

39th Board Meeting

2017 Executive Director Selection Process Lessons Learned Summary Report

GF/B39/18

09-10 May 2018, Skopje

Board Information

Purpose of the paper: The purpose of this paper is to provide a high-level summary of the results of the lessons learned review of the 2017 Executive Director selection process that was recently completed by the Ethics and Governance Committee.

Executive Summary

Context

The 2017 Executive Director selection process concluded successfully in November 2017. The Ethics and Governance Committee (“EGC”) has conducted a lessons learned review of the selection process in order to ascertain how the process could be further improved in the future as it endeavours to continuously improve key Board governance processes.

Questions this paper addresses

- A. *Why the need for another lessons learned review?*
- B. *What are the key observations on the most recent process?*
- C. *What are the lessons for the future?*

Conclusions

- A. Following the 2016 ED search, the EGC conducted a lessons learned review to assess what areas could be strengthened. Findings from the review were taken into account in devising the 2017 ED selection process. Notwithstanding the successful outcome of the process, the EGC deemed it important to review the completed process, to identify the strengths and any areas that could be further improved.
- B. The feedback received from the 2017 review was largely positive. Nevertheless, there are a number of areas for improvement.
- C. Several key lessons have been identified: clearly defining stakeholder roles throughout the entire process; allowing for sufficient time; ensuring the right balance between transparency and confidentiality; comprehensive communication; strengthening Board trust and engagement, and using improved IT platforms and tools.

Input Sought

The Board is requested to take note of the findings of this paper for information. No further action is required by the Board.

Input Received

The EGC received input from the anonymous lessons learned survey conducted in December 2017, as well as from additional feedback provided by key stakeholders. Input also included the results of the review undertaken for the 2016 ED selection process.

Why the need for another lessons learned review?

1. The appointment of Peter Sands as the new Executive Director on 14 November 2017 marked the successful conclusion of the 2017 ED selection process. The lessons learned from the previous search, interrupted in February 2017, were taken into account in devising the new process and contributed to the eventual successful outcome.
2. In the interest of continuously enhancing key governance processes, the EGC has undertaken a lessons learned review of the most recent process. Input came from an anonymous survey and additional targeted feedback provided by key stakeholders.
3. The following summary provides a high-level overview of the key observations and lessons learned. The purpose of the review was not to comment on the actual outcome of the selection process, but rather to ascertain what worked well and what could be further improved.

What are the key observations on the most recent process?

Feedback and input received

4. Feedback was obtained from two different sources:
 - i. an anonymous survey conducted in December 2017. Stakeholders were invited to provide feedback on several questions relating to the process. Members of the 2017 Executive Director Nomination Committee (“2017 EDNC”), the EGC, Board Leadership and their advisors, Board Members and Alternates and select Secretariat staff, including Staff Council, were invited to participate;
 - ii. key stakeholders, namely the Ethics Officer, the Chair and Vice-Chair of the 2017 EDNC, Board Leadership and their advisors, the executive search firm and the Coordinator of the 2017 EDNC were invited to provide additional more detailed feedback, which was documented separately.
5. The survey was sent to eighty individuals, of whom twenty-nine submitted responses.
6. Overall, the large majority of the respondents were either “satisfied” (55.2%) or “fully satisfied” (31%) with the selection process.
7. Respondents identified the following as positive elements:
 - the scope of the due diligence;
 - publication of the names of the final short-listed candidates;
 - the constituency engagement phase and the opportunity to meet and get to know the final candidates more informally;
 - the involvement of Staff Council;
 - greater transparency and enhanced communication.
8. Responses from both the anonymous survey and the additional feedback received highlighted the following recommendations for improvement:
 - greater engagement of constituencies in the initial candidate outreach to increase the number of candidates from the global South;
 - define and formalize the role of the crisis management team and the communications action plan;
 - improve the information technology used for updating the Board and during the constituency engagement phase;
 - clearly define the role of civil society in the selection process (e.g. whether separate calls with the final candidates should be held and led by civil society representatives);

- ensure that the same information is shared with all constituencies to prevent the circulation of misinformation on candidates.

What are the lessons for the future?

9. The recruitment of a new ED inevitably draws attention and speculation. In this respect, it is important to recall that the By-laws of the Global Fund provide that the Board should select the ED “*based on merit, in a non-political, open and competitive manner*”.¹ In order to achieve this, it is imperative to strike the right balance between confidentiality and transparency. It is equally important to ensure that all stakeholders are aligned on the process to ensure a successful outcome.
10. The following lessons summarize the 2017 process:
 - **sufficient time** should be allowed for all the stages of the process. This ensures broad candidate outreach and time for comprehensive due diligence and back ground checks on the candidates;
 - **achieving an adequate balance between confidentiality and transparency.** Although it is very important that stakeholders are kept informed, confidentiality must be maintained to protect the interests of the candidates and the integrity of the process;
 - **key stakeholder roles in the process must be clearly defined** so as to avoid duplication and confusion of tasks;
 - **communication and keeping stakeholders up-to-date on progress** is important for keeping them engaged and aligned during the various stages of the process;
 - **strengthening trust and engagement by the whole Board** is critical to achieving a successful outcome. Trust both in the process and in the key stakeholders is key;
 - **removal of candidate ranking.** The ranking of the final candidates proved problematic in the 2016 ED search and this should be avoided in future searches;
 - **use of improved IT platforms and tools** should be considered, in particular for sharing confidential information with the Board and ensuring constituencies are all equally informed.

¹ Art. 10.1 of the Bylaws of the Global Fund to Fight Aids, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF/B34/EDP07) as approved by the Board on 28 January 2016.