treatment.

Board members were informed that the PSM WG shepherds the purchase of API to ensure that there will be enough ACTs treatments for 2011. To be able to perform this essential role, PSM WG requires solid organization and funding. It was clarified that forecasting was coordinated by the PSM WG and supported by the Secretariat.

A Board member suggested that what the Partnership needs is a map on funding delays modeled after the map that was built for ACTs.

The conclusive remarks in the debate suggested that the issue of forecasting needed more detailed study so that recommendations can be made to the Board. Some of the issues related to procurement will be dealt with by the Finance committee but other structures should ensure implementation afterwards.

The Board called for an in-depth analysis of the SRN situation. A proposition of 10,000-15,000 USD was proposed to contribute to conduct an analysis of SRNs quickly.

**Actions items:**

The Secretariat will:

- 1) make the country roadmaps available via internet ASAP, by preference by the end of the week;
- 2) organize the first conference call of the three Taskforces within a week and circulate a list of email addresses of group members ASAP;
- 3) prepare and present to the Board in December a detailed proposal for enhancing RBM knowledge-sharing capacity, including enhanced software, conference call capacity and email list-serves for endemic country constituencies;
- 4) review MOU with WHO regarding service level details and technical synergies in areas of interest to RBM;
- 5) provide a description of RBM links to global health systems strengthening initiatives and develop recommendations for future planning;
- 6) develop recommendations for delivery of technical assistance to countries with regard to GFATM grant-signing and other bottlenecks.

**Board requests and recommendations that emerged in the discussions:**

To Dalberg:

- 1) Consult with SRNs and partners in the field and ensure that developments that took place over the next 9 months are reflected in an addendum of the evaluation report.
- 2) Include in the Evaluation report information about completed, ongoing and planned surveys in countries.
- 3) Rephrase text suggesting that the work of 3 Working Groups is normative only.

**Suggestions to the Secretariat:**

-The report by the Oversight Committee on the high-level event coordination process should be included in the report to the December Board.

-Circulate the Conflict of interest policy by the end of the week (as requested by the EC in their last meeting)

RBM Board retreat adjourned.