

Terms of Reference Pacific Heads of Health Committee*

1. Introduction

The Heads of Health (HoH) Committee operate under the auspices of Pacific Health Ministers (PHM). Its role is to improve the coordination*of the work of Ministries of Health and their partners in the Pacific, and to advise and oversee implementation of decisions made by PHMs and the PIF Leaders related to health. The overall aim is to strengthen the linkages between the national and regional level mechanisms and improve the delivery of regional health policies and services in order to protect and improve the health of the people of the Pacific region.

2. Role

The Role of the HOH is to ensure that Health Ministers are provided with clear guidance, advice and support from their senior officials to enable them to make informed decisions on policy options to address regional health issues of strategic importance. It includes oversight of the implementation of the Pacific Framework for Health Development (PFHD) and regional priorities identified in the Pacific Plan. Early indications from the Pacific Plan Review is that a new Pacific Plan would not be a list of priorities but focus on 2-3 really big issues with the rest being pushed down to other levels for decisions.

3. Operating Principles

Heads of Health meet as a 'policy advisory' and technical group, providing a governance oversight role for regional functions, including Regional Public Goods (RPGs) in health. Policy decisions are made at country level through normal government processes, and at the HoH meeting and /or the PIF Leaders. HoH may, in consultation with their respective ministers, also advise other ministerial groupings when a health issue falls within their jurisdiction.

- Accountability – members are accountable individually to their respective ministers and collectively to the PHM Meeting
- Efficiency – HoH will ensure meetings, out of session processes, sub-committee arrangements and Secretariat arrangements are efficient, with a well-structured agenda, good chairing, and early circulation of meeting papers and reports.
- To ensure a clear focus, as far as possible, meetings will be framed around the PFHD, and progress against its objectives.
- Adhere to agreed aid effectiveness principles

*(*It is more than coordination, where the HoH are involved in technical discussions and debriefings of regional work and where national work can provide inputs to and inform a regional framework. There is a decision making element to what they do and undertake during these meetings)*

4. Meeting Chair

To ensure the annual meeting conducts its business in an efficient and effective manner it is proposed the following be adopted with regard to chairing the meeting.

4.1 Chairperson

- The country hosting the last Pacific Health Ministers Meeting chairs the meeting.

4.2 Deputy Chairperson

- The Deputy Chair will be the country hosting the next Pacific Health Ministers Meeting.

This will ensure that a strong link with the Pacific Health Ministers Meeting is maintained and continuity in sharing institutional knowledge from one outgoing to incumbent chairpersons.

5. Membership

Membership of the HoH Committee will consist of Heads of Health* from PICTs and include Australia and New Zealand.

*Includes CEOs, Directors, Director Generals, Permanent Secretaries and Secretaries.

6. Attendance

Member countries and territories are encouraged to send the Head of Health to the annual HoH meetings.

7. Responsibilities

- Advise Pacific Health Ministers, and through them Forum processes, on health issues of strategic importance to the region, including the development of a collective view on global health developments relevant to the Pacific region.
- Oversee the development and regular updating of the PFHD for approval by Pacific Health Ministers (and the PIF Leaders as appropriate), and ensure it complements and adds value to National Health and Development Plans.
- Advise the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS) on implementation of both the PFHD and the Pacific Plan (revised) as it relates to health, within and outside the health sector.
 - o Provide advice and commission analysis to inform policy development by Ministers in relation to regional services and the delivery of Regional Public Goods (RPGs)
 - o Oversee implementation and to ensure efficient mechanisms for cooperation on policy and technical health issues, which may include establishment of time limited Working Groups. Provide regional bodies with a stronger link to the regional architecture of PHMs and PIF Leaders, for example the PIRMCCM

- Direct the Secretariat to commission analysis to inform decisions or evaluate performance of agreed functions or activities (working with other bodies as appropriate)
- Assist the Pacific Plan Advisory Committee (PPAC) and the Committee of Regional Governments and Administrations (CRGA) to guide and monitor the work of regional partners and United Nations which are responsible for delivering regional services agreed in the Pacific Plan and the Pacific Framework for Health Development (*This item is problematic as agencies have their own processes/systems and accountabilities – to be discussed at HoH 2014.*)
- Provide an annual report on implementation of the Framework (*to note: Framework to include Forum Compact commitments*) for inclusion in national Annual Health Sector Reviews and Joint Development Partnership arrangements at National Level.
- Report to the Pacific Island Forum, through the Secretariat on matters requested by the PIF Leaders, including relevant regional agreements such as progress of the Forum Compact in the health sector.

8. Sub-committees

The HoH may establish Standing Committees or Working Groups to progress its work as sub-committees. Standing Committees, operate under similar Terms of Reference, subordinate to the Heads of Health. (*Consistent with the Principles above, the number of committees and working groups would be kept to a minimum, and in most cases would be strictly time limited*)

9. Meeting Schedule

The HoH will meet annually, outside the period May to August when Ministries are preparing their annual plans and budgets. In those years when PHMs hold their biennial meeting (noting that they also meet annually at both the World Health Assembly and the WHO Western Pacific Regional Committee meeting), the HoH Meeting will be held no less than six months before the Ministers meeting. This is to enable the HoH to help shape the agenda for the PHM meeting and assist in the preparation for the meeting. A model for the ‘standing agenda’ is attached as Annex 1.

10. Secretariat arrangements

In the first instance, Secretariat services for the committee will be provided by the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), with support from WHO and strong linkages to the Pacific Island Forum Secretariat (PIFS). Heads of Health retain the right to review and modify those arrangements.

11. Linkages to the broader Pacific Island Forum and regional health architecture

The relationship between the HoH, PHM, the Forum architecture and country level arrangements for development cooperation in health will be set out in a diagram, following finalisation of the Pacific Plan Review and PFHD.

**'Heads' of sector is the terminology used in other sectors under the Forum architecture to describe the secretaries and director generals. Standard terminology in other sectors is to use the term "Forum" to describe ministerial level groupings and "Heads" of sector to describe official level groupings e.g Forum Economic Ministers, Heads of Statistics.*

12. Review of Terms of Reference

The HoH Committee shall retain the right to review and amend the ToR periodically.

Annex 1.

“Standing Agenda” – a model agenda for Heads of Health meetings

1. Action from last meeting and out of session decisions

- Note - record of meeting to be circulated for approval within one month of the meeting, actions to be set out in a matrix to facilitate tracking
- Action: monitor progress and agree actions

2. Update on Pacific Development Framework implementation (or development/revision – depending on stage of process) and Pacific Plan

- Report from PFHD and Pacific Plan
– *update on progress and agree actions*
- Report from Pacific Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN)
 - *This report will provide and update on disease burden, risks and surveillance/survey activities*
 - *Action – eg agree actions for national or Secretariat follow up*
- Progress on implementation of regional services and regional public goods
 - *Eg Laboratory Quality Assurance – SPC*
 - *Eg Workforce Training (FNU SMNHS, PEI) and Standards (SPBEA)*
 - Action – eg agree on actions and follow-up*
- Policy areas for further dialogue and analysis prior to submission to Health Ministers
 - *Eg regional system for accreditation of clinical service providers, or in service training providers*
 - *Action eg direct Secretariat to task out additional analysis*

3. Management and oversight of multi-country programs

- Note - this item will cover both financing and technical cooperation programs
- Report from GFATM PIRMCCM
- Report from Pacific Monitoring Alliance on NCD Actions (Pacific MANA)

4. Update on progress against Forum Compact Commitments

- 5. Next meeting** (Note: chair to be appointed for two years. The deputy chair will be the outgoing chair for first year, and incoming chair the following year)

Annex 2 – Acronyms

CRGA	Committee of Regional Governments and Administrations
CROP	Council of Regional Organisations in the Pacific
FNU SMNHS	Fiji National University School of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences
GFTATM	Global Fund to Fight AIDs, Tuberculosis and Malaria
HoH	Heads of Health
PEI	Pacific Eye Institute
PFHD	Pacific Framework for Health Development
PHM	Pacific Health Ministers
PIFS	Pacific Island Forum Secretariat
PIRMCCM	Pacific Islands Regional Multi-Country Coordinating Mechanism
PPAC	Pacific Plan Action Committee
PPHSN	Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network
RPGs	Regional Public Goods
SPBEA	South Pacific Bureau for Educational Assessment
SPC	Secretariat of the Pacific Community
UN	United Nations
WHO	World Health Organisation