

First Meeting of the Independent Evaluation Panel

Summary notes

September 5-6, 2022

Global Health Campus, Geneva, Switzerland

September 5, 2022

Participants

<p>IEP Mira Johri, Chair Cindy Carlson, current Chair of TERG and IEP Vice Chair (interim) Helen Evans, current Vice Chair of TERG Evelyn Ansah, current TERG member George Gotsadze, current TERG member Abdallah Bchir Caroline Lynch Dede Watchiba Elil Renganathan Josephine Watera Mark Bardini (virtual attendance)</p> <p>Strategy Committee Javier Hourcade Bellocq</p>	<p>Evaluation Unit John Grove, Chief Evaluation and Learning Officer John Puvimanasinghe, Senior Specialist, Evaluation and Learning Jutta Hornig, Team Coordinator</p> <p>Global Fund Secretariat Marijke Wijnroks, Chief of Staff Rhiannon James, Senior Specialist OED Hélène Cloet Galibourg, Consultant, Ethics Office Cynthia Urusaro Imref, Consultant, Ethics Office Caroline Berger, Consultant OED Harley Feldbaum, Head, Strategy & Policy Hub Evan Doyle, Advisor, OED/Strategy & Policy Hub Michael Olszak-Olszewski, Manager, KPI Manager Carole D'Souza, Allocation Manager Collins Acheampong, Head, Professional Services Unit, Office of the Inspector General Nathalie Gons, Consultant OED</p>
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Introductions and Ice breakers

This segment set the stage for the day's discussions by collectively defining a shared understanding of evaluation objectives and risks. Reflections from this ice breaker are included in annex 1.

Session 1: Background and Vision of the new evaluation function for the Global Fund

This session laid out the background and vision for the Global Fund's new evaluation function, its structure, and high-level roles and responsibilities of the IEP and Evaluation Unit (EvU). It was highlighted that the IEP is not replacing the TERG and that the functions of the current TERG will be distributed across the EvU and IEP. In addition, the EvU and IEP will take on new roles required by the new evaluation function.

During the session the following questions and comments were discussed:

- The immediate need to develop more detailed rules and processes establishing how the new evaluation function will work. IEP should follow good management practices. It was suggested there may be a need to hold at least one to two closed IEP sessions per meeting.
- Clarity around the relationship to governance bodies. For example, it was queried why the IEP reports to the Board through the SC, instead of directly to the Board and whether there are any implications of this reporting structure? It was noted that in the past disagreements between TERG and SC were very rare, but in these cases the TERG would have direct channels to the Board which would also be the case for the IEP.
- Questions around publication of evaluations were raised and who has final decision over what is published. It was noted that there is a current TERG document procedures policy approved by the Board, but with the transition to the new function this policy will need to be adjusted and is an opportunity to revise and strengthen the policy to promote transparency and independence.
- Acknowledging there are a lot of process and operational modalities to develop, it was emphasized that there should be clarity on what happens if the OED and IEP disagree, for example in the context of the IEP carrying out its oversight role of the CELO and the Evaluation Unit (EvU). Does the SC mediate and make a final decision?
- The content and scope of the IEP reports on quality and independence is to be defined. Given the multiple dimensions of reporting, who between the IEP and EvU reports what to the SC needs to be worked through, given what the needs are.
- It was observed by some IEP members that the time commitment proposed in the ToR is quite low. It was noted that in the first year of operationalization there may need to be more regular and longer meetings.

Actions:

- **Areas where it was noted attention for review and/or Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) are required:**
 - Detailed roles and responsibilities for the new evaluation function and its stakeholders
 - Quality, evaluation ethics, and independence standards
 - Publication policy
 - IEP Management
 - Evaluation topic selection: including criteria and process for independent evaluation topic selection, scoping, and prioritization.
- **Secretariat will share documents on the TEAMS workspace, including:**
 - TERG Publication Policy
 - The most recent Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) report

Session 2: The Global Fund's Ethics policy

This session presented an overview of the Global Fund's Ethics policy and allowed the IEP to ask specific questions. During the session, the following questions were discussed:

- An IEP member asked whether they can publicly disclose their membership status. It was clarified that as a governance unit, membership is completely transparent.
- IEP requested information about how to handle staff misconduct. The Ethics office clarified that the Code of Conduct for governance officials includes the steps on how to manage staff in cases of misconduct.
- IEP asked whether consultants may include their names on published evaluations. It was noted that a Publication policy should specify publishing rights. The Ethics office clarified that it is essential to have a consistent approach to decisions around these questions.
- IEP asked if Ethics Office guides potential Conflicts of Interest with Secretariat staff, for example how to handle cases where evaluation findings are blocked by the Secretariat because they do not accept the findings. The Secretariat emphasized that the new evaluation model is structured and resourced to mitigate this scenario.

Session 3. Administrative Issues for IEP Members

This session clarified the travel and honorarium policy for IEP members. The full travel policy will be accessible on the TEAMS workspace.

Session 4. The Global Fund 2023-2028 Strategy and M&E Framework

This session provided an overview of the Global Fund's new 2023-2028 Strategy, and high-level Theory of Change (ToC) that facilitated the development of the Monitoring & Evaluation Framework for the new Strategy. The session gave an overview of the

Strategic level key performance indicators (KPIs) describing the linkages to monitoring of grants and catalytic investments. Whilst it is not in the IEP mandate to review the KPIs, the purpose of the session was to emphasize where independent evaluation fits into the M&E Framework and the relationship evaluations should have to KPIs for the joint purpose of Strategy Performance monitoring and reporting going forward. The following questions and comments were discussed:

- IEP Members recognized all the hard work that has gone into developing an M&E Framework and ToC for the new Strategy which current TERG members noted was great progress made from the current Strategy.
- It was observed that the ToC should be considered a living document which will need to be reviewed, refined, and built on by the new evaluation function going forward as evaluations are identified and planned.
- In the process of developing the M&E framework IEP members asked whether implementers were engaged. The Secretariat clarified that about 30% of the 200 external participants in the measurement consultations were from implementing countries.
- It was asked whether GF investments are tagged by outcomes which would facilitate thematic clustering for evaluations. The Secretariat clarified that Global Fund investments cannot be tagged to outcomes as these have multiple funders; but investments can be tagged by interventions, inputs, and outputs which are contributing to outcomes.
- The challenge of accessing data for evaluations was raised and IEP members emphasized the importance of ensuring evaluators can access programmatic monitoring data, potentially through a central repository.
- The Secretariat was also asked how it ensures sufficiency and quality of data such as availability of data at the sub-national level. The Secretariat clarified that strengthening data generation and use is one of the priorities in the new Strategy and that some KPIs monitor access to and quality of data. However, not all data collected and used in countries is reported to the Secretariat.
- The IEP were informed that there are internal changes going on in the Secretariat in relation to how programmatic monitoring is managed, coordinated and supported. The new division is called the Programmatic and Risk Division and there is opportunity for building coordinated ways of working between the new evaluation function and this new division.

Development of the Multi-Year Evaluation Calendar, Annual Workplan

This session began with a description on critical considerations for evaluation in the Global Fund. Referred to as '5 hacks' these included:

1. Evaluations compliment KPIs in the M&E framework and are essential in areas where quantitative metrics do not exist or struggle.
2. The Global Fund is cyclical organization: good timing is a pre-requisite for impact.
3. Our country-lead process is an essential part of our theory of change.

4. Consider the political and practical aspects of evaluation recommendations.
 5. Build complementary and coordinated links with the OIG and other surveys.
- The OIG also confirmed that it will present a 3-year plan to the Board in November and that the EvU and OIG will work together to reduce perceived duplication and look for opportunities for working together. The OIG clarified that overlap is not necessarily problematic, but it is critical to identify areas where coordination can be improved.
 - It was also noted that the Board has requested the OIG to consider an audit or advisory of the new evaluation function at the end of 2023.
 - During the discussion it was noted that the Global Fund's three-year grant cycle is short for evaluating complex topics. The Secretariat recognizes this challenge but proposed that it is still possible to evaluate stepwise improvements. In cases where program continuation grants are secured, there is scope for a longer duration of evaluation.

Annual Workplan

The session explained that the new evaluation function will develop a detailed budget and an annual workplan, which is a paper explaining how the new evaluation function is committing to the MYE Calendar. An annual workplan and detailed budget are submitted two weeks before the Strategy Committee's meeting dates of October 10-12, 2022. In addition to the evaluations, all meetings and immediate action items for the new function need to be included in the annual workplan, for example related to developing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Evaluation Topic Proposals for the MYE Calendar

This session presented and discussed topics proposed during the Global Fund's measurement consultations that require further prioritization by the new evaluation function. Topic candidates need to be included in the MYE Calendar and workplan for Committee recommendation in October and Board approval in November.

It was clarified that the topic proposals come from 3 sources:

1. Those that have already been committed to in previous committee/Board decisions;
2. Evaluations topics that emerged from the measurement consultations to fill evidence gaps and/or compliment KPIs for monitoring progress towards achieving the new Strategy objectives; and
3. Proposals made by the SC in July 2022 and from early consultation with Secretariat teams on additional learning needs than those proposed in (2).

The following questions and comments were discussed:

- The IEP requested clarity on who makes final decisions on the new evaluation function's workload. The Strategy Committee representative clarified that if the Board asks for an evaluation that the IEP believes is unfeasible, the IEP can present the Board with a counterproposal that lays out a rationale and prioritization.

- In reflecting on the maximum feasible number of annual independent evaluations, the IEP discussed the trade-offs between quality and quantity. In the July Strategy Committee, the Secretariat has proposed 4-6 evaluations per year. It was noted that some constituencies want more, but the Secretariat emphasized limited scope to digest more and the need to focus on quality and utility, including meaningful engagement from all stakeholders.
- The IEP requested information on how evaluations are budgeted for, citing peer organization practices in estimating an evaluation budget (0.3-.5% of an institution's total budget). The Secretariat clarified they are assuming an estimated 300-400,000 CHF per evaluation; and 1 million CHF for the End-term review. The Secretariat highlighted that the new evaluation function is covered by the Operating Expenses budget (versus through a Strategic Initiative as in the current Strategy cycle) and is thus well positioned to have a sustainably resourced evaluation portfolio.
- IEP asked whether there is scope for joint evaluations with partners, noting a 12-agency joint evaluation has been planned for SDG3 Global Action Plan (GAP). The Secretariat clarified that there is scope, and this is in the vision of the new function.
- The IEP discussed prioritizing evaluations that are likely "winners" to champion the launch of the new evaluation function. Other criteria for immediate prioritization needs included expected length and budget per evaluation.
- In discussing how to define an evaluation's optimal scope, IEP members and the Secretariat discussed the trade-offs of treating a cross-cutting topic as a lens versus as a standalone evaluation. It was commented that equity, gender, and human rights could be cross-cutting. The SC representative noted recent intensive efforts to differentiate the gender and human rights agendas could complicate an evaluation that aims to combine these areas.
- The IEP requested clarification about the resource allocation evaluation that has been committed to by the Board, and how it differs from the proposed evaluation of matching funds. The Secretariat clarified that the resource allocation evaluation is an independent assessment of the Global Fund's methodology used to determine disease split determination and wider allocation into Catalytic Funding. The proposed matching funds evaluation examines how and to what extent this lever has delivered on the Strategy.
- The Secretariat clarified which evaluation topics pertain to Global Fund Strategy levers in the business model and reflected on the cases where these might be folded into larger overarching topics such as the evaluation on the funding request and grant making cycle as a whole.
- The IEP requested access to past evaluations done in the proposed evaluation topic areas to identify common themes and trends.

Dissemination approaches and modalities

- The IEP discussed how to incorporate dissemination and learning uptake into evaluation planning. IEP requested taking stock of current dissemination processes,

and the TERG's practice of producing a position paper for which the Secretariat produces a management response was noted.

- The importance of sharing findings throughout the evaluation lifecycle was highlighted, suggesting preliminary, secondary, and final readouts of findings.
- The IEP and EvU agreed that building a learning culture requires more than disseminating findings and requires a comprehensive Learning Strategy that invests in knowledge translation and organizational learning.

Conclusions of session for workplan and calendar

- **2023 Annual Workplan and Budget to submit to the Strategy Committee**
 - Commit to the End-Term Strategic Review and 2-3 evaluations that have been committed to in Board decisions.
 - Consider whether there could be an additional evaluation that will showcase more strongly how the new evaluation function can be of value.
 - Specify the evaluations proposed through Measurement Consultations that are likely to be conducted in 2024 and 2025 but specify further consultation to refine scope and identify timing is ongoing.
 - List the other topics that have also emerged through consultations emphasizing that these require further consultations. Include the OIG Calendar when submitting the Multi-Year Evaluation Calendar to the SC and Board.

September 6, 2022

Joint session with Current TERG members and IEP members as well as Secretariat staff for open sessions.

Introduction

The TERG chair welcomed all the participants to the 48th and last TERG meeting. The morning session was organized as joint TERG/IEP session. When asked, no participants declared conflict of interest.

Country steered review (CSR) discussion

The TERG chair introduced the CSR, as part of the handover to the newly formed IEP at the end of the meeting. She explained that this work had been requested by the Strategy Committee (SC) and the Board M&E working group. It is intended to give a voice to country stakeholders about how the Global Fund model works in country.

Although the consultation phase survey and Key Informant interviews (KIIs) are still ongoing, the CSR consultant team presented the preliminary findings highlighting key differences and areas of consensus in respondents' perspectives:

- Compared to global level stakeholders, anonymity was strongly favored by civil society respondents who feared repercussions and ostracization.
- While some respondents found it important to include Sub-recipients (SRs) and Sub sub-recipients (SSRs), others thought they may not be familiar enough with the Global Fund processes and thus may provide uninformed feedback, or use the CSR tool as a tool to complain.
- There is a need to understand more clearly how findings are going to be used.

The TERG and the IEP consider that anonymity remains a non-negotiable feature of the CSR, but possibilities still need to be explored about how to combine with a feedback tool that would enable direct course correction, if the tool is also to address the Secretariat needs. The Secretariat team highlighted the risk of not obtaining direct information on the Global Fund processes if the CSR surveys beyond PRs. They also raised the operational challenge and high cost of maintaining an up-to-date data base with all the PR SR SSR CSO etc. The TERG took note of these risks and challenges.

As the response rates were still low, suggestions were made to send reminders and find incentives to better engage people in the survey. A point was made that lessons learned from the A2F survey (sent out to stakeholder right after each Funding Request submission)

could also be a good source to inform the CSR tool development. Reflecting on how to better engage stakeholders (direct or indirect interlocutors of Global Fund) in the future CSR, the TERG and IEP advised to enhance the messaging around how findings will be used.

The TRP representative reiterated that getting feedback on the GF, including TRP processes, through the CSR presents an excellent opportunity to understand how to improve both TRP processes, and country ownership challenges.

Finally, the TERG welcomed the clarification about a planned CRG survey, also under development, which does not appear to overlap with the CSR survey content. The CRG survey, developed for KPI purposes and led by community representatives, aims at providing more in-depth and granular information specifically about communities' work.

Discussion on C19RM evaluation forward planning

The TERG Chair made a presentation capturing the objectives and design of the evaluation of C19RM 2020. She summarized the key gaps, limitations and challenges faced in the first round of the evaluation and used this as a platform to underpin a suggestion that a mid-term evaluation be implemented end 2022/beginning 2023 focused on C19RM. Key perspectives and positions were also summarized with regard to the benefits and disadvantages of implementing a mid-term evaluation of C19RM. The initial proposal presented to SC was for the evaluation to be implemented over three rounds including a mid-term evaluation.

The TERG discussants presented their perspectives on the merits of undertaking a mid-term evaluation, focusing on the desirability and importance of undertaking a mid-term evaluation. Some TERG members expressed concerns about the added-value of a mid-term evaluation, with a view that, given the timing and context, a mid-term evaluation would less likely lead to timely course-correction or learning. The SC representative expressed his view on the importance of evaluating C19RM both at mid and end points. Noting that TRP has not reviewed C19RM requests, the TRP focal point emphasized that a mid-term evaluation is particularly valuable and informative from its perspective.

The Secretariat also contributed to the debates concerning a mid-term evaluation. The evolution of the pandemic is important, for example, the demand for C19 products has declined considerably, impacting grant absorption. Countries are focused on revisiting reinvestment priorities and shifting to HTM mitigation. Furthermore, after a mid-term evaluation, countries will have only some 6 months left of implementation. Finally, many countries will be busy in 2023 working on the new grant funding requests and implementing current grants. All these factors should be considered in making a decision about whether and when to move forwards with a mid-term and endline evaluations.

All TERG members agreed that an endline evaluation would help the Global Fund prepare for PPR in the future and for accountability purposes to demonstrate what the impact associated with this investment was.

Executive Session (1)

Chair: Cindy Carlson

IEP/Evaluation Unit and TERG only

Discussion on CSR

During the joint executive sessions, the TERG and the IEP members reiterated the importance of anonymity, particularly in countries where the grants are small and people easily identifiable. They also clarified that the future CSR should:

- include a broad range of stakeholders, including SRs and SSRs, to capture the full user experience, even if the tool may be occasionally used as a complaint tool;
- utilize a user-friendly terminology rather than additional user guide to facilitate the engagement of stakeholders, including frontline implementers;
- include information on dissemination plan, and how to use findings; and
- ensure a good representativeness across the three diseases as well as send out regular reminders to ensure as a wide a response as possible to survey.

C19RM

Observation was made that, without a mid-term evaluation, an endline evaluation is insufficiently timely to support important decisions. It was suggested that, instead of a dedicated mid-term evaluation, it could be preferable to integrate C19RM as an area for special focus within the next Strategic Review (SR) process. As C19RM funding terminates at the end of December 2023 and relevant financial and programmatic results will only be available in mid-2024, it was proposed an endline evaluation should take place in 2024 with deliverables being completed in 2025. This would necessitate agreement with the SC on the evaluation plan with funds to cover an endline evaluation in 2024. It was further discussed that an end-line evaluation should explore the effect of reprogramed investments related to health systems.

Acknowledging the important advantages of combining data collection and evaluation implementation processes, the participants also cautioned that the design of the SR needs to provide sufficient scope for the C19RM deep-dive component to undertake adequately rich and deep analysis to provide rigorous evidence to evaluate this significant investment. The SC will be further consulted on this issue.

Lessons learned and handover to the new evaluation function

The TERG reflections document was discussed, which included a summary of the observations, insights and lessons learned from several years of overseeing independent evaluations of the Global Fund. The purpose of the session was to help orient the IEP members and Chief Evaluation and Learning Officer (CELO) to complex contexts within which an independent evaluation group operates in the Global Fund. What “worked well” and “not worked so well” were detailed in three areas: content; process; and evaluation and learning culture. Overall, key reflections included:

- need to recognize inevitable and constant tensions between utility/relevance versus independence, and timeliness versus quality. It is important to manage these;
- need to ensure IEP/EU is part of greater Global Fund transparency, a) to improve global health partners’ understanding of Global Fund challenges and lessons learned, and b) to improve external engagement with Global Fund challenges; and
- need to maximise the opportunity that the better staffing and resourcing for the EU presents, allowing the IEP to work more at an oversight level. IEP members should find the appropriate balance between keeping abreast of each part of the evaluation cycle and maintaining appropriate distance.

Discussion by TERG and IEP members included the need to: think out of the box in terms of evaluation; make resources easily available to carry out the evaluation function, both financially and in terms of access to data; balance the pool of evaluators and enlarging it; think of mechanisms for the EU to be independent from the Secretariat; create an evaluation repository in the form of a “one stop-shop” for better and increased use of evaluation; develop a concrete mechanism to follow-up the implementation of evaluation recommendations; and continue ensuring that all evaluation reports be public and disseminated, such as through brown bag type events.

An important next step would be to list these issues and check how IEP is addressing them. Furthermore, it is key to monitor and list how each evaluation is impacting policies. This would additionally be helpful to inform an OIG audit of the independent evaluation function, which is planned to be conducted about end of 2023. The need for IEP to make a good initial progress was also noted, and 2023 will be key for this.

The session ended with the outgoing Chair of the TERG passing on a symbolic key to the incoming Chair of the IEP.

Annex 1: Reflections from opening ice breaker on September 5, 2022

IEP members replied in a few words what evaluation means to them:

- accountability
- learning
- action
- accountability includes impact
- learning as a way of “failing better”
- inclusivity

What is negative about evaluation (risks, roadblocks, apprehensions)?

- politics, undermined independence, bias, quality issues
- evaluations are mostly not used. Other risks include manipulation and lack of ownership.
- presenting evaluations in a punitive manner; “if they look punitive then people want fight back.”
- defensiveness and apprehension
- resources and politics
- bias and inaccuracy
- lack of engagement and ownership
- sub-optimal shifts in resource allocation and a politicization of results more broadly.
- management controlling an evaluation function through their control of resources.
- may invoke a fear of change; even as children the word evaluation was scary.