



**Terms of Reference for Communication Working Group (CWG)
A Roll Back Malaria Partnership Working Group
7 October 2003**

I. Background¹

In accordance with the Operating Framework of the RBM Partnership, the Communication Working Group (CWG) has been established by the RBM Partnership Board to advance the work programmes of partners during Phase II. The CWG will be supported by the Secretariat to fulfill its terms of reference as noted below.

The Communication Working Group will focus on developing and recommending strategic approaches for improving effectiveness and scaling up RBM malaria communication policies and interventions and synthesizing and disseminating evidence-based best communication practices. It will not duplicate the responsibilities of WHO Expert Committees. Recommendations to the Board arising from the CWG should be useful and adaptable to local situations, bearing in mind inter-country and within-country differences in needs, context, cultures and existing local mechanisms. The CWG will be guided by the overall commitment of the RBM partners to: (i) partnership and capacity building, (ii) harmonization, accountability and transparency in scaling-up actions; and (iii) bridging the gaps between technical and programmatic support needs at country level.

The CWG is mandated to make its recommendations on communication policy and on steps needed to increase communication activities in support of scaling up RBM malaria interventions on the basis of sound evidence and data. Decisions and recommendations from the CWG will be ratified by the Board.

II. Purpose/Rationale

The Communication Working Group has adopted the following mission statement:

Mission: To empower RBM partners at the country level to develop, implement and evaluate effective, appropriate and evidence-based strategic malaria communication activities to achieve RBM objectives.

The CWG will assist the Secretariat in developing and using strategic frameworks for scaling up different communication activities at regional and country levels. The CWG will agree on a strategy and means to stimulate more effective malaria communication strategies and mobilize resources to increase communication activities at the country level.

¹ Ref.: Minutes of the RBM Steering Committee Meetings/Teleconferences, June – December 2002; and the Proposed Operating Framework for the RBM Partnership (Revised Draft of 9 December 2002)

The CWG will act as an advisory body for the RBM Partnership Board on all matters pertaining to communication and advocacy activities. As a purely advisory body, the CWG does not have authority to implement activities on behalf of RBM, nor is it accountable for reporting to the Secretariat on national or regional progress in malaria control.

Because 90% of the burden of disease is located in Africa, the geographic focus of this international advisory body will be on Africa. This focus, however, does not preclude working on related issues and including experiences, evidence and data on successful communication activities and policies from other regions.

III. Functions of the CWG

- Develop a strategic framework for malaria communication
- Identify and make recommendations concerning communication strategies, tools and approaches that promote RBM goals for malaria control
- Identify ways to monitor and evaluate malaria communication activities that include both process and outcome indicators and that integrate into existing and future RBM monitoring and evaluation activities
- Identify and recommend strategies for building communication capacity among RBM partners, country program and institutions.
- Serve as a resource and actively engage with country programs, sub-regional networks, other RBM working groups and the RBM Partnership Secretariat
- Identify national advocacy issues and recommend strategies for addressing them
- Advocate for increased attention to and resources for malaria communication activities based on evidence of their effectiveness
- Facilitate processes that will engage and include stakeholders in the development, implementation, and evaluation of communication strategies.
- Identify opportunities for linkages between malaria communication and the other health and human development communication networks, programs and partners
- Identify critical strategic and technical questions on aspects of communication for smaller task forces to address when necessary
- Other activities as requested by the RBM Partnership Secretariat or Board

IV. Membership

In order to fulfill the above functions, the CWG's members should be drawn from a variety of institutions and represent a broad range of relevant disciplines. Outside consultants or experts may be invited to attend meetings when a particular subject or objective is to be addressed. Some members may be appointed to serve in an observer capacity; this designation would be determined by the Board. The following are suggested criteria as guidance for selection:

- Expertise and experience in the area of health communication
- Knowledge of malaria and malaria-related issues
- Balance of scientific and programmatic knowledge and experience

- Geographic representation (especially Africa)
- Commitment to participating actively in the CWG
- Balance of relevant disciplines within the CWG (e.g. social sciences, behavioural sciences, media, strategic communication design, social marketing, community mobilization, etc.)

The CWG should include representation from the RBM partners with particular interest or experience in issues of communication and advocacy:

- UNICEF, WHO (HQ), WHO (AFRO) and World Bank
- Key bilateral partners (e.g. Canada, Denmark, Japan, Netherlands, UK, USA)
- Key technical partners in this field (e.g. Malaria Consortium, Gates Malaria Programme)
- Countries (e.g. communication specialist from MOH/MOI)
- Non-African initiatives (e.g. Amazon, Mekong)
- Academics (e.g. Johns Hopkins, Liverpool, African universities/academics)
- NGOs
- Foundations
- Private sector (representative of pharmaceutical sector, others)
- Media (especially African broadcasters, e.g. Media Foundation of West Africa, International Federation of Journalists- Africa)
- Organizations with expertise in specific areas, including knowledge management (e.g. The Exchange), electronic communication (e.g. Bellanet) and communities of practice (e.g. HDNet)

V. Structure and Working Procedure

The CWG will have an independent chairperson proposed by the membership at a CWG meeting and endorsed by the RBM Partnership Board. It will also have a small secretariat, hosted by one of the partners, to facilitate its functions.

The CWG will generally meet twice annually. The Chair will determine the meeting dates in coordination with CWG members. Individual CWG task forces may meet on an ad-hoc basis to address specific issues as assigned by the larger body. The CWG will formulate an annual program of work with clearly defined products. The terms of reference, proposed membership and program of work for each WG must be endorsed by the Board.

1. Guiding Principles

As a general principle, the chairperson and the CWG secretariat, following consultations with the larger group, will make decisions on the CWG's activities and initiatives. Contributions and needs-based requests will also be encouraged from the potential beneficiaries of the CWG's functions, in agreement with section III. Emphasis will be placed on the proactive management of all key communication issues.

2. Convocation/Notification of meetings

2.1. Ordinary Meetings

Ordinary meetings will be convened as described above.

2.1.1. Special/Emergency/Extra-ordinary meetings

Any member of the CWG or even outside stakeholders can call special/emergency meetings on the basis of clearly identified needs. Such requests, however, will need to be endorsed by the RBM Partnership Secretariat.

3. Types of Meetings

In the interest of efficient use of time and costs associated with meetings, the CWG will complement face-to-face meetings with virtual meetings (i.e. teleconferences and videoconferences) of the CWG as a whole or of its task forces, as necessary.

4. Frequency of Meetings

Ordinary meetings: Two ordinary meetings per year, to be held at a host partner site
Ad hoc meetings: See "Convocation/Notification of meetings", above

5. Definition of Quorum

A quorum has not yet been defined.

6. Meeting Report Preparation and Distribution

Reports on the proceedings of the CWG will be drafted by CWG secretariat, reviewed by the Chairperson (and additional members as required by the subject matter), and distributed to CWG members within two weeks of the meeting.

7. Financing of Meetings

The resources for the functioning of the CWG will be mobilized by the RBM Partnership Secretariat. Independent funding can be sought for specific activities on an ad hoc basis and with the written agreement of both the CWG Chair and the RBM Partnership Secretariat. Members will finance their own participation, while the RBM Partnership Secretariat will fund the meeting logistics expenses.

VI. Implementation and Monitoring of WG Decisions *(approved by the Board)*

1. Role of Working Group

The WG will:

- carry out a regular monitoring of all activities
- provide a monthly update to the WG core group to ensure an effective implementation of the WG decisions
- prepare and distribute meeting reports

2. Role of RBM Partnership Secretariat

The RBM Partnership Secretariat will serve as the coordinators of the Working Groups, in particular with regards to coordinating membership, online information and/or discussions, and other support functions as necessary.

VII. Dissolution of Working Group

The Communication Working Group is envisaged as a long-term structure contributing to the Abuja Targets, the RBM objectives and the Millennium Development Goals. The above terms of reference for the Communication Working Group will be supplemented by an annual programme of work that would reflect priority issues requiring the attention of the RBM Partnership.

The need for the CWG and the relevance of its terms of reference will be reviewed and modified as appropriate for the endorsement of the Partnership Board two years from the CWG's establishment (i.e. in 2005).