

# **Fourth Meeting of the Independent Evaluation Panel Summary Notes**

September 13-14, 2023

Virtual Meeting

## **Participant List (see Annex A)**

## **Agenda (see Annex B)**

***Please note that some topics were spread out over sessions on each day of the meeting. For ease of reading, the meeting notes have been grouped by session topic instead of sequentially by agenda item.***

The meeting agenda was developed in consultation between ELO and IEP leadership. It was recognized during the meeting that IEP members did not feel they had enough time to discuss agenda items, particular decision items and more preparatory steps must happen before decisions can be made during IEP meetings. This will be taken into serious consideration in planning for future meetings.

### **Session Topic: Opening and updates from Chair & ELO Operational update**

The IEP Vice Chair and CELO welcomed the two new IEP members and expressed gratitude for the outgoing IEP member's time serving with the IEP and their contributions made.

The Ethics Office (EO) representative confirmed all IEP members have completed the necessary conflict of interest declarations and reiterated that IEP members should declare any change of professional situation to EO and the IEP Chair. At the start of the meeting, EO requested IEP members to disclose any new conflict of interest. Some members disclosed certain personal situations for full transparency, none of those being declared as conflicts.

CELO introduced ELO's new team members. and outlined the three functional clusters of ELO: 1) insights and methods, 2) practices and 3) partnerships, with at least 2 staff covering each function. CELO provided an operation update on the ELO as part of the meeting pre-read package and reiterated some key points from that document.

### **Session Topic: Annual evaluation workplan for 2024 and budget**

This topic was divided over 2 days and 2 sessions. The objective of the first session was for ELO to describe the 2024 annual workplan and answer any questions from IEP on the evaluation annual work plan and obtain input from IEP on the proposed evaluation topics. Following an IEP closed session on day 2, the second session on this topic was for the IEP to inform the ELO if they recommend the workplan for approval by the Strategy Committee (SC) and provide additional input.

#### **Session 1:**

This session provided an update on the proposed 2024 evaluation topics. Based on the Board approved Multi-Year Evaluation Calendar and following consultations with technical teams in the Global Fund Secretariat to confirm timing and relevance for decision making, four evaluation topics have been identified for 2024. ELO presented additional pre-scoping information on the evaluation topics and how they align with the evaluation criteria.

#### **Summary of main comments and discussion points:**

- IEP noted that the IEP TOR state that the role of IEP is to ‘advise’ the Strategy Committee on the annual 2024 evaluation workplan prior to seeking their approval and requested clarification on what “advise” legally means.
- IEP expressed a concern about insufficient time for IEP review and discussion of the 2024 workplan prior to the document submission to the Strategy Committee.
- Clarification on ELO’s model of engagement around individual evaluations was requested.
- IEP emphasized the importance of ensuring sufficient length of time between the announcement of RFPs and the deadline for obtaining the proposals to allow for a broader pool of suppliers to apply. IEP also suggested public placement of pre-announcements of forthcoming evaluations (even before the development of TOR and RFPs) on the Global Fund website and broader dissemination through available channels to increase awareness of potential bidders and allow more time for preparations.
- IEP also proposed to conduct benchmarking of the evaluation costs for evaluations of varying complexity with other entities to estimate the related costs.
- IEP enquired if there has been any country involvement in the selection of evaluation priorities.
- Specific inputs from IEP were provided on the evaluation topic proposals and in particular IEP requested ELO to clearly elaborate the difference between the 2 community- related evaluations.

### **ELO and Legal and Governance Department (LGD) response**

- LGD informed IEP that input from IEP received during the meeting on the annual workplan should be reflected by ELO in the revised paper for the SC. IEP input and advice can also be channeled to the SC by the IEP Chair during the SC deliberations on the evaluation workplan approval. The ELO remains accountable to the SC for the submission of the “strategic priorities and the annual work plan for the evaluation structure of the Secretariat”.
- ELO clarified that timelines for workplan development and approval at this time of year are always tight due to internal budgeting processes not being completed until end of August. However, discussions on evaluation topics for subsequent years and other elements of the workplan, in future years, should take place earlier in the year with IEP. Costing information remains dependent on Secretariat-wide budgeting processes, however.
- ELO also clarified that an engagement team will be formed for each evaluation, consisting of an Evaluation Lead and Evaluation Manager from ELO, and IEP Focal Points.
- ELO acknowledged that when posting an RFP a lead time of 4 to 6 weeks is not always sufficient for potential bidders. Therefore, following the SC approval of the 2024 evaluation work plan, ELO will place a note on the GF website of the evaluation workplan to give early warning to service providers that these RFPs are forthcoming. ELO is also making efforts to broaden the scope of applicants by developing a master list of all potential bidders, with a particular focus on those from the Global South.
- ELO agreed that the benchmarking of the evaluation costs with other entities is a good activity to do.
- ELO clarified that country-level perspectives on evaluation topics were included in the series for 2022 measurement consultation which informed the multi-year evaluation calendar. Representatives of implementing partners also serve on the Strategy Committee and the Board and will input on scope. For specific evaluations, targeted consultations during the scoping stage will be required.
- ELO confirmed that, despite having the word “community” in the title, the two community related evaluations are distinct from each other. The community engagement evaluation

examines the extent to which the HTM response is responsive to and being led by those living with and most affected by the 3 diseases and examining the quality and outcome of community-led platforms throughout Global Fund related processes. It is anticipated that assessments in this evaluation are community-led and, unlike the previous TERG evaluation in this area, should focus on the outcomes of the engagement. The community system strengthening evaluation centers on community-based/led program delivery integrated with national health and social systems and delivery of integrated, people centered quality services.

## Session 2:

Following discussion in the IEP closed session, IEP informed ELO that they endorse the workplan and recommend to the SC to approve the 2024 evaluation workplan. While IEP endorsed the four evaluation thematic topics suggested by ELO in the annual work plan, IEP suggested:

- Being concerned about the lack of quality time in the IEP formal meetings to adequately discuss the documents as a panel, IEP will follow advice from ELO/CELO and will organize an online meeting in advance of the formal IEP meeting to discuss the documents supplied by ELO and formulate its position, which will be shared with the ELO during formal meetings.
- In the future, IEP would expect earlier engagement on annual work planning with ELO in the year.
- To be able to fulfill the quality assurance role, assigned to IEP by the Board, IEP is expected to evaluate the adequacy of the planned budget relative to planned evaluations. Therefore, IEP should receive an annual work plan along with the planned budget, which was lacking in the meeting documentation due to the internal OPEX planning not being complete at time of submission (30<sup>th</sup> August) two weeks before the IEP meeting. [Note: costing information was made available to IEP leadership after the meeting].
- IEP members will provide technical-methodological inputs during TOR development, not only approving TOR developed by ELO.

## **Session Topic: Development of a document procedure (Day 1 and Day 2)**

In the past, evaluations conducted under the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) had been published pursuant to a TERG documents procedure adopted by the Strategy Committee (SC) in October 2017. Now that the TERG no longer exists, this SC policy has to be revised; this was explicitly acknowledged at the creation of the Evaluation Function in GF/B46/05 revision 1. A revised document aligned to the new Evaluation Function foundational documents was drafted by ELO and LGD and shared with the IEP.

This topic was discussed over 3 sessions. The first session was an opportunity for IEP to ask questions to ELO and LGD on the draft document procedure and to receive inputs. Based on IEP input received, ELO and LGD made changes to the draft document procedure after the session and went through these changes with IEP on day 2 of the meeting. Following an IEP closed session, a third session was for the IEP to inform the ELO if they recommend the document procedure for approval by the Strategy Committee (SC).

## Session 1

Summary of main comments and discussion points:

- IEP raised concern that the tone of the document policy appears to give more influence to the Secretariat to object to a particular evaluation being published, without clear criteria set out in the document for such objection.
- IEP also referred to the OIG procedures on publication of audits and investigations that have a time frame indicated for feedback and publication and recommended that the evaluation document procedure also includes timeframes for feedback from involved parties and for publication.
- It was raised that in similar policies of other organizations, the only reason why the publishing of an evaluation could be canceled or postponed is due to a risk to the beneficiaries of the evaluated program.
- IEP was concerned with the lack of consistency in reflecting the Board assigned IEP role in the document. Namely, at times IEP was called an “advisory body” in the document and at times an “oversight body”. Clarity and consistency on the Board-assigned role to IEP was requested by IEP.
- LGD advised that the Strategy Committee (SC) retains the decision for publication, as was the principle in the TERG procedure. If there is consensus to publish between the CELO and the Secretariat, the evaluation goes to the SC for information and onwards to the Board prior to the public release. If there is disagreement between the Secretariat and the ELO on the appropriateness of publishing the report, the IEP commentary, or the management response, or if the IEP has not endorsed a report, the SC will be presented with the matter and will make a decision considering the advice of the IEP. There is no way for the Secretariat to block the publishing process if the SC agree to the report being published, and this consensus principle was also applicable to the TERG procedure. However, IEP suggested that publication policy should be geared to advance the procedure further from what was used by TERG and bring greater transparency for independent evaluations and increase their value for the organization.
- LGD also advised that timelines can be considered but it was clarified that the OIG timelines in the OIG stakeholder engagement model refer to timelines for the AFC and Board to consider the OIG reports and ensuring no delays can happen through the actions of these bodies and – whilst the evaluation function could follow the OIG model, this would be a material shift from the current approach for evaluations and the advice is not to propose to the SC a procedure including a prescriptive timeframe for the SC review, or for internal Secretariat or ELO processes. Indeed, the practice has been for the SC to consider the reports at its regular meetings, which introduced a variable, and sometimes significant, delay in the consideration by the SC of a report.

#### **Actions:**

- LGD and ELO to incorporate revisions into the draft document procedure based on input received.

#### **Session 2:**

- LGD walked through the revisions to the document following the discussion on day 1 of the meeting including different timeline options for the publication of evaluation reports and reiterated the challenges in having exact timelines as the SC discusses these reports in their sessions.
- IEP queried what is the process if IEP thinks a document should be published and CELO and/or the secretariat does not. It was confirmed that the proposed procedure is that if

there is no consensus between the CELO and the Secretariat on releasing a report to the public, or even if both agree a report should not be published, it would prompt a discussion on what the proposal is and this is sent to the SC for decision, who additionally seeks the IEP's view.

**Actions:**

- ELO to send the updated document procedure to IEP.

Session 3:

- Following discussion in the IEP closed session, IEP informed ELO that they require more time to review the document procedure, particularly as they had only seen the revisions made from the previous day during a 20 minute presentation by LGD, which was not felt to offer sufficient and quality time for the IEP to offer its considered views and arrive at a common- agreed position of the Panel.
- LGD proposed to submit a document to the SC for input rather than decision at the October meeting as delaying to the next SC session in March 2024 could be problematic for publication of ongoing evaluations (first ones expected in March 2024) if SC do not approve the document procedure in March. SC electronic approval could be done before this time providing SC have had opportunity to discuss the procedure in the session in October.
- IEP raised the risk of simultaneous feedback on the procedure between IEP and SC and not comfortable to submit, even for input, at the October SC session.
- It was agreed that the TERG document procedure will serve as the guiding approach in the meantime and in absence of updated document procedure.

**Actions:**

- IEP will provide comments on the document procedure by mid-October. [note: further to the meeting, following consultation with the CELO and IEP Leadership, the SC leadership requested the updated document be presented directly to the Strategy Committee for decision]

**Session Topic: Brief updates on Strategic Review/SR2023, Resource Allocation Methodology/RAM, Imbizo, Evaluation Policy/Principles**

The objective of his session was to provide all IEP members with an update on progress to date and next steps of ongoing evaluations. Also, to present progress made in benchmarking and establishing evaluation principles for the independent evaluation function. ELO and IEP Focal Points provide brief updates on each activity.

**Actions:**

- IEP has requested that in future reviews of evaluation deliverables, ELO provides the IEP focal points with a comment sheet demonstrating all comments received and responses to these comments.
- IEP will receive the TOR for Imbizo to review in the coming weeks. A more in-depth session to be held on Imbizo in November 2024 IEP meeting to discuss potential risk mitigation and topics for inclusion in Imbizo:

- ELO to develop a roadmap for creating the Evaluation Principles to present to the IEP in November 2024, which outlines key stakeholders and stakeholder expectations to implement the roadmap.

### **Session Topic: Quality Assessment Framework**

The objective of this session was to receive input from IEP members on the draft of the Quality Assessment Framework.

#### **Summary of main comments and discussion points:**

- The number of items and options for rationalizing the items in the framework was discussed as well as opportunities to integrate key principles central to Global Fund (including: Human Rights, equity etc.). Further rationalizing of items would be done following the meeting.
- There was consensus that a more limited and constrained scoring scale (0-4 scale) is preferable in this type of tool/framework. Scales of this kind encourage reviewers to more decisively judge whether a product is below or above satisfactory quality thresholds. IEP emphasized that in addition to a quantitative score that a qualitative rationale should be supplied to nuance the score.
- The advantages and disadvantages of employing a tool requiring scoring at high-level dimensions only or scoring at sub-dimensions were discussed. The preference was for reviewing and scoring at dimension and sub-dimension levels given that this will provide more granular and actionable information.
- It was suggested to test out the draft instrument on a previous TERG evaluation to assess whether the proposed instrument is sensible and operational. It was proposed that the outcome of this testing process should be completed to feed into discussion in the November IEP meeting. Two volunteers from IEP were nominated to undertake the test review process.

#### **Actions:**

- IEP to review the number of items and propose an approach to rationalizing items and share a revised draft of tool.
- IEP to identify previous TERG evaluation to review as a test case.
- IEP Focal Points (FPs) to review completed evaluation to test the approach as an input into November (2023) IEP meeting.

### **Session Topic: Joint update on revision of the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)**

The objective of this session was to go through the Joint Document developed by IEP and ELO Leadership on areas of alignment and non-alignment on the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) since the IEP meeting in June 2023 and to discuss the areas where alignment is needed.

#### **Summary of discussion points:**

- SC consultation on evaluation scope and TOR – IEP requested that SC should have the opportunity but not an obligation to provide input for each evaluation TOR. The understanding is that the SC is not being asked to approve the evaluation TORs, as this is the responsibility and expertise of the IEP. As evaluations are chosen to be on topics of strategic importance to the SC, the Strategy Committee would provide inputs related to the

strategic direction of the Global Fund and the Board's and constituencies' priorities. Alignment on the mechanism to obtain SC input is still under discussion.

- Chairing of validation meetings - proposal from IEP leadership is to have a default position where IEP leadership will be the Chair of recommendation and validation meetings. LGD noted that, unlike the TERG, IEP is not intended to be involved in the day-to-day management of evaluations. Rather, it is intended to be an escalation forum for any disagreement between the Secretariat, contractors, ELO, etc. – it cannot be ensured IEP is seen as an uninvolved party if IEP chairs the sessions by default.
- Direct communication with contractors: ELO should be the first point of contact for vendors/contractors. However, when and how contractors can communicate and escalate issues to IEP is a topic where further discussion and agreement is required.
- Performance: IEP asked whether ELO reports on regular performance metrics ELO that can be shared with IEP. ELO confirmed that this is possible and that for 2024 new metrics need to be developed around learning and the utility of evaluations and advice from IEP on effective metrics would be useful.
- Observing the tight timeline in the IEP for decisions, IEP members shared their concern that there are a lot of documents to review, and it is not clear what documents need to be approved and when and when there is time for IEP to discuss the document and come to a common position. Therefore, it was suggested that ELO develops a document calendar and shares with IEP members with the objective of ensuring enough time for IEP to review and provide feedback. This calendar will be discussed and managed among IEP leadership and ELO (such as in the bi-weekly join calls).
- Some important areas were not discussed in the meeting and may be discussed in subsequent meetings. This included the IEP annual report and commentaries, the role of steering committees, conditions under which evaluations should be stopped, continuous improvement.

#### **Actions:**

- Update on progress on the SOPs to be provided to the Strategy Committee (SC) in October.
- IEP to discuss areas where there remains unalignment and to provide feedback to ELO after the meeting. [Subsequent to the meeting, SCL provided their views on outstanding issues, which will be used as a basis for the ELO to finalize the SOPs]
- Aim to finalize the SOPs by the November IEP meeting.
- ELO to develop a planning tool so that IEP members are clear on what is coming and when.

#### **IEP closed session.**

During the closed session, IEP members discussed the annual evaluation workplan for 2024, SOPs and the document procedure. The SC ex-officio member to the IEP was invited to attend this session. Outcomes of deliberations made in the session were shared with ELO in the respective sessions detailed above (Annual Workplan Session and Documents Procedure Session)



## Annex A: Participants List

IEP	Secretariat support
<p>George Gotsadze - Meeting Chair Cindy Carlson - Meeting Co-Chair</p> <p><b>IEP members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mira Johri (Day 2 only, due to illness)</li> <li>• Abdallah Bchir</li> <li>• Caroline Lynch</li> <li>• Cindy Carlson</li> <li>• Dede Watchiba</li> <li>• Elil Renganathan</li> <li>• Evelyn Ansah</li> <li>• Florencia Guerzovich</li> <li>• Fred Carden</li> <li>• George Gotsadze</li> <li>• Helen Evans</li> <li>• Josephine Watara</li> <li>• Mark Bardini</li> </ul> <p><b>Ex officio IEP members:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Javier Hourcade Bellocq (SC representative)</li> <li>• John Grove, Chief Evaluation &amp; Learning Officer (Head of the evaluation structure of the Secretariat)</li> <li>• The Executive Director did not nominate an ex officio representative for this meeting.</li> </ul>	<p><b>ELO</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jutta Hornig, Team Coordinator</li> <li>• Yana Daneva, Evaluation Officer</li> <li>• Rhiannon James, Sr. Specialist Eval. Partnerships</li> <li>• John Puvimanasinghe, Sr. Specialist Eval. &amp; Learning</li> <li>• Michael Schroll, Senior Specialist, Eval. &amp; Learning</li> <li>• Marc Theuss, Specialist Eval. &amp; Learning</li> <li>• Olga Varetska, Specialist</li> <li>• Rita M Benitez, Specialist, Learning and Dissemination</li> <li>• Roy Mutandwa, Specialist, C19RM Evaluation (Joining ELO as of Oct 2023)</li> </ul> <p><b>Legal and Governance Department</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Etienne Michaud, Chief Counsel</li> <li>• Madalina Ciasar, Legal Counsel</li> <li>• Maximilian Mueller, Lead, Governance Operations and Advisory (Day 1)</li> </ul> <p><b>Ethics Office</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• H�el�ene Cloet Galibourg, Ethics Office (opening sessions)</li> </ul>

## Annex B: Agenda

Day 1: Wednesday 13 <sup>th</sup> September				
Time -PM <sup>1</sup>	Agenda Item	Session Purpose	Lead/Presenter(s)	Document for advance review
1:00-1:20	Opening and updates from Chair Welcome/Intro new members ELO Operational update	For information	George Gotsadze John Grove Hélène Cloet Galibourg (Ethics Office)	Document 01 – CELO Operational Update
1:20-2:00	Annual evaluation workplan for 2024, (session 1 of 2)	For discussion	John Grove (Chair) John P	Document 03A - 2024 Workplan Overview and initial pre-scoping on evaluation topics  Document 03B: SC Decision Paper: Annual evaluation workplan and budget 2024
2:00-2:20	Development of a document procedure (session 1 of 2)	For discussion	Rhiannon James Etienne Michaud (LGD)	Document 04 - SC Decision Paper Draft: Document Procedure
2:20-2:30	Break			
2:30-3:30	Brief updates on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Strategic Review/SR2023</li> <li>Resource Allocation Methodology/RAM</li> <li>Imbizo</li> <li>Evaluation Policy/Principles</li> </ul>	For information	Cindy Carlson (Chair) Relevant IEP FPs and ELO members	Document 05 - Update on 2023 ongoing evaluations and activities  Document 06 - Considering an evaluation policy for the Global Fund - Update
3.30-4.00	Quality Assessment Framework	For discussion	George Gotsadze (Chair) IEP FPs	Document 07A Cover note for the Quality Assessment Framework  Document 07B Quality Assessment Framework
Day 2: Thursday 14 <sup>th</sup> September				
1:00-1.40	Joint update on revision of the Standard Operating Procedures	For discussion	George Gotsadze & John Grove	Document 02 - ELO & IEP Leadership joint document
1:40 -2:00	Document Procedure	Update	Cindy Carlson	
2-3.15	IEP Closed Session			
3.15-3.20	Break			
3:20-3:40	Feedback from IEP on SOP discussion and the document procedures to the SC. (session 2 of 2)	Decision by IEP on recommendation of the document procedures to the SC. (session 2)	Chair – Cindy Carlson	
3.40-4.00	Annual evaluation workplan for 2024, including budget (session 2 of 2)	Decision by IEP on recommendation of the 2024 annual workplan and budget to the SC	Chair - George Gotsadze	Document 03B - SC Decision Paper Draft: Annual evaluation workplan and budget 2024
4:00	AOB and wrap up	For guidance and discussion	George Gotsadze & John Grove	