

TERMS OF REFERENCE
OF THE TECHNICAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE
ON NEWBORN AND CHILD HEALTH (TACNCH)

The Technical Advisory Committee on Newborn and Child Health (TACNCH) is appointed by the Secretary, Ministry of Health under the chairmanship of DDG PHS II as a body to make recommendations to the National Committee on Family Health (NCFH). The NCFH is the apex body established under the chairmanship of the Secretary, Ministry of Health on the recommendation of the Maternal and Newborn Health Review (WHO, 2007). Under the mandate vested on the TACNCH by the NCFH all **new policies / programmes/ projects** and revisions to the existing newborn and child health **policies / programmes/ projects** of the government and non government sectors would be reviewed and approved by this committee.

Over the years, newborn and child health has much improved in the country. The fact that the neonatal, infant and child mortality rates in the country at present are comparatively low when compared to other countries in the South East Asian Region bear testimony to this fact. The long standing, free of charge, preventive and curative interventions of the national child health programme and the socio economic improvements , especially the maternal education have been attributed to these impressive performances. The most yielding interventions are related to antenatal care, skilled birth attendance, exclusive breast feeding, provision of safe water and sanitation, prevention of communicable diseases like malaria, immunization, health education, and nutrition supplementation.

However, it is not the same for neonatal, infant and child morbidities and geographical variations in morbidity and mortality. Still there are many preventable causes of morbidity in newborns, infants and children.

It is imperative at this juncture to focus attention on strategies that need to be adopted to further improve neonatal and child health of the country. The identified gaps in the provision of health care in relation to neonatal and child morbidities, special needs and related long term sequelae need to be addressed. The country need to adopt evidence based interventions and strategies and establish a national quality assurance system while addressing the issues related to policy formulation, planning, financial allocation, resource management, monitoring and other issues relevant to newborn and child health.

Many experts believe that the traditional approaches alone could not be effective in filling the existing gaps. Consequently stakeholders are in the process of introducing new interventions and attempting to revise the existing interventions. The MNH review conducted in 2007 has recommended establishment of advisory committee on newborn health, to function as the technical body that could review and recommend new initiatives and revisions to existing interventions.

Mandate of the Technical Advisory Committee on Newborn and Child Health

The committee shall function as the Technical Advisory Body for the National Newborn and Child Health Programmes by providing policy directives, technical guidance, advising and monitoring national and provincial programmes. The committee shall make recommendations to the NCFH on issues related to improvements in the newborn and child health.

Responsibilities/Scope

1. Ensure that issues related to Newborn and Child Health are identified and addressed.
2. Review, actively, the existing newborn and child health programmes for its comprehensiveness in relation to contemporary needs, and advocate the NCFH and Ministry of Health and Provinces for necessary changes to rectify gaps identified, and. encourage other stakeholders also to do the same.
3. Ensure that all newborn and child health programmes in the country adopt evidence based technically sound interventions that are in accordance with the national policies and guidelines.

The committee with the mandate vested on it by the NCFH will review, revise and make recommendations to all new newborn and child health related initiatives and revisions to existing initiatives. Consequently NCFH will make that it is mandatory for all stakeholders to submit the proposals of new and revised programmes for the review of the TACNCH.
4. Interface with national and provincial authorities and other governmental and nongovernmental stakeholders as appropriate to facilitate the implementation and adoption of newborn and child health initiatives.
5. Facilitate provision of technical expertise in the implementing the National Strategic Plan on Maternal and Newborn Health and the National Strategic Plan on Child Health
6. Advise on issues related to policy formulation, planning, financial allocation, resource management and other issues relevant to newborn and child health.

7. Review the evidence gaps related to newborn and child health, declare research requirements, generate funds and encourage researchers to engage in evidence generation
8. Facilitate and motivate stakeholders who are attempting to introduce timely new initiatives and revisions to the newborn child health programmes by helping them in the advocacy attempts, coordination and recommending the credibility of the initiatives
9. Assess the resource requirements for implementing the national newborn and child health strategic plans, identify priorities and gaps and advocate the government on the fund allocation for acquiring relevant resources (manpower , equipment and other funds). Liaise with Development Partners and INGOs to raise the funds to supplement the government supplies and to make INGO funding reflect national strategic inspirations

Composition of the Advisory Committee

DDG PHS II – Chairman

D/MCH

Director HEB

Chief Epidemiologist

Director MS

D/TCS

Two Directors of Teaching Hospitals

One PDHS

One RDHS

DN/MS

DN/PHS

DD/MCH

CCP/Maternal Care

CCP- Intranatal and Newborn Care

CCP/Child Nutrition

CCP/Child Development and Special Needs

CCP/Maternal and Child Morbidity and Mortality Surveillance

CCP /Monitoring and Evaluation

One MOMCH

Three Neonatologists and or Heads of Neonatology Units

President and four nominees from SLCP

President or one nominee from SLCOG

President or one nominee from SLCCP

President or one nominee from PSSL

Academic Staff member from a Department of Paediatrics on rotation – Sri Jayawardenapura, Kelaniya, Colombo, Galle, Peradeniya, Jaffna

WHO/National Professional Officer- MPS

UNICEF/Chief of Health and Nutrition section

UNFPA/National Programme Officer- RH

Additional members will be co-opted as and when required

Functioning of the Advisory Committee

- The committee will function under the chairmanship of the DDG (PHS) II
- The members to the committee will be appointed by the Secretary Health in consultation with DGHS for a period of two years. It is mandatory that only the members appointed by the Secretary participate at the committee meetings
- CCP/Intranatal and Newborn Health and CCP /Child Development and Special Needs of the Family Health Bureau will function in rotation as Secretary to the committee and be responsible to schedule and facilitate meetings of the committee in discussion with DDG PHS II and DMCH

- DMCH is responsible to provide necessary facilities to conduct the meetings
- Members should not have any conflicts of interest
- Committee should meet once in two months and the meetings are held on fixed dates
- The quorum for a committees meeting are 10 members
- The Chairman could appoint technical subcommittees to address special issues and members outside the committee can be co-opted to the subcommittees
- The committee should regularly submit progress and recommendations to the NCFH

Accountability

The Technical Advisory Committee on Newborn and Child Health is accountable to the National Committee on Family Health.