Terms of Reference
Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Antimicrobial Resistance (STAG-AMR)

The Strategic and Technical Advisory Group for Antimicrobial Resistance (STAG-AMR) is the principal advisory group to the World Health Organization (WHO) on antimicrobial resistance. The STAG-AMR has the mandate of advising the WHO Director-General and the AMR Division on overall global policies and strategies to address AMR within the context of human health, while considering relevant World Health Assembly (WHA) resolutions and decisions. The mandate of the STAG-AMR is to provide strategic and technical advice.

I. Functions

The STAG-AMR shall have the following functions:

1. To review progress in the implementation of WHO’s priority activities to tackle AMR in countries consistent with WHO’s mandate, relevant WHA resolutions and decisions, and the strategic objectives of the Global Action Plan on AMR (2015), and make recommendations;

2. To provide an independent evaluation of the major strategic, scientific and technical challenges and opportunities to be addressed by WHO in order to enhance progress in addressing AMR in the context of human health;

3. To review the adequacy of WHO’s response to emerging national and global public health risks with regard to AMR and make recommendations;

4. To review and make recommendations on the status of linkages between AMR and other health interventions, and other relevant sectors;

5. To review and make recommendations on WHO’s engagement in partnerships to enhance the achievement of global AMR goals.

II. Composition

1. The STAG-AMR shall have up to 30 members, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the areas of technical expertise relevant to the implementation of the five strategic objectives of the global action plan on AMR. In the selection of the members, consideration will be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, strategic and operational management experience, geographical representation and gender balance.

2. Members of the STAG-AMR, including the Chair, shall be selected and appointed by WHO in consultation with the Regional Offices as appropriate, on the basis of their technical expertise and public health experience following an open call for experts. The Chair’s role includes the following:

   - to chair the meeting of the STAG-AMR
   - to liaise with the WHO Secretariat between meetings.

In appointing a Chairperson, consideration shall be given to gender and geographical representation.

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1 Members serve as full participants and partake in the deliberations and the adoption of the recommendations of the meeting in which they are involved.

2 Internal Note: selection/appointment/termination should be made by the Director-General or by the ADG of the responsible Division, if delegated this authority.
3. Members of the STAG-AMR, including the Chair, shall be appointed to serve for a period of three years, and shall be eligible for reappointment only once for a period of up to three additional years. Their appointment and/or designation as Chair may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO's interest so requires or as otherwise specified in these TORs or letters of appointment. A Chair is eligible for reappointment as a member of the STAG-AMR but is only permitted to serve as Chair for one term. Where a member’s appointment is terminated, WHO may decide to appoint a replacement member.

4. STAG-AMR members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed members/members shall be required to complete a declaration of interests form and their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, shall be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the WHO Secretariat, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

5. Following a determination that a proposed member’s participation in the STAG-AMR would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed member will be sent a letter inviting them to be a member of the STAG-AMR. Their appointment to the STAG-AMR is subject to WHO receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement. Notwithstanding the requirement to complete the WHO declaration of interest form, STAG-AMR members have an ongoing obligation to inform the WHO of any interests real or perceived that may give raise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

6. As contemplated in paragraph II.4 above, WHO may, from time to time, request STAG-AMR members to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before a STAG-AMR meeting or any other STAG-AMR related activity or engagement, as decided by WHO. Where WHO has made such a request, the AG member’s participation in the STAG-AMR activity or engagement is subject to a determination that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

7. Where a STAG-AMR member is invited by WHO to travel to an in-person STAG-AMR meeting, WHO shall, subject to any conflict of interest determination as set out in paragraph II.6 above, issue a letter of appointment as a temporary adviser and accompanying memorandum of agreement (together ‘Temporary Adviser Letter). WHO shall not authorize travel by an STAG-AMR member, until it receives a countersigned Temporary Adviser Letter.

8. STAG-AMR members do not receive any remuneration from the Organization for any work related to the AG. However, when attending in-person meetings at the invitation of WHO, their travel cost and per diem shall be covered by WHO in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.

III. Operation

1. The STAG-AMR shall usually meet at least once each year. WHO shall provide any necessary scientific, technical and other support for the STAG-AMR. WHO may convene additional meetings, including through teleconferences and videoconferences, on an ad hoc basis, as decided by the Assistant Director General of the AMR Division, in consultation with the STAG-AMR Chair as appropriate.

STAG-AMR meetings may be held in open and/or closed sessions, as decided by WHO in consultation with the Chair.
(a) Open sessions: Open sessions shall be convened for the exchange of non-confidential information and views and may be attended by Observers (as defined in paragraph III.3 below).

(b) Closed sessions: The sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to WHO, or other potentially sensitive or confidential information, may be restricted to the members of the STAG-AMR and essential WHO Secretariat staff.

2. The quorum for STAG-AMR meetings shall be two thirds of the members.

3. WHO may, at its sole discretion, invite external individuals from time to time to attend the open sessions of an advisory group, or parts thereof, as “observers”. Whether attendance is in person or virtual will also be at WHO’s sole discretion. Observers may be invited either in their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-State actor. WHO will request observers invited in their personal capacity to complete a confidentiality undertaking and a declaration of interests form prior to attending a session of the advisory group. Invitations to observers attending as representatives from non-State actors will be subject to WHO internal due diligence and risk assessment including conflict of interest considerations in accordance with the Framework for engagement with non-State actors (FENSA). Observers invited as representatives may also be requested to complete a confidentiality undertaking. Observers shall normally attend meetings of the STAG-AMR at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

At the invitation of the Chair, observers may be asked to present their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. Observers will not participate in the process of adopting recommendations of the STAG-AMR.

4. The STAG-AMR may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of the STAG-AMR) to work on specific issues as agreed upon by WHO and as resources allow, to help address specific questions. These Working Groups will function for a time limited basis and report back to the STAG-AMR. Their deliberations shall take place via teleconference or video-conference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the STAG-AMR for review at one of its meetings.

5. STAG-AMR members are expected to attend meetings. If a member misses two consecutive meetings, WHO may end his/her appointment as a member of the STAG-AMR. WHO may decide to appoint a member in replacement of that member.

6. A report of the main STAG-AMR meeting each year, including the STAG-AMR’ recommendations to WHO, shall be submitted jointly by the STAG-AMR Chair and the Assistant Director-General of the AMR Division to the Director-General. All recommendations from the STAG-AMR are advisory to WHO, who retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the STAG-AMR.

7. The STAG-AMR shall normally make recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority opinions will be reflected in the meeting report.

8. Active participation is expected from all STAG-AMR members, including in working groups, teleconferences, and interaction over email. STAG-AMR members may, in advance of STAG-AMR meetings, be requested to review meeting materials and to provide their views for consideration by the STAG-AMR.
9. WHO shall determine the modes of communication by the STAG-AMR, including between WHO and the STAG-AMR members, and the STAG-AMR members among themselves.

10. STAG-AMR members shall not speak on behalf of, or represent, the STAG-AMR or WHO to any third party.

IV. Secretariat

WHO shall provide the secretariat for the STAG-AMR including necessary scientific, technical, administrative and other support. In this regard, the WHO Secretariat shall provide the members in advance of each meeting with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to Observers will be determined by the WHO Secretariat.

V. Information and documentation

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing STAG-AMR related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and/or parties collaborating with WHO. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in section II(5) above, STAG-AMR members undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that any and all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their STAG-AMR related activities shall be exclusively vested in WHO.

2. STAG-AMR members and Observers shall not quote from, circulate or use STAG-AMR documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.

3. WHO retains full control over the publication of the reports of the STAG-AMR, including deciding whether or not to publish them.