

DRAFT TERMS OF REFERENCE FOR THE PHARMACEUTICALS WORKING GROUP (PWG) OF THE SWAP COMMITTEE

Background

The Health Sector Wide Approach (SWAP) Committee provides a forum for consultations and exchange of ideas and experiences between the different stakeholders involved in the health sector. The SWAP Committee also provides a forum for harmonization of donor support as well as policy consultation and advice on future development. The committee has several working groups in the health sector. In recognition of the problems facing the Pharmaceutical sector in the country it has now added the Pharmaceutical Working Group.

Stakeholders in the Pharmaceutical sector acknowledge that medicines play an important role in the delivery of health services. The sector however is plagued with problems of inadequacies in drug availability, supply and distribution resulting from various factors such as:

- Inadequate funding for medicines
- Poor drug supply and distribution systems
- Shortage of pharmaceutical personnel to manage drug supplies at different levels of health care service delivery.
- The absence of up-to-date guidance documents for the sector such as the National Medicine Policy and its Master plan as well as the Essential Medicine List
- Inadequate drug management practices at the facility level
- Inadequate promotion of rational drug use due to absence of reference materials such as updated Standard Treatment Guidelines and non functioning of Drugs and Therapeutics Committees

Such inadequacies affect the quality of health service provided to the population in the country. The Pharmaceuticals Working Group (PWG) has therefore been established to support the Government of Tanzania in its efforts to achieve the objectives of the National Medicine Policy which aims at making available to all Tanzanians at all times the essential pharmaceutical products which are of quality, proven effectiveness and acceptable safety at a price that the individual and the community can afford when are needed to prevent, cure or reduce illness and suffering. In so doing the PWG will also be supporting the National Health Policy, the Health Sector Strategic Plan (HSSP) and the health related objectives in the MKUKUTA as well as in attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

Mission of the Pharmaceuticals Working Group

To provide sound advice and technical support for sustainable improvement of the Pharmaceutical sector so as to the overall objective of the National Medicine Policy

Strategy:

- **Provide technical advice and support** to the MOHSW in bringing up relevant policy guidelines and strategies to enhance improvement in the provision of pharmaceuticals services.
- **Promote multi-sectoral collaboration** and maintain a high level focus on pharmaceutical issues among stakeholders that impact on the accessibility, quality and rational use of medicines

- **Coordinate and monitor** implementation of the Pharmaceutical Master Plan and identify important emerging Pharmaceutical and Health issues that require appropriate attention.
- **Endeavor for coherent, consistent, predictable and sustainable** technical and financial support to the Pharmaceutical Sector among development partners, international funding agencies, NGOs and other stakeholders
- **Promote information and evidence for decision making;** Convene regular briefing and advocacy meetings/dialogues on pharmaceutical issues

Tasks of the Working Group

The PWG is expected to perform the following:

- To identify current and emerging barriers within the Pharmaceutical Sector relating to policy implementation with the objective of providing sound and timely advice for remedial measures
- To assist the MOHSW to develop and implement a multi-sectoral Pharmaceutical Strategic Plan (Master Plan for the Pharmaceutical Sector)
- To receive and comment on pharmaceutical updates from members/sectors in respect to ongoing activities/programmes
- To provide necessary advice to update existing pharmaceutical information
- To monitor and evaluate implementation of plans in line with National Medicine Policy and other appropriate policy guidelines within the Health Sector
- To undertake any assignment that may be allocated by the MOHSW

Membership

1. Membership of the PWG shall be based on institutional representation with a designated focal person who is expected to participate actively in the activities of the group
2. The period of services for appointed members will be for two years following approval by the Permanent Secretary
3. In order to support broader stakeholder representation, other stakeholders may be invited to the meetings or become co-opted members subject to existing rules and procedures.

Cessation of Appointment

1. Any appointment will be nullified by the appointing authority if the attributes and performance of the appointed member is below expectations
2. In the event that a designated Member for one reason or another is unable to continue shall give notice in writing to Chairman of the PWG at least one month ahead of retirement to enable necessary replacement

Schedule of meetings, planning, reporting and information sharing

- The Pharmaceutical WG will meet on a monthly basis
- The group should establish a yearly work plan in relation to events relevant to the Pharmaceutical Sector in Tanzania.
- The Working Group, will report on progress and bottlenecks in the Pharmaceutical Sector to the regular SWAP meetings, including recommendations and joint high-level decisions/actions as appropriate.
- Members are requested to share information on upcoming events, missions, studies, projects and their results in the earliest stage possible.