



ENGAGING STAKEHOLDERS

Relationships with stakeholders in each country are paramount to developing a fully integrated and successful national NTD control program, and the NTD Control Program works to identify key stakeholders early in the program planning process to build local capacity and foster strong and productive relations with key technical partners.

This document provides guidelines for organizing, leading, and following-up after NTD stakeholders' meetings. Although different countries have unique environments and disease epidemiological patterns, the principles and objectives remain the same.

STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING

The NTD Control Program organizes a stakeholders' meeting in new countries as one of the first steps in supporting governments to scale up integrated and coordinated national NTD control programs.

Defining Meeting Goals

The first step in organizing an NTD stakeholders' meeting is to determine the purpose, specific objectives, and expected outcomes of the meeting. Meeting organizers should seek consensus between program managers, the NTD team within the Ministry of Health, and other in-country stakeholders on the goals for the meeting. Most meetings will address three main issues: integrated program start-up, advocacy, and orientation of new partners.

The stakeholders' meeting is an opportunity to develop a strategic framework for an integrated, comprehensive, and sustainable NTD control program. Participants can define ways of coordinating individual disease program activities and plan the co-administration of drugs during integrated mass campaigns.

The stakeholders' meeting is an excellent time for partner organizations to review or revise strategic plans, share information and knowledge, and renew their commitment to integrated NTD control. The meeting also allows the government to strengthen its engagement in and ownership of the integrated NTD control program in the country.

Principles

The national NTD focal person at the Ministry of Health should take the lead in organizing and convening the stakeholders' meeting. He or she should work with any disease-specific teams in the Ministry as well as a representative of USAID and the USAID partner's country program manager. The organizing committee should be formed at least two months before the meeting. The committee will work on six main components of the meeting:

1. Inviting Partners to the Meeting

The stakeholders' meeting committee should create a list of participants for the Ministry of Health to invite to the meeting. Invitations should be sent at least one month before the meeting. High-level involvement from the Ministry of Health, such as chairing or opening the meeting, will demonstrate the government's commitment to NTD control. The list of meeting participants should include the following:

- a. Government agencies: top officials from the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Education, the School Health Program, and the departments in charge of water and sanitation are expected to attend. Ministry of Finance and drug regulatory officials are important contacts for importation and clearance procedures. Officials from regional health directorates should also attend.
- b. USAID mission or US embassy representatives/officials.
- c. NTD partners in-country, the UN and organizations such as WHO or UNICEF.
- d. NGOs working in the field of parasitic disease control, blindness control, morbidity management and water and sanitation.
- e. Partners and donors of the individual NTD control programs as well as research institutes involved in the surveillance of specific neglected tropical diseases.
- f. Though not required, it is advisable to contact and include non-traditional partners such as associations and faith-based organizations that play important roles of social mobilization and NTD morbidity management.

We encourage sharing of regular communications and draft strategies with stakeholders prior to the stakeholders' meeting. Regularly scheduled meetings and updates – including post-MDA meetings – will help facilitate lessons learned and optimize future work planning, and will support a well-integrated NTD Control Program.

2. Preparatory Meetings

Pre-forum meetings should be held with the Ministry of Health top officials and individual key stakeholders prior to the stakeholders' meeting to define roles and contributions, to explore fields for collaboration to fill the gaps in funding and technical assistance, and to enhance program effectiveness.

We encourage regular communications and draft strategies be shared with stakeholders prior to the stakeholders' meeting; this open communication inspires stronger collaboration, allows all parties to be fully prepared and leads to a more productive stakeholders' meeting.

3. Developing the Agenda

The stakeholders' meeting is usually a one or two-day event. The agenda should be initiated by the committee, and then developed collectively with the grantor and the health officials in charge of NTD control. The final agenda should be sent to all partners at least one week before the meeting. The typical agenda has seven elements:

- a. Background and diseases specific prevalence, trends and control efforts since the respective disease programs' inception.
- b. Presentations from donors, grantors and key partners.
- c. Integrated control program achievements, latest treatment coverage, and maps.
- d. Key elements of the strategic orientation and operational work-plan.
- e. Gaps in technical and financial capacity and new opportunities for scale-up, areas for additional contributions, and sustainability of the program.
- f. Group work and plenary sessions around programmatic aspects.
- g. Next steps and recommendations.

4. The NTD Country Strategic Plan

The meeting planning committee will work with the country NTD team and the individual country program managers to draft or revise the national strategic plan, including new orientations or strategies. The plan would highlight the following aspects:

- a. Background on the NTDs' specific endemicity
- b. Program achievements to date in terms of treatment coverage and integration of individual NTD programs
- c. Plans for scale-up of an integrated disease control program
- d. Monitoring, evaluation, surveillance, and morbidity management components
- e. Plans for phase-out and sustainability of control/elimination efforts
- f. Key partners' contributions: mapping out partner-supported districts, interests/activities, contributions, and plans
- g. Gaps in funding and/or technical expertise

The draft plan should be circulated to the stakeholders prior to the meeting. A synopsis or a brief hand-out on the strategic plan should be available during the meeting.

5. Data Collection, Compilation, and Analysis

It is mandatory to have up-to-date and complete data for the meeting, including:

- a. Current information on each individual NTD control program activities.
- b. Treatment coverage and performance indicators, as well as data on ongoing or planned activities.

- c. Integrated NTD maps.
- d. Depending on the status of the country NTD control program, data on the latest preventative chemotherapy should be completed and processed for concise and precise presentations.

6. Logistics and Administration

A stakeholders' meeting is an activity that is part of a country NTD work plan, planned and budgeted accordingly. Stakeholders' meetings cost about \$5,000.00 – \$10,000.00 USD. The ad hoc committee arranges for logistics and administration.

The stakeholders' forum venue gathers 40 to 60 people; and the logistical arrangements should be handled appropriately, including:

- a. Booking a conference room with all the amenities and equipment, translation services, stationery, and commodities to accommodate approximately 60 persons,
- b. Sending out invitations and agendas well in advance,
- c. Collating all the PowerPoint presentations prior to the meeting, and
- d. Arranging transportation for participants from the regions.

The ad hoc committee appoints a reporter to write up the minutes, finalizes the document and distributes them to the participants in a timely manner after the meeting. The committee will put mechanisms in place to follow up on next steps and recommendations.

SAMPLE STAKEHOLDERS' MEETING AGENDA

Agenda
Stakeholder's Meeting:
Country X Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Control Program
The Five-Star Hotel
24-25 March 2009

Tuesday, 22 March 2009		Chair for Day 1: Mrs. Director of Health
9:00 a.m.	Welcome address by the Minister of Health	Mr. Minister
9:10 a.m.	Message from the grantee's National Director	Mr. Director
	Objectives and Expected Outcomes	National Program Manager
9:20 a.m.	Overview of USAID's NTD Control Initiative programs	USAID Representative
9:40 a.m.	Overview RTI's NTD Control Program	RTI Representative
10:00 a.m.	Overview of the Country NTD Control Program	National Program Manager
	Presentation from Partners	Facilitator: Mrs. Chairperson
11:00 a.m.	Discussions	Facilitator: Mrs. Chairperson
11:30 a.m.	Snack Break	
11:45 a.m.	Presentation on diseases specific programs: background, maps, prevalence and achievements	Individual NTD National Program managers
1:10 p.m.	The Integrated NTD Control Program strategic orientations	NTD Focal Person (grantee)
1:30 p.m.	Lunch	
2:15 p.m.	Other components of NTD control: Morbidity management, surveillance, water and sanitation	National Program Manager

2:45 p.m.	The Integrated NTD Control Program scale-up plans Technical and financial gaps	National Program Manager
3:30 p.m.	Discussion	Facilitator: Mrs./Mr. Chair
3:45 p.m.	Break	
4:00 p.m.	Work group	Facilitator: National Program Manager
5:00 p.m.	Closing	Mr. Chair

Wednesday March 2009		Chair for Day 2: Dr. Honor
9:00 a.m.	Recap of Day 1 Proceedings	Reporter
9:15 a.m.	Continue group work activities	Mr. Chairman
11:30 a.m.	Break	
11:45 a.m.	Plenary	Facilitator: Mr. Chairman
12:45 p.m.	Strategic directions for the country NTD Control Program	NTD Focal Person
1:30	Lunch	
1:30 p.m.	New opportunities	NTD Focal Person
2:00 p.m.	Meeting recap	Reporter
2:15 p.m.	Next steps	NTD Focal Person
2:45 p.m.	Break	
3:30 p.m.	Recommendations	National Program

		Manager
4:00 p.m.	Closing	Mrs. Director of Health

Acronyms:

MoH: Ministry of Health
NTDs: Neglected Tropical Diseases
RTI: Research Triangle Institute
WHO: World Health Organization