

GSA Advisory Board Meeting Report

19 January 2018

The GSA Advisory Board convened to review the GSA's 2018 operational strategy and consider recent activities.

The meeting started with an overview and introduction to the GSA's vision, mission and approach, institutional partners and 2017 activities. The GSA management team then presented on it's planned strategy and activities for 2018 following the 5 overarching and cross-cutting themes: Strategy & Policy, Implementation, Research, Advocacy and Communication.

The Global Schistosomiasis Alliance



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The GSA is focusing on five interconnected themes

The Control and elimination of schistosomiasis is the overarching objective that connects these themes



GSA Institutional Partners and Observers



Summary of 2017 key activities

Operations

- New GSA management team
- GSA management now operates out of the Natural History Museum, London.
- Just as the other NTD coalitions the GSA is resourced via its pharmaceutical industry partner, i.e. Merck

Partners, Observers and stakeholders

GSA has continued to strengthen its relationships with a wide range of stakeholders:

- Three new key schisto organisations joined as institutional partners (Helen Keller International, Sightsavers, Swiss TPH)
- Worked closer with WHO Geneva, WHO AFRO and ESPEN

Working Groups

- Implementation: Developed Donor Coordination Tool with input from partners
- Research: Published special schisto edition in "Infectious Diseases of Poverty",. Hosted 'Schistosomiasis Elimination and Control - Next Steps' in Baltimore
- Behaviour Change: Set up a new working group set up and drafted ToR

Advocacy and Resource Mobilisation

- Geneva NTD Summit: highlighted the importance of schistosomiasis and drove the schistosomiasis agenda at summit
- Uniting to Combat NTDs: provided schisto-specific input for 2017 scorecard and fed into the scorecard development process for 2018

Communication

- Presentations and Outreach: NNN, COR NTD, Swiss TPH, ISNTD, Interviews including BBC world service, Reuters, ISNTD and specialist societies and various endemic country media
- Reports: Making Schistory, GSA Newsletters, Reports and slides from meetings on GSA website under resources. Opinion piece in PLOS NTDs, developed with partners
- Online Comm: Increased Blog posts and social media engagement, drafted website re-design

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1 Strategy and Policy

In 2018 GSA will work with our partners to catalyze control & elimination strategies

International strategy

- Encourage & advocate pending revision of guidelines and an accepted vision of the elimination of schistosomiasis and how it will be measured.
- Work closely with the WHO in support of elimination strategizing to ensure optimal allocation of resources for elimination.

Global Research

- Coordinate and communicate global research to ensure a focus towards a shared morbidity control and elimination vision building on the successful research conducted in 2017

Training & Educational Resource

- Develop a central web-based resource for training and educational programmes in schistosomiasis

Moving to a Vision beyond 2020

- Provide the platform for GSA members and other stakeholders to contribute to strategy and policy formulation and setting (Vision beyond 2020)
- Strengthen the links with the STH community to pursue common strategy and policy issues

2 Implementation

In 2018 GSA will continue to focus on developing the theme of delivery in support of its mission to control & eliminate schistosomiasis.

Working group & Tools

- Strengthen relationship between implementers through the Implementation working group (WG)
- Complete the **Donor Coordination Tool** with the Implementation WG
- Support development of an **Inventory Training Manual** with the Implementation WG, ESPEN and the Gates Foundation

Meetings

- Convene high-level stakeholders meeting to finalise Schistosomiasis Action Plan
- Subject to NTD programme managers' meetings, organize meeting to discuss PZQ use and implementation tools
- Present/participate in NNN, NTD supply chain forum, WHO meetings (by invitation), CCC

Endemic Countries

- Continue ongoing one-on-one discussion with countries regarding their implementation plans (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Uganda, Togo, Egypt)

Partnerships

- Develop non-traditional delivery partnerships, such as private sector organisations and support of start-ups via accelerators
- Develop and share best practice in implementation at intersection of WASH, PC, and vector control
- Contribute to the development of impact milestones for the UTC Scorecard

3 Research

In 2018 GSA will bring together the world's leading experts in schistosomiasis and will focus on the following activities:

Working Groups

- Organise meeting for stakeholders of the main research WG
- Strengthen the new Behaviour WG & organise first official meeting
- Set up a Snail Control Intervention WG to bring together snail control experts and support the WHO vector management strategy and the NNN integrated vector control group

Research meetings

- Present/support schistosomiasis research meetings including ICOPA, International Symposium on Schistosomiasis, COR NTDs and ASTMH

Current key research topics

- Female Genital Schistosomiasis morbidity, diagnosis and treatment
- Schistosomiasis in pre-school-aged children, morbidity and treatment
- Intensified disease management of severe and/or irreversible schistosomiasis morbidity
- Snail control technologies
- Precision mapping and evidence-based programmatic decisions to determine treatment expansion to adults

Early-Career Researchers

- Develop & build a platform for early-career researchers in schistosomiasis
- Collect and share news, meeting reports and research resources via website and social media
- Continue promoting & supporting early-career researchers through meetings and social media

4 Advocacy

Together with GSA stakeholders & partners in 2018 GSA advocacy will focus on:

Multi-lateral organisations

- Strengthen national and regional relationships via WHO AFRO and ESPEN
- Continue to support the revision of the WHO guidelines & resources

Affected countries

- Advocacy at state level will be targeted to support any ongoing and upcoming delivery work in the implementation theme

Topical issues

- Advocate for a focus on FGS, Snail Control & WASH

Resource mobilisation

- Work with non-conventional partners (e.g. Business Fights Poverty, Dalberg etc) to mobilize new resources
- Build/strengthen relationship with DFID & USAID & Gates Foundation

Tools, kits & resources

- Promote the use of the NTDeliver supply chain tool
- Promote the use of the Donor Coordination Tool & Inventory training manual

Networks

- Support and strengthen international networks including Uniting to Combat NTDs, German NTD Network, NNN

5 Communications

In 2018 communication focus will use:

Social Media

- To increase interactions with stakeholders and the public
- To provide a platform for early career researchers and other stakeholders to discuss and share schistosomiasis control and elimination resources (Linked In & Facebook groups)
- To share news, reports, newsletters & resources from the GSA website and from partners
- To promote the use of the GSA website

Traditional Media campaigns, Newsletters and Reports

- To encourage traditional media groups and highlight schistosomiasis
- To engage new audiences, particularly using the GSA Wormzilla
- To inform and support stakeholders through the GSA newsletter and meeting reports
- To promote the use of the GSA website

Main website

- To become the go-to online source for schisto news & resources
- To share resources and support early career researchers & programme managers

Outreach & Education

- To engage students in higher education through talks and thereby promote awareness of schistosomiasis
- To support outreach and communication activities by partners & working groups
- To promote the use of the GSA website

The Advisory Board congratulated the GSA on a progress made for 2017 and discussed the 2018 strategy and activities. The board highlighted the importance of working with the schistosomiasis community to:

- Clarify schistosomiasis Control and elimination definitions and targets post 2020
- Support coordination of PZQ supply and implementation

- Facilitate the sharing of technical expertise and tools for NTD programmes in endemic countries
- Identify gaps in implementation and operational research
- Strengthen advocacy for schistosomiasis elimination and control
- Build online and virtual platform to become the go-to-site for schistosomiasis-specific resources.

The GSA thanked the Advisory Board for their feedback and continued support.