

Terms of Reference for the Quadripartite Technical Group on the Economics of Antimicrobial Resistance AMR (QTG-EA)

These Terms of Reference for the Quadripartite Technical Group¹ on the Economics of Antimicrobial Resistance (QTG-EA) are agreed to by the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) (collectively referred to as the “Quadripartite”). The Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR (QJS), which consolidates cooperation between FAO, UNEP, WHO and WOAH to coordinate the global One Health response to AMR, will have oversight of the QTG-EA through its Senior Management Group (QJS SMG). The QJS will provide overall secretariat support for the QTG-EA.

I. Background

1. Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) occurs when bacteria, viruses, fungi and parasites are or become resistant to antimicrobial treatments to which they were previously susceptible. The main drivers are the inappropriate use of antimicrobials in human, animal and plant health, food production, and environmental contamination².
2. AMR poses severe threats to human, animal, plant and environmental health, and global food security. Recent research shows that almost 5 million deaths were associated with AMR globally in 2019³. Other than the negative impact on animals, AMR can also significantly affect food production, food security and farmer livelihoods. AMR is potentially to become an international trade and economic issue linked to health security, food safety and sustainable development. Estimates of economic losses caused by rising AMR range from – 1.1 to 3.8 per cent of annual gross domestic product (GDP) by 2050⁴. Although the risks of AMR to human, animal and plant health and the environment are shared by all countries globally, Lower and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) bear a more significant burden of infectious disease and will be most adversely affected by AMR.
3. There is currently inadequate financial support for the sustainable implementation of national action plans on AMR. Existing estimates of the costs of antimicrobial resistance containment measures and national action plan implementation range from the US \$4-9 billion annually, but experts have suggested that these figures may underestimate the actual cost of action and inaction to antimicrobial resistance in a One Health context.
4. Among the Quadripartite core mandates is to support the global AMR response across the One Health spectrum through global advocacy and political engagement, creation of a shared vision and goals, and providing secretariat services for global governance structures. In their 2022-2023 joint workplan, the Quadripartite have prioritized estimating the cost of the AMR response and the potential return on investment. In addition, the AMR Global Leaders Group (GLG) emphasized that making the investment case by defining the return on investment in antimicrobial resistance activities is a top priority.
5. A Quadripartite Technical Group is required to provide advice on estimating the AMR cost and associated co-benefits of AMR response across different sectors to inform global, regional, and country prioritization and resource mobilization.

¹ For FAO purposes, the term “Technical Group” is interpreted to reflect a “panel of experts” established with a view to developing consultations with leading technicians in fields of activity of the Organization, as contemplated under Article VI, paragraph 4 of the FAO Constitution.

² World Health Organization. (2019). No time to Wait: Securing the future from drug-resistant infections. Interagency Coordination Group on Antimicrobial Resistance Report to the Secretary General of the United Nations. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/no-time-to-wait-securing-the-future-from-drug-resistant-infections>

³ Global burden of bacterial antimicrobial resistance in 2019: a systematic analysis.

⁴ <https://documents1.worldbank.org/curated/en/323311493396993758/pdf/final-report.pdf>

II. Functions

6. The role of the QTG-EA will be to provide strategic and technical advice and /or inputs to the Quadripartite and the GLG. The Quadripartite sets and regularly reviews the specific functions of the QTG-EA.
7. Based on the request from the Quadripartite, the QTG-EA will:
 - (a) provide advice to the Quadripartite on the needs, scope, and format of conducting economic and investment cases for AMR action at global, regional and country levels
 - (b) identify and share models and approaches to building economic cases for AMR across sectors.
 - (c) assist the Quadripartite where possible in seeking sector-specific advice, particularly where that advice may not already be present in the Technical Group
 - (d) advise on data needs, evidence gaps, and approaches to address them to better estimate the cost and benefits of AMR response
 - (e) advise on key assumptions and hypotheses for the selection of AMR interventions, costing methods and return on investment calculations
 - (f) provide strategic advice and input to the GLG on the economics of AMR and financing for AMR action
 - (g) advise the Quadripartite on mainstreaming the findings, including the economic assessment and resource mobilization tools in the organizational strategies and joint operational at all levels

III. Composition

8. The QTG-EA will be composed of up to twenty (20) experts
9. The QTG-EA will include a sector-balanced representation of AMR experts and economists, with an expectation that experts will have the expertise in AMR strategic planning and economic evaluations in one or more sectors (human health, animal health (terrestrial and aquatic), food safety and food production, plant health, and the environment). All sectors should be covered once the group is formed. There will also be a balanced representation of regions and gender, and significant expertise of AMR response in lower resource settings.
10. The Quadripartite welcomes expressions of interest from Economists, Epidemiologists, Development experts or other relevant disciplines who have experience working on human, animal, plant health and environment economics issues.
11. Experts of the QTG-EA shall be appointed to serve for a period of two (2) years and shall be eligible for reappointment. QTG-EA experts will be eligible to be appointed as Chairperson but are only permitted to serve in this role for one (1) term. Their appointment and/or designation as Chairperson may be terminated at any time by the Quadripartite if their interest so requires or in accordance with the terms of the relevant letter of appointment. Where a Chairperson's appointment is terminated, the Quadripartite may decide to appoint a replacement Chairperson.
12. Experts of the QTG-EA, including the Chairperson, shall be selected and/or appointed by the Quadripartite following an open call for experts. The Chairperson's functions include the following:
 - (a) to chair the meetings of the QTG-EA;
 - (b) to liaise with the QJS between meetings

Duration

13. The QTG-EA will be established for a duration of two years. The Quadripartite may decide to extend or shorten the duration.

Selection process

14. The Quadripartite, through the QJS, will issue a joint open call to select QTG-EA experts.
15. Additional experts may be considered from a roster or by a new open call as required.

16. QTG-EA experts will have international experience and having worked on similar technical committees at national or international levels will be an asset.
17. The QTG-EA experts shall serve in their personal capacities.

Accountability

18. The QTG-EA will be accountable to the QJS SMG and provide advice to the GLG as required. The QJS SMG will regularly review the progress and provide feedback to the QTG-EA. The QTG-EA will regularly report through the Chairperson to the QJS SMG and the GLG through invitations to meetings and/or written meeting reports, as appropriate.
19. Reports of each QTG-EA meeting containing its recommendations shall be addressed to the QJS SMG.

Guiding Principles

20. The QTG-EA will not have any separate legal identity.
21. The QTG-EA will attempt to build consensus around the scope and methodology of the economic and investment case for AMR, advocate for and support its implementation and continually advise on approaches and data points needed to support prioritization and financing of AMR response
22. QTG-EA experts must respect the impartiality and independence required of the Quadripartite. In performing their work, experts may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or any authority external to the Quadripartite. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed experts shall be required to complete a declaration of interests form and their appointment, or re-appointment, shall be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the QJS and a committee selected from members of the Quadripartite, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
23. Following a determination that a proposed expert's participation in the QTG-EA would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed expert will be sent a letter inviting them to be an expert of the QTG-EA. Their appointment to the QTG-EA is subject to the Quadripartite receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement. Notwithstanding the requirement to complete the declaration of interest form, QTG-EA experts have an ongoing obligation to inform the Quadripartite of any interests that may give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
24. The Quadripartite may, from time to time, request QTG-EA experts to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before an QTG-EA meeting or any other related activity or engagement, as decided by the Quadripartite. Where the Organizations have made such a request, the QTG-EA expert's participation in the QTG-EA activity or engagement is subject to a determination that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
25. QTG-EA experts do not receive any remuneration from the Organizations for any work related to the QTG-EA.

IV. Operation

26. The QTG-EA shall meet six times per year. However, the Quadripartite may convene additional meetings as needed. QTG-EA meetings will be held virtually, via video or teleconference and in person, resource availability permitting.
27. QTG-EA meetings may be held in open or closed sessions, as decided by the Chairperson in consultation with the Quadripartite.
 - (a) Open sessions: shall be convened for the sole purpose of the exchange of non-confidential information and views and may be attended by representatives of the Quadripartite and other relevant stakeholders.

- (b) Closed sessions: sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to the Quadripartite shall be restricted to the members of the QTG-EA and representatives of the Quadripartite.
28. Economists and AMR programme experts from each organization will be invited as observers.
 29. The quorum for QTG-EA meetings shall be two-thirds of the QTG-EA experts.
 30. The QTG-EA may decide to establish smaller working groups (i.e., sub-groups of the QTG-EA) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations shall take place via teleconference or videoconference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the QTG-EA for review at one of its meetings.
 31. QTG-EA experts are expected to attend meetings. If an expert misses two consecutive meetings without justification, the Quadripartite may end his/her appointment as an expert of the QTG-EA.
 32. Reports of each meeting and the final report shall be submitted by the QTG-EA to the QJS. All recommendations from the QTG-EA are advisory to the Quadripartite, who retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the QTG-EA.
 33. The QTG-EA shall normally make recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority dissenting views from the majority may be reflected in the meeting report when requested by the Expert concerned.
 34. Active participation is expected from all QTG-EA experts, including in working groups, teleconferences, and interaction over email. QTG-EA experts may, in advance of QTG-EA meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by the QTG-EA.
 35. The Quadripartite shall determine the modes of communication to be used by the QTG-EA.
 36. The Quadripartite shall decide on the actions to be taken regarding any advice or recommendations made by the QTG-EA. The outputs of the QTG-EA are jointly owned by the Quadripartite. Without prejudice to the advisory nature of the QTG-EA recommendations, regular updates of the activities of the QTG-EA shall normally be published on the Quadripartite organizations' websites and/or communicated to the public in other forms as appropriate.
 37. QTG-EA members shall not speak on behalf of or represent the QTG-EA or the Quadripartite to any third party.
 38. The working language of the QTG-EA will be English.

V. Secretariat Support

39. The QJS will provide secretariat support for the QTG-EA. The Secretariat is hosted by WHO and has liaison officers from FAO, UNEP and WOAHA based in their respective organizations. Representatives from the World Bank and other relevant stakeholders will assist the work of the QTG-EA through the Secretariat.

VI. Information and documentation

40. Information and documentation to which QTG-EA experts may gain access in performing QTG-EA-related activities, shall be considered confidential and proprietary to the Quadripartite. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in paragraph 23 above, QTG-EA experts undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their QTG-EA related activities shall be exclusively vested in the Quadripartite.
41. QTG-EA experts shall not quote from, circulate, or use QTG-EA documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.
42. The Quadripartite retain full control over the publication of the reports of the QTG-EA.