



INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR
ANTIMICROBIAL RESISTANCE
SOLUTIONS

2024

Annual Partners Meeting

Advancing AMR solutions
through collaboration and
implementation

Foreword

The growing threat of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is one of the most urgent challenges facing global health today. With pathogens becoming increasingly resistant to available treatments, even common infections could once again become life-threatening. The need for swift, coordinated action has never been more important, particularly in Low- and Middle-Income Countries (LMICs) where the impact of AMR is felt most acutely.

This report summarises the key discussions and outcomes from the ICARS Annual Partners Meeting (APM) 2024, which was held virtually on 29 October for all our global partners. The meeting focused on two central themes: global collaboration and sustaining impact in AMR mitigation. These discussions underscored the urgency of collective action in addressing AMR and highlighted the importance of partnerships and evidence-based interventions that are both effective and sustainable.

Over the past year, in collaboration with our partners, ICARS has made notable progress in advancing our mission. ICARS now supports over 40 projects across more than 20 LMICs, working closely with ministries and research institutions. These projects focus on co-developing and testing country-owned and led, cost-effective, context-specific AMR solutions designed for sustainable impact, with the goal of delivering tangible, measurable outcomes across the One Health spectrum. As global efforts to implement and finance National Action Plans (NAPs) remain insufficient, a key focus of ICARS' work is supporting their successful implementation.

In the past year, ICARS has secured partnerships with a range of regional and global organisations, including but not limited to Wellcome, the International Development Research Centre (IDRC), the Novo Nordisk Foundation (NNF), the Centre for Cellular and Molecular Platforms (C-CAMP), the International Vaccine Institute (IVI), the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform (MSPP), as well as country Mission Partners. These partnerships span critical areas that are both AMR-specific as well as AMR-sensitive, such as climate change, immunisation, health system strengthening as well as gender and equity, supporting country efforts to address AMR.



Dr Sujith J Chandy
Executive Director
The International Centre for Antimicrobial
Resistance Solutions (ICARS)

We are thrilled to see the growing recognition and momentum around AMR in global discussions. ICARS actively participated in several key events this year, including the 4th Ministerial Conference on AMR in November in Jeddah, the UN Hearing on AMR in May, and the UN General Assembly High-Level Meeting (HLM) on AMR in September in New York. ICARS actively participated in numerous high-level discussions throughout the year, including the World Health Assembly and the World Health Summit, among others. ICARS was pleased to provide input on the UNGA Political Declaration on AMR and contribute to important discussions about translating its commitments into concrete actions which can generate real impact on the ground. This included co-hosting three side-events during the UNGA HLM week in New York and participating in a high-level roundtable during the World Health Assembly. An essential aspect of ICARS' work in these forums has been ensuring that the perspectives of LMICs are represented in high-level decision-making and the global dialogue.

ICARS extends its gratitude to the Danish Government for their unwavering support throughout our journey. The Danish government's continued commitment to AMR and the work of ICARS has been instrumental in helping us advance our mission and build momentum in addressing this critical global issue.

While we are proud of the progress made, we know there is still much work to be done. The challenges of AMR remain vast, and it is only through sustained collaboration across countries, sectors, and organisations that we can make meaningful change. This report highlights discussions at our Annual Partners meeting including some of ICARS' key achievements from the past year, ongoing efforts, and the essential contributions of our partners in addressing AMR.

We would like to express our sincere thanks to our partners, especially the countries we are co-developing projects with, as well as donors, and all those who have supported and contributed to ICARS' work. Together, we are making strides, but the journey is far from over. We look forward to continuing this important work in the years ahead, consolidating our partnerships, advancing evidence-based interventions, and supporting capacity-strengthening efforts to effectively address AMR on a global scale.

Message from Ole Thonke, Under Secretary for Development Policy at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Denmark



"This past year has been crucial for ICARS and the AMR agenda. AMR has gained significant attention, marking a global acknowledgement of it as a critical challenge that requires collective action (...). Implementation is key. Only 28% of countries have developed a costed implementation plan for AMR that includes monitoring and evaluation, and just 10% have actually allocated funds from their national budgets. The world is lagging behind, and this is where ICARS can make a significant impact (...). The fact that ICARS was mentioned by the G7 is a clear indication that the organisation is now firmly established on the international agenda as a recognised body to address AMR."

Session 1

Global collaboration and coordination beyond the UNGA HLM on AMR

The first thematic session focused on the importance of global collaboration in moving from declarations to actionable solutions. This session highlighted how international partnerships as well as implementation and financial prioritisation of National Action Plans can strengthen the global mitigation of AMR.

Dr Andre Luiz de Abreu, from the Ministry of Health of Brazil, highlighted the role of ICARS in Brazil's G20 Presidency. He recognised ICARS' participation in Brazil's AMR side event during the G20 Health Working Group meeting, which helped keep AMR high on the agenda during the Presidency. "Brazil is proud to have had ICARS participate in our AMR side event during the G20," Dr de Abreu shared. He further underscored the importance of transforming global commitments into actionable outcomes. "There is often a gap between declarations and reality. We know it's difficult to turn these global commitments into concrete actions, especially in Low- and Middle-Income Countries. That's why partnerships, like the one we have with ICARS, are crucial," he explained.

Dr Saviour Yevutsey, Senior Specialist and National Coordinator of the Ghana AMR Coordinating Secretariat at the Ministry of Health, stressed the value of global solutions that can be tailored to local needs. "Ghana's relationship with ICARS gives us the opportunity to access solutions that have worked in other countries and adapt them to our own needs," Dr Yevutsey explained. He highlighted the significance of global funding in supporting national AMR efforts, noting, "Most of our AMR programmes have been donor-funded, and as we move forward, Ghana must benefit from the global funding environment to ensure the success of our national AMR action plan."

Dr Daniel Eibach, Senior Policy Advisor at BMZ in Germany, reflected on the importance of translating global commitments into real actions, particularly focusing on national-level implementation. "Global goals are important, but we must focus on the national level," Dr Eibach noted.

He emphasised the need for tailored National Action Plans that are adapted to local realities. "The targets must be adapted to local contexts, and we must focus on regions most affected by AMR, such as South Asia and sub-Saharan Africa," he said.

Germany's contribution to the conversation also included a call for greater investments in laboratories, diagnostics, and antibiotic stewardship programmes. "We need to invest in bacterial diagnostics, surveillance, and equal access to antibiotics to address AMR on a global scale," Dr Eibach stated.

Dr Lesley Ogilvie, Director of the Global AMR R&D Hub, emphasised the importance of building on the momentum from the past year saying: "We really need to start thinking about how to break down the barriers to implementation". She suggested learning from other sectors, such as HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria, which have set similar targets. "Can we learn lessons from their successes and challenges in reducing the burden of these diseases?" Dr Ogilvie also highlighted an ongoing project with ICARS focused on AMR research investments in LMICs, with a publication expected soon. She concluded by stressing the importance of continuing the partnership with ICARS.

Ms Nelea Motriuc, Coordinator of the AMR Multi-Stakeholder Partnership Platform, highlighted ICARS' active involvement in the platform and emphasised the need for a One Health approach to AMR. "AMR doesn't have borders, so our strategies shouldn't either," she said. Motriuc stressed the platform's role in fostering cross-sector collaboration and supporting the implementation of National Action Plans.

Dr Yvan Hutin from the WHO AMR division commended ICARS for its impactful work closely aligned with the realities of countries, saying "It's amazing to have ICARS doing all this excellent work that is so connected to countries' reality.". He highlighted the importance of connecting the contributions of partners like ICARS to national health strategies and ensuring progress through result-based management.

Session 2

Sustaining impact in AMR mitigation – Implementation of interventions

The second thematic session addressed how to sustain AMR interventions and ensure their long-term impact through scalable, evidence-based strategies. Several country representatives shared their experiences and case studies of ICARS-supported AMR mitigation projects in action.

Dr Talant Sooronbaev, from Kyrgyzstan, shared the country's experience in addressing unnecessary antibiotic use through the implementation of a CRP test. "Unfortunately, we have a poor situation in Kyrgyzstan when it comes to unnecessary antibiotic use and antimicrobial resistance," Dr. Sooronbaev said. He went on to explain that ICARS' support through a coordinated study on using the CRP test as a potential marker for reducing unnecessary antibiotic use in primary healthcare settings had produced positive results. "We conducted a randomised clinical trial using the CRP test for children, and we saw very good results. Even our nurses and general practitioners now understand the importance of using this test to reduce unnecessary antibiotic prescriptions," he explained.

The positive outcomes of the trial led to broader national support for the CRP test. "Now, we have good support from the Ministry of Health, and the CRP test is included in national guidelines for general practitioners to help them decide whether to prescribe antibiotics or not," he shared. Dr. Sooronbaev highlighted the success of this approach, emphasising the importance of integrating evidence-based practices into national healthcare systems. "We are now planning to expand this project with a new study for adults, and we are optimistic that this will also have a significant impact on AMR in Kyrgyzstan," he added.



Kyrgyzstan, June 2023



Kyrgyzstan, May 2022

Dr Sooronbaev also celebrated the progress made through collaboration with ICARS on a microbiological study. "Through this study, we have gained invaluable experience. For the first time, we brought together microbiologists and clinicians to discuss the results of microbiological studies," he said. This collaboration between clinicians and microbiologists is now a regular practice in several hospitals. "This model is now being implemented in five hospitals in Kyrgyzstan, and we plan to expand it further," he concluded.



Kyrgyzstan, May 2022

In Zimbabwe, Dr Tinashe Hodobo presented the country's efforts in addressing AMR within the poultry sector, emphasising the One Health approach. "We have a focus on the poultry value chain, and we are working with small-scale farmers in three districts to reduce antimicrobial use," Dr Hodobo explained.

He shared how ICARS' support, including the involvement of science advisors and behavioural scientists, helped design a co-created intervention that combines biosecurity practices with data-driven insights. "We are targeting small and medium-scale farmers, looking at flocks ranging from 50 to 10,000 birds. Our goal is to reduce antimicrobial use and promote rational practices within these farming communities," he said.



Zimbabwe, August 2023

Dr Hodobo also highlighted the community-based approach used in the project. "We are working with over 150 farmers in the pilot phase, gathering baseline data to better understand practices and behaviours. This helps us tailor interventions that are not only based on scientific evidence but are also adapted to local contexts," he explained. He also pointed to the integration of the farmer field school approach, which promotes learning-by-doing to foster long-term behavioural changes. "This project comes at a very good time. Poultry is widely consumed in Zimbabwe, and addressing antimicrobial use within the sector will go a long way in safeguarding public health," he concluded.



Zimbabwe, September 2023

Dr Lul Raka, from Kosovo, shared how his country was integrating cross-sector collaboration into its AMR response, particularly within the One Health framework. "We are focusing on both human and animal health sectors, working to reduce antibiotic use in agriculture, as well as in healthcare settings," Dr Raka said. He emphasised that intersectoral partnerships are key to developing sustainable solutions. "By working together, we can address the root causes of AMR and ensure that interventions are both effective and long-lasting," he noted.



Kosovo, November 2023

Dr Raka also discussed Kosovo's collaborative approach in designing and implementing AMR interventions. "We were very careful to avoid overlap in our AMR and IPC efforts. From the beginning, we ensured that we stayed in close contact with all stakeholders, including both national and international partners," he said.

Dr Raka went on to describe a successful collaboration with the Swiss Development Agency during Kosovo's AMR project development. "During the co-development process, we worked closely with ICARS and the Swiss Development Agency, who had experience in chronic diseases in Kosovo. Their input on project organisation, site selection, and risk mitigation was invaluable," he shared.

Additionally, Dr Raka highlighted an innovative aspect of their AMR intervention: the inclusion of a community representative in the AMR decision-making group. "During the development of our SOP (Standard Operating Procedure), a discussion arose about involving community leaders to help break down silos. We decided to include a community representative who could raise awareness and share information about AMR in the community. This person was added to the final SOP draft," Dr Raka explained, highlighting the success of integrating community engagement into the AMR response.

Dr Timothy Jinks on the role of ICARS in bridging gaps and fostering partnerships

Dr Timothy Jinks, Head of Interventions for Infectious Disease at Wellcome, provided closing remarks reflecting on ICARS' progress since its inception in 2019. He emphasised the importance of cross-sectoral approaches, particularly the One Health framework, in ensuring effective, sustainable interventions.

Dr Jinks acknowledged ICARS' role in addressing critical gaps in global AMR mitigation, stating: "It's a privilege to be here and hear about the exciting progress made by ICARS and the country partners. I want to congratulate all the participants for their hard work and success so far."

He commended the collaborative platform created by ICARS, which he believes plays a pivotal role in translating global declarations into real, actionable solutions.

"Denmark's foresight in supporting the creation of ICARS has proven essential in addressing the gap in global efforts against AMR. ICARS is now the platform that can bring together stakeholders to ensure we move from declarations to practical, effective interventions," Dr Jinks said.

He further emphasised the importance of cross-sectoral approaches, particularly the One Health lens, which ICARS integrates into its work. "The One Health approach is key to addressing AMR comprehensively. It's not just about human health; we must consider the animal health, agriculture, and environmental sectors as well," he noted.



"ICARS is now the platform that can bring together stakeholders to ensure we move from declarations to practical, effective interventions"

We thank all our partners for joining the discussion at our second annual partners meeting, and for your efforts to collaboratively mitigate AMR around the world. We look forward to your continued support in the years to come.



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