

Meeting Minutes
Public-Private Partnership Group of the
International Network on Household Water Treatment and Safe Storage

Chapel Hill, North Carolina, USA
4 October 2011

1. Introduction

The inaugural meeting of the Public-Private Partnership Group (“PPG”) began with a round of introductions and Maggie Montgomery provided a brief overview of the agenda. Ryan Rowe recorded the minutes.

Please refer to Annex 1 for a list of participants in attendance.

2. Agenda

- Present and discuss proposal for an international HWT evaluation scheme.
- Gain inputs on how to foster public-private partnerships in the area of HWTS.
- Discuss resource mobilization options and priorities.

3. Proceedings of the meeting

The following items included in the agenda were discussed at the meeting.

a. Evaluation Scheme for Household Water Treatment Technologies

Prior to the meeting WHO circulated a discussion note to the Network Advisory Group and the PPG seeking feedback on a proposed WHO-led evaluation scheme for household water treatment (HWT) technologies, based on the recently published WHO HWTS evaluation recommendations.¹

The rationale for such a scheme is that many countries lack the capacity to subject manufacturers to rigorous and independent evaluations of product performance. The evaluation scheme would form the starting point for a process that would facilitate the use of proven HWT technologies in efforts to reduce the burden of diarrhoeal disease. Ultimately, this would result in an orderly scaling up of HWT technologies which would be hard to achieve without an independent evaluation scheme.

PPG members began the discussion by requesting a brief update of the feedback on the scheme from Advisory Group members. This update was provided by Maggie Montgomery, and referred to the following points:

¹ WHO, 2011. *Evaluating household water treatment options: Health-based targets and microbiological performance standards*, Geneva, World Health Organization.
http://www.who.int/water_sanitation_health/publications/2011/household_water/en/index.html

- AG members expressed concern about whether the scheme is immediately necessary and suggested a one-year waiting period to evaluate the extent of dissemination and implementation of the scheme by governments.
- AG members noted that some manufacturers may decide to move ahead with certifying their products with or without an evaluation scheme, but it is not clear how the scheme may affect local manufacturers, products or methods.
- Network Secretariat to consider possibility of developing further communications / dissemination activities to support implementation of HWT evaluation document by governments.

The PPG members generally agreed that WHO involvement is needed to set a global standard and assist countries in strengthening national capacity to regulate household water treatment technologies. John Kariuki expressed his support for an evaluation scheme but said that capacity development is also needed to enable governments to conduct testing of devices and enforce regulations on their own accord. Greg Allgood remarked that if a product had already been tested and certified, by an international testing agency such as NSF, these results should be considered within an international scheme.

PPG Members agreed that an evaluation scheme would fill a void in current efforts to scale-up HWTS, especially within globally funded public health endeavours. Navneet Garg cited the example of the WHO Pesticide Evaluation Scheme (WHOPES) as an effective mechanism for informing selection of insecticide treated mosquito nets within programmes of the Global Fund for HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.²

Deepak Saxena suggested the scheme as outlined in the circulated discussion note should be simplified to reduce start-up costs and speed up implementation. He proposed that WHO could identify and certify laboratories for conducting technology performance evaluation as per the guiding principles set out in the WHO document. He indicated that rather than have manufacturers submit product documentation to a WHO expert committee before being tested (as outlined in the document), that manufacturers instead submit directly to approved laboratories for evaluation. Products meeting one of three levels of performance (highly protective, protective, interim) could then be recognized by WHO in a list on its website or in an official letter addressed to government ministries. .

Greg Allgood suggested that previously tested technologies, particularly those that have already undergone rigorous external review such as EPA testing would submit to WHO the previous testing to avoid the needless use of resources. Maggie Montgomery suggested that WHO may be able to create a document that would be shared with Boards of Health that simply referred the previous regulatory review (e.g. EPA approved the technology for removal of “X” log of bacteria, viruses, and parasites) and indicate how this testing result fits with the three levels of performance.

² WHO, 2010. *WHO pesticide evaluation scheme: 50 years of global leadership*. Geneva, World Health Organization. http://whqlibdoc.who.int/publications/2010/9789241599276_eng.pdf

Ryan Rowe suggested that WHO could collect a fee from laboratories seeking to be certified, in a similar fashion to the United States Environmental Protection Agency and state certification agencies.

The group acknowledged the need to avoid a process that might exclude small local manufacturers from participating. The manufacturers present (Vestergaard-Frandsen, Procter & Gamble, and Hindustan Unilever) offered financial support for the scheme, saying they realized start-up costs could be a barrier to advancing the initiative.

Maggie Montgomery expressed appreciation for these ideas and said that she would consult with her colleagues at WHO, including the WHO Office of the Legal Counsel and provide feedback in due course.

b. Public-private partnerships scheme for HWTS

Maggie Montgomery expressed the desire of the Network Secretariat to learn from and partner with the private sector for mechanisms to scale-up HWTS. Members asked for clarification about what areas would be of interest. Maggie Montgomery responded that distribution strategies, advocacy efforts, role / impact of subsidies, and tracking consumer use are issues that the private has experience /expertise in. Due to time constraints, further discussion on this item was deferred to a future meeting.

c. Resource mobilization

Maggie Montgomery explained that the Network was seeking the private sector's assistance with resource mobilization, in terms of advocating for donors to dedicate funding to HWTS. Sanne Fournier indicated that there are some interesting alternative funding mechanisms that could be explored. It was agreed that any efforts on this should be in coordination with the working groups on scaling up and advocacy. Due to time constraints, further discussion was deferred to a future meeting.

d. Other items

Navneet Garg expressed concern that PPG efforts would overlap with the WGs. He suggested the PPG could regularly review WG progress quarterly with the aim of providing strategic input on issues related to scale and private sector involvement as well as avoiding duplication of efforts. Maggie Montgomery clarified that the PPG is to provide strategic input to the Network while the WGs have more of an operational and technical role.

There was also discussion about nominating additional members to the PPG, including representative(s) of the donor sector. Maggie Montgomery invited the PPG members to submit suggestions.

e. Key action items

The main points for action from this meeting are as follows:

- Maggie Montgomery to consider ideas proposed by PPG members on the evaluation scheme and revert with feedback.
- PPG members to consider nominations of additional members to the PPG and submit suggestions to the Network Secretariat.
- Maggie Montgomery to revise PPG ToR to reflect role in reviewing WG outputs relating to scale and the private sector.
- Network Secretariat to request a progress report from WGs for review by PPG at a subsequent meeting.
- Ryan Rowe to publish final proceedings of PPG meetings online for other Network participants to review.

ANNEX 1 – List of Participants (alphabetical order by last name)

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