



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE
SOLUTIONS

2023

Annual Partners Meeting

Summary conclusions

Introduction

On October 3rd, 2023, ICARS had the pleasure of hosting its first Annual Partners Meeting. This event brought together our **Low- and Middle-Income Country (LMIC) partners, Funding Partners, Mission Partners and Implementation Partners** for an insightful exchange on topics of key importance to prevent and mitigate antimicrobial resistance (AMR). This will be the first of many meetings aimed at providing a **platform for the collective sharing of experiences and perspectives in mitigating AMR.**

The Annual Partners Meeting was Chaired by ICARS' Executive Director, Dr Sujith J Chandy, and moderated by ICARS' Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, Dr Ghada Zoubiane. The strong turnout underscored the shared commitment of ICARS and its partners in their efforts to sustainably address AMR.

The meeting began with introductory remarks from ICARS' Dr Robert Leo Skov, Scientific Director, and Ms Helle Engslund Krarup, Director of Operations, who provided insights into ICARS' comprehensive approach and progress since its inception in 2019. Mr Svend Særkjær, Permanent Secretary for the Danish Ministry for the Interior and Health, underscored Denmark's continued commitment to ICARS and the shared responsibility in addressing AMR as a global development challenge. The participants¹ then presented and shared their perspectives on the following topics:

- What are the **enablers and barriers** for advancing sustainable implementation of AMR National Action Plans (NAPs).
- How stakeholders can **work collaboratively** to reinforce efforts for sustainable implementation of AMR solutions.
- How to secure more **funding** to advance sustainable implementation of AMR solutions.



"To provide a response that is as impactful as the threat itself, we must work together and build on each other's efforts while recognizing that there is no 'one size fits all'. This is particularly important if we are to sustainably mitigate AMR in Low- and Middle- Income Countries."

Dr Sujith J Chandy

¹ Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Danish Ministry of Interior and Health, Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit, Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations, Georgia National Centre for Disease Control, Global AMR R&D Hub, Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnerships, International Development Research Centre (Canada), International Livestock Research Institute, International Vaccine Institute, Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance, Kosovo Ministry of Health, Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health, Pakistan Health Services Academy, Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR, Radboudmc, ReAct Africa Network, ReAct Europe, UK Department of Health and Social Care, United Nations Environment Programme, Wellcome, WHO Regional Office for Europe, World Organisation for Animal Health, Zambia National Public Health Institute, and Zambian Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock.

Discussions and key messages

Following presentations from various partners, participants debated a range of topics and the following key messages emerged (the detailed agenda can be found in the annex):



Partnership is the golden thread

Partnerships and collaboration across AMR stakeholders are critical to **advancing AMR NAP** implementation. As emphasised by Prof. Roma Chilengi, Director General of the Zambia National Public Health Institute, collaboration is the driving force behind addressing challenges that are often nationally neglected. Highlighting the ICARS' model of partnering with Zambia, Dr Chilengi articulated the importance of working collaboratively to **bridge the gap between evidence, policy and practice** and create the momentum and inspiration to ultimately address global challenges such as AMR.

Examples from Georgia, highlighted by Dr Tamar Gabunia, Director General of the National Centre for Disease Control in Georgia, provided compelling illustrations of the **pivotal role of international partnerships in AMR strategy development and implementation**. Dr Gabunia notably emphasised the impact derived from such collaborations, with **evidence-informed strategy** rooted in global best practices.

Partnerships are also the cornerstone in achieving **sustainable financing** for AMR NAP implementation. Only through partnership can we comprehensively address the full spectrum of actions needed to mitigate AMR and achieve long term impact.

Political will is a key enabler

Over the last few years, there has been a **growing global political interest in AMR**, acknowledging its burden, especially in LMICs, and the need to **invest in advancing NAP implementation**. This has been accompanied by progress in research and development to support interventions to prevent and control AMR.

Notably, the most crucial catalyst to AMR mitigation efforts is the **political will and leadership at the national level**, as emphasised by Dr Paul Fandamu, Deputy Director-Research and Epidemiology of Veterinary Services at the Zambian Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock. Reiterating this point, Dr Dafnia Gexha-Bunjaku, Kosovo's Deputy Minister of Health, drew attention to the strengthening of political commitment in Kosovo following the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as the development of an AMR NAP and an interdisciplinary and multi-sectoral technical working group to support this NAP.

While there has been substantial political support in various countries, the **transition from ambition to action** remains somewhat limited, especially in some LMICs, leading to significant gaps in countries' efforts to **operationalise their NAPs**.

In Zambia, steps have been taken to actively support activities that advance NAP implementation, including setting up multi-sectoral technical working groups as well as motivating and convening experts to focus on specific key issues related to AMR stewardship, amongst other interventions. This will need to be complimented by efforts to fund large-scale implementation projects, as well as pursuing the integration of AMR solutions in existing systems and programmes.

Using a bottom-up approach is a sustainable AMR NAP implementation solution

Effective management of care, combined with general awareness raising, serves as a key route to influencing **higher policy levels**. As underscored by Dr Shahzad Ali Khan, Pakistan's Vice-Chancellor of Health Services Academy, a **bottom-up approach involving patients, healthcare workers and the community** proves to be the most effective, especially when dealing with unnecessary use of antibiotics.

This was further highlighted by Dr Talant Sooronbaev, Chief pulmonologist and Deputy Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Council in the Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health, who noted that efforts to engage the community, including care workers, have been crucial in their ongoing ICARS project looking at testing interventions and technology uptake for better stewardship.

Implementation funding is a necessity for sustainable action

Increasing funding for large-scale implementation of AMR solutions and their integration into existing systems and programmes is crucial for sustainable AMR mitigation – especially in an LMIC context. This requires **coordinated efforts** and **domestic prioritisation of resource mobilisation**.

The current lack of appropriate funding for the implementation of solutions is a challenge to advance the AMR agenda, as underscored by Ms Lotte Machon, State Secretary for Development Policy in the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs. She noted that addressing AMR represents an excellent return on investment for many countries, as well as highlighted the perspectives on climate change and health and the linkage to AMR.

Dr Danilo Lo-Fo-Wong, Regional Advisor for the Control of AMR at WHO Europe, further reinforced this notion by highlighting that **financing AMR will pay itself back quite quickly** and that we must collectively promote the idea that ‘a healthy economy is built on a healthy population’.

It is therefore crucial to **integrate AMR investment into the political economy** to deliver impactful evidence of AMR solutions, as reinforced by Dr Mirfin Mpundu, Director of the ReAct Africa Network. These endeavours will necessitate collaboration and coordinated actions to reverse the current situation over the next decade.

Dr Timothy Jinks, Head of Interventions, Infectious Diseases at Wellcome, pointed out that what is critical is to aim for **evidence-informed action** to address AMR, highlighting the vital role that ICARS is playing in bridging the gap between generating the evidence and making the necessary changes.

Intervention and Implementation Research is a key methodology

Implementation and intervention research ensures **intentional consideration of how an intervention works within the wider social, political, economic and health context** (Peters et al., 2014). Delivering effective AMR solutions that meet the needs requires an intervention and implementation research component that examines the **adaptability and acceptability of AMR interventions** in a given context, including the **willingness of end-users to adopt, adapt and change**, as highlighted by Dr Arshnee Moodley, team leader for AMR at the International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI).

This ensures that policies and evidence (including innovations) align with the intended objectives, **ultimately benefiting the community**, as highlighted by a representative from the Global AMR Innovation Fund. A proactive approach involves **weaving early-stage scientific research together with implementation research to maximize our impact**.

Dr Lesley Ann Ogilvie reinforced this notion by highlighting the Global AMR R&D Hub’s partnership with ICARS, which focuses on assessing the funding allocated to AMR intervention and implementation research and its impact in LMICs. The collaboration uses the AMR Hub’s dynamic dashboard to map the quasi value of AMR research funding in LMICs, considering outcomes and translation into policy, programmes, and practice. The goal is to inform future research investment and funding models.

Moving forward

ICARS' first Annual Partners Meeting served as a dynamic forum where the significance of partnership and collaborative efforts to mitigate AMR was underscored. The exchange of insights and the shared commitment to learning from each other's experiences were pivotal aspects of the discussions. This gathering provided a remarkable opportunity for mutual growth and understanding.

ICARS will carry these valuable insights into future discussions as we move towards the United Nations General Assembly 2024 high-level meeting on AMR, amongst other high-level meetings.

We are grateful to all our partners and collaborators for their unwavering commitment and support.

Looking forward, ICARS eagerly anticipates welcoming not only all our current partners but also new ones at our second Annual Partners Meeting next year. We deeply value your ongoing engagement and contributions.

Contact

ICARS

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Our projects



Annex

Organisation	Name	Title
Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs	Lotte Machon	State Secretary for Development Policy
Danish Ministry of Interior and Health	Svend Særkjær	Permant Secretary
Deutsche Gesellschaft für Internationale Zusammenarbeit	Burkard Kömm	Programme Manager, Support to Pandemic Preparedness in the EAC Region
Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations	Dr Junxia Song	AMR Focal Point
Georgia National Centre for Disease Control	Dr Tamar Gabunia	Director General
Global AMR R&D Hub	Dr Lesley Ann Ogilvie	Director
Global AMR R&D Hub	Dr Ralf Sudbrak	Deputy Director
Global Antibiotic Research and Development Partnership	Dr Lauren Jankelowitz	Access Leader, Sub-Saharan Africa
International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions	Dr Sujith J Chandy	Executive Director
International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions	Helle Engslund Krarup	Director of Operations
International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions	Dr Robert Leo Skov	Scientific Director
International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions	Dr Ghada Zoubiane	Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement
International Centre for Antimicrobial Resistance Solutions	Lisa Bugge Nør Larsen	Programme Manager
International Development Research Centre, Canada	Dr Renee Larocque	Program Leader for Livestock Vaccine Initiative Fund
International Livestock Research Institute	Dr Arshnee Moodley	AMR Team Leader
International Vaccine Institute	Dr Laura Plant	Head of External Affairs, Europe Regional Office
Joint Programming Initiative on Antimicrobial Resistance	Laura Marin	Head of Secretariat
Kosovo, Ministry of Health	Dr Dafina Gexha Bunjaku	Deputy Minister
Kyrgyzstan Ministry of Health	Dr Talant Sooronbaev	Chief pulmonologist and Deputy Chairman of the Scientific and Technical Council
Pakistan Health Services Academy	Dr Shahzad Ali Khan	Vice-Chancellor
Quadripartite Joint Secretariat on AMR	Dr Kefas Samson	Technical Officer
Radboudumc	Dr Jeroen Schouten	Senior Researcher
Radboudumc	Dr Heiman Wertheim	Head of the Clinical Microbiology Department
ReAct Africa Network	Dr Mirfin Mpundu	Director
ReAct Europe	Anna Sjöblom	Director
UK Department of Health and Social Care	Clare MacIver	Head of Global AMR Strategy
United Nations Environment Programme	Jacqueline Álvarez	Chief, Chemicals and Health Branch, Industry and Economy Division
United Nations Environment Programme	Aitziber Echeverria	AMR focal point
Wellcome	Dr Timothy Jinks	Head of Interventions, Infectious Disease
Wellcome	Dr Janet Midega	Research Lead for Drug Resistant Infections
WHO Regional Office for Europe	Dr Danilo Lo-Fo-Wong	Regional Advisor Control of AMR
World Organisation for Animal Health	Dr Holy Akwar	Deputy Head, AMR & Veterinary Products Department
Zambia National Public Health Institute	Prof Roma Chilengi	Director General
Zambian Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock	Dr Paul Fandamu	Deputy Director-Research and Epidemiology, Department of Veterinary Services



Annual Partners Meeting

October 3rd, 14:00-17:00 CET, Zoom

14:00-14:05 - Welcome

Dr Sujith J Chandy, Executive Director, ICARS

14:05-14:20 - Reflections

Dr Robert Skov, Scientific Director, ICARS, and Helle Engslund Krarup, Director of Operations, ICARS

14:20-14:25 - Perspectives from partners

Svend Særkjær, Permanent Secretary, Danish Ministry for the Interior and Health

Topic 1: What are the enablers and barriers for advancing sustainable implementation of AMR National Action Plans?

14:25-14:30 - Introduction by the moderator
Dr Ghada Zoubiane, Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, ICARS

14:30-14:40 - Perspectives from partners
Dr Paul Fandamu, Deputy Director-Research and Epidemiology of Veterinary Services, Zambian Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock & Prof. Roma Chilengi, Director General, Zambia National Public Health Institute

14:40-14:50 - Perspectives from partners
Dr Shahzad Ali Khan, Vice-Chancellor of Health Services Academy, Pakistan

14:50-15:05 - Open discussion and reflection

15:05-15:15 - Break

Topic 2: How can stakeholders work collaboratively to reinforce efforts for sustainable implementation of AMR solutions?

15:15-15:20 - Introduction by the moderator
Dr Ghada Zoubiane, Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, ICARS

15:20-15:30 - Perspectives from partners
Dr Tamar Gabunia, Director General, National Centre for Disease Control, Georgia

15:30-15:40 - Perspectives from partners
Clare MacIver, Head of Global Antimicrobial Resistance Strategy, Department of Health and Social Care, United Kingdom

15:40-15:55 - Open discussion and reflection

15:55-16:05 - Break

Topic 3: How do we secure more sustainable funding to advance implementation of AMR solutions?

16:05-16:10 - Introduction by the moderator
Dr Ghada Zoubiane, Head of Partnerships and Stakeholder Engagement, ICARS

16:10-16:20 - Perspectives from partners
Lotte Machon, State Secretary for Development Policy, Danish Ministry

16:20-16:30 - Perspectives from partners
Dr Mirfin Mpundu, Director, ReAct Africa Network

16:30-16:40 - Perspectives from partners
Dr Timothy Jinks, Head of Interventions, Infectious Disease, Wellcome

16:40-16:55 - Open discussion and reflection

16:55-17:00 - Concluding remarks by the chair
Dr Sujith J Chandy, Executive Director, ICARS