

## Surveillance, Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (SMERG)

### Terms of Reference

#### I. Purpose

The purpose of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria's Surveillance, Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (RBM SMERG) is to facilitate alignment of partners on strategies and "best practices" in surveillance, monitoring, and evaluation (SME) of malaria control and elimination programs.

The SMERG also identifies emerging questions and needs related to the implementation of SME initiatives from effected countries and communicates these to global membership to brainstorm solutions. The SMERG encourages participation from professionals in malaria endemic countries and actively pursues engagement all partners working on SME of malaria.

The SMERG will ensure that its work is aligned with, and complements, that of WHO and other RBM working groups.

The SMERG is accountable to the RBM Partnership Board through the RBM CEO.

#### II. Functions

**Convene:** SMERG brings together country experts and global partners who are well versed in SME and have the ability to advise on, and advocate for, improved SME for the RBM Partnership.

**Coordinate:** SMERG is a forum to coordinate efforts in SME, including:

- Developing and maintaining consensus around SME strategies across partners and institutions
- Providing a forum to identify, prioritize critical actions for country, regional, and global SME work
- Provide a forum to identify critical operational research to support evidence-based, efficient programme implementation
- Harmonising SME activities to leverage partner resources and avoid duplicating efforts
- Identifying critical SME bottlenecks and organising specific Committees to address the challenges and provide recommendations
- Identifying and recommending strategies for technical assistance and capacity strengthening in SME at all levels
- Monitoring changing needs for SME as country programmes, and the RBM Partnership itself, evolve

**Facilitate Communication:** SMERG is a forum for communication and mutual learning, including:

- Advising the RBM Board, through the RBM CEO, on appropriate SME frameworks for the RBM Partnership
- Keeping partners informed of SME developments and initiatives
- Informally advocating for increased attention to and resources for SME activities within RBM and member institutions
- Disseminating SME resources to RBM partners, including meeting materials such as

- agendas, meeting minutes, and participant lists
- Other activities pertinent to SME as requested by the RBM Board, through the RBM CEO

### **III. Membership**

SMERG is a willing assembly of RBM partners; as such, membership is open to all interested parties. The SMERG co-chairs may actively approach and encourage individuals or organisations to join the SMERG to diversify the group or introduce new strengths and skills. SMERG membership strives for a balance of scientific and programmatic knowledge and experience and for geographic representation. Membership to the SMERG can be requested through the contact information available on the RBM Partnership website.

The role is a voluntary role, and there is no remuneration for participating. However, members representing organisations with means are encouraged to support the travel of endemic country participants to SMERG meetings. This financial support is critical to SMERG's purpose to address country-level SME needs and to maintaining well-rounded discussions.

#### **Expectations of all members**

- Institutional investment or personal involvement in SME of malaria
- Expertise and experience in relevant field for SME
- Ability to fund their own participation and attendance at SMERG meetings (individually or through their institution), unless they qualify for financial support from SMERG partners

#### **Roles and responsibilities of all members**

- Active participation in SMERG events
- Responsiveness to requests from the SMERG Secretariat and Co-chairs

#### **Invited Guests and Presenters**

Other experts in specific fields will be invited to participate in general SMERG meetings and Committees, depending on the agenda and the focus of activities.

### **IV. Structure**

#### **Co-chairs**

Two Co-chairs will be elected from the SMERG membership. The Co-chairs will serve a two-year term and are limited to two consecutive terms. There is no limit on the number of non-consecutive terms a co-chair may serve.

Roles and responsibilities include:

- Strategic and technical direction of SMERG
- Preparation and chairing of SMERG meetings
- Communication with RBM Management Team, including taking part in quarterly coordination meetings chaired by the CEO
- Liaising with RBM Partner Committees and other RBM Partnership Working Groups, including taking part in relevant Partner Committee Steering Committees
- Review of meeting minutes, quarterly update and annual reports

#### **Secretariat**

Roles and responsibilities of the SMERG Secretariat include:

- Coordination and organisation of SMERG plenary meetings and committee meetings in collaboration with Co-chairs

- Preparation and dissemination of meeting minutes
- Preparation of quarterly updates on the SMERG's work for the CEO, and annual reports to the RBM Board
- Coordination with RBM relating to SMERG homepage updates, maintenance of membership list, meetings minutes, and SMERG products
- Communication among SMERG membership
- Maintenance of momentum on SMERG tasks and products
- Liaising with RBM Partner Committees and other RBM Partnership Working Groups
- Other supporting functions as appropriate

### **Committees**

Committees may be established to work on specific short-term issues or products of interest to SMERG or longer-term objectives in areas of interest to SMERG. A committee may be established at the recommendation of annual SMERG meetings or of RBM to the co-chairs. Additionally, any member may propose the creation of a committee to meet an explicit SME challenge or need.

SMERG Co-chairs must endorse the committee, with support from the SMERG Secretariat. Following this endorsement, Committees will be named on the SMERG website along with contact information. Each Committee should be led by co-leads and have an agreed TOR with specific annual plans and objectives that are validated by the SMERG Co-chairs and Secretariat.

Leads may invite knowledgeable professionals who are not otherwise engaged in SMERG activities to join a committee. Committee meetings will include invitations to the SMERG Co-chairs and Secretariat, and meeting minutes will be submitted to the Co-chairs and the SMERG Secretariat. Each committee is responsible for reporting progress on their annual plan to the SMERG Co-Chairs and Secretariat. The Secretariat will organize quarterly meetings specifically to for monitoring committee progress against deliverables in their annual plan.

## **V. Operating Procedures**

### **Convocation of Meetings**

**Plenary Meetings:** SMERG Co-chairs will call up to two SMERG meetings per year, with support from the SMERG Secretariat, as budget allows and technical needs call for. The technical agenda will be in line with the programme of work, and will follow informal consultation with the RBM Management Team and SMERG members on the suitability of proposed meeting dates.

**Ad Hoc Meetings:** Meetings on issues requiring the urgent review of SMERG will be organised on an ad hoc basis if called for by the Board or Management Team.

**Committee Meetings:** In-person or virtual meetings on specific issues or products of interest to SMERG may be organised.

In the interest of efficient use of time and limiting costs associated with meetings, SMERG will complement face-to-face meetings as held at a host partner's site with virtual meetings (i.e. teleconferences and videoconferences) of the SMERG as a whole or its Committees as necessary.

### **Meeting Minutes**

The SMERG Secretariat will draft minutes on the proceedings of meetings, including those of Committees. The Co-chairs, and other selected members depending on the subject matter, will

review these minutes within one month of a plenary meeting. Meeting minutes will be shared through the SMERG and RBM websites, along with presentations, with the approval of all speakers.

### **Election of Co-chairs**

- The election procedure shall be transparent and open to all individual members, defined as those who have attended at least 2 meetings in the last 3 years (endemic country participants, generally defined as representatives from National Malaria Control Programmes and country-led research institutions, must only have attended 1 meeting in the last 3 years in order to vote).
- The Secretariat shall send out notifications one month prior to the election, soliciting nominations.
- Each member has the right to nominate one person or self-nominate. Nominees may be anyone working on SME of malaria issues.
- Prior to the election, the Secretariat shall obtain a confirmation from the nominees that they are interested and willing to run for election.
- Prior to the co-chairs' endorsement by the membership, they must gain assurance from their employer regarding the travel and workload required by the role.
- The election should be carried out through a secret ballot or through the use of electronic vote. A simple majority decides.

### **Annual Workplan and Budget**

Facilitated by the Working Group Co-chairs, the Working Group will develop an annual workplan and accompanying budget. This workplan will be the results of a defined consultative process, defined in the governance of the Working Group, including the opportunity for the RBM CEO to provide comments and inputs to ensure harmonization and consistency with RBM and Partner Committee workplans.

### **Conflicts of Interest**

The identification and management of conflicts of interest should be undertaken in accordance with the RBM declaration of interest process, as overseen and directed by the RBM Secretariat.

## **VI. Dissolution of the Working Group**

The TOR will be reviewed by the Co-chairs and Secretariat on a biannual basis. The review process will be based on specific performance criteria. In other words, SMERG will be measured on how well SMERG accomplishes the activities and meets the goals and targets defined in annual workplans.

If a majority of targets cannot be met in the two year time period of the workplan and there is a low rate of participation among members, if the mandate of the SMERG has been completed, or if the Board no longer feels that the mandate of the SMERG is relevant to the new Partnership Workplan, the Board can decide to dissolve the SMERG.

The RBM Management Team will monitor the performance of the Working Groups and may request the Partnership Board to remove accreditation if a Working Group is either inactive or does not fulfil the requirement to ensure adequate participation of malaria-affected countries in its activities.

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