

# Measles and Rubella Initiative Outbreak Response Fund Standard Operating Procedures, effective 01 September 2018

The September 2018 update of this document includes modifications to:

1. Remove the requirement for countries to fund 50% of the operational costs of the outbreak response;
2. Clarify that countries are strongly recommended to use this funding to also conduct a ‘root-cause’ analysis of the outbreak to identify specific steps to improve routine immunization and surveillance to prevent future outbreaks; and
3. Add a requirement that the government’s cover letter confirms that the government will provide the human resources required for planning and implementing the vaccination activity, including staff working at health facilities in at least the outbreak areas. (note: in situations where there is no acting government, please discuss this requirement with WHO and/or UNICEF.)

## A. Introduction

In June 2012, the Gavi Board approved \$55 million US for measles outbreak response and other emerging measles needs in Gavi-eligible countries. Measles outbreaks should be addressed through a comprehensive approach that reduces morbidity and mortality by providing appropriate case management and vaccinating individuals at risk<sup>1</sup>. In November 2015, the Gavi Board approved the new measles/rubella strategy which provides all Gavi-eligible countries with access to multi-year support for measles or measles-rubella vaccine SIAs and continues support for the outbreak response fund up to a total of \$10 million US per year. This document describes the standard operating procedures followed by the Measles and Rubella Initiative (M&RI) for the use of these funds.

## B. Management and decision making

The M&RI’s Management Team (MT)<sup>2</sup> is responsible for decision making regarding the allocation of the outbreak response funds. In addition, the Gavi Secretariat through its participation in the M&RI Programme Implementation Working Group (PIWG) has input into these funding decisions. Country applications for outbreak response funds will be reviewed by the PIWG, with a funding recommendation referred to the MT for decision making. All country stakeholder/partner representatives should be invited by WHO and UNICEF country offices to participate in the PIWG discussions to improve coordination and information sharing.

## C. Eligibility for use of funds

All Gavi-eligible countries that have a *significant measles outbreak of national public health importance AND cannot respond to the outbreak fast enough with in-country funding (e.g., domestic epidemic response funds or donor funding)* are eligible to request funding for outbreak response.

Once a country decides to seek M&RI funding support for outbreak response immunization, advance notification (Annex 1) should be provided to the M&RI indicating the approximate amount of support needed. A formal request should follow the advanced notification, consisting of four documents:

1. A completed request form (Annex 2).
2. An investigation report of the outbreak and risk assessment of the potential for spread.
3. A plan of action describing the planned outbreak response activities which provides:
  - Identification of the target regions and size of target population;
  - Plans and budget for the proposed vaccination activities;

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<sup>1</sup> For details on responding to outbreaks, please see “Response to measles outbreaks in measles mortality reduction settings” available at [http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2009/WHO\\_IVB\\_09.03\\_eng.pdf](http://whqlibdoc.who.int/hq/2009/WHO_IVB_09.03_eng.pdf)

<sup>2</sup> The Management Team is made up of the core founding partners of the Measles and Rubella Initiative – American Red Cross, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, United Nations Foundation, UNICEF and WHO.

- Plans for the evaluation of the outbreak response and
  - Plans to conduct a root-cause analysis of the outbreak to identify concrete actions to improve routine immunization and surveillance to prevent future outbreaks. Note: Countries can request technical assistance to conduct a root-cause analysis from WHO. The US CDC is also available to provide this technical assistance.
4. An official letter (cover letter) demonstrating commitment from the government that it will provide the human resources required for planning and implementing the vaccination activity, including staff working at health facilities in at least the outbreak areas. In situations where there is no acting government, please discuss this requirement with WHO and/or UNICEF

The PIWG and MT will assess all requests for funding. Approved countries will receive funds to cover: 1) bundled measles vaccine costs for selective and/or non-selective vaccination campaigns; 2) operational costs up to US \$0.65 per targeted person; and (3) activities to conduct a root-cause analysis of the outbreak to identify specific actions to improve routine immunization and surveillance. To the extent that operational costs support is insufficient to meet in-country costs, countries should look internally or to donors to fill funding gaps. M&RI will consider supplementing operational costs on an exceptional basis if other resources are unavailable. The M&RI outbreak response funds will not be provided if in-country funding (donor or domestic) is available to cover all costs of the outbreak response. Case management and treatment costs will not be covered by the outbreak response funds.

#### ***D. Procedure to access the measles outbreak response fund***

1. The Ministry of Health requests M&RI outbreak response funds through the WHO or UNICEF country offices. The WHO and UNICEF country offices immediately notify regional offices and WHO/HQ by e-mail of the country's intent to seek funding using the advance notification form (Annex 1). WHO/HQ EPI alerts the PIWG and MT of the country's intent to apply for funding. This notification is informational only.
2. The formal country request follows (Annex 2). The Ministry of Health drafts the request in consultation with the WHO and UNICEF country offices<sup>3</sup>. The WHO and UNICEF country offices share the request with their regional offices immediately. In consultation with the Ministry of Health, the WHO and UNICEF country and regional offices review and revise the country request for technical and operational appropriateness, as needed. The WHO and UNICEF country and regional offices ensure that completed requests are submitted to WHO/HQ EPI along with the WHO regional focal point's recommendation for approval or disapproval within 7 working days after receipt of the advance notification.
3. WHO/HQ EPI processes the formal request and circulates it to the PIWG within 7 working days of receipt. WHO/HQ EPI then arranges a PIWG conference call to discuss the proposal and make a funding recommendation to the MT. WHO/HQ EPI requests additional information from regional and country offices when needed by the PIWG.
4. After the MT reviews the PIWG's recommendation and makes a funding decision (by a simple majority of the MT), WHO/HQ EPI informs the WHO country office and Ministry of Health. UNICEF PD immediately alerts UNICEF SD with all required information so that orders can be placed for the vaccines and devices. UNICEF SD will prioritize supplies in consultation with the supply coordinating group in case of supply shortages.
5. WHO and UNICEF headquarters transfer funds for operational costs to their country offices and funds for bundled vaccine costs to UNICEF SD, ensuring that funds reach these offices within 7 working days after approval of the request.

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<sup>3</sup> In most countries, the WHO country office will take the lead in sending the request. However, there might be circumstances where UNICEF takes the lead, and the request will be channeled through UNICEF country and regional office.

6. The M&RI then sends formal notification of its funding decision, signed by the UN Foundation, to the Ministry of Health. Formal notification is made even if a request is not funded.
7. The country MOH staff implements, evaluates, and prepares a report on the outbreak response<sup>4</sup>. This report must be completed within 3 months of the disbursement of funds to the country and should be sent to the WHO and UNICEF regional offices and WHO/HQ EPI. The report will be shared immediately with other partners. The report should include the results of the root-cause analysis and planned activities to strengthen routine immunization and surveillance to prevent future outbreaks.

The M&RI encourages countries to initiate immediate investigation and respond in a timely manner to outbreaks. *The M&RI will not fund any request that is made after the completion of an outbreak response.*

At the end of each year, the M&RI will carefully evaluate the SOPs, and make needed changes to maximize efficient and rapid deployment of outbreak response funds. Any SOP changes will be communicated by the UN Foundation to Gavi as part of annual reporting requirements.

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<sup>4</sup> The report should be made in the format found in Annex 3.

## Measles and Rubella Initiative Outbreak Response Fund Advance Notification Form<sup>5</sup> to Request M&RI Support<sup>6</sup>

*The Measles and Rubella Initiative (M&RI) is a partnership of the UN Foundation, UNICEF, American Red Cross, US CDC and WHO. The M&RI Outbreak Response Fund's objective is to ensure rapid and effective response to measles outbreaks by providing funding for vaccines, injection materials and operational costs. This advance notification does not, in any way, replace the need for a formal request as outlined in the standard operating procedure to access the M&RI outbreak response fund.*

### 1. General information:

- a) Date of sending this notification: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)
- b) Country: \_\_\_\_\_ (name of country)
- c) Name, e-mail and telephone number of contact person at notifying agency
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. Outbreak essential information:

- a) Date of rash onset of first suspected case in the outbreak: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)
- b) Total number of outbreak associated suspected cases: \_\_\_\_\_ (number)
- c) Laboratory confirmation done: YES / NO (strike out whichever does not apply)
- d) Total number of laboratory confirmed cases: \_\_\_\_\_ (number)

### 3. Vaccination plan:

- a) Size of the target population: \_\_\_\_\_ (number)
- b) Estimated cost for the requirement of vaccines and injection materials: USD \_\_\_\_\_
- c) Estimated operational costs: USD \_\_\_\_\_
- d) Will vaccination be done in one or multiple phases? \_\_\_\_\_
- e) Planned start date of vaccination: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)<sup>7</sup>
- f) Planned end date of vaccination: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)<sup>9</sup>

### 4 Root cause analysis:

- a) Does the country request technical assistance to conduct the root cause analysis of the outbreak?  
\_\_\_\_\_ yes \_\_\_\_\_ no

<sup>5</sup> Email this form to HQ-EPI WHO ([MRI-ORF@who.int](mailto:MRI-ORF@who.int)) through either the WHO or UNICEF country and regional offices. In most countries, the WHO country office will lead in sending advance notification. However, in some circumstances UNICEF takes the lead, and the request will be channelled through the UNICEF country and regional offices.

<sup>6</sup> This form serves only as advance notification to the M&RI that a formal request to apply for M&RI outbreak response funding will follow (in the format in Annex 2 of the standard operating procedure to apply for M&RI outbreak response funding). It is obligatory to submit a complete report in the format outlined in Annex 3 of the standard operating procedure to apply for M&RI outbreak response funding within 3 months from the date of disbursement of funds.

<sup>7</sup> If done in phases, the start and end dates of each phase should be mentioned in a separate note.

## Measles and Rubella Initiative Outbreak Response Fund Request Form<sup>8</sup> to Access M&RI Support<sup>9</sup>

*The Measles and Rubella Initiative (M&RI) is a partnership of the UN Foundation, UNICEF, American Red Cross, US CDC and WHO. The M&RI Outbreak Response Fund's objective is to ensure rapid and effective response to measles outbreaks by providing funding for vaccines, injection materials and operational costs. This format is for a formal request to access the M&RI outbreak response fund and follows the advance notification sent earlier as outlined in the standard operating procedure to access M&RI outbreak response funds.*

**Please provide the following information:**

1. This form, filled;
2. Investigation report including epidemiology and risk assessment;
3. Plan of action and budget; and
4. A cover letter from the Ministry of Health confirming commitment from the government that it will provide the human resources required for planning and implementing the vaccination activity, including staff working at health facilities in the outbreak areas.

**1. General information:**

a) Date of request: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)

b) Was advance notification sent earlier: YES / NO

If "yes", date of advance notification: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)

c) Country: \_\_\_\_\_ (name of country)

d) Name, e-mail and telephone number of contact person at requesting agency

\_\_\_\_\_

**2. An investigation report of the outbreak and risk assessment of the potential for spread, which includes:**

- a) the country's routine immunization coverage of MCV1 (and MCV2 if applicable) for the last 5 years;
- b) the number of reported (suspected and laboratory confirmed) measles cases in the last 5 years, by age groups (0 – <1y; 1 – 4y; 5 – 9y; 10 – 14y; 15y and above);
- c) the number, geographic extent, target age group and coverage of SIAs done in the last 5 years;
- d) the date of commencement of the outbreak (an approximate date may be used if the exact date is unknown);

<sup>8</sup> This form should be sent by e-mail to HQ-EPI WHO ([MRI-ORF@who.int](mailto:MRI-ORF@who.int)) through either the WHO or UNICEF country and regional offices. In most countries, the WHO country office will take the lead in sending the request. However, there might be circumstances where UNICEF takes the lead, and the request will be channelled through UNICEF country and regional offices.

<sup>9</sup> This form provides the format for a formal request to M&RI outbreak response fund. It is obligatory to submit a complete report in the format in Annex 3 of the standard operating procedure for M&RI outbreak response funding within 3 months from the date of disbursement of funds.

- e) two epi curves of the current outbreak showing 1) the number of reported (suspected) measles case and (2) the number of laboratory confirmed and epi-linked) measles cases. Both curves should be presented by day or week of rash onset;
- f) two spot maps of the measles cases in the outbreak: 1) suspected cases and 2) laboratory confirmed/epi linked cases;
- g) two charts or tables indicating the age distribution (by year of age) of the measles cases in the outbreak: 1) suspected cases and 2) laboratory confirmed/epi linked cases;
- h) an analysis of the root causes of the outbreak (note, a preliminary root cause analysis can be included at this point with a more definitive analysis completed for the final report); and
- i) a risk analysis of the districts in the country that indicates the potential for spread of the current outbreak. This should, as a minimum, take into account MCV1 (and MCV2 if applicable) coverage during the last 5 years; SIA coverage in the last 5 years; number of suspected measles cases in the last 5 years; history of outbreaks of measles in the last 5 years; and other threats like population movements, refugee influx, natural calamities etc.

**3. A plan of action and budget that describes the planned outbreak response and root cause analysis activities, including:**

- a) Identification of the target regions and size of the target population. This should indicate the rationale for the age group and areas targeted;
- b) Plans for the proposed vaccination activities that provides the dates, manpower and training requirements, logistic details, vaccine and devices requirements, transport requirements, social mobilization and communication plans, AEFI management plans, waste disposal plans;
- c) Plans for the evaluation of the outbreak response including intra-campaign monitoring and post-campaign coverage survey. The costs for these activities should be included in the budget;
- d) Plans to conduct a root cause analysis with identification of specific actions to improve routine immunization and surveillance, as appropriate; and
- e) A detailed budget for the proposed vaccination activities and root cause analysis that provides the breakdown of costs. The budget should break down the costs by age groups (under 5 years and 5 years and older), by activity and by contribution of each partner to each activity.

**4. A cover letter from the Ministry of Health** stating the government's commitment to provide the human resources required for planning and implementing the vaccination activity, including staff working at health facilities in the outbreak areas.

## Measles and Rubella Initiative Outbreak Response Fund M&RI Support<sup>10</sup> Reporting Form<sup>11</sup>

***It is obligatory to submit a complete report in this format within 3 months from the date of disbursement of funds***

*The Measles and Rubella Initiative (M&RI) is a partnership of the UN Foundation, UNICEF, American Red Cross, US CDC and WHO. The M&RI Outbreak Response Fund's objective is to ensure rapid and effective response to measles outbreaks by providing funding for vaccines, injection materials and operational costs. This format is for the report on the use of M&RI outbreak response fund as outlined in the standard operating procedure to access M&RI outbreak response funds.*

### 1. General information:

- a) Date of request: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)
- b) Date of receipt of funds from M&RI: \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)
- c) Date of outbreak response: From \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)  
To \_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_/\_\_\_\_ (dd/mm/yyyy)
- d) Country: \_\_\_\_\_ (name of country)
- e) Reporting agency: Ministry of Health / WHO CO / UNICEF CO (tick whichever applies)
- f) Name, e-mail and telephone number of contact person at reporting agency
- \_\_\_\_\_

### 2. A report of the outbreak, outbreak response and root cause analysis, that contains:

- a) the geographical extent of the response (names of districts, cities/towns, map);
- b) the number of children targeted by age groups (0 – 4y; 5 – 9y; 10y and above);
- c) the age distribution of the reported (suspected, laboratory confirmed, and epi-linked) measles cases (0 – <1y; 1 – 4y; 5 – 9y; 10 – 14y; 15y and above);
- d) the number and percentage of children immunized by age groups (0 – 4y; 5 – 9y; 10y and above);
- e) updated epi curves of the current outbreak showing the number of the reported (suspected, laboratory confirmed and epi-linked) measles cases by day or week and indicating the dates of outbreak response;
- f) was a coverage evaluation done? YES / NO (strike out whichever does not apply);

<sup>10</sup> This form provides the format for reporting to the M&RI outbreak response fund..

<sup>11</sup> This form should be sent by e-mail to HQ-EPI WHO ([MRI-ORF@who.int](mailto:MRI-ORF@who.int)) through either the WHO or UNICEF country and regional offices. In most countries, the WHO country office will take the lead in sending the report. However, there might be circumstances where UNICEF takes the lead, and the report will be channelled through UNICEF country and regional offices.

- g) the results of the coverage evaluation survey (if done);
  - h) an analysis of the root cause of the outbreak including specific activities to strengthen routine immunization and / or surveillance; and
  - i) updated plans to avoid the causes of this outbreak in the future and plans for strengthening immunization and surveillance systems.
- 3. A report on the funds received from M&RI for outbreak response and root cause investigation activities which provides a detailed breakdown of the expenses incurred for the activities, by activity and by contribution of each partner to each activity.**