

# Polio Research Committee

## Terms of Reference

- **Date of Establishment: March 2008**

The work of the Polio Research Committee (PRC) which is described herein builds on work performed at or by previous meetings, consultations, committees or subcommittees concerning polio-related research.<sup>1</sup> However, the PRC supersedes all such previous consultations, committees or subcommittees.

- **Responsible Officer/Team**

Roland Sutter, Special Advisor to Director Polio Eradication, WHO

Harish Verma, PRC Secretariat, Research, Policy and Containment, WHO

- **Terms of Reference**

The PRC shall perform the following tasks:

1. Review polio eradication-related research
2. Identify the remaining gaps in knowledge for interrupting wild poliovirus transmission and assessing and managing risks in the post-eradication era
3. Determine a list of study questions to address those gaps and risks
4. Propose appropriate studies to be initiated, commissioned or funded by GPEI and or interested stakeholders to address priority knowledge gaps
5. Review external research proposals in terms of conception, design and scientific merit, and determine their respective priorities and funding levels
6. Monitor, evaluate and direct the dissemination of progress and findings from all relevant research
7. Further engage solution-oriented interested parties, stakeholders and potential new collaborators

- **Composition**

*Maximum number of members allowed:* Nine. A quorum for any meeting of the PRC will be five.

*Gender distribution:* Consideration will be given to ensuring appropriate gender balance.

*Selection Criteria:* The first priority will be technical expertise in the following disciplines: vaccinology, virology, biosafety, epidemiology, clinical trial design and immunization programmes. Where feasible, priority will also be given to those with experience in conducting vaccine-related research in developing country settings, particularly those of greatest programmatic importance to the GPEI.

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<sup>1</sup> There was a previous ad hoc research subcommittee, convened as the WHO Informal Consultation on Research Towards Development of Post-Certification Polio Immunization Policy. There have also been several meeting and consultations that have addressed similar issues, among them the Consultation on the Global Eradication of Poliomyelitis, held on 23-25 March 1998 (WHO/EPI/GEN/ 98.12), the Consultation on New Polio vaccines for the post-eradication era, held on 19-20 January 2000 (WHO/ V&B/00.20); and those described in " 'Endgame', Issues for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative", published in *Clinical Infectious Diseases*, 2002, 34:72-7.

- **Selection of Members**

*Nomination:* The core GPEI partners will issue a call for nominations for the PRC. The nominations will be reviewed by the selection panel and recommendations made to the Director, Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO.

*Appointment:* By Director, Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO.

*Potential conflict of interest:*

No research subcommittee member can have a financial or professional engagement with a commercial entity the use of whose products may be influenced by the PRC or its work. In addition, PRC members may neither submit proposals for funding, nor shall they receive funds through any decision of the PRC. In addition, prior to being appointed as PRC members and prior to renewal of term, nominees and current PRC members shall be required to complete a WHO Declaration of Interest.

*Confidentiality undertaking:*

In addition, prior to confirmation by WHO of their appointment as PRC members, PRC nominees shall be required to sign a Confidentiality Undertaking. All papers presented to the PRC, which may include pre-publication copies of research reports or documents of commercial significance, shall be treated as confidential. PRC deliberations are confidential and may not be publicly disclosed by PRC members except for the dissemination of reports as otherwise described herein.

- **Duration & Rotation of Membership**

Duration of membership is established at three years, with the possibility to serve consecutive terms. In any given year, efforts will be made to ensure that no more than two members shall be changed.

- **Suspension/Termination of Membership**

Membership on the PRC may be terminated for any of the following reasons:

- (1) Failure to attend two consecutive PRC meetings;
- (2) Change in affiliation resulting in a conflict of interest; and
- (3) A lack of professionalism involving, for example, a breach of confidentiality.

- **Selection of Chair**

*Research Subcommittee chair appointed by:* Director, Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO, nominates the PRC chair.

- **Duration and Rotation of Chair**

*Duration/rotation of PRC Chairmanship:* three years with the possibility of extension.

- **Meetings and Operational Procedures**

*Meeting frequency:* Twice a year

*Recommendations:* Recommendations will, as a rule, be made on the basis of a majority vote.

*Other contributions and degree of interaction among members/secretariat between meetings/conference calls (email updates, conference calls, etc.):*

In addition to attendance of meetings, active contributions will be expected from all PRC members throughout the year, including participation in video and/or telephone conferences as well as interactions via email. Review of documents will also be solicited. PRC members will receive WHO/HQ polio e-mail updates, key meeting reports and background documents.

*Additional Experts*

Additional experts may be invited to meetings, as appropriate, to further contribute to specific agenda items.

*Remuneration*

PRC members will not be remunerated for their participation in the PRC; however, reasonable expenses such as travel expenses incurred by attendance at PRC or related meetings will be compensated by WHO.

▪ **Reporting Mechanisms**

*PRC reports to:* Director, Polio Eradication Initiative, WHO. This shall include bi-annual meeting reports as well as presentations (upon request) by the PRC chair (or his or her designee) to the SAGE Polio Working Group.