

Entry to the Medicines Transparency Alliance initiative: criteria and procedure

Introduction

The Medicines Transparency Alliance (MeTA) is a global health initiative focused on improving access to quality-assured medicines in developing countries by increasing transparency and accountability in the pharmaceutical sector. The initiative was piloted during 2008-10 and has now entered its second phase, MeTA 2, which will run from 2011-2015.

The purpose of MeTA is to encourage a multi-stakeholder approach to improve transparency around the selection, regulation, procurement, sale, distribution, promotion and use of medicines. Through this approach, the initiative aims to strengthen governance, improve efficiency, and encourage innovative and responsible business practices.

Seven countries: Ghana, Jordan, Kyrgyzstan, Peru, the Philippines, Uganda and Zambia have participated in the pilot phase of MeTA and are continuing on to Phase 2 of the project. In the pilot phase multi-stakeholder groups were formed to collect and share data on the selection, pricing, procurement, quality, availability, promotion and use of medicines. The goal of the second phase is to convert the multi-stakeholder dialogue into concrete actions that improve access to medicines.

Purpose of this document

The purpose of this document is to outline the entry criteria for countries wishing to join MeTA . The document outlines both essential and desirable criteria for entry. The procedure to request entry is also outlined.

Criteria for countries to join MeTA

Essential Criteria

- Willingness to commit to the MeTA principles which state that:
 - Governments are responsible for providing access to health care, including access to essential medicines.
 - Stronger and more transparent systems and improved supply chain management will increase access.
 - Increasing equitable access to medicines improves health and enables other human development objectives to be achieved.
 - Improved information about medicines can inform public debate and empower customers and patients.

- A multi-stakeholder approach that involves all sectors (private, public and civil society) will lead to greater accountability and provide a basis for better policy.
- Expressed willingness by the government to implement policies and reforms to increase access to medicines and to enhance transparency of the pharmaceutical sector.
- WHO capacity in the country for the provision of technical support and acceptance of WHO as an observer on the country MeTA Council.
- Ability to obtain sustainable funding.
- Understanding of the time and effort required to set up a multi-stakeholder group, develop mutual trust and show results.
- A willingness to put information into the public domain
- Capacity of the Ministry of Health to engage in the project.
- A secure country environment which allows for unhindered operations of MeTA activities.

Desirable but not Essential Criteria

- The existence of national and international champions and partners committed to the MeTA principles.
- Geographical proximity to current MeTA countries.
- Local representatives of DFID, or other partners who are supportive.

Process for countries to request participation in MeTA

1. Countries interested in participating should request and review all guidance documentation.
2. Meetings with stakeholders should be held to assess ability to meet the entry criteria.
3. Official request for participation can be made through WHO or HAI by sending an expression of interest and an outline of the plan for MeTA implementation.
4. WHO and HAI will review the request and make an assessment of eligibility.

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