

CONCEPT NOTE

AFRICAN MEDICINES QUALITY FORUM 5th ANNUAL MEETING

Dates: April 4-6, 2022

11:00 CAT, 09:00 GMT, 12:00 EAT

Venue: Zoom

“Building Capacities and Managing Job Stress in National Quality Control Laboratories in Africa During the COVID-19 Pandemic”

Introduction

The fifth annual meeting for the African Medicines Quality Forum (AMQF) is hosted by the African Union Development Agency-NEPAD (AUDA-NEPAD), the United States Pharmacopeial Convention (USP) and the World Health Organization (WHO). Participants for this meeting include all members of the AMQF including its Technical Committee (TC), leadership from USP, AUDA-NEPAD, WHO, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Health Organizations (RHOs) as well as other partners (both current and potential) and key stakeholders.

Background

The African Medicines Quality Forum (AMQF) is the Quality Control (QC) voice of (African Medicines Regulatory Harmonization (AMRH) Programme and plays a key role in assuring the quality of medicines circulating on the African markets. It is an evolution emanating from the Network of Official Medicines Control Laboratories (NOMCoL)-Sub Saharan Africa, whose 2009 inception was funded by United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and subsequently supported by USP. The AMQF was established in 2017 in collaboration with AUDA-NEPAD and West Africa Health Organization (WAHO) to build and strengthen the capacity of African countries in medicines quality control and regional post market surveillance which in turn, will contribute significantly to reducing sub-standard and falsified (SF) medical products in circulation on the African markets. AMQF is expected to drive the harmonization of QC standards and practices and, ultimately, the mutual recognition of QC tests among African countries and supporting them to prevent, detect and respond to SF medical products.

Vision:

To see a substandard and Falsified Medicines Free Africa.

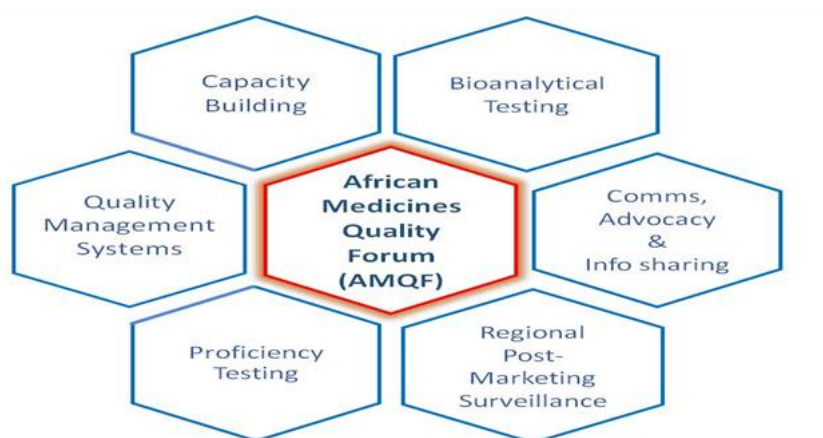
Mission:

To protect the African People's Health by ensuring the quality of health commodities through harmonized quality control systems, strengthened interregional and continent collective responsibilities and mutual accountability.

Goal:

To build and strengthen the capacity of the African National QC laboratories which in turn, will contribute significantly to reducing substandard and falsified medical Products in circulation on the African Markets

The Six areas that AMQF works in are indicated below:



Four annual AMQF meetings have been convened to date. At the Forum's first annual meeting held in February 2018 in Tanzania, the draft Terms of Reference (ToR) for AMQF and its TC were deliberated, members of the TC were proposed, approaches and concrete actions to address key administrative, organizational and technical issues that impede effective operations of NQCLs were recommended. The latter recommendations informed the content of the Forum's 2018 workplan. The proposed TC members were subsequently endorsed by the AMRH steering committee and the first AMQF-TC meeting was held in August 2018. During this meeting, the AMQF governance structure was finalized, the chair, vice-chair, rapporteurs and communications focal person of the TC (who are to serve also in the same capacity for AMQF) were elected.

The second annual AMQF meeting was held in February 2019 in Morocco and the TC members were formally introduced to the entire Forum. Other issues discussed during the meeting were, solutions to financial sustainability of AMQF under AMRH. The successful accomplishment of the 2018 workplan activities was also reported and a 2019 workplan was finalized. A second AMQF-TC meeting was held in Victoria Falls, Zimbabwe as part of AUDA-

NEPAD's fourth Scientific Conference on Medical Products Regulation in Africa (SComRA IV). During this meeting progress on the 2019 workplan implementation was reviewed and AMQF members and Joint Action Group (JAG) representatives were accorded the opportunity to interact. In addition to this, the ToR was revised to conform to the new model ToR for AMRH TCs (this resulted in the change of name from AMQF-TWG to AMQF-TC). The new ToR model stipulates that AMQF reports to the AMRH through the AMQF-TC which is responsible for steering the affairs of the network.

The third annual meeting was held in February 2020 in Abuja, Nigeria where the AMQF 2020 work plan was presented. There was a presentation on the roadmap for strengthening the NQCL infrastructure and systems where several NQCLs were categorized into four groups according to their capacity. The various NQCLs were also sensitized to the importance of drafting laboratory strategic and business plans as well as having the right legal mandate and the importance of instrumentation and analytical techniques were emphasized. There was also a break-out session to design regional RB-PMS programs that AMQF could play a role in, followed by an interactive panel discussion on financial sustainability of AMQF.

The fourth annual meeting was held virtually due to travel restrictions resulting from the Covid19 pandemic from March 29-31, 2021. A taskforce was formed to develop a 'Guidance for Testing of Medicines for treatment and prevention of COVID-19 and Hand Sanitizers' which was submitted to AUDA-NEPAD for review and an online seminar for training members for analysis of hand sanitizers was organized. A discussion on mobilizing funds of the forum was held and AMQF was given a recommendation to develop a strategic or a business plan for a period of two (2) to five (5) years which could be brought in as a proposal for potential funders.

Meeting Objectives-

1. Finalize the draft 2021 AMQF report including the updates on the implementation of the 2021 AMQF workplan and present this in plenary.
2. Review results from 2021 ILT (Interlaboratory Testing) and alcohol-based hand sanitizers webinar
3. Discuss how NQCLs can identify platforms they can use to participate in proficiency testing
4. Generate a discussion on how NQCLs can generate funds for the process of building capacities
5. Sensitize NQCLs on how and the importance of managing job stress and building resilience during this Covid-19 pandemic
6. Finalize, present and advocate for the 2022 AMQF workplan and agree on solutions to address recurring challenges in completing activities set in the workplan.
7. Discuss and consider the incorporation of established country Substandard and Falsified (SF) focal points and the network into the AMQF activities and workplan.
8. Discuss the role of AMQF in the operationalization of African Medicines Agency (AMA)

Expected Outputs

1. Finalized 2021 AMQF annual report.
2. Finalized ILT (Interlaboratory Testing) and the process of identifying platforms/providers for future PT participations.
3. Discussion completed and recommendations on how to fund the process of building capacities for NQCLs given.
4. NQCLs sensitized on different ways to manage job stress during the Covid19 pandemic.
5. An agreed 2022 AMQF workplan.
6. Formal integration of SF Focal Points into the AMQF structures
7. The role of AMQF in the operationalization of AMA known by all members

Participants

AMQF members including its Technical Committee (TC), leadership from USP, AUDA-NEPAD, WHO, Regional Economic Communities (RECs), Regional Health Organizations (RHOs) as well as other partners (both current and potential) and key stakeholders.