

Operational Excellence Working Group

Inaugural Steering Team Meeting

**Amsterdam, Casa 400 Hotel
6 and 7 December, 2018**

Participants

Steering team members

- Bart Vander Plaetse, (Chair), Head of Programme Unit FAIRMED, ILEP ITC
- Taye Letta, Leprosy Prevention and Control Manager, Ministry of Health, Ethiopia
- Rabindra Baskota, Leprosy Prevention and Control Manager, Ministry of Health Nepal
- Roch Christian Johnson, President, International Leprosy Association (ILA), member of GPZL LT
- Marcos Virmond, Instituto Lauro de Souza Lima, Technical Advisor National Leprosy Program Brazil
- Ibtissam Khoudri, Head National Leprosy Control, Ministry of Health Morocco
- Guillermo Robert de Arquer, Senior Technical Advisor, Lepra UK
- Nayani Suriyarachchi, Country Coordinator FAIRMED Sri Lanka
- Gerrit de Vries, Organization Manager Global, NLR, The Netherlands
- Shovakar Kandel, Country Director The Leprosy Mission Nepal
- Mohammed Ahmed, East Africa Program Coordinator, DAHW

Secretariat

- Christine Fenenga, Operational Excellence Coordinator
- Tonya Duhart, Operations Manager

Guests

- Arielle Cavaliero, Leprosy Project Manager, Novartis Foundation
- Erwin Cooreman, Team Leader, Global Leprosy Programme, WHO (online participant)
- Rao Pemmaraju, Global Leprosy programme, WHO, (online participant)

Unable to attend

- Anil Kumar, Deputy Director General (Leprosy), Ministry of Health and Family Welfare, Government of India
- Supun Wijesinge, Technical Advisor National Leprosy Control Program, Ministry of Health Sri Lanka
- Sunday Udo, Country Director The Leprosy Mission, Nigeria
- Courtenay Dusenbury, GPZL Secretariat Director

The meeting was opened by the chair Bart Vander Plaetse and facilitated by Christine Fenenga. The objectives of this meeting were to familiarize the steering team members with the history, objectives and milestones of the Global Partnership for Zero Leprosy (GPZL) and more specifically, with the plans of the Operational Excellence Working Group and their individual roles in it. Although an outline of the plans had been prepared, the meeting was meant to invite members to provide input and shape the plans. Discussion was encouraged through small-group formats and other interactive forms.

The overall objective of the Operational Excellence Working Group is to foster the development, use, scale-up, monitoring, and evaluation of best practices and promising innovations in national leprosy control programmes. To achieve this objective, the working group, divided in sub-groups, will work on a number of pre-defined tasks. The five sub-groups are organized around five identified sub-themes, covering the full spectrum of leprosy control. During this meeting the sub-group leaders (chair and facilitator) were appointed to the specific subgroups as follows:

Sub-groups	Chair (NLPMS)	Facilitator
1. Identification of people at risk/ PEP	Dr Rabindra Baskota, Nepal	Mr Gerrit de Vries, NLR , The Netherlands
2. Early detection & prompt treatment	Dr Marcos Virmond, Brazil	Mr Mohammed Ahmed DAHW East Africa
3. Disability	Dr Ghislain Sopoh, Benin*	Dr Nayani Suriyarachchi, FAIRMED, Sri Lanka
4. Stigma	Dr Taye Leta, Ethiopia	Dr Kandel Shovakhar TLMT Nepal
5. Operational capacity	Dr Ibtissam Khoudro, Morocco	Mr Guillermo R de Arquer, Lepra United Kingdom

*During this meeting Dr Ghislain Sopon was not yet appointed. Dr Christian Johnson represented him for this occasion.

Other members of the steering team that were unable to attend this meeting will be co-facilitating the sub-groups.

Under the guidance of a facilitator and chair, each sub-group will: 1) Develop an inventory of best practices and innovation, which will be organized into a set of free online tools available for countries on the zero leprosy toolkit 2) Support country peer-to-peer reviews to identify opportunities, challenges and needs in implementing tools towards zero leprosy 3) Support in providing technical advice as needed when questions are raised about implementation of the online tools. During the meeting each of these tasks were discussed in length. For example: Who is the audience for the toolkit? What criteria should be used to identify best practices and how should these best practices be documented and presented? How should countries for peer-to-peer reviews be selected and what are crucial components in the assessment tool?

The steering team realizes that the Operational Excellence Working Group does not have to start from scratch. Much can be learned from guidelines and examples of the WHO, ILEP and other NTDs. Alignment and avoidance of duplication should be key in our work. This point was also stressed by WHO/GLP Dr Cooreman who, together with Dr Pemmaraju, gave a presentation on the WHO GPL strategy and the areas for collaboration with the Operational Excellence Working Group.

During the second day, a discussion was held on planning and communication. It is clear that 2019 will be an important kick-off year, in many activities need to be organized, created and launched. Activities include forming the sub-groups, organizing the online meetings, developing content for the toolkit, organizing the toolkit and helpdesk, conducting the country review missions, creating mission reports and country planning roadmaps. The steering team demonstrated great commitment and enthusiasm, but also acknowledged being realistic and setting feasible goals. Leaders of each sub-group will now develop a short action plan for 2019. The steering team sets the target to present its first output during the International Leprosy Congress in September 2019 in Manila.

The 2019 plan for the Operational Excellence Working Group:

- January 2019
 - Members that responded to the open call will be assigned to sub-groups and will be informed by the GPZL secretariat
 - Steering team members compile their sub-group plan 2019 and have an online meeting
 - Briefing meeting of the Technical Advisers team organized
 - First online meetings with sub-groups planned
 - Country review tool further developed in liaison with WHO GLP

- February 2019
 - First online meeting for all sub-groups; guidance provided by the coordinator to work on tasks
 - Sub-groups start working on 'best practices' as content for the Zero Leprosy toolkit
 - Design and development of toolkit

Online meetings with sub-groups will be organized monthly by chairs and facilitators, with support of the GPZL secretariat. Content for the toolkit will be uploaded from April on. Country peer-to-peer review missions and roadmap planning (2-3 countries in 2019) will be planned in liaison with WHO-GLP and respective countries after January.

For communication, the GPZL will be setting up WhatsApp groups for the steering team and per sub-group. The secretariat will also use Google drive for sharing documents and will create a folder for each sub-group. For sub-group conference calls, we will use the Ring Central facility. Members will receive instructions how to use it.

More detailed plans per sub-group will be available in January.

This first steering group meeting was closed by ILEP president Mr Jan van Berkel. In his encouraging words he stressed the importance of the GPZL and specifically this working group helping countries to identify their strengths and gaps and build capacity to achieving the Zero Leprosy goal.