



**Vector Control
Advisory Group**

MEETING REPORT
12-14 November 2018

Ninth 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 (PQT) for vector control products. To assist WHO in developing public health policy, VCAG assesses new interventions and provides guidance on developing the evidence needed for public health value assessment and policy. VCAG assesses this evidence once it is generated and provides recommendations to WHO on the public health value of new tools.

As of November 2018, VCAG is reviewing 18 new interventions, spanning a range of innovative technologies from new insecticide combinations for insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) to modified, transgenic or sterile mosquitoes to suppress or replace wild populations. Highlights include:

- six new intervention classes for malaria comprised of 11 tools¹ including five new ITNs; and
- seven new intervention classes for NTDs comprised of six tools for *Aedes*-borne diseases and two for leishmaniasis control;
- For 12 tools, innovators have moved to the stage of either planning or already conducting epidemiological trials to generate evidence to assess their public health value.²

VCAG experts, innovators and other stakeholders convened in Geneva on 12–14 November 2018 for the 9th VCAG meeting. Eight VCAG members were joined by six ad hoc experts, five of whom attended in person and one by phone. The open session was attended by members of VCAG, applicants and product developers, WHO staff from GMP, NTD and PQT, and other stakeholders, including representatives of donor and procurement agencies. A WebEx link was provided so participants could also join the open session remotely. The closed meeting was attended by VCAG members and ad hoc experts, the WHO Secretariat and the relevant parties only. The participants are listed in Annex 1.

VCAG functions

VCAG has the following specific functions:

1. To provide guidance to product developers, through WHO, on data requirements and study designs to enable assessment of the public health value of new vector control tools, technologies and approaches.
2. To assess the public health value of new vector control tools, technologies and approaches submitted to WHO.
3. 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 tools, technologies and approaches.

OPEN SESSION

Dr Mwelecele Malecela, NTD Director, Dr Pedro Alonso, GMP Director and Dr Suzanne Hill, Director, WHO Essential Medicines and Health Products, welcomed VCAG members to Geneva and wished them successful deliberations.

Dr Alonso noted the importance of VCAG's role in assisting with policy development for new malaria vector control options and highlighted the outcomes of the GMP policy review process supported by the Boston Consulting Group. The review of GMP policy development processes had identified that the pathway for vector control products, which VCAG is part of, should serve as a model for overall policy development for malaria interventions within GMP. Speaking on the ongoing transition in VCAG membership, Dr Alonso announced the appointments of Professor Heather Ferguson as the Vice-Chair of VCAG, commencing immediately, and Dr Salim Abdulla as the new incoming Chair of VCAG, to be formalized following the 9th VCAG meeting in accordance with the revised Terms of Reference.^{3,4} Dr Alonso noted the hard work, time and valuable contributions of Dr Thomas Scott in chairing the VCAG for the past three years and thanked him as the outgoing chair on behalf of WHO.

Dr Alonso updated the participants on the process to recruit new VCAG members. Members will be selected and appointed by the WHO Assistant Director-General for Communicable Diseases, upon the advice of the Director GMP and the Director NTD. In selecting members, consideration will be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, geographical representation and gender balance.

Dr Malecela discussed the importance of vector control in overcoming NTDs, nearly half of which are vector borne, resulting in 600 million cases annually. Existing vector control tools must be used to their full potential and new vector control options are urgently needed in the context of growing insecticide resistance, expanding urbanization, globalization and climate change. Many new tools on the horizon include NTDs as a target disease, including sterile and *Wolbachia*-infected *Aedes* mosquitoes, vector traps, spatial repellents, genetically modified mosquitoes and systemic cattle treatments for leishmaniasis control. The work of this advisory body is crucial for guiding new approaches in vector control. VCAG outcomes play a key role in setting WHO policy, thereby supporting NTD and GMP in determining whether specific new interventions should be added to the range of interventions available to vector-borne disease control programmes.

Dr Hill noted the importance of vector control in public health and the value that WHO places on this issue, as reflected in the joint dedication of the three departments – GMP, NTD and PQT – to this work. WHO is undertaking a process of transformation, including

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