

ATscale Board Meeting - 1 & 2 December 2022

Decisions, next steps, timelines

- AT user engagement: The board approved the approach and the pre-selection of IDA, and asked the secretariat to enter into a 1-year agreement. After 6 months, the secretariat will report back to the board.
- Investment in Central Asia and Caucasus: The board approved the 3-year catalytic plan for Tajikistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, including the proposed activities and overall budget managed by WHO, and wished to be kept updated, including on stakeholder coordination and links to other areas outside health.
- 2023 Operational Plan: The 2023 Operational Plan was approved, including the pre-selections indicated. More detail on the budget for visibility & mobilization was requested. [A new annex to the updated 2023 Operational Plan provides this now.] The secretariat was authorized to adjust the M&E budget upwards. [This has been done by shifting 100'000 USD from the contingency budget to M&E.]
- The secretariat can go ahead with establishing a network of AT providers and a Private Sector Core Group and begin preparations for the creation of a private sector board seat . The secretariat will prepare the necessary changes to the by-laws to be presented at the March board meeting, thereby also providing the partners with the necessary time to seek internal approvals.
- There will only be 3 board meetings in 2023, in March, June and November, with exact dates to be confirmed.

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Welcome, attendance, adoption of agenda and minutes of the last board meeting(s)

Etleva (Eva) Kadilli, Director of UNICEF's Supply Division, welcomed the participants on behalf of UNICEF to what is the largest humanitarian warehouse in the world and expressed that UNICEF was very happy to host the board meeting.

Jon Lomøy also welcomed the participants and established that the necessary quorum was reached. The draft agenda for the meeting was adopted. The minutes from the board meeting held on 28 and 29 September were adopted without changes. The Chair especially welcomed Tchaurea Fleury, Jose Viera, and Satish Mishra who were participating for the first time.

General update

Pascal Bijleveld provided an update on ATscale activities and developments since the previous board meeting. The first competitive process to find a partner for programme management related to a country concept note has concluded with CHAI Kenya selected. Learnings from this process have already fed into the framing for the ongoing process in Cambodia. In Cambodia some realignment of responsibilities between the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Social Welfare, Veterans and Youth (MOSVY) will happen following an announcement by the Prime Minister. This mainly affects mobility and the Provincial Rehabilitation Centers. Pascal Bijleveld had just returned from a mission to Senegal and the country concept note was near ready. A CFP was underway to establish pipeline countries, funded by USAID, managed in partnership with ATscale. This will be across multiple countries to identify a pool of countries that could be well-placed for funding consideration later in 2023 and 2024. In collaboration with USAID, the ATscale secretariat was concluding another CFP for in-country work for an eyeglass programme with a strategic AT component.

The Global Public Goods work that was started in 2022 is largely on track, with a few interventions shifted to the 2023 Operational Plan. As part of an effort to bring more coordination and alignment to the wheelchair provision sector, ATscale co-hosted with ISWP a meeting with participants from 16 organisations on 25th October 2022 in Geneva. Participants reviewed progress and priorities for the wheelchair sector, as well as opportunities to strengthen global collaboration going forward.

To continue to raise ATscale's visibility, ATscale and the Missing Billion Initiative hosted a breakfast roundtable in mid October on the sidelines of the World Health Summit in Berlin. It was opened by Helen Clark, former PM of New Zealand, and attended by over fifty leaders in global health. Pascal Bijleveld attended the Remarkable Tech Conference in San Francisco which brought together innovators, investors, foundations, and AT users and highlighted the needs of emerging markets. In Berlin and the US several meetings were held with potential partners and donors. Work is ongoing for participation at the World Economic Forum in January 2023.

Pascal Bijleveld also introduced the latest team member, Dorothee Steinbach, who will be an intern with the team for 6 months.

Board members welcomed ATscale looking at links with other global agendas (such as climate change) and would appreciate standard messaging for this. ATscale should also consider engaging with the Women Deliver conference in July 2023 and other non-traditional spaces for advocacy. The message around AT being necessary for full participation is powerful.

AT user engagement

Decisions / next steps / follow-up:

- The board approved the approach and the pre-selection of IDA, and asked the secretariat to enter into a 1-year agreement. After 6 months, the secretariat will report back to the board.

Barbara Goedde presented the plan for AT user engagement jointly developed by IDA and the ATscale secretariat, which aims to engage users of assistive technology at all steps and in all facets of ATscale’s operating model to ensure the relevance and appropriateness of its interventions. To give ATscale a practical way of operationalizing it, participation can be grouped into four levels, each with increasing participation and influence: inform, consult, co-create and decide. IDA will (i) manage a roster of AT users who participate in the ATscale Advisory Technical Group; (ii) establish and maintain a global network of AT users for feedback, insights and participation; (iii) manage microgrants to OPDs and others representing AT users for local advocacy work, awareness raising campaigns, focusing on countries where ATscale engages; and (iv) provide relevant and effective trainings, workshops, awareness raising campaigns, and other OPD-driven advocacy to complement ATscale’s advocacy and communication. US\$250’000 was allocated in the draft 2023 Operational Plan under the budget for Sustainable & Efficient Operations.

Board members appreciated the progress made on this very important topic. A discussion ensued on what role ATscale can play in capacity building for OPDs concluding that microgrants provided at the country-level need to be closely linked to ATscale’s objectives and to be aware of other ongoing programmes. It was also clarified that the selection of countries where microgrants are supported will be done with the ATscale secretariat to ensure that they are relevant, such as future pipeline or focus countries. Work needs to start before the development of country concept notes however to ensure that AT users can fully participate in that process.

Regarding the management of the AT user group within the ATscale Advisory Technical Group, UNOPS will take another look at how it might be possible to directly hire AT users as experts in the future. The secretariat clarified however that what is suggested is not a “standard outsourcing” of a task but that a close working relationship with IDA is foreseen, leveraging their knowledge, relationships and experience instead of building parallel expertise. IDA shared some of their extensive experience in capacity building and microgrants, as well as the targeted activities that can be undertaken with them, such as advocacy campaigns or a range of interactions/meetings to push a certain agenda. IDA is currently “learning by doing” on the engagement with non-OPD actors. A link to the Global Initiative on Ageing and other actors in that field was suggested, as well as a later suggestion to look at the Special Olympics health messengers programme.

Investment in Central Asia and Caucasus

Decisions / next steps / follow-up:

- The board approved the 3-year catalytic plan for Tajikistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan, including the proposed activities and overall budget managed by WHO, and wished to be kept updated, including on stakeholder coordination and links to other areas outside health.

Pascal Bijleveld set the context of the proposed investment. It is part of the first wave of countries where ATscale is applying a learning approach. Part of that learning is trying different approaches - in this case, a multi-country approach in one region. The secretariat had visited 4 countries out of which 3 countries are now included in this proposal.

Satish Mishra, WHO EURO, then presented the proposal to the board. Three countries (Tajikistan, Georgia, Azerbaijan) have been identified for focused ATscale investments based on the political commitments, enabling ecosystem, progress made in the past, availability of resources, and potential for quick impact. Together with the secretariat, a multi-country approach for these countries was agreed, which would also serve as learning for ATscale to better understand how to optimally engage and support countries while trying to balance impact, speed, and government and stakeholder engagement. Further, the approach also aims to provide cross-country learning opportunities and synergies in procurement.

During and following country missions by the ATscale secretariat, WHO EURO held a series of consultations with the concerned ministries and relevant in-country partners. A key outcome of the in-country consultations was a mutual agreement between WHO and UNICEF for setting up a national project coordination committee in each country to oversee the implementation of the project. Satish Mishra presented a summary of the context in each country, proposed interventions and the potential impact.

The board pointed out the technical quality of the proposal and saw real value in the focus on integration of AT with primary health care, as well as the possibility to learn from engaging in middle-income countries. Links with other sectors, such as education, should however also be considered. Activities around rehabilitation in the countries were pointed out as something to build on, as well as existing training resources. While the 3 countries have different levels of GDP, sustainability is a consideration in all cases and movement in the right direction is evident, e.g. an increase in the government budget for AT in Tajikistan. The inclusion of OPDs was raised and it was confirmed that they would be included in the national coordination committees. The secretariat had witnessed the good relationship of WHO with the governments in each of the 3 countries. While there were no plans at the moment for sub-granting, there was close coordination between WHO, UNDP, UNICEF, World Bank, and others.

Briefing with interim UNOPS Executive Director

Jens Wandel briefed the board on developments regarding the S3i situation at UNOPS. The Executive Board of UNDP, UNFPA and UNOPS had met the previous day and agreed on the proposed plans for change at UNOPS to go forward. Two reviews by a third party, KPMG, have been made public. Jens Wandel shared UNOPS's appreciation for ATscale and follows its activity at the highest level. He noted that ATscale was one of the only projects spared from the USAID funding freeze. ATscale also encourages UNOPS to continuously improve and become more diverse and inclusive.

The board then reflected on the need to bring more persons with “non-traditional” UN profiles into the secretariat, including users of AT.

Update on AT in Ukraine

Satish Mishra from WHO EURO provided an update on the work to provide access to assistive technology for internally displaced people in Ukraine where ATscale provided catalytic support to the establishment of decentralised Assistive Technology (AT) Service Hubs in Ukraine and the provision of “AT10” kits of the most essential assistive products in a crisis situation. AT10 kits include over 1000 assistive products (two types of wheelchairs and cushions, elbow and axilla crutches, walking sticks and frames, static toilet and shower chairs, absorbent products and catheter kits) which are meant to serve a population of about 10’000 IDPs each.

ATscale financed 2 kits and associated services. This incentivised other donors to finance 3 more already and 5 more are to follow soon. The kits were procured and successfully distributed to 12 health facilities in five Oblasts. The project is supported by a specific order of the Ministry of Health of Ukraine. The work on the AT10 kits helped communicate the importance of AT to humanitarian colleagues.

Board members welcomed the progress on this initiative and reiterated that the humanitarian response in Ukraine was the first one where disability was included from the beginning. UNICEF has adopted the AT10 list and is actively promoting it. An exchange of data on demand and use to optimize the list was suggested. Satish Mishra confirmed that WHO EURO had worked closely with the European Disability Forum (EDF) and Ukrainian coalitions of disabled persons, and that by being integrated with the humanitarian cell in WHO the initiative was part of the overall humanitarian response.

Operational Plan

Decisions / next steps / follow-up:

- 2023 Operational Plan: The 2023 Operational Plan was approved, including the pre-selections indicated. More detail on the budget for visibility & mobilization was requested. [A new annex to the updated 2023 Operational Plan provides this now.] The secretariat was authorized to adjust the M&E budget upwards. [This has been done by shifting 100’000 USD from the contingency budget to M&E.]

Pascal Bijleveld, Emily Wootton and Barbara Goedde presented the draft Operational Plan (attached with the requested changes as Annex 1). *[NB: To not jeopardize the competitiveness of request for proposals processes, the version of the operational plan that will be publicly available will differ from the one shared with board members. It will not include detailed budget information but remain at a high-level.]*

In a discussion on pre-selection, it was clarified that the pre-selection of partners is not the normal modus operandus of ATscale but an exception to the norm of undertaking competitive processes when this is substantially justified. It was also clarified that neither the work around AT user engagement nor the other proposed pre-selections were cases of unsolicited proposals - which would only ever be considered in very exceptional cases, such as a humanitarian emergency like the war in Ukraine. The secretariat had already prepared some points to this purpose for the sections dealing directly with the 2023 operational plan and will present a memo

to the board with clear standards and procedures on grant-making that are consistent with UNOPS procedures, likely at the March board meeting.

In the ensuing discussions on **Global Public Goods**, the process for developing the annual Operational Plan was further clarified: the product narratives form a basis, as well as discussions with experts from each area. The secretariat plans to work on an overview of the product narratives which would outline the similarities in strategic objectives across products and highlight the ones that are product-specific. Additional information was sought on the investments in market intelligence and visibility; market shaping in the area of prostheses (market access deals); the large-scale scientific study to prove the potential of autorefractors; as well as the Smartphone study. The planned work on local production (centered on wheelchairs but potentially going beyond that area) sparked much interest. The importance of adopting a clear evidence-based position by ATscale on this topic, including under what conditions ATscale would consider supporting local production was welcomed by the Board.

Regarding **country level investments**, the discussion focused on the suggestion to add a potential investment in the hearing sector in Rwanda for 2023, building on a ready-for-funding national strategy and a successful implementation pilot. This, however, still needs to be discussed with the Rwandan government. While country investments so far have aimed for a broader AT approach, given the current funding situation, testing a sector-specific approach to be able to show impact at a national scale would allow for both learning and quick demonstration to attract further investments.

Board members agreed with the planned activities to increase **visibility** for ATscale and the AT sector and added useful suggestions, including additional events to consider attending, such as “Women Deliver” or the next five-year review of the Alma-Ata declaration on primary health care. It was confirmed that for the planned UN General Assembly resolution, the secretariat is drawing on IDA’s expertise.

Resource mobilization will be a priority for 2023, with that year and 2024 likely being the “make or break” period for ATscale. The CEO will continue to dedicate a lot of effort to this, with the support of a dedicated position under recruitment. It was agreed to continue with the assumptions presented in September when the strategy was agreed and to consider a review of those in 2023. Board members suggested useful leads, as well as looking at the possibility of secondments (e.g. from the private sector) or volunteer support (e.g. from academia). The secretariat will follow-up internally on the possible use of UNOPS reserves for ATscale and USAID and FCDO will also monitor this topic and engage when possible. The RM efforts so far were recognized with one participant saying that whenever she speaks to a fellow donor they mention that they have already been proactively approached by ATscale.

There was less discussion on the areas of **sustainability & efficient operations**, except for clarifications on the ATscale Technical Advisory Group and its management. The board felt the activities and budget related to M&E should be strengthened given the importance of a strong learning agenda and the need for more robust data. [This has been amended since the board meeting and the updated Operational Plan is attached.]

The **budget** was recognized as well balanced overall. It was clarified that investments listed as being priority 3 can only be undertaken if/when ATscale attracts additional donor(s). The secretariat will carefully manage the budget uncertainty and expectations from partners. The

amount of second year funding for Kenya will, for example, need to be discussed in mid-2023 as even though grants can be signed based on funding commitments rather than “money in the bank”, there is a reputational risk that needs to be managed.

More detail on the budget for visibility & mobilization was requested which was regarded as high but necessary in the current phase of ATscale’s development. [A new annex to the updated 2023 Operational Plan provides this now.] The secretariat was asked to review the M&E budget and authorized to adjust it upwards. [This has been done by shifting 100’000 USD from the contingency budget to M&E.] UNOPS is working on a model that better reflects the actual hosting costs and the secretariat is engaged to see whether this can translate into lower indirect costs for ATscale.

With these comments, the board approved the 2023 Operational Plan.

Roles & Responsibility Framework

Decisions / next steps / follow-up:

- The secretariat can go ahead with establishing a network of AT providers and a Private Sector Core Group and begin preparations for the creation of a private sector board seat . The secretariat will prepare the necessary changes to the by-laws to be presented at the March board meeting, thereby also providing the partners with the necessary time to seek internal approvals.

Pascal Bijleveld presented the work on partnership roles and responsibilities. The draft framework outlines key activities that the partnership aims to collaborate on, and articulates a broad typology of partnerships. In a later iteration, it will provide more detail on the roles of WHO and UNICEF as partners that are involved at all levels of ATscale’s work. The paper also considers the role of two important constituencies that are not yet fully represented within the partnership: the private sector and academia. For engagement with the private sector, 3 levels were presented: establishing a network of AT providers and a private Sector Core Group, and adding a board seat for the private sector.

It was suggested to look for ways to engage with academia other than via a board seat. But they were recognized as an important stakeholder group that ATscale should continue to engage with.

There was broad agreement on the usefulness of the network of AT providers and a Private Sector Core Group. Regarding a board seat for the private sector, questions were raised on how to view representation given the nature of the AT industry, and whether this should be a voting or non-voting seat. A preference for the latter, at least initially, was expressed. WHO also stated they will need to get internal clearance in addition to due diligence reviews that the secretariat will carry out.

The board agreed that the secretariat can go ahead with discussions with private sector partners and the secretariat will prepare the necessary changes to the by-laws to be presented at the March board meeting. Board members should also obtain any necessary internal approvals ahead of the next meeting.

Closing

Decisions / next steps / follow-up:

- Only 3 board meetings in 2023 with dates to be confirmed for March, June and November.

Jon Lomoy thanked the secretariat for the preparations, including the quality of documents and background works which supported the constructive discussions of this fruitful board meeting. He reiterated the thanks to UNICEF for hosting the board meeting and for the interesting tours of UNICEF's Global Supply and Logistics Hub, home to the largest humanitarian warehouse in the world, spanning over 20,000 m² with the capacity to store up to 36,000 pallets of supplies. Participants had been impressed by the efficient operations and appreciated getting to know "the backend" of UNICEF's procurement and supply operations. Similarly, the tour of the Innovation Lab had been much appreciated, especially on the AT specific items.

Jon Lomoy suggested trying out having only 3 board meetings in 2023 on an exceptional basis and the board members agreed to this proposal. The secretariat will circulate suggested dates in March, June and November to board members for a two-week turnaround for raising any scheduling conflicts. At least one board meeting should be in a programme country. The by-laws can be updated accordingly at the March board meeting.

Participants

Organisation	Representatives and delegates
FCDO	Penny Innes Sarah Dabbaj
IDA	Jose Viera Tchaurea Fleury
SAFOD	George Kayange (remotely)
Unaffiliated Board Seats	Jon Lomøy Ana Lucia Arellano Phyllis Heydt (remotely)
UNICEF	Eva Kandilli Kristoffer Gandrup-Marino Dennis Soendergaard
UNOPS	Andrew Kirkwood (ex-officio member) Jean-Francois Laurent (remotely)
USAID	Laurel Fain Michael Allen
WHO	Satish Mishra
ATscale secretariat	Pascal Bijleveld (ex-officio member) Barbara Goedde (note taker) Emily Wootton <i>Ceridwen Johnson</i> <i>Anil Kashyap</i> <i>Eduardo Sanchez</i> <i>Mujib Ahmad</i>
Guests	Jens Wandel, Executive Director UNOPS a.i. (remotely) Moin Karim, Regional Director for UNOPS Europe and Central Asia (remotely)
Excused	Zeinab Gura (MoH Kenya)