



SPEAK-India

TERMS OF REFERENCE

Mandate

1. The overall aim is to strengthen, support, and mobilize the Visceral Leishmaniasis (VL) scientific and programmatic community to form a consortium with a mission to drive towards sustainable elimination of VL in northern India.

Two main objectives:

- I. to develop a forum for constructive discussion around the transmission dynamics of VL, bringing together the scientific, logistic and practical expertise, and
 - II. to use this forum to define the gaps in our understanding that threaten elimination and its sustainability, analyse existing or new data and findings, and to develop protocols, methodologies and actions that can rapidly provide the missing information.
2. To achieve these aims and objectives, SPEAK India will establish a VL Leadership Group to make strategic decisions and a Steering Committee to implement these strategic decisions and review their progress.
3. The secretariat will provide secretariat support to the Steering Committee in accordance with a terms or resources agreement drafted by the London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (LSHTM), the grant-holders of a Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) grant to support the consortium.

Composition

4. The members of the VL Leadership Group will be representatives of leading national and international organizations and national government institutes (specifically ICMR, and the National Vector Borne Disease Control Programme, NVBDCP) who are in a position to integrate major findings of the proposed operational research within the National Programme.

5. The Steering Committee will be approved by the VL Leadership group in communication with LSHTM and the BMGF. The Steering Committee will include representatives of ICMR, NVBDCP, LSHTM and BMGF, and will be open-ended to enable input from specific areas of expertise as and when required. Its members will be responsible for representing the consolidated position of the consortium.

Purpose

6. The VL Leadership Group will serve as the principal decision-making body for the activities of the consortium and will be responsible for giving guidance and strategic directions to enable implementation of the operational research undertaken. Specifically, it will:

- promote and coordinate the implementation of the consortium's work with other national and international activities, seeking synergies and avoiding overlaps, and
- liaise with relevant governmental organizations and non-governmental organizations that are active in the VL elimination programme.

7. The Steering Group will monitor the progress of the consortium activities including the development of research proposals and dissemination of outcomes. Specifically, it will:

- liaise closely with all of the partners involved in VL elimination activities in India as well as relevant partners in Bangladesh and Nepal, who will be invited as observers to the assembly meetings
- establish working groups, as needed, to prepare research protocols and implement consortium activities,
- ensure that progress meets the needs of the National Programme, and
- serve as a forum to discuss and disseminate issues arising related to VL transmission to sustain elimination in India.

7. The India-based secretariat will ensure that:

- consortium meetings are well calendared,
- consortium members are kept informed of key developments, and
- consortium activities are organized and actioned.

Officers

8. At the first meeting of both the VL Leadership Group and Steering Committee, a chairperson and a vice-chairperson will be elected from among the representatives.

9. The elected chairperson of the Steering Committee will attend future VL Leadership Group meetings, take minutes of the meeting, and circulate the minutes to the Steering Committee to ensure good communication between both groups.

Meetings

10. The meetings of the VL Leadership Group Steering Committee are envisaged to take place twice yearly and will be convened by the chairperson. They will ordinarily be held back to back with the general assembly meetings.

11. The virtual meetings of the Steering Committee are envisaged to take place monthly and will be convened by the chairperson, or vice-chairperson. Twice yearly face-to-face meetings will also take place held back to back with the general assembly meetings. An agenda will be circulated 2 days prior to each meeting, and agreed minutes of the meetings will also be prepared well in advance.

Duration

12. Funding for current activities ends on 30 April 2018.