

Defeating Meningitis by 2030: a global road map

Technical Taskforce (TTF)

Terms of reference

Functions

WHO has coordinated the development of the world's first road map for the prevention and control of meningitis. This road map is a call to action, a call to defeat meningitis by 2030. With the collective vision “Towards a world free of meningitis”, the road map paves the way to tackle the main causes of acute bacterial meningitis (meningococcus, pneumococcus, *Haemophilus influenzae* and group B streptococcus). The three visionary goals are to (i) eliminate bacterial meningitis epidemics, (ii) reduce cases and deaths from vaccine-preventable bacterial meningitis and (iii) reduce disability and improve quality of life after meningitis due to any cause. In order to achieve these visionary goals, strategic goals, key activities and milestones are set out in five highly interconnected pillars: Prevention and epidemic control, Diagnosis and treatment, Disease surveillance, Support and care for people affected by meningitis, Advocacy and engagement.

This road map was developed with the strong involvement of experts from all regions, ministries of health, public health organizations, civil society organizations, academics, the private sector, donors and other stakeholders, through a multidisciplinary approach. A Technical Taskforce composed of partners, and international experts, historically engaged in long-term meningitis control has played an essential role in the process of developing the road map.

In November 2020 the Seventy-third World Health Assembly at its resumed session endorsed the first ever resolution on meningitis prevention and control, which approves the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030.^{i, ii} The latter is also identified in WHO's thirteenth general programme of work 2019–2023, as one of the four flagship global strategies to prevent high-threat infectious hazards.

An initial report on progress for implementation of the resolution was submitted to the Executive Board at its 150th session in January 2022 (EB150/13) and Member States warmly welcomed and supported the establishment of a Strategic Support Group to facilitate the implementation of the road map and raise the profile of meningitis on the global health agenda.ⁱⁱⁱ An initial review of the global meningitis situation and an assessment of efforts made in meningitis prevention and control is due to the 76th World Health Assembly (May 2023) through the Executive Board at its 152nd session (January 2023).

The Technical Taskforce (TTF) will continue to play an essential role under the general authority of WHO, with specific responsibility for leading and coordinating the implementation of the WHO *Defeating Meningitis by 2030 Global Road map*, globally and regionally, by providing a forum for technical exchange and cooperation on meningitis and road map related activities. The TTF is not a decision-making body per se, but it helps the Organization to ensure its accountability to Member States, in line with the resolution and the Mission of the Organization. A Strategic Support Group is also appointed to support WHO and its partners in the implementation of the Global Road map globally and regionally.

Membership

The TTF consists of representatives of partners, and international experts, who are highly committed to Defeating Meningitis by 2030. One to two members of the Technical Taskforce will be observers to the Strategy Support Group on a rotational basis. The WHO TTF secretariat consists of representatives from all key relevant departments at the regional and global levels of the organization, including immunization, health emergencies, and mental health.

Institutions initially invited to become members of the TTF include the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine, Médecins Sans Frontières and Epicentre, the Meningitis Research Foundation, PATH, and UNICEF. Core expert advisers from complementary disciplines are also invited to become members of the TTF. Membership may be further extended to new institutions and new advisers, as appropriate, taking into account regional relevance.

WHO will regularly review the current TTF membership and assess if rotation on/off is necessary. Membership is for an initial period of three years (2021 inclusive), potentially renewable for another three years.

Meetings and operational procedures

The TTF will participate in coordination discussions through meetings, teleconferences and email. WHO briefings to members will be held from time to time as required.

Operational procedures have been refined at the first meeting to held in 2021.

Roles and responsibilities of TTF members

Roles and responsibilities of TTF members include to:

1. Lead and coordinate designated activities in the road map, while creating links and fostering synergies with complementary initiatives;
2. Contribute to the Monitoring and Evaluation of the implementation of the road map, and propose strategic adjustments accordingly and as needed;
3. Share knowledge and information, and help identify key stakeholders at global and regional levels;
4. Increase the visibility of meningitis as an important global public health problem and contribute to mobilize resources to support the implementation of the road map at national, regional, and global levels; and
5. Liaise with and seek support from the Strategy Support Group, composed of representatives of global and regional level donors, ministries of health and civil society organizations, to achieve the road map objectives, in line with the resolution and the Mission of the Organization.

ⁱ Seventy-third World Health Assembly conference paper A73/A/CONF./1 Meningitis prevention and control. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2020 (https://apps.who.int/gb/ebwha/pdf_files/WHA73/A73_ACONF1-en.pdf, accessed 7 February 2021).

ⁱⁱ The Seventy-third World Health Assembly approved the road map in November 2020. The definitive version of the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030 can be found in the official records of the Seventy-third World Health Assembly (document WHA73/2020/REC/1, Annex 4).

ⁱⁱⁱ Executive Board reviews progress in the implementation of the global road map on defeating meningitis by 2030 (<https://www.who.int/news/item/07-02-2022-executive-board-reviews-progress-in-the-implementation-of-the-global-road-map-on-defeating-meningitis-by-2030>, accessed 22 February 2022)