

Orientation of Fellowship Focal Points in SEARO and WHO Country Offices

*Report of the Workshop
Jaipur, India, 28-30 July 2011*

Contents

	<i>Page</i>
1. Introduction	1
2. Objectives.....	1
3. Expected Outcome	2
4. Proceedings.....	2
4.1 Inaugural Session	2
4.2 Regional Overview of WHO Fellowships	2
4.3 Current practices of fellowship management.....	3
4.4 Country Presentations.....	4
4.5 Draft Standard Operating Procedures	8
4.6 Issues and Challenges.....	8
4.7 Strengths – What worked well:	8
4.8 Recommendations	9

Annexes

1. Agenda	11
2. List of participants	12
3. Agreed Standard Operating Procedures for Fellowships Focal Points at WHO Country Offices	14
4. Agreed Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Office focal points in ETS unit.....	18
5. Checklist for processing of FAF	30
6. Recommended Actions to address related issues in fellowship management.....	31

1. Introduction

An Orientation of Fellowship Focal Points in SEARO and WHO Country Offices was organized in Jaipur, India from 28-30 July 2011, aiming to improve the fellowship management at country and regional office levels. Following the introduction of Global Management System (GSM) in January 2010, the payment processes have changed drastically. Hence a need was felt to review the existing processes and procedures in the light of GSM requirements and to bring in more efficiency at each stage of fellowship management and to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for Regional Office and Country Offices to address the issues and challenges in the existing system. The Regional Consultation on Management of Fellowship Programme organized by WHO SEARO in Bangkok, Thailand from 8-10 February 2011 also recommended for a meeting with WHO Country Office (WCO) fellowship focal points to discuss these issues and challenges. The orientation workshop was therefore convened to provide an opportunity to discuss and address these issues and challenges.

The WCO fellowship focal points from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste participated in the orientation. However, due to some administrative issues, DPR Korea could not participate. Seven representatives from ETS Unit (SEARO) participated in the orientation. Altogether there were 17 participants in the meeting.

The agenda of the meeting and the list of participants are given in **Annexures 1 and 2** respectively.

2. Objectives

General Objective

The general objective of the orientation was to improve fellowship management.

Specific Objectives

At the end of the orientation workshop, participants would be able to:

- explain the new fellowship related work processes introduced following roll-out of GSM including redressal of issues of challenges taking into account the various constraints faced by staff at both ends.

- describe the agreed standard operating procedures (SOPs) in respect of various fellowship processes to be followed both at Regional Office (RO) and WCO levels.
- identify strengths and weaknesses in the existing system of fellowship management and measures to improve the different stages of implementation, viz. registration, placement, award, monitoring & evaluation.

3. Expected Outcome

- Well-informed fellowship focal points at WCOs and RO with better understanding and knowledge of the new GSM processes affecting fellowship management, including related issues and challenges, and agreed SOPs and measures to improve fellowship management at the country level.

4. Proceedings

4.1 Inaugural Session

The Orientation commenced with a brief presentation by Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol, TIP-HRH, WHO SEARO on the background and objectives of the Orientation. She said that the Orientation was a platform for sharing and learning both from country and regional office experiences. She requested the participants to share their ideas about effective approaches that could be adopted for efficient management of fellowships.

This was followed by a brief introduction on the orientation programme and folder contents by Ms Renu Sharma, National Professional Officer (Fellowships) and self-introduction by participants.

4.2 Regional Overview of WHO Fellowships

A presentation on Regional Overview of WHO Fellowships was made by Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol giving details of the fellowship definition as per WHO Manual and review of statistics on fellowships processed during the previous three biennia. Countries like DPR Korea, India and Myanmar have been sending huge number of fellows for overseas fellowships. Bangladesh and Indonesia had shown marked decline in the number of fellowships over the last three bienniums. For Indonesia, this reduction was due to a conscious decision of the government. Whereas in case of Bangladesh, where huge amount of funds were available for fellowships from other development partners, WHO Bangladesh decided to use WHO funds for other activities.

She briefed the participants about the policy guidance of the Regional Director in favour of regional fellowships as the extra-regional fellowships were costly and had less relevance in terms of country/region perspectives. Review of fellowship statistics showed

that India and Thailand had proved to be favourite destinations for WHO fellows and Indonesia was also coming up as a new country of study. Gender trend of WHO fellows showed a stable trend of male-female ratio. In terms of duration of study, the trend was in favour of short term fellowships of less than 3 months. Majority of the fellowships (more than 70%) had been in areas like public health, disease prevention and health promotion. Due to some innovative measures being taken, both by WCO and ETS unit, marked improvement in the receipt of Fellowship Termination Studies Report (FTSR) and Utilization of Fellows' Services Report (UOFSR) had been achieved. Dr Duangvadee highlighted the need for reducing the delay in receipt of Fellowship Applications Forms (FAFs) and having an effective monitoring and follow-up system for timely submission of FTSRs and UOFSRs. She requested the WCO FEL focal points to share their experiences and suggest measures in addressing these crucial issues.

4.3 Current practices of fellowship management

Ms Renu Sharma made presentation on current practices of fellowship management post GSM rollout. She oriented the participants on the current practices of fellowship management, roles of various players in fellowship implementation and the categorical difference between Fellowships and Study tours. She also briefed the participants on the need for updation of the Regional Directory of Training Institutions (RDTI).

The meeting then was briefed in details of activities involved in fellowship management.

4.3.1 Pre-placement process

Mr Arun Ratnam (ETS Unit) made a presentation on pre-placement process to orient the participants on WHO policy on eligibility of fellowship, current pre-placement processes, important aspects of Fellowship Application Form and their provisions in the WHO Manual.

4.3.2 Placement process

Mr Lokesh Malhotra (ETS Unit), briefed the participants on the placement processes being followed and the documents being generated during the placement process like technical review of fellowship application forms, preparation of fellowship placement request, preparation of final fellowship estimate and issues related to placement processes.

4.3.3 Award and Post-Award process

Ms Vanaja Sundaresan (ETS Unit) briefed the participants on the award and post-award processes covering actions like issuance of LOA; travel requests; procurement service requests for payment of stipend and other training related payments; settling of travel

claims; follow-up on trimestrial and confidential reports etc. The participants were also briefed about the issues and challenges in the award and post-award processes.

4.3.4 Monitoring and Evaluation Processes

A brief presentation on the monitoring and evaluation processes with emphasis on the need for timely submission of FTSR and UOFSR was made by Ms Renu Sharma.

Plenary discussions were followed after the above four presentations.

4.4 Country Presentations

The WCO's role in fellowship management includes review of FAFs, providing funding for the fellowship; arranging ticket and stipend upon receipt of Letter of Award and approved Travel Request from ETS unit; and follow-up on FTSRs and UOSRs. In addition to fellowship related activities, the WCO fellowship focal points are also involved in making administrative travel arrangements for study tours and country participants for GEAs conducted by various Technical Units from the Regional Office. Details of each country's experiences were provided below.

4.4.1 Bangladesh

Ms Latifa Hamid (WHO Bangladesh) made a presentation on the fellowship procedures being followed in Bangladesh which included preparation of list of fellowships in accordance with Plan of Action and forwarding the same to the concerned government departments for nominations and follow-up on the nominations. The current government selection procedures include initial selection by Programme Managers, submission of nominations to Director General Health Services for scrutiny, forwarding the nominations to MOHFW for finalization of selection of candidates through selection committee chaired by Additional Secretary. The delay in nomination occurs during this process. WCO FEL unit has a system of monitoring receipts of FTSRs and UOSRs but UOSR has been a big challenge. Typical problems faced by WCO are receiving inappropriate nomination and the ministry's refusal to send revised nomination, and delays occurring in decision making due to long time absence of concerned Technical Officers in WCO.

4.4.2 Bhutan

Ms Rinji Om (WHO Bhutan) made a presentation on Bhutan fellowship activities. She highlighted that even though WHO was one of the biggest funding agencies in Bhutan, it did not have a direct involvement in fellowship selection process. The Ministry has a Human Resource Committee which selects the candidates for all fellowship/nomination for workshops, meetings and training irrespective of the funding source. For long term fellowships (more than 6 months), there is an inter-ministerial Committee which advertises the fellowship for open competition among health professionals and carries out

selection process. The problem specific to Bhutan is that some candidates are not within commuting distance due to which there could be considerable delays in FAF submission. She also pointed out that the ministry had been stressing for use of DFC mechanism for fellowships.

4.4.3 India

A presentation on fellowship procedures being followed for WHO fellows from India was made by Mr Mukesh Sabharwal (WHO India). WCO receives very large number of nominations for both in-country and overseas fellowships every biennium. The International Health Division in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare is the focal point in the ministry for fellowship matters. The Ministry of Health plays a major role in fellowship selection process which includes deciding on the field and duration of study. The Ministry invites nominations through their internal process and a fellowship selection committee scrutinizes the applications and selects candidates for identified fellowships. Thereafter the list of nominated candidates is forwarded to WCO for further administrative processing. WCO coordinates with the fellows for submission of completed FAFs and forwards to ETS/SEARO with official endorsement for placement and award actions. Since India is one of the study destinations for WHO fellows, WCO also receives considerable number of requests for government clearance for foreign fellows placed in India. WCO liaises with ministry for the necessary clearances for these fellows and has a monitoring system in place for such requests.

4.4.4 Indonesia

Ms Retno Sulistyowati (WHO Indonesia) gave a presentation on the fellowship procedures being followed in Indonesia. Indonesia has more inbound and in-country fellowships than outgoing fellowships. Once requests for placement of foreign fellows are received in WCO, it liaises with the Ministry of Health for placement confirmation. The technical unit in WCO assists the government in preparing a tentative programme and budget which is forwarded to ETS for sharing with national authorities of fellows concerned. The country office also coordinates with embassy for courtesy arrangement. The typical problem faced in Indonesia is the considerable delay in receipt of government clearance for the visit of foreign fellows including delay in receipt of tentative training programme and training budget. Also in cases where the training implementation unit at MoH does not have bank account, there is considerable delay in sending the government clearance and payment of training fee. This delay leads to insufficient lead time for visa and other formalities. For outgoing fellowships, there are delays in receipt of nominations coupled with funding issues. Sometimes the visa process is also difficult and delay occurs in stipend payments to fellows.

4.4.5 Maldives

A presentation on fellowship procedures in Maldives was made by Ms Aminath Ismail (WHO Maldives). As with other countries in the Region, WHO does not have a role in selection process in Maldives. There is a government selection committee which follows specific fellowship selection process and selects candidates for WHO fellowship. The Ministry has been advised by WCO to adhere to rules like four months lead time for FAF submission, fellows to have health insurance coverage, provision of complete details, completeness of FAFs, desired institutes within the region, specific period of unavailability, valid medical certificate, timely submission of FTSR and UOFSRs and collection and encashing of Fellowship Termination Allowance (FTA). A typical problem being faced by Maldives is that the fellows are not continuing in government service as mandated in the fellowship rules. Some of them either leave their government jobs or take leave without pay and do not serve for the mandated period after the completion of the fellowship.

4.4.6 Myanmar

Ms Kyi Kyi Nyein (WHO Myanmar) made a presentation on the fellowship procedures being followed in Myanmar. The WCO prepares the workplan in consultation with programme managers. Selection/nomination mechanism for fellowships of 6 months and above involves a competitive exam (written plus viva-voce) which is conducted by the department concerned. For short term fellowships of 3 months and below, the programme managers in the concerned areas propose the names of the candidates which are submitted to the Honourable Minister for approval. In Myanmar, an in-house screening mechanism did exist previously for screening of FAFs which was discontinued during recent years. A monitoring mechanism is in place in the WCO to monitor receipt of FTSRs and UOSRs. For the 2010-2011 biennium, the WCO faced difficulties in assessing the total number of planned fellowships and the funds allocated for them.

4.4.7 Nepal

Mr Kanchan Shrestha (WHO Nepal) made a presentation on the fellowship procedures being followed in Nepal. As per the fellowship provisions, fellowships of 3 months or more are advertised by the government in the daily newspaper with specific criteria of selection. The applications received are submitted to a Fellowship Committee with a comparison sheet. The Committee selects the candidates based on the criteria, performance evaluation and recommendation of the concerned authority. The list of selected candidates is submitted to higher authority for approval. The approved list along with FAFs is forwarded to WHO for further processing. The Fellowship Committee comprises of Health Secretary, Director General, Chief (Policy, Planning & International Cooperation Division (PPICD)), Joint Secretary, Director of concerned Division, Dean (Institute of Medicine), Representative from WHO and Technical Experts from concerned Donor Agency. The WCO has a monitoring system in place for follow-up on timely receipt of post training reports.

4.4.8 Sri Lanka

A presentation on the fellowship procedures being followed in Sri Lanka was made by Ms Valerine Kumarasinghe (WHO Sri Lanka). For 2010-2011, the budget for fellowship activities was 8.22% of the total country budget. The country cooperation strategies are finalized based on country's needs and discussions are held between WCO and national programme managers on the country's needs for training. The WCO provides the number of fellowships indicated in the approved workplan to the government. The planning unit in the ministry obtains nominations through advertisement process. Candidates are shortlisted from the applications forms received and are interviewed by a panel comprising of relevant Deputy Director General (Chair), relevant Director and Director (Training). The names of shortlisted candidates are sent to Director General Health Services, Additional Secretary, Secretary and Honorable Minister for approval and is a time consuming process. The WCO has a mechanism in place for monitoring of timely submission of FTSRs and UOSRs. However, submission of UOSR is a problem as fellows often have changed duty stations and cannot be traced.

4.4.9 Thailand

Ms Charoenporn Eiemwongsri (WHO Thailand) made a presentation on the fellowship procedures being followed in Thailand. Majority of Thailand fellowships are long term. The selection of WHO fellows is done by Ministry of Public Health with participation of WHO through a long-term fellowship selection (LTFS) committee established under the International Health Policy Program (IHPP). This programme has been assigned the responsibility of liaising with WHO regarding identification of candidates for WHO long term fellowship programme. The selection committee comprises of 4 members i.e. Chairperson (from Prince of Songkhlanakarind University), WR Thailand, a senior MoPH executive and the Director, IHPP. The candidates are interviewed by the selection committee and a final list of appropriate candidates for WHO LTFS support is concluded. The recommendation of the selected candidates is sent to WHO Thailand office for further processing. The selected candidates apply for placement of their proposed study directly to the target universities / institutes, with support from IHPP / MoPH. This is to obtain acceptance letters from the universities/institutes and avoid delays. The completed FAFs along with Endorsement Sheet as well as the acceptance letter are then forwarded by the Ministry to WR Thailand for administrative processing. As WCO receives the list of selected candidates beforehand, it assists the candidates in the preparation of necessary documents and follows up directly with the fellows. Once finalized, the completed FAFs along with endorsement sheet, acceptance letter and PTAE0 are forwarded to ETS unit for placement and award actions. The WCO also has a mechanism in place for monitoring and follow-up on the post training reports.

4.4.10 Timor-Leste

Mr Jose Barreto (WHO Timor-Leste) made a presentation on the procedure being followed in Timor Leste. The WCO informs the government about the availability of the

fellowship. The government sends nominations based on the request. WCO then contacts the concerned universities for registration of the candidates. The candidates are required to clear the admission test conducted by the university. Due to time constraints and lack of clarity about existing fellowship processes, WCO Timor-Leste has been using APW mechanism for arranging the fellowships. After completion of the training, the fellow reports to WCO as well as ministry but no utilization report is received. WCO, however, evinced interest in processing fellowships in 2012-13 through SEARO through fellowship mechanism.

4.5 Draft Standard Operating Procedures

Draft Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each component of fellowship management was presented and followed by discussions. Several critical issues regarding procedures and time-frame were deliberated upon. Based on the inputs received from WCO focal points and RO staff, the SOPs were revised and finalized. These are given in **Annex 3**. In addition a check list for review of FAFs by WCO focal points was also reviewed and finalized which is given in **Annex 4**.

4.6 Issues and Challenges

The issues and challenges in managing fellowship programme being faced by the country offices as well as regional office was reviewed through group work and final consensus on recommendations to address the issues was obtained. The outcome of group work and recommended actions is given in **Annex 5**.

4.7 Strengths – What worked well:

Based on the workshop deliberations, following strengths were identified.

- Proper briefing at the WCO by the FEL focal point to fellows before their departure for the training programmes facilitated timely submission of FTSR.
- Withholding of US\$ 100 “Fellowship Termination Allowance (FTA)” until submission of FTSR contributed to timely submission of FTSR.
- Maintaining direct contact with fellows was useful to expedite submission of the FTSR and UOFSR.
- Good rapport and close collaboration between the WCO FEL focal point and responsible government officials (including programme managers) helped improving the effective management of the FEL programme at the country level.
- Efficient monitoring system at the WCO contributed to effective management of the FEL programme.

- Close coordination between ETS and WCO fellowship focal points facilitated efficient management of fellowship programme at the country level.

4.8 Recommendations

The meeting made following recommendations to further strengthen the management of fellowship programme.

4.8.1 Recommendations for WCOs:

- WCO FEL focal points to follow agreed SOPs in managing the FEL programme at various stages, i.e. pre-placement, placement, award & post award and monitoring and evaluation stages.
- WCO FEL focal points to implement the recommended actions/proposed measures for improving the management of the FEL programme at the country level.
- Facilitate in updation of Regional Directory of Training Institutions (RDTI).

4.8.2 Recommendations for ETS/SEARO:

- ETS to communicate to PPC to kindly request WRs to indicate specific FEL activities required under various SOs/ programmes in the 2012-2013 workplan to facilitate better planning, management and reporting of FEL activities at the country and regional levels.
- ETS to inform all WRs of the new SOPs including FAF checklist to be followed by WCO FEL focal points.
- ETS to pursue for SEARO management's guidance/ decision with respect to the following:
 - provisions of financial support for thesis/ dissertation (research study which is integral part of an education/ training programme) to enable fellows to complete the programme successfully,
 - provisions of seed money for payment to fellows to expedite submission of UOSR, similarly to provision of FTA for submission of FTSR,
 - reconsideration of the use of "DFC" for supporting government officials for formal study abroad in order to make better use of WHO expertise and resources for effective management of "fellowship-related" activities at the country level.
- ETS to implement the recommended actions/ proposed measures for improving the management of the FEL programme at the regional level.

- ETS to organize a joint meeting of national and WCO FEL focal points every biennium (once in every two years) to review the progress made, discuss common issues and determine measures to further improve the FEL management at the country and regional levels.
- ETS to identify and organize a suitable SDL programme to cater to the needs of all fellowship focal points to build capacities to effectively manage fellowship programme as needed.

Annex 1

Agenda

1. Inauguration
2. Background and Objectives
3. Regional Overview of WHO Fellowship
4. Overview of current practices of fellowship management & Regional Directory of Training Institutions
 - 4.1 Pre-Placement process
 - 4.2 Placement process
 - 4.3 Award process
 - 4.4 Monitoring and Evaluation
5. Country Reports on existing practices
6. Draft Standard Operating Procedures for RO & WCOs
7. Issues and challenges in effective management of fellowship
8. Conclusion and recommendations
9. Closing Session

Annex 2

List of participants

WHO Country Office – Fellowship Focal Points

Bangladesh

Ms Latifa Hamid
Administration Assistant
WHO
Dhaka, Bangladesh

Bhutan

Ms Rinzi Om
Administrative Assistant
WHO
Thimphu, Bhutan

India

Mr Mukesh Sabharwal
Assistant (Fellowships)
WHO
New Delhi, India

Indonesia

Ms Retno Sulistyowati
Secretary
WHO
Jakarta, Indonesia

Maldives

Ms Aminath Ismail
Clerk II
WHO
Male, Maldives

Myanmar

Ms Kyi Kyi Nyein
Assistant (Programme)
WHO
Yangon, Myanmar

Nepal

Mr Kanchan Shrestha
Assistant
WHO
Kathmandu, Nepal

Sri Lanka

Ms Valerine Kumarasinghe
Administrative Assistant
WHO
Colombo, Sri Lanka

Thailand

Ms Charoenporn Eiemwongsri
Clerk
WHO
Bangkok, Thailand

Timor-Leste

Mr Jose Barreto
Assistant (Library)
WHO
Dili, Timor-Leste

WHO SEARO

Dr Duangvadee Sungkhobol
TIP-HRH
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Ms Renu Sharma
National Professional Officer
(Fellowships)
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Mr Arun Ratnam
Assistant II (Programme)
Education and Training Support Unit
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Ms Vanaja Sundaresan
Assistant II (Awards)
Education and Training Support Unit
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Ms Y. Ramani
Assistant II (Awards)
Education and Training Support Unit
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Mr Lokesh Malhotra
Assistant I (Placement)
Education and Training Support Unit
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Ms Rakhi Sharma
Clerk I
Education and Training Support Unit
WHO, SEARO
New Delhi-110002, India

Annex 3

Agreed Standard Operating Procedures for Fellowships Focal Points at WHO Country Offices

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Pre-Placement			
Submission of details of planned Fellowships in country workplans to SEARO	To review their respective country workplans and prepare a separate statement containing details of planned fellowships including PTAE0, fellowships details (long description of activity as per WP) and provision made	By the end of April of the 1 st year of the biennium or within 1 month of approved WP.	
Submission of FAFs to SEARO along with the checklist duly signed by the WCO focal point	To follow-up with their focal points in MoH for initiation of selection process for nomination of fellows for WHO Fellowships, including submission of FAFs	At least 50% of FAFs of planned fellowships to be submitted by 30 September of the first year of the biennium Submission of remaining FAFs by 30 June of the second year of the biennium	
Anomalies identified/ clarifications sought by SEARO in respect of FAFs, PTAE0, etc.	To contact the fellow / MoH focal points to seek clarifications and revert to SEARO	Within one week of receipt of such request from SEARO.	WCOs to maintain an internal follow-up system.

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Placement			
Fellowship Placement Request (FPR)	To share information regarding proposed host institution and dates with fellow and national authorities	Within one week of receipt of FPR from SEARO	
Final Fellowship Estimate (FFE)	To share fellowship costing information with TU/PLN in WCO, as appropriate	Within one week of receipt of FFE from SEARO	
Programme Confirmation and revised FFE, if required.	To share information regarding programme and training fee budget with national authorities. To share information regarding the programme with fellow.	Within three days of receipt of email from SEARO	
Award			
Letter of Award	To share LOA, fellowship information booklet and other documentation with fellow and national authorities	Within three days of receipt of original LOA from SEARO	
Itinerary and cost estimate	To obtain itinerary and ticket cost from local travel agent and share with SEARO	At least twenty days before the departure of the fellow for fellowship.	
Travel Arrangements	To inform fellow regarding travel arrangements	Immediately upon receipt of alert from travel agent regarding readiness of tickets	

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Briefing of fellow including payment of stipend, etc.	To brief fellow regarding programme arranged, entitlements, reporting details, general security, insurance etc. including payment of stipend	Preferably one week before commencement of travel or as convenient to fellow	
Fellowship Termination of Studies Report (FTSR)	To follow-up with fellow upon return from fellowship for submission of FTSR & travel claim (TC), if any	Within two weeks of return from fellowship, through email or through phone	
Travel claim & FTSR duly reviewed by the TU in WCO	To submit TC, if any, and FTSR to SEARO after review by concerned TU in WCO	Within one month of fellows' return from fellowship	
Other clarifications/approvals sought by Awards Desk from time to time	To facilitate required information/approvals by consulting TU in WCO, fellow or national authorities, as applicable	Preferably, within one week of receipt of request from SEARO	
Utilization of Fellows' Services Report (UOSR)	To follow-up with fellow for submission of UOSR through email or letter followed by phone follow-up and share such communications with SEARO.	3-4 weeks before completion of 12/24/36 months of end of fellowship as appropriate.	

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
In-country Fellowships			
Reporting on In-country Fellowships by countries handling in-country fellowships	To share the information as per SEARO template to ETS.	On quarterly basis.	
Study-Tours			
Reporting on Study-Tours	To share information on Study Tours requests handled/being handled by TUs in SEARO, in a specified format.	On quarterly basis.	

Annex 4

Agreed Standard Operating Procedures for Regional Office focal points in ETS unit

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Monitoring and Evaluation			
Review/Registration of FAFs in the Allied Fellowship Information System (AFIS)	<p>To review related workplans to ascertain provision/funding for fellowship.</p> <p>To scrutinize FAFs in terms of completion of mandatory information</p> <p>To input entire information in the Fellowship Management System (FMS)</p>	Within 7-10 days of receipt of nomination	<p>Following information need to be scrutinized:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The details provided by the fellow meets the minimum requirements stipulated in the WHO Manual for example ensuring that the fellow possesses relevant language/work experience; the fellow has stated clear fellowship study objectives; has submitted a valid medical certificate; FAFs are supported by duly completed fellowship endorsement sheet etc.

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Preparation of Emails/Memorandum regarding anomalies/shortcomings	To prepare emails to WCOs drawing their attention to the various anomalies/shortcomings in the FAFs, quoting relevant Manual Provisions, wherever applicable, and seeking revised updated FAFs, etc. for registration/processing of fellowship.	Immediately upon knowing the anomaly	
Operate/maintain and update the Electronic Data Management System (EDMS) and Fellowship Management System	To review and update status of fellowship in FMS To undertake/arrange electronic filing/record keeping of various milestone documents in the FMS/EDMS (including important correspondences)	As and when files are put up for action	The various milestone documents are as follows: 1. Fellowship Application Form (FAF) 2. Fellowship Placement Request (FPR) 3. Final Fellowship Estimate (FFE) 4. Letter of Award (LOA) 5. Fellowship Termination of Study Report (FTSR) 6. Utilization of Studies Report (UOSR)
Attend to on-line trouble shooting services for users in ETS arising out of use of EDMS/FMS in coordination with ISM	To identify cause for trouble and take remedial action as appropriate; To consult relevant ISM staff, when required, to explain	Immediately upon being apprised of the problem	

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
staff	the nature of problem and facilitate corrective action		
Review progress of all fellowships requests received	To review country-wise detailed fellowship status reports in terms of number of FAFs received, related actions taken including indexing of milestone documents, etc. including taking/facilitating related actions.	On a quarterly basis	
Provide time bound reports and briefing material for in-house use including monitoring of implementation status	<p>To generate specific reports from EDMS and FMS for use, as and when required</p> <p>To generate/prepare country-wise Fellowship Implementation Status Report for sharing with WCOs, along with analysis</p> <p>To generate/prepare detailed Fellowship Summary Report to be shared with senior management, together with analysis of fellowship data</p> <p>To monitor the receipt of FTSRs and UOSRs from countries including maintaining follow-up with WCOs regarding outstanding FTSRs/UOSRs; obtain technical evaluatory comments from units based on FTSR/UOSRs received.</p> <p>To obtain quarterly update of study tour data handled by TUs for submission to senior management</p>	Frequently	

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Placement			
Technical Review of Fellowship request	To arrange for technical review of the fellowship request	5-7 days	<p>The comments from concerned Technical Unit in SEARO is sought on the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. appropriateness of the fellow for the training; 2. appropriateness of training duration, 3. appropriateness of field of study, 4. appropriateness of training institution/country of placement identified by the fellow or government 5. any recommendations to be made to the government/WR <p>If the feedback from the TU is not received within 5-7 days, then a follow-up email is sent to the TU for early clearance of the fellowship request.</p>
To initiate formal	To issue Formal Fellowship	Immediately	Issuance of FPR

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
<p>placement action for the fellowship request</p>	<p>Placement Request (FPR) for the fellowship.</p> <p>To issue revised FPR in case of postponement of training programme or change in training institution or change in training dates or change in fellows.</p>	<p>after technical review of the fellowship request is completed.</p>	<p>involves the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Scheduling of the training keeping in mind the lead time required for obtaining host government and host institution clearance; availability of the fellow and validity of funds. 2. Collect host details from internet or other sources. 3. Update host institution details in Fellowship Management System. 4. Preparation of Fellowship Placement Request (FPR) indicating the scheduled dates and identified host training institution. This request is sent to the host government and host training institution along with FAFs for obtaining host and government clearance (placement could be direct /

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
			<p>indirect (i.e. through TICA in case of placements in Thailand or through WPRO in case of extra-regional placements).</p> <p>Normally a lead time of at least three months is kept while scheduling the training dates to facilitate necessary clearances and for making administrative arrangements.</p>
Preparation of cost estimate of the fellowship	To prepare Final Fellowship Estimate (FFE) and share it with WCOs	Immediate	<p>FFE is prepared by taking into consideration the following:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Stipend (Travel and Resident Rate) 2. Travel Cost 3. Incidentals 4. Book Allowance 5. Tuition Fees 6. Cost Sharing 7. FTA <p>FFE is prepared at the time of preparation of FPR.</p>
Follow-up on necessary	To follow-up for formal	4-6 weeks after	This follow-up is

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
clearances for the fellowship	<p>clearance from host training institution and concerned host government.</p> <p>To follow-up with host training institution regarding training fee break-up details, programme details, payee details, etc.</p> <p>To negotiate with host training institution regarding the training fees</p>	sending the FPR.	<p>through subsequent email/telephone reminders. It also involves sending follow-up communications for obtaining and negotiating with the host institutions regarding the training fees. (Direct follow-up with host institutions (in case of placements in India) and follow-up with WHO country staff in case of placements in other SEAR countries and also follow-up with WPRO counterparts in case of extra-regional placements).</p>
Review of programme details and training fee	<p>To review the programme details and training fee break-up for completeness and their suitability to country provision / needs and share it with WCOs for their acceptability/feedback.</p> <p>To revise FFE based on actual training fee details received</p> <p>To alert WCO regarding confirmation of placement and send the fellowship file for award action</p>	Immediate	
Actions pertaining to withdrawal of	To revise FPR	As and when	

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
nominations / replacement of fellows	To revise FFE To liaison with concerned host training institution / host government for the revised request either directly or through concerned WCO / RO	necessary	
Award and Post Award			
Pre-Award	To review programme details and training budgets to ascertain field visits, fellow's entitlements, travel sector, etc. To create RMS folder for the fellowship	None. It is done before the issuance of LOA.	
Letter of Award Award (contd.)	To issue Letter of Award after ensuring the following requirements: i. PTAEO details with adequate funding ii. Contact details of the host institute and training coordinator iii. Complete details of the fellow iv. Agreement on the training programme and training budget by the respective country office of the fellow. v. Government clearance of the country of study for the fellowship	Immediate	The time frame for issuance of LOA varies from country to country. For example for DPR Korea fellows, LOA is required 8 weeks before travel (for facilitating government release and visa process) whereas for BANGLADESH fellows it is required 15-20 days before travel. Depending on country requirement, placement confirmation and LOA issuance is done.

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
Travel requests (TR)	<p>To issue Travel Request by ensuring the following :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Uploading of LOA in RMS folder ii. Appropriate funding in the PTAEO ensured iii. Supplier creation of the fellow in GSM iv. Itinerary and ticket cost to be received from the concerned country office / Amex 	At least 15 days prior to travel	<p>TRs need to be issued at least 8-10 days prior to travel to facilitate timely stipend payment to the fellow prior to departure.</p> <p>There is no provision of issuance of collective travel authorization for a group of fellows travelling together. Individual TRs to be raised for each fellow.</p> <p>Follow-up with GSC as well as SEARO/FIN for the stipend authority for each fellow after approval of TR need to be done.</p>
Payment of subsequent stipend, book allowance, training fee, FTA, etc.	To prepare procurement service request (PR) for payment of subsequent stipend and book allowance	5-7 days	<p>Following is the requirement for issuance of PR:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i. Uploading of LOA in RMS folder ii. Appropriate funding in the PTAEO provided iii. Supplier creation and site creation for the fellow/institute iv. Relevant
	To prepare procurement service request for payment of training fee	5-7 days	
	To prepare Procurement service request for other entitlements like research cost, visa fee reimbursement, reimbursement of English test fee etc. (where applicable).	5-7 days	

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
	<p>To prepare procurement service request for FTA payment</p> <p>To trigger payments once PO is created and follow-up with GSC as well as SEARO/FIN for the payment authority for each of the payments triggered.</p>	<p>5-7 days</p> <p>As and when the payments are due</p>	<p>documents like training fee invoice, research proposal and budgetary break-up for research cost, original bills for reimbursement of visa fee/English test fee etc uploaded in RMS.</p> <p>There is no provision of issuance of collective procurement service requests for a group of fellows obtaining training together. The request has to be raised for each fellow.</p>
	<p>To revise LOA</p>	<p>As and when required</p>	<p>Due to visa and other issues, fellows are unable to join on time. Rescheduling of training and obtaining necessary clearances for the revised dates is done. LOA is revised based on actual joining of the fellow and actual dates of training.</p>
	<p>To issue cancellation LOA in case of cancellations.</p>	<p>As and when required</p>	<p>Cancellation actions are both offline and</p>

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
	To cancel TRs in case of cancelled awards		in GSM and is done on case to case basis
Post Award	To settle travel claims received from the fellows	As and when required	Settlement of claims is either through travel claim in GSM or raising procurement service requests in GSM.
	To take recovery actions for cases where the training was terminated early and there are recovery of payments involved	As and when required	Recovery is done by doing TCs against the respective TRs in GSM. It is online process. Recovery of the amount is done through offline process.
	To follow-up on trimestrial reports/confidential reports	As and when required	<p>Depending on the duration of study, the fellows are required to submit trimestrial reports after each academic term or at six-monthly intervals which are for evaluation purposes. These are applicable for fellowships of more than 6 months duration.</p> <p>The training institutions are also required to submit an interim confidential report on fellows pursuing training of six</p>

Action Required	Steps Involved	Time Frame	Remarks
			months or more.
	To follow-up on payments with BFO/FIN and GSC and trouble shooting	As and when required.	<p>Lead time for such actions varies from 2-5 days.</p> <p>It is done through generation of training advices from GSM and/or raising a service request to GSC and following it up with GSC.</p>

Annex 5

Checklist for processing of FAF

The following checklist has been designed to assist ETS unit to process your FAFs as quickly as possible. The completed checklist should be signed and attached to the FAF. If you have any queries, please contact ETS/SEARO.

Name(s) of fellow(s)

Duration of Study

Field of Study

Regional/Extra Regional Regional Extra Regional

PTAEO Details Project : Task : Award :

Project : Task : Award :

Provision (US \$)

I. The following are attached :

- i) Covering memo/letter from WR/Government
- ii) Original (one) FAFs alongwith endorsement sheet

II. I have examined the FAF and Endorsement Sheet and confirm the following:

Endorsement Sheet

Sec 1 Observations and recommendations of the Selection Committee completed and signed.

Sec 2 Endorsement by Government completed and signed.

FAF

- i) Personal data of fellow, including mailing and home address, telephone no., email, etc. are complete
- ii) Fellow is not over 55 years of age
 - Fellow is over 55 years of age; however programme duration is below three months
 - Age waiver letter from government attached as fellow is over 55 years of age and programme duration three months or above.
- iii) Adequate details regarding language ability/experience provided
- iv) Details regarding education provided
- v) Details regarding employment record provided
- vi) Proposed field or subject of study provided
- vii) Fellowship study objectives provided and validated by TU in WCO (Q 7-10 of FAF)
- viii) Commitment by fellow - signed and dated
- ix) Duly completed Medical Certificate

Name :

Signed : _____ Date :

Annex 6

Recommended Actions to address related issues in fellowship management

Issues	Recommended actions
General	
Lack of management system for study tours	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to share the updated SOP/guidelines for FEL/Study Tour programme (especially after GSM go-live) so that all WCOs can follow the same practice. • WCOs to provide study tour statistics to ETS on quarterly basis. ETS would provide WCOs a template for sending such information. • WCOs to inform study tour officials about the mandatory requirement of submission of study tour report after completion of study tour. (One report by fellows of same group of study tour sufficient). • WCO to send the study tour request to the concerned technical unit in SEARO • The country office to arrange a programme in consultation with the proposed institutes and obtain government concurrence (with TU involvement) • All logistics arrangement (including travel, stay, payment to the institute, etc.) should be the responsibility of the technical unit in SEARO
Inadequate attention to fellowship programs by the MoHP as well as WHO	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO focal points to participate in the Regional Consultation together with Country focal points, so that common problems could be sorted out. • SEARO/Country Office to consider carrying out impact evaluation studies on utilization of fellowship.
Use of old procedures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to share service requests sent to GSC for payments to fellows with WCO focal points • ETS to share payment advice for tuition fee payment with WCO focal points
Use of DFC / APW	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO to reconsider the use of “DFC” for supporting government officials for formal study abroad in order to make better use of

Issues	Recommended actions
mechanisms for fellowships	<p>WHO expertise and resources for effective management of “fellowship-related” activities at the country level.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country focal points to share with ETS their previous experience and any discussions/requests in their countries on MoH intention to use DFC/APW mechanism for fellowships. • ETS to provide pros and cons of such use and manual provisions to senior management for informed decision.
Fellowship Implementation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to ensure that implementation of fellowship is completed within first 15 months of the biennium so that unused funds could be utilized for other priority activities. • ETS to provide the Fellowship Implementation Status Report to WCOs, preferably during the second half of the biennium on a regular basis. • WCOs to ensure that planning focal points are sensitized on the need for involving fellowship focal points in planning process for the upcoming biennium. • WCOs to use the cost averages provided by ETS for planning funding for fellowships (already provided to WCOs for 2012-13 biennium). • WCOs to clearly define “fellowship” in the workplan (either in long/short description) along with proposed number of fellowships, duration and planned cost to enable ETS and WCO focal points to monitor the Implementation Status of Fellowships and to avoid confusion. • ETS to seek BFO’s guidance on how to make payments in 2012 till new workplans are approved.
Measures for improving efficiency	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to support national authorities in effective fellowship management and implementation.
Relevance of making cost sharing payments to PAHO in the post GSM scenario	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to submit proposal to senior management with adequate justification for reduction in cost sharing fees, presently being paid @ US\$ 1,000 per fellow.
Pre-placement	
Late receipt of nominations and/or delay in submission of FAFs by fellows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to ensure that the concerned national authorities are sensitized on the need for initiating the process of inviting applications well ahead of time. WCOs to ensure that request for Selection of Fellowships start as soon as workplans are submitted to SEARO.

Issues	Recommended actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to ensure that a deadline for receipt of nominations is specified to national authorities beyond which the FAFs will not be accepted. However keeping in view the country sensitivity and for maintenance of good relationship with national authorities, late nominations can be accepted on an exceptional basis. More diplomacy required in dialogues with national authorities regarding late nominations. • WCO to discuss in appropriate fora (WHO/Government collaborative meetings) for timely submission of nominations of suitable candidates.
Incomplete FAFs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO focal points / TUs to review FAFs for completeness. • ETS to share the checklist for review of FAFs. • WCOs to alert the national authorities for age waiver. whenever a fellow of 55 yrs of age or above is nominated. • WCOs to ensure briefing/training of New Technical Officers on fellowship programme as well as validation of technical appropriateness of FAFs.
Ineligible candidates nominated for fellowship	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to alert WCO focal points about such nominations.
Frequent change in fellows, institute or programme; cancellations, replacements and postponements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to brief national authorities about the cost implications due to cancellations/replacements/postponements.
Placement stage	
Long lead time required for arranging placements (for both outgoing and incoming fellowships) Delay in receipt of host and government clearances	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to ensure that their request memo/letter for placement clearly mentions the objective, institution to be visited and duration of the visit. • ETS to expedite the process of fellowship. If there is any rejection of nomination, ETS to inform the WCO within 2 weeks of getting FAFs so that ministry can send revised nomination. • ETS unit to request Technical units in SEARO to urgently clear fellowship requests. • WCOs may consider to contact the concerned Embassy/Consulate of the fellow on an exceptional basis, where inordinate delays in receipt of government clearances occur.
Non-availability of bank	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to discuss this with AO or WR Indonesia as this issue is

Issues	Recommended actions
account when MOH is coordinatin training programme	Indonesia specific.
Late receipt of government clearance for incoming foreign fellows	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS/WCO to ensure that sufficient lead time (minimum 6-8 weeks) is given to the Ministry of Health to process clearances for foreign fellows, especially those whose study duration is more than 3 months.
Lead time (2-3 wks) required for government release of fellows for joining the training.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon receipt of formal placement request (FPR), WCO FEL focal points to inform national authorities and fellow immediately.
Award and Post Award Stage	
<p>Problems faced by fellows in securing their release to undertake the training programme;</p> <p>Difficulties in getting visa in some cases</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to sensitize national authorities on timely release of nominated fellow even at short notice for timely joining in the training programme. • ETS to request Senior Management to discuss clearance at high level meetings • ETS to issue Letter of Award based on country needs in terms of lead time required for visa process and government release
Post GSM, stipend details (duration) not available in payment advice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to share necessary information with WCO FEL focal points as and when required.
Funding problem	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO to provide information regarding funding provision made for the fellowship along with PTAE0 details at the time of submission of FAFs. • ETS to share the Final Fellowship Estimates with the WCO focal points • ETS to share with WCO focal points the shortfall in funding at placement and award stage through sharing of revised FFE • ETS to ensure that prior information about tuition fees and research costs is obtained from training institute at the commencement of fellowship and is shared with the concerned country office.
Training not meeting learning objectives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO focal points to share the programme details with national authorities and fellows once finalized. These should also be thoroughly reviewed by technical Units in country offices and feedback sent to ETS.

Issues	Recommended actions
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO to inform fellows that in case they feel that the training is not meeting their learning objectives, they need to inform ETS so that it can be taken up with the training institute and relevance of remaining training is ensured. • ETS to discuss with concerned training institution the negative feedback received from the fellow regarding the training.
Research costs(>USD 750) beyond the manual provisions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCOs to brief fellows about manual provisions for such entitlements and not to claim anything over and above the permissible limit • ETS to seek approval of senior management for payment of such costs over and above the manual limits for long term fellowships (e.g. Ph.D courses) and keep WCO, concerned government and TU in SEARO informed.
Fellows submit travel claims for non-reimbursable expenses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • WCO focal points to brief fellows about their entitlements before their departure • WCO focal points to critically review the travel claims before forwarding to ETS
Late receipt of FTSRs and UOSRs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ETS to continue sharing the list of fellows whose FTSRs and UOSRs are due with WCO focal points periodically. • WCO focal points to have effective monitoring mechanisms for timely receipt of FTSRs and UOSRs. Fellows can be directly approached by WCO focal points for timely submission of the above reports under intimation to national authorities. • WCO focal points to send the FTSRs and UOSRs to WCO TOs to assess the usefulness of training to the fellow and national authorities. ETS to send a communication to all WRs to this effect and to share the format for such evaluation. • WCO to send the report of this evaluation to ETS for sharing with concerned TU in SEARO. • WCO to ensure that the content of evaluation report is brought to the attention of the national authorities. • ETS to ensure that the title of the study is included in the evaluation report. • WCOs to ensure thorough briefing of the fellows before departure on issues pertaining to fellowship, security, need for health insurance coverage, timely submission of FTSR and UOSR etc.

Issues	Recommended actions
Payment can be linked to UOSR submission to ensure timely reporting.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• ETS to discuss the issue with senior management
If Fellow not continuing in service as mandated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WCO to bring this to the attention of the national authorities
UOSRs not received in appropriate time due to change in duty stations	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• WCOs to ensure that the Fellow is briefed that submission of UOSRs is mandatory even if there is change in his/her duty station• WCOs to sensitize national authorities regarding non submission of UOSRs to be taken into consideration when such fellow is re-nominated for another fellowship.• WCO focal points to discuss this issue at National focal point meetings.

An Orientation of Fellowship Focal Points in the WHO Regional Office for South-East Asia and WHO Country Offices was organized in Jaipur, India, on 28-30 July 2011. This was on the basis of the recommendations of the Regional Consultation on Management of Fellowship Programmes organized by SEARO in Bangkok, Thailand, in February 2011.

This orientation was aimed at improving fellowship management at the country and Regional Office levels, and reviewed existing fellowship management processes to achieve greater efficiency at each stage. Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for the Regional Office and country offices in fellowship management were developed at the Orientation to address existing issues and challenges.

Seven representatives from SEARO and one Fellowship Focal Point each from Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Indonesia, Maldives, Myanmar, Nepal, Sri Lanka, Thailand and Timor-Leste participated in the Orientation. The recommended actions and SOPs established will bring in greater efficiency in the fellowship management system in the South-East Asia Region.