



Ethiopia Onchocerciasis Elimination Expert Advisory Committee (EOEEAC)

Terms of Reference and Procedures of Operation

I. The Ethiopian Program for Elimination of Onchocerciasis (EPEO)

This is a multi-approach program using targeted annual or semi-annual treatment with ivermectin (Mectizan®) and vector control/vector as appropriate dedicated to the goal of eliminating onchocerciasis in all the foci in the country. The Government of Ethiopia has taken the decision to change the onchocerciasis (River Blindness) control policy to phased countrywide onchocerciasis elimination in 2012 with the highest political and financial support in the country.

EPEO is a program of the Ministry of Health (MOH), affected districts and communities of Ethiopia. The current key implementing partners supporting this program are WHO/APOC, The Carter Center, Lions Club, Light for the World, and RTI Envision/USAID.

Elimination of onchocerciasis in Ethiopia will entail:

- Interruption of transmission by 2020, and eventually WHO verification of elimination of onchocerciasis.
- Rigorous satisfaction of elimination certification criteria (indicators for elimination) which will be established and periodically reviewed in detail, focus by focus, by the Ethiopia Onchocerciasis Elimination Expert Advisory Committee (EOEEAC), a group of national and international experts convened under the auspices of the EPEO of Ministry of Health, Ethiopia. The criteria used will be developed by the EOEEAC drawing on the existing criteria and protocols developed by WHO, APOC, OEPA, and Uganda.

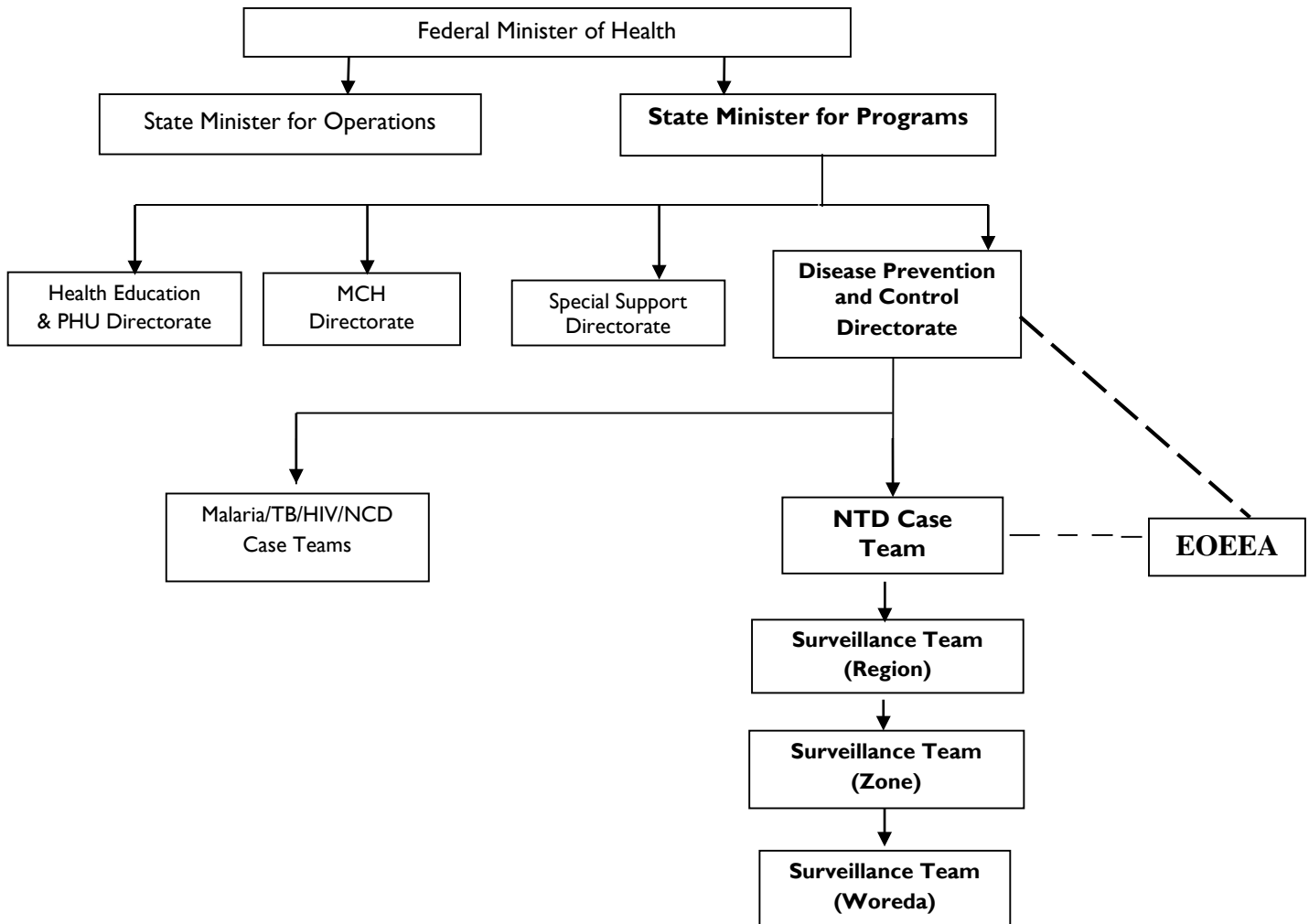
II. Ethiopia Onchocerciasis Elimination Expert Advisory Committee (EOEEAC)

Ethiopia Onchocerciasis Elimination Expert Advisory Committee (EOEEAC) is an EPEO technical advisory committee composed of national and international experts that conducts annual review of activities, and recommends to the EPEO effective approaches and methods for hastening onchocerciasis elimination. The EOEEAC is formed in order to provide credible, independent and international technical support for the government policy on onchocerciasis elimination.

The secretariat for the EOEEAC will be based at the MOH’s NTDs Case Team office under the direction of Federal Coordinator for EPEO.

The NTDs/Oncho Program Coordinator at the Federal Ministry of Health serves as the Secretary of EOEEAC. The implementing partner who is willing and ready to support the EOEEAC will provide a Co-Secretary to the EOEEAC who works for a three year term. In case there is more than one supporting organization, the Co-Secretary position will revolve based on the consensus reached by the members of the EOEEAC. This arrangement is critical for ensuring continuity in the face of frequent transfers of key program personnel, and sharing of workload so that the committee receives and disseminates accurate and timely critical information for program implementation.

III. Organogram for the Ethiopian Program for Elimination of Onchocerciasis (EPEO)



IV. Annual EOEEAC Meetings

The EOEEAC will meet for at least three days, once a year. However, an extraordinary meeting can be called to attend to urgent matters of concern.

The site of all meeting will be in Ethiopia and the place will be decided by the Secretariat in consultation with the Chairperson.

V. EOEEAC Responsibilities

1. EOEEAC agenda will include reports on programmatic activities in each targeted focus, data analysis, certification activities, and financial status of the EPEO.
2. Scientific presentations of research and new tools relevant to EPEO, and updates on regional programs (APOC/PENDA, OEPA, NTDs, etc.), will be given during the meeting.
3. The EOEEAC has the responsibility to review national plans and other relevant onchocerciasis related proposals and tools (e.g. operations research) submitted for technical assistance to determine their viability, and to make recommendations on design and operational issues.
4. The EOEEAC serves as a forum for the partners to discuss key issues related to the national initiative.
5. The EOEEAC plays a general role in prioritizing activities, non-routine activities toward national goals.
6. The EOEEAC shall play a general ad hoc role in stimulating interest in sustained support for the Ethiopia onchocerciasis elimination initiative and have an advocacy role and the dissemination of appropriate information. The committee will also encourage and assist where necessary, publication of results in peer reviewed journals.

VI. The Role of the EOEEAC Chairperson

The EOEEAC Chairperson will be elected by fellow members. The term of service is three years with the option of the EOEEAC to renew the Chairperson's tenure for additional one term.

The Chairperson will:

1. Consult with the EOEEAC members (including the Co-Secretaries) on a regular basis and communicate directly with EOEEAC members on related issues.
2. Develop the agenda in consultation with EOEEAC members, Co-Secretaries and other relevant parties.
3. Chairs all EOEEAC meetings.
4. Receive reports from each ad hoc sub-committee.

VII. Roles of the EOEEAC Secretaries

There will be two Co-Secretaries to the EOEEAC, the Federal Coordinator of EPEO (a government employee of the Federal Ministry of Health (MOH) and representative from

the partner organization as mentioned above under Article II.

1. The co-secretaries will be non-voting members of the EOEEAC.
2. They will work with the Chairperson of the EOEEAC to develop agendas, organize all aspects of the meetings and provide minutes.
3. The Secretaries shall participate fully in all EOEEAC meetings.
4. Only the Secretary from FMOH has the right to cast votes in case of a deadlock.

VIII. EOEEAC Composition

1. The EOEEAC shall consist of eighteen voting members and two non-voting co-secretaries. The official members include three from Federal Ministry of Health (including one from EPHI), one from the Ethiopian Mapping Agency, one representative from each affected regions, one from each oncho implementing partners, four at-large independent members who will be selected for their professional expertise in tropical diseases/oncho, finance and/or administration, and will include national and international experts.
2. WHO, African Program for Onchocerciasis Control (APOC), Mectizan Donation Program (MDP), and Lions Clubs International Foundation (LCIF/Lions Clubs of Ethiopia) shall have an observer status.
3. The World Health Organization (WHO) representative in Ethiopia will be representing the verification agency; hence, will attend EOEEAC meetings as an observer.
4. The EOEEAC as it may find appropriate will ensure that at each meeting the representatives of endemic zones are in attendance as observers.
5. Institutional and at-large members have equal voting privileges.

Following constitute the EOEEAC:

1. Federal Ministry of Health (2)
 - 1a. EPHI (1)
2. Regional Health Bureaus [(5) Amhara, Oromia, SNNPR, Benishangul Gumuz, Gambella]
3. Ethiopian Mapping Agency (1)
4. The Carter Center (1)
5. Light for the World (1)
6. RTI Envision (1)
7. Aklilu Lemma Institute of Pathobiology, Addis Ababa University (1)
8. University of Gondar (1)
9. At-large (4)

Non-voting members:

1. Co-Secretary from FMOH
2. Co-Secretary from Oncho implementing partner who is ready and willing to support the committee

IX. Election of EOEEAC members, and Terms of Service

1. Institutional members are selected by their agencies and serve at the discretion of their institution.
2. At-large members are nominated for service by the EOEEAC and approved by the FMOH.
3. Simple majority vote of a quorum of EOEEAC members is sufficient to elect at-large members.
4. The chairperson of EOEEAC will be elected from the voting members.
5. Term of service for at-large EOEEAC members is three years, with a two-term limit if elected for a consecutive term. The inclusion of at-large members shall be timed to stagger completion of terms.
6. Ten EOEEAC members shall make a quorum.

X. *EOEEAC Travel and Per Diem Policy*

The partner supporting EOEEAC will support travel of EOEEAC national and at-large members, who will be reimbursed for reasonable transportation costs and given an adequate per diem allowance to cover hotel, meals and incidental expenses, in accordance with The Carter Center policies. However, EOEEAC members belonging to international organizations and partners will arrange to have these costs covered by their respective organizations.

XI. *Approval of EOEEAC Recommendations by the Government (Federal Ministry of Health)*

Since onchocerciasis elimination process requires quick response to technical issues that may need adjustments in field plans and financial commitment, rapid and clear responses to EOEEAC recommendations based on objectively collected and analyzed data by the Federal Ministry of Health should be the norm.

As a great tool for advocacy, and motivation of communities, districts, Ministry of Health personnel and partners, the government without delay shall announce achievements attained as far as suppression or interruption, halting of interventions, commencement of post treatment surveillance (PTS) and elimination of transmission of onchocerciasis in foci when and where it is scientifically proven.

Accepted at the First EOEEAC Meeting

6th of October 2014, Addis Ababa