Business Meeting Minutes (Session 15)
24 January, 2015
Dr Christina Rundi (APMEN Vector Working Group Chair), Ministry of Health Malaysia
Dr MRSS Bandara (APMEN Vector Working Group Vice-Chair), Anti-Malaria Campaign Sri Lanka

A brief overview of the APMEN Governance process was presented which reiterated that the Network was Country led and driven and that the discussions and actions from the Working Group meetings would be elevated to the Annual Network Meeting for further consideration and ratification.

The Chair acknowledged and thanked ACTMalaria who had provided the APMEN VcWG with administrative and Secretariat support over the past year.

An update on the achievements of the Vector Control Working Group during 2014 was provided which included: Country Partner Vector Survey, supporting 8 participants to attend the IVM training in Malaysia, development of the Vector of Asia Pacific Region phone application (currently in beta testing stage. The app is planned to be launched during the APMEN VII Meeting in March 2015), 2 APMEN-funded attendees participated in Roll Back Malaria VCWG-10 Meeting, continuing consultation with WHO (SEARO/WPRO) on planned vector control in elimination settings training in 2015, working with GMP/WHO (SEARO/WPRI) and ACTMalaria on Insecticide Resistance.

The Chair presented the 2015 budget with the proposed activities for the working group. While APMEN only had funding through to the end of June 2015, the original work plan for 2015 included activities scheduled through the end of the year. The Chair proposed that the Working Group consider the activities planned and: prioritise those that could be completed by mid-2015, delay any activities pending further future funding, add in any additional activities.

The Chair called for agenda items from the floor.

The VcWG Research Grants were raised and discussed and it was noted that this activity had been delayed for 2 years. The original plan for the Grants was to have an open and competitive application process for proposals, however given the very limited timeframe and budget available now it was suggested that Countries who had ‘ready-made’ proposals with research questions that were achievable in a short time frame could submit for funding under this activity stream. The Secretariat advised the group that only AUD $50,000 is currently available for the Vector Research Grants. Further discussion from the floor recommended that a brief outline could be submitted to the VcWG via the Secretariat for review, where it would go through a quick but detailed technical feasibility and scientific and ethics review. It was emphasised that the review process would need to make sure the proposed study already has a good institutional link with research/academia to actually make the research happen given the tight timeline.

There was unanimous support for this.

The next item raised was the funding support APMEN has provided to participants attending the annual IVM training course. The Secretariat sought comment from the group whether this should be continued. The Ministry of Health Malaysia advised that due to funds being diverted to relief efforts for the recent flooding disaster in Malaysia, that there may be not budget to run the IVM training in 2015, or it may be downsized.
It was raised that all countries should aim to have their own IVM course and that APMEN could work towards supporting internal training opportunities. One suggestion was that an IVM expert could provide an intensive training course within another country. Malaysia put forward its interest in exporting its expertise to other countries through training opportunities. Another suggestion was that any funds assigned to IVM training could be re-allocated to a WHO WPRO supported training course if the IVM training did not progress. The group requested the Secretariat (Amanda) liaise with ACTMalaria to discuss possible options further.

Recommendation: That future IVM funds in 2015 are used for internal Country Partner IVM training needs and to support an expert from Malaysia to assist in the training, or to move the funds to assist the WHO WPRO Training.

11 votes were in favour, 1 abstain, 1 absent.

APMEN to support vector related Fellowship recipients to attend the annual meeting to showcase what they had undertaken and achieved during and post Fellowship.

There was unanimous support for this.

The group noted that there was already some budget for WHO training, and proposed that any additional budget could support more participants (beyond 2). The aim of this training is for participants who attend the course to become resources within their own countries and pass on their skills and knowledge to others. It was noted by the group that Capacity building is coming out as an important priority for available budget.

The next item discussed was the position of the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Working Group. The current term for the Chair and Vice-Chair is one year. The Secretariat called for nominations and a Country Partner member of the group nominated the current position holders to continue their roles.

- Voting for Chair and Vice Chair
  - Nominations: Christina Rundi for Chair, Bandara for Vice Chair
  - Nomination accepted

The Secretariat noted that governance issues would be addressed at APMEN VII to bring the governance of the Working Groups in line with each other so all Chair/Vice Chairs of Working Groups would have 2 year terms.

The structure and format of the APMEN meeting was discussed. By having Working Group meetings separate from the full APMEN meeting, the group intended to bring other people into the discussion, not just the people that attend the main APMEN meeting. The separate meeting has allowed entomologists, case management specialists amongst others have other voices in the fold.

The group recommended that the Chair and Vice Chairs of each Working Group attend the larger annual APMEN Technical and Business Meeting to represent the respective groups. The Secretariat responded that this already will happen, it’s included in the budget and the Chairs will present the workplans and feedback on activities at the meeting.

It was also noted that having multiple meetings also allows other Country Partners to host, as well as bring local provincial staff, to attend.