



**Vector Control
Advisory Group**

MEETING REPORT
Geneva, 11–13 November 2019

Eleventh meeting of the WHO Vector Control Advisory Group



**World Health
Organization**



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BACKGROUND

The WHO Vector Control Advisory Group (VCAG) serves as an advisory body to WHO on new tools, technologies and approaches – collectively referred to as “interventions” – for the control of vectors of malaria, dengue and other vector-borne diseases. VCAG is managed by the WHO Global Malaria Programme (GMP), the WHO department of Control of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTD) and the WHO Prequalification Team for vector control products (PQT-VC).

The specific functions of VCAG are:

- to provide guidance to product developers, innovators and researchers on the generation of epidemiological data and study designs to enable assessment of the public health value of new vector control interventions;
- to assess the public health value of new vector interventions submitted to WHO; and
- to provide advice to WHO, for submission to the Malaria Policy Advisory Committee (MPAC) and the Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for neglected tropical diseases (STAG), on the public health value of new interventions.

VCAG experts, innovators (referred to as “applicants”) and other stakeholders met in Geneva on 11–13 November 2019 for the 11th VCAG meeting. The agenda is reproduced in Annex 1. Ten VCAG members were joined by five temporary advisors and a prequalification assessor. The open session was attended by the VCAG (including temporary advisors), applicants and product developers, WHO staff from GMP, NTD and PQT-VC and other stakeholders, including representatives of donor and procurement agencies. A WebEx link was provided for participants who participated in the open session remotely. The closed meeting was attended only by VCAG members, temporary advisors, WHO Secretariat and relevant parties. The participants are listed in Annex 2.

OPEN SESSION

The declarations of interest of participants were reviewed by the WHO Secretariat, in accordance with WHO policy and procedures, and relevant interests were disclosed. The declarations are presented in Annex 3.

Opening remarks

Dr Pedro Alonso, Director, GMP, thanked the experts for devoting their time and knowledge to support WHO with the assessment of public health value of novel vector control interventions. He noted that the fight against malaria continues to be challenging, with insecticide resistance being one of several key challenges. Within this context there is a need for continued research on and development of new interventions for vector control.

Dr Mwele Malecela, Director, NTD, welcomed and thanked the VCAG members for their contributions to public health. She updated the group on the NTD Roadmap, 2021–2030. The roadmap, in which effective vector control plays a vital role, sets ambitious but realistic global targets to tackle 20 NTDs by 2030. She also noted that the fight against vector-borne diseases must be integrated in terms of both interventions and sectors.

In that context, she highlighted the importance of partnership among the three WHO departments involved (GMP, NTD and PQT) to meet the goal of saving lives through vector control measures.

Emer Cooke, Director, Regulation of Medicines and other Health Technologies, observed that it is an exciting time to be working in vector control. WHO's Prequalification department has many years of experience in the regulation of health products. This experience as well as the now established evaluation process for vector control products, will be important in meeting the challenge of providing access to new and innovative vector control interventions, such as genetically modified mosquitoes. The prequalification system is adapting to meet such submissions, with the aim to help and not hinder access to these innovations.

Outcomes of the WHO Strategic Advisory Group on Malaria Eradication

Dr Pedro Alonso presented on the outcomes of the Strategic Advisory Group on Malaria Eradication, which was formed in 2016 to advise WHO on future scenarios for malaria, including whether eradication is feasible. The Group, composed of scientists and public health experts from around the world, conducted a 3-year study of trends and projections of the factors and determinants that underpin malaria. They affirmed that eradication is a goal worth pursuing, as it is likely to save millions of lives and billions of dollars. It noted, however, that with the currently available tools, we are far from a malaria-free world. The Group called for more investment in research and development of new tools and approaches to fight malaria, stronger universal health coverage to ensure that everyone can access the services they need, stronger community engagement and better surveillance linked to subnational, national and regional strategies for a more targeted malaria response (1).

Updates: summary of discussions

Anna Bowman, VCAG Project Manager, started her presentation by contextualizing the work of VCAG. She noted that WHO's legitimacy and technical authority lie in its rigorous adherence to systematic use of evidence as the basis for all policy (2). In this context, VCAG plays an important role in both supporting the generation of evidence and reviewing it.

It was noted that VCAG's core function, to assess the public health value of new vector control interventions, has remained the same since its inception; however, the scope of the group's work has changed. VCAG's Terms of Reference have been updated to

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