

Technical Evaluation Reference Group: Thematic Evaluation on Strategic Initiatives

TERG Position Paper, Management
Response and Final Report

December 2021

TERG Position Paper on Strategic Initiatives and Multi- Country Catalytic Investment Grants Evaluations

Executive Summary

Context

In addition to country allocations, the Global Fund allocates resources for catalytic investments, which comprise matching funds, multi-country grants (MCGs¹) and strategic initiatives (SIs)² deemed critical to meet the aims of the 2017-2022 Strategy and its Strategic Objectives (SOs)³. The thematic evaluations on MCGs and SIs were commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) to assess the contribution of MCGs and SIs to achieving the SOs of the Global Fund including, but not limited to, their catalytic effects. Due to the similarity of conclusions arising from both the MCG and SI evaluations, the TERG has decided to present a joint position paper on these evaluations, highlighting several key themes for the design of the next cycle of catalytic investments.

Questions this paper addresses

The paper provides the TERG's position on the MCG and SI evaluation reports, to help prioritize recommendations and further improve the design/selection, implementation, and impact of MCGs and SIs to provide key inputs for the Strategy Committee (SC) decisions about the next allocation cycle (2023-2025) for the post-2022 strategy.

Conclusions

Drawing from the findings, the two evaluation reports highlight the following overarching areas of conclusions on MCGs and SIs (detailed conclusions in Table 2, 3 and 4 (see page 8):

- **Selection and Prioritization of Grants:** The current approach to the selection of programmatic issues for MCGs and SIs mostly ensured relevance with the programmatic needs and alignment with and contribution to the SOs.
- **Grant Design:** The design of MCGs and SIs have improved over time. However, some design limitations have placed constraints on achieving their objectives.
- **Catalytic Effect and Added Value:** The MCGs and SIs were largely designed to add value and achieve some sort of the 'catalytic' outcome. However, there is a lack of consensus across the Global Fund landscape on what constitutes a catalytic effect.
- **Harmonization with Other Grants:** There are missed opportunities to harmonize the MCGs and SIs with other types of Global Fund support (e.g., where matching funds complement the SI support) or implemented by other agencies.
- **Performance Measurement:** There are challenges in measuring the performance of MCGs and SIs with a lack of metrics for catalytic and/or strategic intent.
- **Value for Money (VfM):** The 2017-2019 MCGs and SIs were not particularly set up to measure or manage for VfM. However, analysis suggests that some MCGs and SIs were more likely to offer VfM than other.
- **Management and Implementation:** Both SI's and MCG's have complex management and implementation arrangements, with high transaction costs partly due to multiple parties involved.

¹ Some countries pool their allocation to manage a multicountry program for better operational efficiencies, and these are allocation funded. This evaluation is focused on multi country catalytic investment Grants programs funded solely by catalytic funding (MC Catalytic Investments (CI))

² Matching funds, multi-country grants (MCGs) and strategic initiatives (SIs) are 2.5%, 1.8%, and 2.7% of the overall Global Fund investments and 35.5%, 26%, and 38.5% of catalytic investments, respectively, based on Board Decision Point on Sources and Uses of Funds for the 2020-2022 Allocation Period, 42nd Board Meeting GF/B42/DP03, with adjustments based on November GAC decisions

³ GF/B35/DP10

TERG Position: The TERG broadly endorses the key findings, high-level conclusions and recommendations of the two evaluations with qualification/clarifications for some recommendations. The TERG is of the opinion that both types of investments should be continued going forward as both add value in their own ways. While acknowledging the marked improvements in the design and selection process of MCGs and SIs, the evaluations have identified some key issues that need priority consideration to enhance their impact. The TERG notes the conclusions and recommendations from both evaluations highlighting the need to:

- a) **Strengthen harmonization and coherence of catalytic investment design with country grants**, i.e., to provide a more holistic mapping of types of catalytic investment for transformational change. Greater attention needs to be paid to what is being covered in country grants and by other partners.
- b) Strengthen design through ensuring **a Theory of Change and that evaluation plans** are included in each investment case for clear catalytic effect and performance measurement.
- c) Further **strengthen implementation, governance and performance management arrangements**. This includes continuing to incentivize partner performance towards the achievement of results and to seek alternative partners where this is not occurring.

Furthermore, both evaluations underlined **the lack of a shared understanding by various Global Fund stakeholders of what “catalytic effect” means and the low priority given particularly to MCG grants (see page 7 across the Secretariat** (see more in table 5, annex 3 and 4) despite their value add **in areas that are not covered** by country grants. The catalytic nature of these investments would be better realized if **the SC facilitated a consensus on the definition of catalytic⁴; expected impacts from these modalities, including the risk if they are not implemented; and high-level principles to guide the selection topics that would most likely achieve that impact⁵.**

Based on the evidence in these two evaluations, **the TERG sees merit in merging these two types of catalytic investments**. This could help to streamline oversight and management, while facilitating the adoption of successful innovations employed by either the SI or MCGs at present.

Input Received

The scope of work and the evaluation questions were developed after extensive consultations with the Secretariat and the SC. These evaluations were conducted with substantial contributions from the Secretariat and further inputs from SC as well as relevant external partners and stakeholders.

⁴ SI Recommendation 1, MCG Recommendation 2

⁵ SI Recommendation 2, MCG Recommendation 2

Report

Part 1: Background

1. In addition to country allocations, the Global Fund allocates resources for catalytic investments, which comprise matching funds, multi-country grants (MCGs) and strategic initiatives (SIs)⁶. These investments incentivize the programming of country allocations for priority areas; support activities that may not be easily addressed by individual country grants in predefined areas in various geographic regions; as well as provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature respectively, to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Strategic Objectives (SOs)⁷.
2. The Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) commissioned thematic evaluations on SIs and on MCGs. The scope of work and evaluation questions were developed in consultation with the Strategy Committee (SC) and the Global Fund Secretariat. Relevant partners, such as WHO, UNAIDS, RBM, Stop TB Partnership, PEPFAR etc. and past SC leadership provided inputs into the evaluation. The overarching objective was to evaluate whether and how the SIs and MCGs contributed to achieving the SOs, including but not limited to their catalytic effects, to inform the discussions by the Board and SC for the 2023-2025 allocation period. The three main objectives of each of the evaluations can be found in Table 1 below:

Table 1: Main Objectives of the SI and MCG Evaluations

Strategic Initiative Evaluation	Multi-country Grants Evaluation
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main Objective 1: To review how, and on what basis, areas for SIs were selected and whether they have been sufficiently prioritized• Main Objective 2: To review the SI implementation arrangements and how performance was monitored to identify key contributing factors that made SI's more successful and• Main Objective 3: To assess whether the SIs have achieved their intended objectives, in particular the extent to which the SIs have been catalytic.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Main Objective 1: To evaluate whether and how multi-country catalytic investment grants contribute to achieving the strategic objectives of the Global Fund• Main Objective 2: To evaluate whether and how multi-country catalytic investment grants were able to effectively tackle regional bottlenecks and address cross-border and national issues and,• Main Objective 3: To evaluate the efficiency, effectiveness and equity of operationalization and implementation of multi-country catalytic investment grants to inform the 2023-2025 allocation cycle and multi-country grant priorities under the post-2022 Global Fund strategy.

3. **Methods and approaches:** Both evaluations drew heavily on secondary data and primary data collected through individual interviews and group discussions. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic

⁶ Matching funds, multi-country grants (MCGs) and strategic initiatives (SIs) are 2.5%, 1.8%, and 2.7% of the overall Global Fund investments and 35.5%, 26%, and 38.5% of catalytic investments, respectively, based on Board Decision Point on Sources and Uses of Funds for the 2020-2022 Allocation Period, 42nd Board Meeting GF/B42/DP03, with adjustments based on November GAC decisions

⁷ GF/B35/DP10

restrictions, all interviews were conducted remotely for both evaluations. The SI evaluation key informants (230 interviews) and relevant documentation were identified in consultation with the Secretariat, and especially the SI Project Management Office (SI-PMO), selected SIs leads/ focal points as well as implementing partners at central and country levels. For the MCG evaluation, 208 interviews were conducted including key stakeholder interviews at global, regional, and country levels. In addition to desk-based review of the documents, there was an on-line survey in three languages with a 30% response rate from 56 respondents out of 187 stakeholders surveyed. Finally, the overall conclusions were drawn from in-depth assessment of ten (10) out of more than twenty (20) SIs from both cycles and from eight (8) MCG case study reviews out of seventeen (17) MCG in the 2017-2019 allocation period.

4. **SI typology, country deep dives and definition:** Ten SIs⁸ were identified for in-depth exploration case studies in seven countries⁹. These SIs were clustered into three broad themes for analysis, which relate to areas of strategic importance to the Global Fund, i.e.,
 - a. Promoting/enhancing the uptake of innovations and introduction of new products
 - b. Strengthening and sustaining systems
 - c. Addressing areas that are at risk of being under-prioritized or de-prioritized.
5. **Eight MCGs¹⁰ and three country case studies for each selected MCG were purposively selected based on the following set of criteria:**
 - a. Mix of disease components (HIV/TB/malaria)
 - b. Mix of regions
 - c. Mix of RCMs/RO and other coordination/oversight bodies
 - d. Grant budget over \$5 million
 - e. Not included in the 2019 OIG Global Fund MCG review
6. Both evaluation teams drew upon the approach adopted in the SR2020 review¹¹, and defined 'catalytic' as leading to one or more of the following operational criteria being met:
 - **More:** Additional funding is leveraged from other sources and/or additional activities are implemented
 - **Improved:** Activities that were conducted previously are now appreciably more efficient, effective and/or strategic
 - **Unique, new or innovative:** Activities or contributions that are exclusive or exceptional to catalytic funding and/or those that are entirely new, original or initiated because of catalytic funding and
 - **Faster:** Activities that were implemented previously but are now being implemented at an accelerated pace.

Furthermore, the SI team drew upon from the definition of the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) which described a two-track framework for **catalytic change**, with the two aspects being 'transformative' (growth-enhancing change) and 'crowding-in' effects.

⁸ AGYW, TB preventive treatment, STE, PSM-diagnostic and planning, Malaria New nets, TB missing cases, Malaria eliminations, SDI-labs, Data, CCM evolution pilot.

⁹ Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Eswatini, Mozambique, Nepal, Tajikistan, and Tanzania

¹⁰ Americas Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative QRA-M-IDB (MCG RMEI)- Malaria elimination, Elimination of malaria in Southern Africa QPA-M-LSDI(MCG MOSASWA)-Malaria -elimination, TB in the mining sector (MCGWHC)-TB -missing cases, TB West and Central Africa NTP/SRL Cotonou QMZ-T-PNT(MCG NTP/SRL)-TB -lab strengthening, TB Interventions among migrants and mobile populations in Mekong QMZ-T-UNOPS (MCG TB UNOPS)-TB -migrants, HIV-Sustainability of Services for key population (KP) in EECA region QMZ-H-AU(MCG EECAAPH)-HIV KPs, Sustainability of services for Key Populations in the MENA region QMZ-H-FA (MCG MENA)-HIV -migrants, Sustainability of HIV Services for Key Populations in Asia Program QMZ-H-AFAO(MCG SEA AFAO-HIV KPs

¹¹ Technical Evaluation Reference Group Position Paper: Strategic Review 2020. Volume 2: Annexes. 31 August 2020, pp. 107-108. https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10496/terg_strategicreview2020position_annexes_en.pdf

Using the above criteria, the evaluation teams determined the extent to which the SIs and MCGs were catalytic: a) by design; b) in implementation; and c) in results.

7. **Key Limitations of the evaluations:** The limited number of countries for the validation of SIs constrained the ability to determine how SIs complement country grants in different setups and regions; multiple components of some complex SIs (e.g., STE, PSM, Data) posed a major constraint to coherent evaluation and analysis; and COVID-19 disruptions was a limitation for both evaluations. Further, there was lack of/limited availability of data on results/impact of the 2017-2019 allocation period (NFM2) and at the outset of the 2020-2022 allocation period (NFM3). For the MCG evaluation, which started later than the SI evaluation, the time frame for the evaluation was particularly tight as the final reports were needed in time for submission together with the TERG position paper and management response to the 17th SC meeting in October 2021.

Part 2: Findings, Conclusions and Recommendations from the Strategic initiatives and Multi Country Catalytic Grant evaluation Reports

8. The SI and MCG evaluation findings were mapped to the objectives and evaluation questions (the complete findings are provided in the SI and MCG reports on pages 15-48 and 11-42 respectively). Some of the findings include:

Similar findings from both evaluations

- SIs and MCGs in the 2017-2019 allocation period showed limited shared understanding between the Board/SC, Grant Approval Committee (GAC), Secretariat and Partners of the meaning of the term 'catalytic', little clarity on how these grants should achieve a catalytic and/or strategic effect, and no metrics for assessing achievement of catalytic/strategic intent.
- Both evaluations found significant challenges with use of performance measures. The MCG team found that harmonizing specific indicators across multiple countries created challenges, while the SI team suggested that the 2017-2019 SIs had results frameworks of variable quality. For the 2020-2022 allocation period, all but one of the SIs reviewed have improved management performance frameworks, with clearer results frameworks developed, including more robust metrics that are better aligned with existing data reporting mechanisms or tools.
- The 2017-2019 SIs and MCGs were not set up to measure or manage for VfM and as such have generated insufficient evidence to demonstrate VfM. Nonetheless, analysis suggests that some SIs and MCGs are more likely to offer VfM than others, with key drivers being a clear and coherent design, reasonable project management costs and regular Secretariat and implementing partner engagement.
- The evaluation found that there had been varied alignment between MCGs or SIs and country grants, with implementation often done in parallel for both type of investments. MCG development appeared to have had more engagement from Secretariat Country Teams (CTs) and country stakeholders while SIs have had much less engagement from either.
- The MCGs and SIs were found to have experienced a number of management, governance and accountability challenges during the 2017-2019 period. Both SI's and MCG's had complex management and implementation arrangements. Also the transaction costs for both were high partly due to the multiple parties involved. In the case of MCGs, the evaluation found cumbersome, multi-layered reporting lines often consisting of one or more regional

PRs and a cluster of national Co-PRs, SRs and SSRs, with the associated hierarchies of reporting and communication and data aggregation in the 2017-2019 allocation period, which led to difficulties with making changes to grants to respond to the changing circumstances or to get approval for innovative models. For SIs concerns were raised about changes to types of contracting that could increase transaction costs.

- While recognizing the constraints imposed by the Global Fund replenishment cycle, the three-year funding cycle was seen as very limiting to both SI and MCG modalities especially given the inherent delays in start-up due to the multiple partners involved.

SI specific findings

- There is some indication that the SIs that best demonstrate (or have the potential to demonstrate) a catalytic effect are those with a strong focus on scaling up access to and utilization of new/innovative/unique technologies and approaches at the country level with the aim of specific programme improvement, such as New Nets, TB Missing Cases, and Malaria Elimination.

MCG specific findings

- The MCG evaluation identified that the MCGs appeared to have a low priority within the Secretariat with more attention paid to country grants, which are much larger and the main priority for CTs. Although they add value to the country grants, the lack of attention, support and resources to manage the additional complexities and risks associated with MCG potentially limits the impact that could be achieved by them.
- Consistent with the finding in the OIG's review in 2019, the continued weakness of most regional coordination mechanisms and regional organizations, which are largely under resourced or not resourced at all from the grants, is constraining governance functions. This includes limited oversight function which constitutes a risk. Support to a small number of MCG's from the CCM Hub has been positively received and more proactive support in the future would be of benefit.

9. The evaluations have drawn high level conclusions in relation to the findings across the three main objectives pillars for each. The SI evaluation identified five conclusions, while the MCG evaluation identified eight conclusions, spanning strategy and operational aspects. Tables 2, 3 and 4 below show highlights where both evaluations drew similar conclusions from their findings, as well as the evaluation specific conclusions.

Table 2: SI and MCG Similar High-level Conclusions

SI Evaluation Conclusions	MCG Evaluation Conclusions
Selection and Prioritisation Broadly Appropriate though Challenges Remain	
C1. The current approach to the selection of programmatic issues for SIs to focus on has ensured that SIs are relevant to programmatic	C1.1(a) In general, MCGs have demonstrated clear contributions towards achieving the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives, primarily SO1, with

<p>needs and aligned with the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.</p> <p>The SIs do not however address all the most critical issues affecting the achievement of the Global Fund Strategy, and it is not always clear how/why some issues were selected over others.</p>	<p>limited contributions to the other strategic objectives.</p> <p>C1.2 The criteria and processes used to select and prioritize MCGs are broadly appropriate and have yielded a set of grants that individually had clear rationales and strong strategic justification for multi-country approaches.</p>
<p>Weak Consensus on Definition of Catalytic Effect but Demonstrated Added Value</p>	
<p>C2. Despite a lack of clarity on what is meant by the term 'catalytic', the SIs are largely designed to add value and achieve some sort of 'catalytic' outcome. They are, however, inadequate in and of themselves to resolve the issues they are targeted towards. Given their limited funding and scope, they should not be seen as a panacea, and there is only limited evidence that the SIs have systematically been used to leverage the wider systems-scale change required to meaningfully address the issues that the SIs are intended to address.</p>	<p>C1.1(b) Challenges in measuring MCG performance have left question marks over the extent to which MCGs have demonstrated a clear and catalytic effect</p> <p>C2.2 MCGs are adding value to country grants and are generally responsive to regional needs. However, the extent to which they are strengthening regional capacity is varied, and prospects for sustainability more generally are limited.</p>
<p>C3. While SI design has improved over time, design limitations persist that constrain the SIs to achieve the desired catalytic intent, for instance, poorly defined intervention logic linking outputs to outcomes and impacts. SI designs have also suffered from a lack of country stakeholder engagement, poorly defined performance frameworks, and limited planning for sustainability.</p>	<p>C.1(c) Decisions on the prioritization of MCGs have been taken in isolation from decisions on grant design, such as budget envelope, implementation timeframes compared with country grants, management and governance arrangements, and considerations of risk management. This has been a contributory factor to sub-optimal design of some MCGs</p>
<p>Weak Harmonization with Other Grant Funding</p>	
<p>C4. There have been missed opportunities to fully harmonize the SIs to other types of Global Fund support (e.g., where matching funds complement the SI support at the country level and SIs support core grant implementation). This has constrained SI effectiveness at country level because it limits opportunities for synergy and reducing overlaps and does not take advantage of the Fund's broader infrastructure for country-led programming.</p>	<p>Limited Secretariat engagement in managing the complexities of MCGs; low relative priority given to MCGs amongst other competing Secretariat priorities; complex management arrangements; and local contextual factors have hampered MCG implementation and their effectiveness.</p>

Table 3: SI Specific Conclusions

SI Evaluation Conclusions
<p>C5. Between the first and the second allocation periods, improvements in partner contracting, SI coordination, implementation, planning and reporting across the portfolio indicate a capacity to learn from experience and to respond positively to various reviews. This will be needed as the Global Fund considers how to adapt its business model to address known issues and achieve the more difficult areas of its Strategy.</p>

Table 4: MCG Specific Conclusions

MCG Evaluation Conclusions
<p>C2.1 Partnerships have been an important factor in the success of many MCGs in tackling regional bottlenecks and addressing cross-border issues, with several successful partnerships established with non-standard partners, including development banks and the private sector.</p>
<p>C2.3 The regional governance function remains weak, due in part to limited Global Fund Secretariat buy-in and support.</p>
<p>C3.1 Two sets of constraining factors have hampered implementation for many MCGs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Global Fund business model - Constraints include MCGs generally being treated as low priority across the whole Global Fund business model, resulting in limited Secretariat engagement and support to help manage the additional complexities associated with the grants. • Contextual factors. Constraints include political sensitivities associated with cross-border implementation and sharing of information, and the establishment of complex management arrangements to try to overcome these constraints
<p>C3.2 MCG program management-related costs are variable, as are Secretariat transaction costs.</p>
<p>C3.3 Key lessons learned across the MCGs are related to: the importance of improved risk identification and mitigation; the need to simplify complex management and implementation arrangements, which not only increase the cost but also inhibit innovation; opportunities for enhanced communication; the critical need for stronger and grant-specific performance measurement; and the need to explore more flexible funding cycles</p>

- The recommendations suggest approaches for strengthening design, implementation, and results aspects of these catalytic investments for consideration in the development of the next strategy. There is already good progress and improvement in SI design elements for the 2020-2022 cycle following the OIG advisory and SI boost initiatives. **The evaluations highlight the following as critical to the Global Fund to consolidate and accelerate its impact through SIs and MCGs investments** (see evaluation high summary recommendations in annex 3 for SI evaluation and annex 4 for MCG evaluation). Table 5 provides a summary of the high-level recommendations from both evaluations.

Table 5: Summary Recommendations

Recommendation Theme	
Strategic Initiative Evaluation Recommendations	Multi-Country Grant Recommendations
Maintain catalytic investments for areas adding value	
N/A	R1. Maintain MCGs as a priority investment area for activities that demonstrably add value over and above what country grants can deliver to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.
Develop agreed definition of 'catalytic'	
R1. The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent, and shared definition of what 'catalytic' means to the Global Fund. Alongside this, develop catalytic criteria that are measurable and relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality.	R2(a). Strengthen MCG selection, prioritization, design and review processes by developing an agreed definition of 'catalytic' as applied to all catalytic investments that is used consistently across the Board, SC, GAC, TRP and Secretariat;
Strengthen criteria for prioritisation and selection of areas for catalytic investment	
<p>R2. The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. the level of programmatic risk they pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives. 2. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multi-country grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; 3. the robustness of a business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs. <p>These changes should result in fewer, but more strategically focused SIs, with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.</p>	<p>R2(b) Strengthen MCG selection, prioritization, design processes by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Estimating financial needs and resource availability and including these considerations as part of MCG selection and prioritization criteria. • Strengthening consideration of sustainability in MCG selection and prioritization. • Strengthening design through more robust risk matrices that consider risks associated with the complexities of MCG implementation.

Strengthen design through ensuring a Theory of Change and evaluation /review are included in each investment case	
<p>R3. The Secretariat should continue to strengthen the SI design process such that:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe. 2. the inclusion of a robust theory of change that defines where the SI fits within the Global Fund funding universe. 3. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and 4. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design. 	<p>R2(c) Strengthening MCG designs through the inclusion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • robust theories of change (TOC) that present well-defined intervention logic linking outputs to outcomes and impacts, and include risks and critical assumptions, • reviews after two years, taking into consideration a timely grant start-up, to allow for course correction or discontinuation, • providing the TRP with more time and guidance to consider complex design features of MCGs including landscape analysis and risk management of contextual factors.
Strengthen harmonisation and coherence of catalytic investment design with other grant funding	
<p>R4. The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund's broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across Global Fund stakeholders.</p>	<p>R2(c) Strengthening MCG designs through the inclusion of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comprehensive landscape analyses to identify gaps and overlaps with country grants, other catalytic investments and initiatives funded or implemented by other agencies,
Strengthen implementation and performance management arrangements	
<p>R5. The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management, and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented and the partner implementing them.</p> <p>Additionally, continue to incentivize partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is up-front agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.</p>	<p>R2(d): Strengthening MCG review processes through:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a limited set of grant-specific performance measures focused on output/outcome levels, <p>R3: Continue to strengthen MCG implementation and governance arrangements through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising the profile of MCGs across the Global Fund • Streamlining MCG management and implementation arrangements • Building on partnership successes • Building regional governance capacity • Exploring more flexible funding cycles that include mid-term review/evaluations

Part 3: TERG POSITION

11. The TERG broadly endorses each evaluation's key findings and the high-level conclusions. The TERG particularly commends the Global Fund's use of lessons learned on SI and MCG grants in the 2017-2019 cycle to improve the design and implementation of these catalytic investments identified and demonstrated by these evaluations.

Table 6: Mapped TERG position with Review recommendations and Conclusions

TERG position	Review recommendations mapped to conclusions for SI	Review recommendations mapped to conclusions for MCG
1. Continuation of catalytic investments	N/A ¹²	R1, C1.1/ C2.2
2. Contribution to SOs	N/A	C1.1
3. Define better what catalytic means	R1, C 2	C1.1
4. Selection and prioritization criteria	R1&2	R 2, C1.2/ C2.2/ C3.1/ C3.2
5. Strengthening performance measurement and management	R3, C3b	R3, C2.1/ C2.3/ C3.1/ C3.3
6. Ensuring greater coherence	R4, C 4	C1
7. Designing for higher relevance and sustainability	R3, C3	N/A
8. Implementation and risk management	R5, C5	N/A
9. Merit in merging SIs and MCGs into a single fund	N/A	N/A

12. The TERG concludes that the main objectives of the SI and MCG evaluations have been covered well, despite the constraints under which the teams had to work. Due to the similarity of analysis and conclusions arising from both the SI and MCG evaluations, the TERG has decided to present a joint position on these evaluations, drawing on several key themes that need attention in the design of the next cycle of catalytic investments.
13. **Continuation of catalytic investments:** The TERG agrees with the explicit recommendation in the MCG evaluation “**Strategic Recommendation 1: Maintain MCGs as a priority investment area for activities that demonstrably add value over and above what country grants can deliver to meet the Global Fund’s Strategic Objectives**” and implied conclusion in the SI evaluation that both types of investments should be continued going forward. Both are adding value in their own ways. The TERG supports the recommendations for strengthening the selection, design, implementation and review processes suggested by both reports.
14. The TERG is concerned with the conclusion (C.1.1) that the MCG’s have made a limited contribution to SO’s other than SO1. For SI and MCG’s there is a particular comparative

¹² Not applicable

advantage over country grants associated with key populations and human rights and gender (HRG). SO3 HRG is key to the Global Fund achieving impact but it is also an area that continues to challenge. SI and MCGs in these areas provide a legitimacy and a safe space for civil society implementation on issues that are very sensitive at the country level while recognizing that one of their aims must be to advocate for country ownership.

15. **Definition of catalytic:** The TERG notes the evaluation findings that the varied interpretations of what ‘catalytic’ means has created challenges for determining selection and prioritization criteria for both types of funding. The TERG suggests that attention be given to SI Conclusion 1, which highlights that, while all Strategic Initiatives have relevance, it’s not clear why these particular areas were proposed above other strategic priorities. At a more fundamental level the TERG agrees with the SI and MCG evaluations’ conclusions 2 and 1.1, respectively, that there needs to be a much clearer understanding and definition of ‘catalytic’ for the Global Fund. The ‘more’, improved’, ‘unique, new or innovative’ and ‘faster’ framework used by the SI and MCG evaluation teams, building on the work of the SR2020, appears appropriate, with improved, innovative and faster having greater potential for fostering a transformative effect. As such, Recommendations 1 and 2 of the SI evaluation and Recommendation 2 of the MCG evaluation will need rapid attention to inform the elaboration of selection and prioritization criteria for the next cycle of catalytic funding for 2023 onwards, as well as setting out what the priority areas are for each type of catalytic investment. A more proactive approach to determining what catalytic investments should cover would help to lessen the chances that key areas that should be covered by catalytic investments are neglected.
16. **Strengthening performance measurement and management:** Building on the findings and conclusions around the lack of a shared understanding of catalytic effect, the TERG also agrees with both evaluations’ recommendation that each SI and MCG needs to have an associated Theory of Change that indicates how processes, outputs and outcomes from each investment will produce a catalytic effect. Both types of funding should then ensure that SIs and MCGs have a robust performance framework and evaluation plan according to the Theory of Change.
17. **Ensuring greater coherence:** The design and implementation challenges highlighted in these evaluations could be partially addressed by resolving the harmonization and coordination challenges summarized in Conclusion 1 (MCG) and Conclusion 4 (SI). The TERG agrees that the Secretariat needs to provide a more holistic mapping of which types of catalytic investment would provide the most appropriate means of implementing SC/Board determined priorities for transformational change. Greater attention needs to be paid to what is being covered in country grants and by other partners for those countries also benefitting from catalytic investments. We therefore fully endorse both teams’ recommendations whereby the Secretariat needs to identify, and implement, better prioritized, and harmonized catalytic investments.
18. **Designing for higher relevance and sustainability:** Related to greater coherence, especially in the design of catalytic investments, the TERG agrees with the SI Conclusion 3 on some of the design challenges that strategic initiatives have faced. SR2017 noted early in the 2017-2019 funding cycle that “...there are...some concerns that catalytic funding may undermine country ownership and skew programming and resourcing toward a set of issues defined by the Secretariat; and that country teams may spend a disproportionate amount of time programming relatively small amounts of catalytic funding to the detriment of the overall grant implementation process.” The first part of the above statement has been borne out in this current SI evaluation, and to some extent the second part as well. As such, the TERG agrees with SI Recommendation 3 that the Secretariat and Global Fund partners should continue to strengthen the SI design process, while acknowledging the potential challenges with operationalizing these. For both SIs and MCGs, the design process would be also strengthened by theories of change, in addition

to the performance management and measurement above; and by ensuring consultation with stakeholders at the country level during the design stage.

19. In particular, the Secretariat and/or proposed implementing partners for each MCG/SI need to take on responsibility for ensuring that stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the design, country selection, and implementation timeframe and arrangements. The proposed implementing partner/s will also need to ensure an exit strategy or sustainability plan in place.
20. **Implementation and risk management:** Part of the design of the new cycle of Catalytic Investments will need to consider the areas discussed above together with addressing other challenges mentioned in the SI and MCG evaluation reports. These include who implements the work financed under SI and MCG funds; how they are contracted; and how they are implemented.
 - Who implements: While not explicitly mentioned in the Conclusions and Recommendations of the SI and MCG reports, having greater clarity on the definition of catalytic and what areas most need to be covered under the 'catalytic' umbrella will be important for informing any decisions about who then would make the most appropriate implementing partner for individual SIs and MCGs. The MCG experience indicates that these grants have successfully worked with a larger pool of partners and more innovative partner arrangements. The SI evaluation suggest that there has been little open competition for implementing partners for SI, and that the existing set of partners have been very influential in determining what areas are covered by catalytic funding. Learning from the MCG experience and taking a more holistic approach to determining what needs to be covered by these funds, there should also be opportunities for inviting a wider range of partners, including the private sector, to then support the design and implementation of SIs and MCGs going forward. With stronger performance measures, the Global Fund would also be in a better position to hold implementing partners to account, and to seek alternative implementers when performance is found wanting.
 - How contracted: The TERG is concerned by the findings on SIs that the Global Fund appears to have re-introduced elements of input-based contracting, potentially detracting from a focus on producing outcomes. Given that many of the 2017 – 2019 contracts were eventually able to demonstrate output and/or outcome related results, albeit were delayed in doing so, applying input-based elements to contracting doesn't seem necessary. The TERG is worried that this could disincentivize a drive towards more transformational results, and this should be reconsidered for the new cycle. TERG agrees with SI Recommendation 5 that types of contractual arrangements need to evolve further and would go further to recommend a return to more purely results-based contracting.
 - Implementation arrangements: The evaluation reports found different types of challenges related to the complex implementation arrangements of SIs and MCGs, although both cases often create high transaction costs. For MCGs the TERG agrees that a rethink is needed for coordination, communications and approvals so that protocols for these are streamlined. The TERG notes for consideration the suggestion that applying the same business model used for country grants to MCG (e.g. PR, SR, SSR in multiple countries) may not be appropriate and should be rethought and simplified. For SIs, issues of lack of transparency in the 2017- 2019 cycle are being resolved through more rigorous reporting requirements.
21. A further implementation challenge reported in the MCG report is the perceived lack of priority accorded to MCGs as implementation management lies primarily with the teams that are also managing country grant portfolios. Given the success of establishing the SI Program Management Office **there may be some merit in merging the SIs and MCGs into a single pool of funds** and bringing MCG management into the same management office to ensure that these grants receive sufficient attention going forward. Both types of investments are essentially

‘multi-country’. The ‘regionality’ of some of the merged funds could still be maintained and could be enhanced through more attention being paid by being under the PMO.

22. Finally, the TERG notes with concern observations by both evaluations on weak country partner engagement, especially CCM, in overseeing implementation of these grants in their countries. SOPs and other process documents need to provide explicit guidance on ensuring sufficient CCM and country partner engagement in both design and implementation of these investments.
23. **Risk management:** The TERG agrees that each catalytic SI and MCG funding proposal should include robust due diligence and identification of potential risks and risk mitigation, given the complexities of both implementation and governance arrangements, together with mitigation strategies. This would need to be done as part of both the selection and design processes.

Annexes

The following items can be found in Annex:

- Annex 1: Relevant Past Board Decisions
- Annex 2: Links to Relevant Past Documents & Reference Materials
- Annex 3: SI full recommendations
- Annex 4: MCG full recommendations
- Annex 5: List of Abbreviations

Annex 1 – Relevant Past Board Decisions

Relevant past Decision Point	Summary and Impact
GF/B41/03: Catalytic Investments for the 2020-2022 Allocation Period Revision 1, 15-16 May 2019, Geneva	<p>Based on the recommendation of the Strategy Committee (the “SC”), as presented in GF/B41/03 – Revision 1, the Board:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Acknowledges that the total amount of sources of funds for allocation for the 2020-2022 allocation period will be decided by the Board in November 2019, based on the recommendation of the Audit and Finance Committee following announced replenishment results from the 6th Replenishment.2. Approves that the total amount of funding for catalytic investments in the 2020-2022 allocation period, as described in the Allocation Methodology approved under GF/B41/DP03, will be determined by the total amount of sources of funds for allocation for the 2020-2022 allocation period;3. Approves catalytic investments for the 2020 – 2022 allocation period as set forth in the five scenarios of total funding in the replenishment.

Relevant past Decision Point	Summary and Impact
	<p>4. Requests the Secretariat to return to the SC with a new recommendation on catalytic investments if sources of funds for allocation for the 2020 – 2022 allocation period are below USD 10.1 billion, for SC recommendation to the Board;</p> <p>5. Agrees that in the event that sources of funds for allocation for the 2020-2022 allocation period are above the midpoint of the funding range specified for a scenario above, the Secretariat may recommend the Board to approve an additional total amount up to USD 100 million for catalytic investments, to be invested in the priority areas for the scenario immediately preceding the applicable scenario in the list above.</p> <p>6. Requests the Secretariat to (i) implement a rigorous approval process for all catalytic investments, including strategic initiatives, by a review body with clear and transparent management of conflicts of interest to maintain the integrity of decision making, whether financial or programmatic; (ii) execute a credible, robust technical review process on the activities, mechanisms, and the requested amounts; and (iii) report regularly to the SC on all catalytic investments; and</p> <p>7. Notes the Secretariat will (i) have flexibility to operationalize catalytic investments; (ii) update the SC and Board on such operationalization; (iii) have flexibility to reallocate associated costs among the approved priorities under any applicable scenario, within 10% of the approved amount of associated costs for a specific priority; and (iv) present any reallocations of associated costs exceeding 10% for a specific priority for the SC's approval.</p>

Relevant past Decision Point	Summary and Impact
GF/B36/04 : Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period.– Revision 2, 16-17 November 2016	<p>As part of the allocation methodology approved by the Board in April 2016, up to USD 800 million is available for catalytic investments to catalyze country allocations to ensure they deliver against the aims of the 2017-2022 Global Fund Strategy (“the Strategy”). In view of the total sources of funds for allocation recommended to the Board for use in the 2017-2019 allocation period, the Strategy Committee recommends that the full USD 800 million be made available for catalytic investments</p>
GF/B36/DP06 : Catalytic Investments for the 2017- 2019 Allocation Period (November 2016)	<p>Based on the recommendation of the Strategy Committee (the “SC”) and the amount of sources of funds for allocation recommended by the Audit and Finance Committee in GF/B36/03, the Board: (i) Approved USD 800 million for catalytic investments over the 2017 - 2019 allocation period for the priorities and associated costs presented in Table 1 of GF/B36/04 - Revision 2, of which no portion will be moved to further balance scale up, impact and paced reductions through country allocations. (ii) Noted the Secretariat will have flexibility to operationalize catalytic investments, update the SC and Board on such operationalization, and present any reallocations of the associated costs among the approved priorities for the SC's approval. (iii) Requested the Secretariat to provide the SC with a scope of effort and expected outcomes at the start of all strategic initiatives and to seek SC approval during implementation if there is a substantial change to the relevant strategic initiative's scope</p>
GF/B36/DP05 and GF/B35/05 – Revision 1: Sources and Uses of Funds for the 2017- 2019 Allocation Period (November 2016)	<p>The Board approved USD 800 million for catalytic investments. The Board also decided that USD 10.3 million would be available for country allocations for the 2017-2019 allocation period, of which USD 800 million is to ensure scale up, impact and paced reductions</p>

Relevant past Decision Point	Summary and Impact
GF/B31/DP06 : Special Initiatives (March 2014)	<p>The Board notes that a portion of sources of funds may be excluded from the allocation to Country Bands for future utilization towards initiatives that are not adequately accommodated through the allocation of resources to Country Bands (Annex 1 to GF/B27/DP7) (the “Special Initiatives”)</p> <p>2. Based on the recommendation of the Strategy, Investment and Impact Committee (the “SIIC”), the Board decided that up to USD 100 million will be available over the 2014 – 2016 allocation period for the following Special Initiatives, as described in GF/B31/08A – Revision 1, in the amounts listed below: a. USD 30 million for the Humanitarian Emergency Fund; b. USD 17 million for Country Data Systems; c. USD 29 million for Technical Assistance for Strong Concept Notes and PR Grant-making Capacity Building; d. USD 15 million for Technical Assistance on Community, Rights and Gender; and e. USD 9 million for Enhancing Value for Money and Financial Sustainability of Global Fund Supported Programs.</p>
GF/B35/DP10 : Allocation methodology 2017-2019	<p>The Board approved the allocation methodology presented in GF/B35/05. One of the outcomes of this decision point has been that a refined approach to multi-country programs is to be reviewed by the Strategy Committee (SC). SC is to prepare recommendations to the Board on the priorities, activities or initiatives that may be funded as catalytic investments for the 2017 – 2019 allocation period.</p>

Annex 2 – Relevant Past Documents & Reference Materials

TRP Lessons Learned 2021

[Strategic Review 2020](#) (December 2020)

[TERG Position Paper : Strategic Review 2020](#) (December 2020) [TERG thematic review on partnerships, 2019](#)

TERG Position Paper: Review of Regional and Multi-country grants

Annex 3

Strategic Initiatives Recommendations mapped to conclusions

Recommendations
<p>R1. (Mapped to conclusion C2): The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent, and shared definition of what 'catalytic' means to the Global Fund. Alongside this, develop catalytic criteria that are measurable and relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality.</p>
<p>R2. (Mapped to conclusions C1, C2, C3): The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the level of programmatic risk they pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives; b. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multi-country grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; c. the robustness of a business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs. <p>These changes should result in fewer, but more strategically focused SIs, with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.</p>
<p>R3. (Mapped to conclusion C3): The Secretariat should continue to strengthen the SI design process such that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe; b. the inclusion of a robust theory of change that defines where the SI fits within the Global Fund funding universe; c. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and d. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design.
<p>R4. (Mapped to conclusion C4): The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund's broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across Global Fund stakeholders.</p>
<p>R5. (Mapped to conclusion C5): The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management, and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented and the partner implementing them. Additionally, continue to incentivise partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is up-front agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.</p>

Annex 4

MCGs Recommendations mapped to conclusions

Mapped to conclusions	Recommendation	Strategic/ Operational
C1.1/ C2.2	<p>1. Maintain MCGs as a priority investment area for activities that demonstrably add value over and above what country grants can deliver to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives</p> <p><u>Elaboration:</u> The evaluation noted that most MCGs have demonstrated, and have the potential to continue to demonstrate, clear contributions towards achieving the Global Fund's strategic objectives, primarily maximizing the impact of investments for HIV, TB and malaria (SO1). Contributions towards SO3 are less clear, largely because of the constraints highlighted by the evaluation of measuring grant performance in this area. Nevertheless, there is evidence, primarily through the MENA, EECA APH, SEA AFAO and some LAC grants, that some MCGs are facilitating a 'safe space' for tackling HRG issues that may not be addressed or even acknowledged at the country level. In this sense, MCGs are adding value to country grants and are generally responsive to regional needs. The strategic recommendation from this evaluation is that MCGs per se should therefore be maintained as a priority investment area. The following two recommendations are focused on selecting the <i>right</i> MCGs and ensuring that they perform in the <i>right way</i>, (leading to <i>right results</i>).</p>	Strategic
C1.2/ C2.2/ C3.1/ C3.2	<p>2. Strengthen MCG selection, prioritization and review processes by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing an agreed definition of 'catalytic' as applied to all catalytic investments that is used consistently across Board, SC, GAC, TRP and Secretariat • Estimating financial needs and resource availability and including these considerations as part of MCG selection and prioritization criteria • Strengthening consideration of sustainability in MCG selection and prioritization • Strengthening MCG designs through the inclusion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ comprehensive landscape analyses to identify gaps and overlaps with country grants, other catalytic investments and initiatives funded or implemented by other agencies ◦ robust theories of change (TOC) that present well-defined intervention logic linking outputs to 	Operational

	<p>outcomes and impacts, and include risks and critical assumptions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o a limited set of grant-specific performance measures focused on output/ outcome levels o reviews after two years to allow for course correction and decisions on continuity/ discontinuity o more robust risk matrices that take into account risk associated with the complexities of MCG implementation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing the TRP with more time and guidance to consider complex design features of MCGs including landscape analysis and risk management of contextual factors. <p><u>Elaboration:</u> The evaluation noted that the resources needed to implement MCGs were not always fully considered in these processes. Given the complexities of MCGs and the associated higher risks, the evaluation recommends that the TRP review process should be strengthened through the provision of more time and Secretariat guidance. The bulk of the recommendation however, is focused on strengthening the design of MCGs, as the evaluation identified several design weaknesses. While the inclusion of theories of change is now mandatory in the MCG application guidelines, this needs specific guidance, including the provision of examples of TOCs that include the critical assumptions that underpin a robust TOC.</p> <p>The evaluation highlighted the weaknesses and constraints in MCG performance measurement, and while this is improving over time, it is suggested that performance can best be measured through grant-specific performance indicators, largely focused at output/ outcome levels and developed in collaboration with regional and country stakeholders. The evaluation also recommends that reviews/ evaluations are embedded in the MCG designs from the outset, which could include appropriate baseline, mid-line and end-line indicators.</p>	
C2.1/ C2.3/ C3.1/ C3.3	<p>3. Continue to strengthen MCG implementation and governance arrangements, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising the profile of MCGs across the Global Fund business model and either providing sufficient resources at Secretariat level to support effective MCG governance and implementation or outsourcing this to external agencies; 	Operational

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • streamlining MCG management and implementation arrangements where these are unwieldy or constrain MCG flexibilities to be innovative; • building on partnership successes and supporting FPMs and CTs to explore potential partnership arrangements beyond traditional partners (e.g. development banks or the private sector); • building regional governance capacity including, where necessary, through the provision of either internal or external technical assistance; • exploring more flexible funding cycles that include mid-term reviews/ evaluations to allow for course correction or discontinuation. <p><u>Elaboration:</u> The evaluation noted that MCGs in general are given low priority across the whole Global Fund business model, both by the Strategy Committee in its prioritization criteria in the 2020-2022 allocation period and by the Secretariat, in part due to competing priorities with significantly higher funding for core allocations. The evaluation therefore recommends that the Board and Strategy Committee proactively advocate for increased focus and resources to be devoted to MCGs. The evaluation further recommends that the Secretariat is appropriately resourced to support MCG implementation and governance, although these could also be supported by the engagement of external technical assistance.</p> <p>Because of the complexities of MCGs, their management and implementation arrangements are generally also complex, often consisting of one or more regional PRs and a cluster of national Co-PRs, SRs and SSRs, with the associated hierarchies of reporting and communication and data aggregation. This has led to significant delays in multiple areas, but perhaps the most critical relates to constraining the capacities of MCGs to respond flexibly and innovatively to evolving situations, which are more pervasive in MCGs than country grants. The evaluation therefore recommends that the Global Fund explores how best to streamline management arrangements including providing more flexibility in program and budget re-programming, with an associated risk management framework.</p> <p>The evaluation noted the value of partnerships in contributing toward the achievements of MCGs in tackling regional bottlenecks and addressing cross-border issues, and the establishment of successful partnerships with non-standard</p>	
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	<p>partners, including development banks and the private sector. The evaluation recommends that this is a potentially valuable area for further pursuit, including a mapping of regional partners across a range of sectors, and whether and how best these can be engaged to support MCG implementation. This will require Secretariat time and resources, and it is suggested that these are made available.</p> <p>Multiple stakeholders noted that the three-year implementation timeframe for MCGs was too constraining, given frequent delays in start-up, complexities in management and implementation, and ambitious objectives, especially for MCGs focused on advocacy and political change. Multiple stakeholders advocated for longer MCG implementation timeframes, and some noted that longer timeframes can cut down on the high transaction costs associated with MCGs in terms of start-up and partner contracting. However, the Secretariat also highlighted the constraints inherent in expanding the three-year timeframe, as a result of the Global Fund's three-year replenishment cycle.</p> <p>To address this tension, the evaluation suggests an approach adopted by other bi-lateral and multi-lateral funding agencies, where a five-year planning cycle is envisaged, with a review mid-cycle to allow for course correction or discontinuation if needed. This can be considered in the context of a longer-term vision for all catalytic investments.</p>	
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Annex 5 – List of Abbreviations

A2F	Access to Funding Department in the Global Fund
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
COVID - 19	Corona Virus Disease 2019
CSOs	Civil Society Organizations
CT	Country Team
FPMs	Fund Portfolio Managers
GF	The Global Fund
GAC	Grant Approvals Committee
GMD	Grant Management Division
HRG	Human Rights and Gender
KP	Key Populations
LFA	Local Fund Agent
MCGs	Multi-country grants
MOH	Ministry of Health
NFM	New funding model (1, 2 and 3)
OIG	Office of the Inspector General

PR	Principal Recipients
RCM	Regional Coordinating Mechanism
RFP	Request for Proposal
RMEI	Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative
RO	Regional Organization
RSSH	Resilient Sustainable Systems for Health
SC	Strategy Committee
SI	Strategic initiative
SOs	Strategic Objectives
SR	Sub-recipient
SR2020	The Global Fund Strategic Review 2020
TA	Technical Assistance
TAP	Technical Advice and Partnerships
TB	Tuberculosis
TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group
TOC	Theory of change
TOR	Terms of Reference
TRP	Technical Review Panel
VfM	Value for Money

Secretariat Management Response

Thematic Evaluations of Strategic Initiatives & Multi-Country Catalytic Investment Grants

Introduction

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) is a critical component of the Global Partnership, providing independent evaluations of the Global Fund's business model, investments, and impact to the Global Fund Board through its Strategy Committee. The Global Fund values transparency and publishes TERG reports according to the TERG Documents Procedure approved by the Strategy Committee.

In the preparation period for the 2023-2025 allocation cycle and the 2023-2028 Global Fund Strategy, the TERG commissioned independent thematic evaluations of two of the three catalytic investment modalities - Strategic Initiatives (SIs) & Multi-Country Catalytic Investment Grants (MCGs).¹ The objective of the SI evaluation was to review how, and on what basis, SI's were selected and prioritized, their implementation and performance management arrangements, and assess how and whether these have achieved their intended objectives and catalytic effect. The MCG evaluation focused on whether, and how, grants emerging from this modality have contributed to the Strategy, whether they have been effective at addressing regional and cross-border and national issues, and to what extent they have achieved their intended objectives. The Secretariat welcomes the timeliness of these reviews which will help inform discussions around the 2023-2025 catalytic investment priorities and broadly endorses the overall findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluations, as well as the TERG position. The Secretariat notes that due to timing of these reviews that the primary focus of the evaluations was on the 2017-2019 allocation cycle and the preparations for 2020-2022 cycle. The Secretariat agrees with the review findings that there were challenges for both these modalities during the 2017-2019 cycle and appreciates the acknowledgement of the TERG that many of the lessons learned from the previous cycle were incorporated into the 2020- 2022 allocation cycle.

Areas of agreement

The Secretariat notes that many of the recommendations and findings were specific to the modality (e.g., SI or MCG) that was being reviewed, however many of these can be applied at the level of selecting and determining future catalytic priorities, noting that the Board approves catalytic investment priorities and not the specific modalities.

¹ Matching Funds, the third modality, are funds made available to selected countries to incentivize the programming of the country allocation towards catalytic priorities that are best operationalized directly within country grants.

We agree with the TERG that both MCGs and SIs are useful funding modalities that are covering important priorities that are not necessarily able to be addressed within country allocations and that these should be continued in the next cycle as they are important for delivering the aims and objectives of the Strategy (*TERG Position² 1: Continuation of catalytic investments*). As we look to the next cycle, the selection of catalytic priorities can and should be based on a clear prioritization framework and the subsequent design, implementation, and review processes can and should be further strengthened and streamlined, including at the governance body level. It is our position that catalytic priorities that are best addressed through the MCG modality should continue to focus on strategic priorities that are more appropriately addressed through a multi-country or regional approach, and the decision to implement a specific priority as an SI should be based on the expected outcomes and a clear rationale for why this modality is best suited to deliver impact.³ The recommendations from both evaluations will need to be prioritized and aligned with the agreed prioritization framework for the 2023-2025 catalytic investment priorities and the aims of the new Strategy. Core considerations for the development of catalytic priorities in the next cycle include value for money (VfM) and leveraging the core drivers from the previous cycle to identify and inform future investments (e.g., clear and coherent design, reasonable project management costs, etc.), and the direction of the new Strategy.

We appreciate the acknowledgement of the contributions that the 2017-2019 MCGs have made to achieving the 2017-22 Strategic Objectives (*TERG Position 2: Contributions to Strategic Objectives*) and would counter that this also includes important contributions towards Strategic Objective 3⁴. We note that challenges with respect to performance measurement remain across areas that are not easily quantifiable at the outcome and impact level, e.g., human rights, and this is the focus of ongoing work within the Secretariat and external partners/experts. The Secretariat agrees that MCGs have the potential to achieve more impact, and as part of the next cycle we will look at how to further differentiate the MCG funding request, review and grant-making processes, noting that trade-offs need to be carefully assessed to ensure that there remains sufficient oversight over these investments.

The Secretariat notes the TERG conclusions around the definition of 'catalytic effect' (*TERG Position 3: Define better what catalytic means*), and while there was perhaps a varied understanding or interpretation of what 'catalytic' meant in the 2017-2019 cycle, this was an important criterion of the 2020-2022 prioritization approach which was refined and strengthened based on lessons learned from the 2017-2019 allocation cycle. For the 2020-2022 cycle, it was defined as incentivizing increased funding from allocations to priority areas, leveraging additional funding outside of Global Fund, driving innovative or ambitious programming to accelerate progress towards Strategic Objectives, enabling more effective use of country allocations, and enhancing coordinated response for multi-country contexts. The Secretariat does not recommend having a discussion around the definition of 'catalytic' but rather leveraging the current definition, tested with the factors used by the TERG evaluators which also serve as useful high-level principles, as catalytic effect will continue to be a critical consideration for the prioritization of 2023-2025 catalytic priorities, including those proposed to be implemented as SI or MCG modalities. The SI evaluation has provided a helpful set of factors that may provide further clarification within the existing definition in helping to determine an SI's catalytic value.

² References to recommendations or TERG positions have been mapped to the TERG Position Paper on Strategic Initiatives and Multi-country Catalytic Investment Grants Evaluations, Table 6.

³ SI Recommendation 2

⁴ Promote and Protect Human Rights and Gender Equality

Selection and prioritization of catalytic priorities (*TERG Position 4: Selection and prioritization criteria*), can and should be further strengthened in the next cycle, noting that the Board is responsible for recommending catalytic priorities and that SI's and MCGs are modalities which are the 'how', as opposed to the 'what'. The criteria for selection should be aligned with the context of the epidemics and the direction of the new Strategy. For MCGs, we recognize the need to strengthen consideration of financial needs, resource availability and sustainability in the selection, prioritization, and design of MCGs. This will be considered as part of the 2023-2025 cycle, together with ways to ensure applicants better reflect on theories of change⁵, assumptions, performance measurement, risk considerations and sustainability – noting that the focus of the latter should predominately be on the sustainability of grant outcomes. Noting the significant effort and complexities that such analyses may require; the level of complexity will need to be aligned to the availability of resources provided to the specific priority and Secretariat capacity. The Secretariat concurs that more time guidance for the TRP to consider the specific complexities of MCG grants⁶ and the contexts in which they are implemented would be beneficial and allow for a differentiated review approach as appropriate to MCG selection, prioritization and implementation characteristics. We note that this should be considered as part of the revision of TRP terms of reference for the next cycle and in the context of findings and recommendations of the OIG TRP Advisory.

Regarding SI's, the Secretariat agrees that, as part of the discussion around catalytic priorities for the next cycle, there is a need to identify which issues or areas of focus would be most effectively addressed through the SI modality. This may result in “fewer but more strategically focused SI's with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the Global Fund's Objectives” (*TERG Evaluation, Recommendation 2*). The SI evaluation made specific recommendations with respect to potential selection and prioritization of SI's by the Strategy Committee and for which we broadly agree. Regarding assessing the programmatic risk to achievement of strategic objectives if SIs are not implemented, we partially agree with this recommendation and note that this is complex as this entails disaggregating many existing mitigations and the resources are extremely limited given there are multiple grant level and corporate mitigations already in place for key issues and can be difficult to tease out specific incremental impact of SI. On feasibility and suitability, as the Strategy Committee is tasked with recommending catalytic priorities to the Board, it is important that the direction comes from the Strategy Committee and Global Fund partnership supports a more focused set of priorities for the next cycle. While the Secretariat agrees that there should be a robust business case, we note that this occurs further downstream once the priorities have been approved by the Board and that existing mechanism in place to vet these investments, such as Grants Approval Committee (GAC) review and partner engagement.

The Secretariat concurs with the TERG that strong and robust performance metrics to measure the outcomes and impact of both SIs and MCGs are important (*TERG Position 5: Strengthening performance measurement and management*) and notes that there has been significant progress made in the current cycle in this regard. For the 2020-2022 allocation, SI's articulated theories of change, timeframes and milestones within the results frameworks (programmatic & financial)⁷ and attention has been given to strengthening the performance frameworks of MCGs. We agree that next cycle is an opportunity to further refine performance monitoring, noting the importance of

⁵ This would also ensure higher relevance and sustainability (*TERG Recommendation 7*) of the specific grants emerging from the different catalytic priorities which will be implemented under the MCG modality.

⁶ MCG Recommendation 2.

⁷ Ibid

defining what is meant by “impact” for these two modalities given that these modalities cover a very broad range of investments and given the cost (including time) of extensive evaluations (particularly in a 3-year implementation period). Furthermore, a ‘one-size fits all approach’ would be challenging given the diverse focus of these investments and while we can aggregate performance to targets, outcomes (catalytic or otherwise) are directly related to individual theories of change which should be analyzed closely and may not lend itself to aggregation. Performance measurement for MCGs can be revised to ensure more robust performance measurement of grant objectives. MCGs, like country grant portfolios, are systematically reviewed by the Secretariat as part of the disbursement decision making process which looks not only at financial performance but programmatic performance and allows for course correction. On the SI recommendation⁸ that there be country level consultation for SI design, we note that this should be tailored to the investment given the overall level of diversity and should build from the new Strategy given its collective development and prioritization.

There is a clear need to continue to strengthen governance and implementation of the MCGs, while also streamlining and differentiating how these grants are managed. The outsourcing of MCG grants is a potential solution but would have cost implications and require the Board to consider a differentiated risk appetite for MCGs. A change in management and implementation arrangements – a move to more streamlined arrangements – will require Board acknowledgement and support that MCG grants are unique in nature. While outsourcing may be appropriate for some MCGs what this means in practice requires further consideration and how this would be different from existing grant mechanisms and whether this would indeed be more efficient. The recommendations to explore potential partnerships are not only relevant for the Secretariat but also partners and regional organizations but the level of effort should be commensurate to the overall availability of funding and Secretariat capacity. Investments in enhancing regional governance would be beneficial, however there are cost and Secretariat capacity implications which need to be carefully assessed and tradeoffs need to be critically assessed.

The TERG Position Paper also acknowledges the need to ensure greater coherence of catalytic investments at the country-level and the Secretariat agrees (*TERG Position 6: Ensuring greater coherence*). Of the three catalytic funding modalities, the Matching Funds modality ensures the strongest alignment of investments as these are operationalized within country grants. MCGs are required to demonstrate how the proposed grant will avoid duplication with national programs or other ongoing interventions and must seek endorsement from CCMs or national authorities of participating countries. The review noted that this coordination and harmonization may not necessarily consistently materialize during implementation, and this would be further strengthened by stronger governance at the regional level. Although the reviewers assert that part of this is due to ‘limited Secretariat engagement in managing the complexities of MCGs’, the Secretariat notes that while managing MCGs may not have the same priority as some high impact portfolios, considerable Secretariat time and effort is put into managing these grants which are for the most part small in terms of absolute dollar value.⁹ MCGs are dependent on the priority for which they are intended to deliver and the majority of MCGs have later implementation periods than country-grants and therefore are not aligned in terms of implementation periods.

⁸ SI Recommendation 3

⁹ For the 2017-2019 allocation there were 17 MCG grants ranging from US\$4.5 million to US\$22.5 million over three years. For the 2020-2022 cycle, there are 14 grants ranging from US\$4 million to \$14 million.

The Secretariat acknowledges some SI's are more closely linked to grants (e.g., New Nets Project¹⁰), while others are more challenging to link and harmonize, partly due to their timelines (e.g., country grants operate on a fixed timeline and SI's have in the past generally started later) and modalities and that, where possible, there is a need to ensure greater coherence. For the 2020-2022 cycle, efforts were made to ensure greater harmonization¹¹, but the absolute number of SI's (24) itself creates a challenge and has resulted in some country portfolios facing planned implementation from numerous SI's concurrently (e.g., Mozambique has 14). A smaller number of SI's would facilitate further harmonization. While some SI's have stronger perceived value propositions for Country Teams, transaction costs and prioritization of core work (that may be catalyzed by SI's) needs to be considered in future cycles. While transaction costs can be further streamlined, there are certain costs to the engagement that need to be considered during the design phase, particularly when layered in countries with high levels of investments (e.g., from grants, C19RM, etc.).

We appreciate the TERG commentary and suggestions with respect to implementation and risk management¹² and agree that there is scope to further evolve how these two modalities are implemented and managed. With respect to SI's, we fully concur with the need to continue to evolve contracting, management and oversight arrangements in order to ensure they are appropriate for the nature of activities being implemented and the partners implementing them.¹³ For the 2020-2022 cycle significant effort was made to change and evolve the management of SIs including the formal launching of the SI Project Management Office (PMO) which serves a key oversight role, together with its internal and external stakeholders. With an operational policy note (OPN) and associated standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed, the SI PMO will continue to evaluate processes in order to ensure that they are 'right-sized' with respect to level of effort, transparency and partnership. Regarding MCGs, while not explicitly highlighted in the evaluation, we note that these are very different from SI's as they are managed as grants within the grant portfolio. Identification of implementation arrangements (including partners) follows a similar trajectory to country grants. Where MCGs are being implemented by a Regional Coordinating Mechanism (RCM), they must meet the same eligibility requirements as CCMs with respect to PR selection. For the next cycle, in addition to the introduction and enhancement of the current "continuation" and "pre-shaping" application modalities, we will further look at the Request for Proposal (RFP) process, as this provides an opportunity to identify a more diverse pool of partners, and to see if there are ways to improve collaboration. However, a larger pool of partners may not always be necessary and would depend on the specific priority, scope and region of the grant. We agree that there are opportunities to further improve MCG design and processes, regional governance and partnerships, results measurement and sustainability and degree of differentiation in terms of grant cycle processes and support. However, these need to be considered against the availability of funds and Secretariat capacity noting that MCGs currently represent 2% of the overall 2020-22 grant portfolio.

¹⁰

The Global Fund's Strategic Initiative to 'Address insecticide resistance through accelerated introduction of new nets', includes an objective to build the evidence base on the comparative cost-effectiveness of new types of insecticide-treated nets (ITNs) within the wider vector control toolbox.

¹¹ For the 2020-2022 cycle of SI's there were structured timelines, outputs and points for engagement, though there is an opportunity for greater alignment and communication with Country Teams and in-country partners where SI's operate (as reported in the evaluation).

¹² TERG Position 8

¹³ SI Recommendation 5

Observations on other recommendations

The suggestion by the TERG to consider the merit in merging SIs and MCGs into a 'single fund' and bringing them into the same management office (*TERG Position 9. Merit in merging SIs and MCGs into a single fund*) is not supported by the Secretariat. We do not agree with this recommendation, as the two modalities are very different even though there may be a regional or multi-country aspect in some SIs. MCGs are managed by the Grant Management Division (GMD) as grant portfolios within the region they support, which enables harmonization with national grant and the processes aligned with country grants. While the Secretariat agrees that processes could be streamlined further, unless they were completely outsourced to a third-party management, it would not be sensible to bring them under SI Project Management Office as suggested by the TERG. While third-party outsourcing may make sense for certain multi-countries, this would require the Board to accept that these types of investments are not like country grants and therefore assume a different level of oversight. We also note that it would not make strategic sense to separate the two catalytic investment modalities from the third (matching funds). If the objective is to have increased and aggregate oversight of central resources, all three would need to be combined and there is currently insufficient evidence to suggest that a change is warranted.

The Secretariat does not agree that flexible funding cycles should be instituted to strengthen MCG implementation and governance arrangements.¹⁴ Any decisions to introduce flexibilities for grant allocation utilization periods (AUPs) need to be considered against the Comprehensive Funding Policy (CFP)¹⁵ which determines a three-year cycle. MCGs not recommended for continuation into a subsequent cycle have benefited from non-costed extensions, but existing policies do not allow for an overlap of implementation periods. Decisions around continuation of a MCG in the next cycle is based on a review of program implementation and performance. Like country grants, course corrections (and if warranted discontinuation) are possible at any time and the consultant's suggestion that a five-year planning cycle be envisaged, with "a review mid-cycle to allow for course correction or discontinuation if needed" would replicate the rounds-based system which was discontinued with the adoption of a three-year allocation cycle. Additionally, with replenishment cycles operating on a 3-year cycle, funding levels for MCGs over each period are subject to change which may have material impacts on MCG program design and scope.

Conclusions











As the evaluations primarily focused on the 2017-19 allocation period, the Secretariat agrees that there were challenges with both modalities in these periods and we appreciate the acknowledgment of the TERG that many of the lessons learned were and are incorporated in the 2020-2022 allocation cycle. The lessons learned from the operationalization of the 2020-22 SI's and MCGs will continue to inform process improvements and implementation in preparation for the 2023-25 grant cycle. We thank the TERG for its good collaboration and for the timeliness of these two evaluations.

¹⁴ MCG Recommendation 3

¹⁵ [Comprehensive Funding Policy](#) (16 November 2016)







Summary of Recommendations







Strategic Initiatives

Recommendation	Timeframe	Level of Agreement	Level of Control
Recommendation 1: The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent and shared definition of what 'catalytic' means to the Global Fund and develop criteria that are measurable, relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality	Next Strategy Period		
Recommendation 2: The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria: a. a. the level of programmatic risk the issues pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives if the SIs are not implemented; b. b. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multicountry grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; and c. c. the robustness of the business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs.	Next Strategy Period		
Recommendation 3: Continue to strengthen the SI design process such that: a. a. stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe; b. b. each SI includes a robust theory of change that defines what the SI does and where the SI fits within the Global Fund funding universe; c. c. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and d. d. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design.	Next Strategy Period		
Recommendation 4: The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund's broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across Global Fund stakeholders	Next Strategy Period		
Recommendation 5: The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management, and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented and the	Next Strategy Period		

partner implementing them. Additionally, continue to incentivize partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is upfront agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.			
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Multi-country Grants

Recommendation	Timeframe	Level of Agreement	Level of Control
Recommendation 1: Maintain MCGs as a priority investment area for activities that truly add value over and above what country grants can deliver to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.	Next strategy period, 2023-25 allocation cycle		
Recommendation 2: Strengthen MCG selection, prioritization and review processes by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Developing an agreed definition of 'catalytic' as applied to all catalytic investments that is used consistently across Board, SC, GAC, TRP and Secretariat. Estimating financial needs and resource availability and including these considerations as part of MCG selection and prioritization criteria. Strengthening consideration of sustainability in MCG selection and prioritization. 	Next strategy period, 2023-25 allocation cycle		
Strengthening MCG designs through the inclusion of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> comprehensive landscape analyses to identify gaps and overlaps with country grants, other catalytic investments and initiatives funded or implemented by other agencies. robust theories of change (TOC) that present well-defined intervention logic linking outputs to outcomes and impacts, and include risks and critical assumptions. a limited set of grant-specific performance measures focused on output/ outcome levels. 			

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ reviews after two years to allow for course correction and decisions on continuity/discontinuity. ○ more robust risk matrices that take into account risk associated with the complexities of MCG implementation. 			
<p>Providing the TRP with more time and guidance to consider complex design features of MCGs including landscape analysis and risk management of contextual factors.</p>			
<p>Recommendation 3</p> <p>Continue to strengthen MCG implementation and governance arrangements, by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • raising the profile of MCGs across the Global Fund business model and either providing sufficient resources at Secretariat level to support effective MCG governance and implementation or outsourcing this to external agencies. • streamlining MCG management and implementation arrangements where these are unwieldy or constrain MCG flexibilities to be innovative; • building on partnership successes and supporting FPMs and CTs to explore potential partnership arrangements beyond traditional partners (e.g., development banks or the private sector); • building regional governance capacity including, where necessary, through the provision of either internal or external technical assistance. 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exploring more flexible funding cycles that include mid-term reviews/ evaluations to allow for course correction or discontinuation 			



Global Fund TERG Thematic Evaluation on Strategic Initiatives

Final Report RFP No. TGF-21-05

3 August, 2021

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Abbreviations and acronyms

AEALAC	Asia, Europe, Latin America and the Caribbean
AFC	Audit and Financing Committee
AGYW	adolescent girls and young women
AI	active ingredient
ANASO	The Angola Network of AIDS Service Organisations
APCASO	Asia Pacific Council of AIDS Service Organisations
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEO	Chief Executive Officer
CHIS	community health information systems
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CLM	community-led monitoring
COI	conflict of interest
CRG	community, rights and gender
CSO	civil society organisation
CT	country team
CTE	core team of experts
D	deliverable
DAC	Development Assistance Committee
DHIS2	District Health Information Software version 2
DSD	differentiated service delivery
DTL	Deputy Team Lead
DPT	diagnosis, planning, and transition
E8	The Elimination Eight Initiative
EECA	Eastern Europe and Central Asia
EHG	Euro Health Group
EQ	evaluation question
eLMIS	electronic logistics management information system
EMMIE	Elimination of Malaria in Mesoamerica and the Island of Hispaniola
EU	European Union
FGD	focus group discussion
FPM	Fund Portfolio Manager
FR	funding request
GAC	Grant Approval Committee
GF/GFATM	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GMD	Grant Management Division
HIS	Health Information System
HISP	Health Information Systems Programme
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HMST	Health Management Support Team
HPM	Health Product Management or Specialist
HRD	Human Resource Development
IR	inception report
IVD	In-vitro diagnostic
KI	key informant
KII	key informant interview

KP	key population
KPI	key performance indicator
KVP	key vulnerable population
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LFA	Local Fund Agent
LLIN	long-lasting insecticidal nets
LMIS	Logistics Management Information System
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MC	multi-country
MCG	multi-country grant
MEC	Management Executive Committee
MEMTI	Malaria Elimination in Melanesia and Timor-Leste Initiative
MENA	Middle East and North Africa
MF	matching funds
MOF	Ministry of Finance
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOJ	Ministry of Justice
MOSASWA	Mozambique, South Africa and Swaziland
NGO	non-governmental organisation
NSP	(malaria) national strategic plan
NTP-SRL	National Tuberculosis Plan-Supranational Reference Laboratory
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
OSA	on shelf availability
OPEX	operational costs
PAAR	prioritised above allocation request
PBO	piperonyl butoxide
PCE	Prospective Country Evaluation
PEPFAR	The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PF	performance framework
PLHIV	people living with HIV
PMI	The United States President's Malaria Initiative
PMO	Project Management Office
PSM	Procurement and Supply Management of Health Products
PU	progress update
PUDRs	progress update and disbursement request
QA	quality assurance
RAI	Regional Artemisinin Initiative
RAME	Réseau d'Accès aux Médicaments Essentiels
RCT	randomised control trial
RFA	request for applications
RFP	request for proposals
RMEI	Regional Malaria Elimination Initiative
RSSH	resilient and sustainable systems for health
SC	Strategy Committee
SD	service delivery
SDI	service delivery innovations
SI	Strategic Initiatives
SO	Strategic Objective
SIID	Strategic Impact and Investment Department
SIPMO	Strategic Initiatives Programme Management Office
SOP	standard operating procedure

SR2020	Global Fund Strategic Review 2020
STC	sustainability, transition, co-financing policy
STE	sustainability, transition and efficiency
TA	technical assistance
TAP	technical advice and partnerships
TB	tuberculosis
TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group
TGF HI	The Global Fund High Impact
TL	Team Lead
TOC	theory of change
TOR	terms of reference
TPT	tuberculosis prevention treatment
TRA	transition readiness assessment tool
TRP	technical review panel
UiO	University of Oslo
UNAIDS	The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNFPA	United Nations Populations Fund
UNICEF	The United Nations Children's Fund
USD	United States dollars
VfM	value for money
WHO	World Health Organisation

Executive Summary

In addition to providing resources through country allocations, the Global Fund invests in catalytic funding, which comprise matching funds, multi-country grants and strategic initiatives (SIs). The aim of SIs, as defined by the Global Fund Board, is “to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives”. For the 2017-19 allocation period, the Board approved up to USD 800 million for catalytic investments, of which USD 172 million was operationalised through the SI modality via 18 SI workstreams. This was subsequently increased through the reallocation of funding available for other catalytic investments. For the 2020-2022 allocation period, USD 890 million was made available for catalytic investments, of which USD 343 million was allocated to 19 SI workstreams. For this allocation period, the investment in SIs accounts for around 2.5% of total Global Fund investments and 38% of catalytic investments.

The Global Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) commissioned an independent thematic evaluation of the SIs. Following a competitive selection process, Health Management Support Team (HMST) in association with Euro Health Group (EHG), was selected to conduct the evaluation, which occurred between April and July 2021. The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the value added by SIs, including but not limited to their catalytic effects.

The purpose of the evaluation is to help inform the decisions of the Strategy Committee for the next allocation cycle (2023-2025) with respect to SI priorities under the post-2022 Global Fund strategy that is currently under development. The objectives of the evaluation are:

1. To review how, and on what basis, areas for SIs were selected and whether they have been sufficiently prioritised;
2. To review the SI implementation arrangements and how performance was monitored to identify key contributing factors that made SIs more successful;
3. To assess whether the SIs have achieved their intended objectives, in particular the extent to which the SIs have been catalytic.

In agreement with the TERG, the evaluation team reviewed seven SIs in depth from the 2017-2019 allocation period that continued into the 2020-2022 allocation period, and three SIs that commenced in the latter period. The selection of SIs during the inception phase encompassed the full range of SI types, originally designated as either ‘innovative’, ‘focused on resilient and sustainable systems for health’ or ‘addressing under-prioritised topics’, drawn across disease-focused and cross-cutting thematic areas, and of varying sizes and implementation arrangements. For each SI reviewed, two or more representative countries were selected to provide country-level perspectives.

The evaluation team used a mixed methods approach that employed both qualitative and quantitative data collection as well as analysis. Data were triangulated and cross-referenced to ensure accuracy and quality. Data sources included: a) document review at global level and from selected SIs and countries; b) interviews with key informants and stakeholders at global, regional and country levels (230 people interviewed); and c) SI case study analysis. The evaluation was strengthened by structured feedback from the TERG and the Secretariat following submission of all deliverables and based on discussions at a joint validation of recommendations workshop.

The document review, key informant interviews, case studies, and the validation workshop generated a set of 24 findings for the ten evaluation questions under the three objectives. These findings are described in Section 4 of the report. The findings were synthesised, and five conclusions and five

recommendations at the strategic level were developed as presented below, and summarised the table at the end of this summary.

Main analysis and conclusions

C1. The current approach to the selection of programmatic issues for SIs to focus on has ensured that SIs are relevant to programmatic needs and aligned with the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives. The SIs do not, however, address all of the most critical issues affecting the achievement of the Global Fund Strategy.

As evidenced, the SIs can provide solutions to priorities and challenges to achieving the Global Fund's objectives. As such, they can be seen as relevant programmatic interventions from the perspective of the Global Fund. Notwithstanding their overall relevance, in a context where there are insufficient funds to allow development of SIs covering all the identified challenges, the salient issue is whether the right SIs have been prioritised and delivered. This needs to be seen within the context that the current SIs cover some, but not all of the important challenges. To date, this prioritisation seems to have been done within the context of decisions on which of the three catalytic investment modalities – SIs, matching funds or multi-country grants – will be used to address particular challenges. Experience to date is that this process, at least for the 2017-2019 allocation period, has not been entirely transparent, and the rationale for prioritisation decisions taken are difficult to discern ex-post. Perhaps of more importance, this process appears to have been focused on the Secretariat and technical partners, with limited engagement by country stakeholders. There appear to be limited mechanisms for considering whether there is alignment with country level priorities.

Within the population of possible SIs identified through the process above, there has been an evolution of a more systematic approach to prioritisation from the 2017-2019 to the 2020-2022 allocation period. The approach to prioritisation for the 2020-2022 allocation period entailed development of scenarios to respond to possible replenishment levels and employed a set of criteria based on strategic impact and operational considerations. Ultimately, the prioritisation was not needed, as replenishment levels were sufficient to fund all SIs identified for selection.

C2. Despite a lack of clarity on what is meant by the term 'catalytic', the SIs are largely designed to add value and achieve some sort of 'catalytic' outcome. They are however, inadequate in and of themselves to resolve the issues they are targeted towards. Given their limited funding and scope they should not be seen as a panacea, and there is only limited evidence that the SIs have systematically been used to leverage the wider systems scale change required to meaningfully address the issues that the SIs are meant to address.

All the SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period were designed to address Global Fund's Strategic Objectives, although descriptions of their catalytic intent (i.e., intended catalytic effect) were either absent or not explicitly articulated in the Paper of the 36th Board Meeting.¹ This gap has been recognised by the Secretariat, and the new and continued SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period all have adequate descriptions of their strategic and catalytic intent in their design.

Notwithstanding this recognition, the gap is understanding how the strategic and catalytic intent is expected to work in practice and deliver results. This requires clear articulation of both the conditions

¹ Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period. GF/B36/04 – Revision 2, 16-17 November 2016, Montreux, Switzerland.

and assumptions that need to be addressed by SIs to achieve the intended catalytic results. Logically, this would be set out as part of the theory of change (TOC) developed for each of the SIs. However, many of the TOCs lack critical elements such as clearly articulated risks and assumptions, and identification of where the catalytic effect occurs within the TOC.

Various definitions of catalytic can be found that have been used within the Global Fund between 2017 and 2021. The evidence suggests there is a limited shared understanding among the Board, Strategy Committee, Grants Approval Committee (GAC), Secretariat and Partners of the definition of ‘catalytic’, little clarity on how SIs should achieve a catalytic and/or strategic effect, and no metrics for assessing achievement of catalytic and/or strategic intent. As a way to reconcile these disparate definitions, as well as make it feasible to evaluate catalytic effect and intent, the evaluation team drew upon the approach adopted in the SR2020 review and considered ‘catalytic’ as leading to one or more of the following operational criteria (as described in the Annexes to the report) being met:²

- **More:** Additional funding is leveraged from other sources and/or additional activities are implemented;
- **Improved:** Activities that were conducted previously are now appreciably more efficient, effective and/or strategic;
- **Unique, new, or innovative:** Activities or contributions that are exclusive or exceptional to catalytic funding and/or those that are entirely new, original or initiated because of catalytic funding;
- **Faster:** Activities that were implemented previously but are now being implemented at an accelerated pace.

This evaluation team found that the design of each SIs addresses at least one of the four aspects of ‘catalytic’.

The evaluation team also reviewed definitions of the word ‘catalytic’ used more broadly in development, and how a catalytic effect should be assessed. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) described a two-track framework for catalytic change, with the two aspects being ‘transformative’ (growth-enhancing change) and ‘crowding-in’ (complementary to other development finance).

Our analysis suggests that catalytic investments are actually seen by Global Fund as investments that leverage additional funds, promote innovative technologies and approaches, and advocate for recognition of, and attention to globally important but under-prioritised needs. This suggests that catalytic investments *de facto* prioritise what the ODI terms as ‘crowding-in’ with some movement into ‘transformational’ change. Two questions therefore arise. Firstly, is the balance between ‘crowding-in’ and ‘transformational’ change correct, given the strategic objectives of catalytic investment by the Global Fund? This evaluation’s conclusion is that the current portfolio of Global Fund’s strategic initiatives has inadequate focus on transformational change. Secondly, as more emphasis is needed on supporting transformational change, this raises the question of whether the Global Fund’s current business model can be adapted to support the required selective, longer-term, sustained and programmatic engagement of beneficiaries in SI design and implementation. Conclusions 3, 4 and 5 below would suggest that the challenges would be significant.

² Technical Evaluation Reference Group Position Paper: Strategic Review 2020. Volume 2: Annexes. 31 August 2020, pp. 107-108. https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10496/terg_strategicreview2020position_annexes_en.pdf

C3. While SI design has improved over time, design limitations persist that constrain the Global Fund’s ability to demonstrate the desired catalytic intent.

SIs implemented under the 2017-2019 allocation period have all contributed to one or more of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives (SOs). All SIs have made good progress toward their intended and stated objectives, although the progress of some components that operated in collaboration within target countries (such as New Nets and TB Missing Cases SIs) has been significantly affected by COVID-19. However, the extent of SI contributions to the SOs has been hard to quantify. For instance, our analysis of value for money (VfM) shows that the SIs lacked credible approaches to measure or manage for VfM (effectiveness in particular), and as such, insufficient evidence has been generated to demonstrate VfM (which would have required evidence of their contribution to outcomes). Nonetheless, some SIs are more likely to offer VfM than others, with key drivers of VfM being a clear and coherent design, reasonable project management costs, and regular Secretariat and implementing partner engagement.

These weaknesses have been acknowledged, and led the Secretariat to enhance its own requirements as to how the SI leads, focal points, teams and contractual partners are being asked to measure, monitor and report on activities, outputs and outcomes. Current result frameworks are a mix of outputs and outcomes that will be independently measured or extracted from Progress Update and Disbursement Requests (PUDRs). However, experience with implementation of results-based management across development organisations shows that there are limitations on the degree to which monitoring and reporting approaches can fill the identified gaps. Results-based management also risks creating unintended consequences, in terms of restricting the scope to respond to both specific country contexts and achieving coherence with grants at country level (as discussed in conclusion 4 below), as well as increasing transaction costs associated with increased reporting demands for both international and in-country partners.

Bearing this and conclusion 2 in mind, there are some tentative indications that the SIs which best demonstrate (or have the potential to demonstrate) a catalytic effect are those with a strong focus on scaling up access to and utilisation of new/innovative/unique technologies and approaches at the country level with the aim of specific programme improvement (see Table 8).

C4. There have been missed opportunities to fully harmonise the SIs to other types of Global Fund support (e.g., where matching funds complement the SI support at the country level and SIs support core grant implementation). This has constrained SI effectiveness at country level because it limits opportunities for synergy and reducing overlaps, and does not take advantage of the Fund’s broader infrastructure for country-led programming.

For the Board, the SIs are intended “*to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature, but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives*”. Implicit in this definition is that the SIs at country level are designed and managed to be coherent with Global Fund grants. Evidence shows limited mechanisms to coordinate and synergise the inputs of SIs and other types of catalytic funding, including multi-country grants and matching funds, to deliver coherence across the catalytic investments in any country. The same applies in terms of coherence between catalytic funds and the country allocations. There is evidence that this gap is leading to missed opportunities to avoid duplication and overlaps and increased administrative burden at both GF Secretariat and country levels. For example, during the 2017-2019 allocation period E-2020 includes South Africa, Eswatini and Botswana, countries which directly overlap with the multi-country E8 grant, two of which overlap with MOSASWA multi-country grant (Eswatini and South Africa) and

directly overlap with malaria country grants in all three countries (see Annex 4, Map A). The team noted that this overlap was not fully addressed during design of the Malaria Elimination SI 2020-2022, the SI on Regional Coordination on Malaria Elimination (not reviewed as part of this evaluation), multi-country grant renewals or country grants in countries included in multiple funding streams (Eswatini, Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique).

There is a lack of clarity, within the Secretariat, regarding the responsibility for understanding and managing overlap between the different funding modalities. For each country, presumably the country teams would be expected to know about different funding streams and their intended activities. Interviews conducted during this evaluation suggested that Fund Portfolio Managers (FPMs) often had limited knowledge about the SI(s) that might affect their country grants or how they are intended to complement other existing funding. The same applies to knowledge of SIs by Ministry of Health (MOH) staff and programme managers in country, which suggests that SIs are not well integrated into country-level coordination mechanisms, and thus raises concerns over the degree to which they may overlap or duplicate support from other partners.

The above challenge is not unique to the Global Fund. Based on experience and interviews with comparator organisations such as Gavi, the Global Partnership for Education, and bi-lateral donor organisations issues of coordination of investments managed at country, regional and central levels present a serious challenge.

C5. Between the first and the second allocation periods, improvements in partner contracting, SI coordination, implementation, planning and reporting across the portfolio indicate a capacity to learn from experience and to respond positively to various reviews. This will need to continue as the Global Fund considers how to adapt its business model to address known issues and achieve the more difficult areas of its Strategy.

During the 2017-2019 allocation period, despite a slow start, partner engagement improved over time, as the Secretariat and partners worked together to coordinate and implement activities under most SIs, often under considerable pressure. This teamwork and coordination fostered greater transparency and better accountability arrangements. In general, SI coordination, partner contracting, planning, implementation and reporting have improved over time, both in response to lessons learned by the SI leads, and due to feedback from the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) review, Technical Review Panel (TRP) summary of lessons learned³, and the SI Boost initiative⁴. Changes requiring SIs to develop detailed investment plans (DIP) and accompanying results frameworks mean that stronger implementation and management is possible in the current allocation period. The establishment and expansion of the SI Programme Management Office (SIPMO) has contributed to stronger SI management.

Possibly three risks lie with the current trends in this area, however. These are:

- In response to the OIG Advisory and the subsequent SI Boost Initiative, the Secretariat is striving to improve and increase accountability of their contracted partners and themselves, by centralising the contracting, management of TA, budgeting and reporting for many of the SIs, and changing how the consultants are contracted, i.e., ensuring TA is directly managed by the Secretariat. Interviews with stakeholders from within the Secretariat and with technical

³ Note that TRP Lessons Learned (Q1 2021) have not yet been fully taken into account by the Secretariat and will be addressed in the 2022-2025 allocation period.

⁴ To address recommendations from various internal and external studies, the SIPMO is leading a cross-functional effort to improve SI performance through integrated management in the next cycle, starting from SI design and approval in 2020 and going to SI closure in 2023.

partners themselves provide indications that these changes are resulting in negative responses by some technical partners. Key informants expressed concern that the changes can disrupt relationships between technical partners and their pools of TA that they have recruited and trained. Partners also expressed concern about the lack of clarity as to how the TA is to be coordinated, given the existing heavy workload of many of the Global Fund country teams.

- Centralising the contracting, management of TA, budgeting and reporting for many of the SIs under the SI managers does not address the challenge of enhancing coherence of SIs with other investments, whether Global Fund or other investors. The required coordination mechanisms between FPMs and SI managers are weak at the Secretariat level, and SI managers are not well placed to engage in country level coordination mechanisms.

Whilst the present response may address the concerns flagged in the OIG Advisory and the subsequent SI Boost Initiative, there is a trade-off that needs to be recognised. If the decision were taken to shift towards SIs as mechanisms to deliver catalytic “transformative change”, then adapting SI design to country context and capacity as well as continuous effort at country level by quality staff will be critical. Involvement of beneficiaries in SI design and implementation will also be vital. The current trend to centralisation may make such a shift more challenging to deliver.

Recommendations

The evaluation team notes that the portfolio of SIs, including the ten SIs reviewed, vary in size, implementation period, thematic area, and the strategic and operational challenges that they address. For the reviewed SIs, the funding ranges from USD 3.85 million to USD 35 million, while the challenges include areas at risk of being under-prioritised or deprioritised, weak health systems capabilities, and the need to enhance the uptake of innovative approaches and new products. It was therefore difficult to develop policy prescriptions that embraced the range of SIs. The evaluation team has provided a set of strategic recommendations, as per the TOR, designed to strengthen the design, prioritisation, implementation, and harmonisation of the SIs across the Global Fund’s broader portfolio of support.

Conclusion 2 highlights the recurring theme among key informants of the difficulty in defining the term ‘catalytic’ as applied to SIs. The evaluation team proposed a definition that allows measurement of catalytic as applied to SIs, using four operational criteria focused on activities, commodities and processes (‘More’, ‘Faster’, Improved, and ‘Innovative / Unique / New’), and these criteria were used in the evaluation of the various SIs.

As noted earlier, other development agencies (e.g., the World Bank⁵), explore ‘catalytic’ in terms of ‘transformational change’, and note that “transformational engagements were differentiated most clearly from non-transformational engagements by the extent to which the effects of the intervention were sustained, often because they involved comprehensive approaches to stimulating and sustaining systemic and behavioural change”⁶. Among the mechanisms identified by the Bank to support deep and sustained transformation change is scaling up and replicating innovative approaches, which broadly align with the evaluation’s definition if the criteria are coalesced. Given that Global Fund essentially invests in activities and commodities in order to strengthen systems and structures to achieve results, the evaluation team believes that this definition can be helpful in identifying the

⁵ World Bank Group (2016), Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity - Lessons from World Bank Group Experience.

⁶ *Ibid*

activities, products and processes that can catalyse change in order to achieve an impact (i.e., a ‘catalytic impact’). This can most clearly be demonstrated if the catalytic activities/processes are incorporated in a robust TOC that highlights the point(s) where catalysis is expected to occur, as well as defining the associated risks and assumptions.

This leads to Recommendation 1: The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent and shared definition of what ‘catalytic’ means to the Global Fund and develop criteria that are measurable, relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality.

Conclusions C1, C2 and C3 highlight limitations in SI selection and design processes and their limitations in leveraging the wider systems-scale change to address the issues they are targeted at.

This leads to Recommendation 2: The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria:

- a. the level of programmatic risk the issues pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives if the SIs are not implemented;
- b. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multi-country grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; and
- c. the robustness of the business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs.

These changes should result in fewer but more strategically focused SIs, with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the Global Fund’s Strategic Objectives.

The evaluation notes that there have been significant improvements in SI design from the first allocation period to the second, and proposes four measures to further strengthen SI design. The first relates to the identified need to engage selected stakeholders at the country level in SI design, country selection, and implementation arrangements and timeframes. This can be achieved by formalised and systematic engagement between SI leads/focal points and FPMs/country teams (CTs) at critical junctures (SI design, country selection, implementation timeframe). The second relates to embedding a robust TOC within SI design that is developed collaboratively between the SI lead/FP and respective external partners, and which highlights where the intended catalytic effect(s) will occur (i.e., the points of ‘catalysis’). The third looks to sustainability and suggests that each SI design should include an ‘exit strategy’ with realistic milestones and timeframes, even if these are anticipated to span more than one funding allocation. The fourth builds upon good practice highlighted in the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) Evolution, Community Rights and Gender (CRG) and TB Missing Cases SIs, which had an evaluation component embedded in their designs, with a baseline and endline. The team notes that the Service Delivery Innovations (SDI) SI has recently commissioned an external evaluation, and it is strongly recommended that evaluations should be incorporated into the designs of all future SIs.

This leads to Recommendation 3: Continue to strengthen the SI design process such that:

- a. stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe;
- b. each SI includes a robust theory of change that defines what the SI does and where the SI fits within the Global Fund funding universe;
- c. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and
- d. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design.

As noted in conclusion C4, while there is evidence of some harmonisation between SIs and other internal and external funding sources, the evaluation also identified some overlaps and duplications. This highlights the need for, at the very least, an overview within the Secretariat of all catalytic investments, and indeed across the Global Fund's overall portfolio of support.

This leads to Recommendation 4: The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund's broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across Global Fund stakeholders.

Conclusion C5 highlights the significant progress made over time in SI management, partner contracting, implementation, monitoring and reporting across the portfolio. However, several stakeholders from within the Secretariat and external to the Global Fund highlighted concerns that the recent re-introduction of some elements of input-based contracting are resulting in disincentives and tensions between Global Fund and its UN partners, who occupy the 'same development ecosystem'. Given the strengthening of partner relationships during the SI 2017-2019 allocation period, the evaluation team believes it is their responsibility to alert the Secretariat to these tensions, so that the risks to partner relationships can be managed and mitigated.

This leads to Recommendation 5: The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented and the partners implementing them. Additionally, continue to incentivise partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is up-front agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.

Summary of conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions
C1. The current approach to the selection of programmatic issues for SIs to focus on has ensured that SIs are relevant to programmatic needs and aligned with the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives. The SIs do not however address all of the most critical issues affecting the achievement of the Global Fund Strategy, and it is not always clear how/why some issues were selected over others.
C2. Despite a lack of clarity on what is meant by the term 'catalytic', the SIs are largely designed to add value and achieve some sort of 'catalytic' outcome. They are however, inadequate in and of themselves to resolve the issues they are targeted towards. Given their limited funding and scope, they should not be seen as a panacea, and there is only limited evidence that the SIs have systematically been used to leverage the wider systems-scale change required to meaningfully address the issues that the SIs are intended to address.
C3. While SI design has improved over time, design limitations persist that constrain the SIs to achieve the desired catalytic intent, for instance, poorly defined intervention logic linking outputs to outcomes and impacts. SI designs have also suffered from a lack of country stakeholder engagement, poorly defined performance frameworks, and limited planning for sustainability.
C4. There have been missed opportunities to fully harmonise the SIs to other types of Global Fund support (e.g., where matching funds complement the SI support at the country level and SIs support core grant implementation). This has constrained SI effectiveness at country level because it limits opportunities for

synergy and reducing overlaps, and does not take advantage of the Fund's broader infrastructure for country-led programming.
C5. Between the first and the second allocation periods, improvements in partner contracting, SI coordination, implementation, planning and reporting across the portfolio indicate a capacity to learn from experience and to respond positively to various reviews. This will be needed as the Global Fund considers how to adapt its business model to address known issues and achieve the more difficult areas of its Strategy.
Recommendations
R1. (Mapped to conclusion C2): The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent, and shared definition of what 'catalytic' means to the Global Fund. Alongside this, develop catalytic criteria that are measurable and relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality.
<p>R2. (Mapped to conclusions C1, C2, C3): The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the level of programmatic risk they pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives; b. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multi-country grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; c. the robustness of a business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs. <p>These changes should result in fewer, but more strategically focused SIs, with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.</p>
<p>R3. (Mapped to conclusion C3): The Secretariat should continue to strengthen the SI design process such that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe; b. the inclusion of a robust theory of change that defines where the SI fits within the Global Fund funding universe; c. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and d. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design.
R4. (Mapped to conclusion C4): The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund's broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across Global Fund stakeholders.
R5. (Mapped to conclusion C5): The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management, and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented and the partner implementing them. Additionally, continue to incentivise partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is up-front agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.

1. Background and Introduction

While the Global Fund predominantly invests funding through country allocations, it also funds catalytic investments to support activities that may not be easily operationalised within country allocations. For the 2017-19 allocation period, the Board approved up to USD 800 million for catalytic investments of which USD 172 million was operationalised through the SI modality via 18 workstreams.⁷ This sum was subsequently increased through the reallocation of funding available for other catalytic investments. For the 2020-2022 allocation period, catalytic investments totalled USD 890 million, which represents approximately 7% of Global Fund's total investment for this period. The Global Fund Board (the Board) specifies that catalytic investments can be operationalised through three distinct modalities, namely matching funds, multi-country grants and strategic initiatives (SIs). The aim of SIs is to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature, but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives.⁸ For the 2020-2022 allocation period, USD 343 million was allocated to 19 SI workstreams, which accounts for around 2.5% of total Global Fund investments and 38% of catalytic investments.⁹

The Global Fund is currently reviewing the allocation methodology, including catalytic investments, for the 2023-2025 allocation cycle in its next strategy period 2023-2028, with discussions underway with the Strategy Committee. In this context, the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) commissioned an independent Thematic Evaluation of Strategic Initiatives in order to critically assess how the SIs have been functioning and to what extent they have achieved their intended objectives.¹⁰

2. Overview of the evaluation

This section outlines the aim, purpose, objectives and scope of the evaluation.

2.1. Aim and purpose of the evaluation

The overall aim of the evaluation is to assess the value added by SIs, including but not limited to their catalytic effects. **The purpose of the evaluation is for the findings and recommendations to be used to help inform the decisions of the Strategy Committee for the next allocation cycle (2023-2025) with respect to SI priorities** that will fall under the post-2022 Global Fund strategy currently under development. The TERG emphasised that the evaluation should be strategic in its focus in order to provide strategic guidance to the Board and Strategy Committee (SC) on the future of SI catalytic investments.

The evaluation therefore adopted both a retrospective and formative perspective: Retrospective to assess the SI design, its implementation, and the extent to which it was catalytic; and formative to support learning and evidence-based decision-making. These perspectives will help inform the development and decisions related to SIs in the 2023-2025 allocation methodology, and to a degree, the ongoing implementation of the SIs during the 2020-2022 allocation period.

⁷ https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/4224/bm35_05-allocationmethodology2017-2019_report_en.pdf

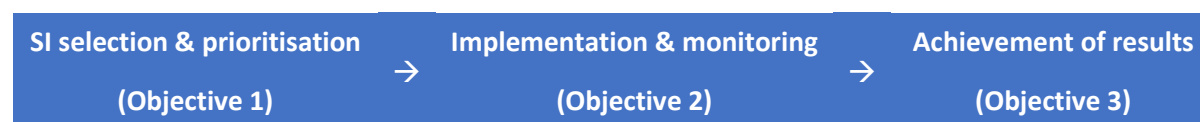
⁸ GF/B41/03.

⁹ https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/9228/fundingmodel_2020-2022strategicinitiatives_list_en.pdf

¹⁰ In addition to this Thematic Evaluation of SIs, the TERG has commissioned a separate independent Thematic Evaluation of Multi-country Catalytic Investments grants, and together these evaluations will provide a comprehensive picture of two of the three modalities of catalytic investments to help inform Board and SC decisions.

2.2. Objectives of the evaluation

The original evaluation objectives, as specified in the Request for Proposals (RFP), were reordered to better reflect the SI process:

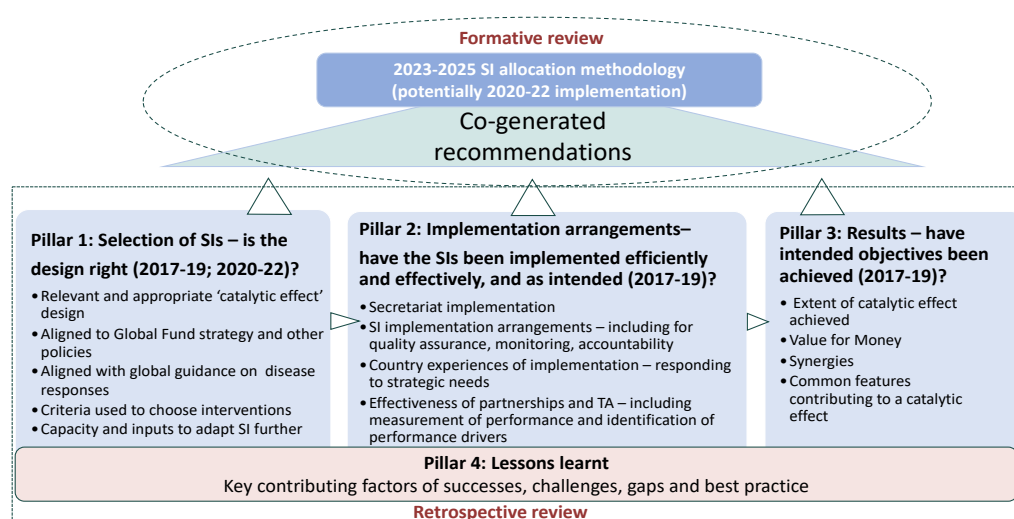


- **Objective 1.** To review how, and on what basis, areas for SIs were selected and whether they have been sufficiently prioritised;
- **Objective 2.** To review the SI implementation arrangements and how performance was monitored to identify key contributing factors that made SI's more successful;
- **Objective 3.** To assess whether the SIs have achieved their intended objectives, in particular the extent to which the SIs have been catalytic.

Objective 1 examines the rationale for investing in SIs, including whether the design, selection and prioritisation of SIs were relevant and appropriate to achieve their intended purpose and objectives. The main focus was on SI design, but the selection and prioritisation processes were also compared across both allocations to explore the extent to which these have improved, including the levels of consultation with internal and external stakeholders. Objective 2 assesses the effectiveness and efficiency of SI implementation and management by the Secretariat, including partnerships and technical assistance (TA)¹¹. Objective 3 assesses the extent to which SIs have achieved their intended results.

Figure 1 illustrates the evaluation objectives and scope, including the three key questions (**doing the right things, in the right way, and achieving the right results**) organised around three pillars and lessons learned from each.

Figure 1: Evaluation scope



¹¹ Drawing upon the recent TRP 2020 Lesson Learned, the 2019 OIG Advisory Report, and other documents.

2.3. Scope of the evaluation

The evaluation focused primarily on the strategic level, i.e., the selection, prioritisation, design and implementation arrangements of SIs, and the extent to which they are catalytic, rather than operational details and processes. The evaluation focused on SIs implemented during the 2017-2019 allocation cycle in order to address all three review objectives, while review of the 2020-2022 allocation cycle was able to provide evidence to inform the evaluation objective on SI selection and prioritisation only.

The Board Paper on Catalytic Investments for the 2020-2022 allocation period¹² provided valuable data on the approved SIs for this period, including the detailed rationale, expected outcomes and expected catalytic effect. Where an SI was continued from the 2017-2019 period, the report highlights lessons learned during this period, and an outline of what would be done differently in 2020-2022. The SIs that were discontinued at the end of 2017-2019 allocation were beyond the scope of the in-depth analysis. The SI on the TERG independent evaluation was also out of scope, in order to avoid conflict of interest with this evaluation. The full set of SIs from the two allocation periods are provided in Annex 5.

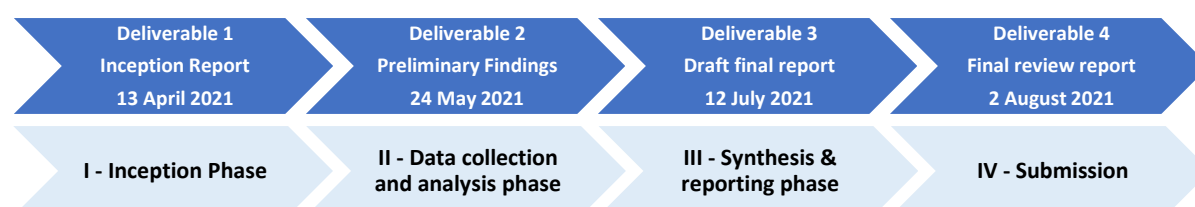
3. Methodology: Sources, data collection, approach and analysis

3.1. The Evaluation Team

The evaluation team was drawn from two health consulting companies: Health Management Support Team (HMST) and Euro Health Group (EHG), both of whom have significant experience in working with and on Global Fund projects. Together, the team brings expertise in health, monitoring and evaluation, management, international development, as well as expertise in some of the countries covered by the case studies. The team consisted of a Team Lead (TL) to oversee and coordinate the process, a Deputy Team Lead (DTL) to ensure the soundness of the methodology and provide quality assurance, and five consultants to research and write up case studies. Each team member, including the TL and DTL, was responsible for taking the lead on either one or two SIs, and pursued data collection across the three pillars. The team contributed collectively to analysis based on their individual research and different perspectives. The leadership team ensured a coherent approach to the SI reviews and facilitated cross-SI discussions of emerging themes, results and areas of analysis and synthesis.

3.2. Work Plan and deliverables

The evaluation was conducted between March 2021 to August 2021 across four main phases; the activities within each phase are outlined below.



¹² GF/B41/03.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Structuring phase - Inception meeting with the TERG - Review design and planning - Tool development (KIs, guides, evidence matrix) - Desk research & analysis - Workplan refinement - SI selection - Country selection 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Systematic review of key docs - Desk review of each SI, evaluation matrix populated - Interviews of key informants - Overall quantitative and qualitative analysis (triangulation of data) - SIs reviewed centrally and in selected countries 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Team analysis workshop - Draft section on findings, conclusions & recommendations and submit to TERG - Present at validation workshop for feedback from TERG and Secretariat - Develop draft final report incorporating feedback from validation workshop and submit to TERG - Develop slide-deck and disseminate at TERG meeting 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Inclusion of final comments following TERG mini-meeting - Submit final evaluation report
Bi-weekly communication with Global Fund focal to update on review progress			

3.3. Data sources and data collection methods

This section outlines the data sources and data collection methods, while the review matrix in Annex 4 presents these in detail for each key review question. The review team drew conclusions based on triangulation of evidence from different data collection methods and both primary and secondary data sources. A common protocol and a data matrix were developed and tested to ensure cross-SI comparability.

Desk review of relevant documents: The team drew heavily on secondary data, derived particularly from Global Fund sources including Board reports, monitoring frameworks, Office of the Inspector General (OIG) and Technical Review Panel (TRP) reports, TERG reviews (including the STC and the Global Fund Strategic [SR2020] reviews), contractual and reporting documentation of implementing partners, risk management reports, reports to the Board and committees, Global Fund-generated survey data, as well as available specific country-level and SI-specific programme evaluations and Grant Approval Committee (GAC) reports, and other internal documents where available. Annex 7 contains a list of documents that were reviewed by the team at the global level. Documents specific to the SIs that were reviewed in-depth are listed under the individual SI case studies in Annex 1.

Key informant interviews: Primary data was collected through individual interviews and group discussions via video teleconference. Due to the current COVID-19 restrictions in place, all interviews were conducted remotely. Key informants at the global level were selected based on the relevance of their experience and/or knowledge of SIs. A cascade approach was used to identify further key stakeholders for interview. All interviews were requested through and coordinated by the TERG Secretariat unless otherwise agreed between the review team and the TERG Secretariat. Key informants¹³ were drawn from the following groups:

¹³ The team developed semi-structured interview guides and shared these in advance, where appropriate.

- Global Fund Board, Global Fund Secretariat (including SI Project Manager Office [PMO], previous SI PMO Coordinator, SI leads and focal points, SC leadership, Ethics Office, Strategic Impact and Investment Department [SIID], Technical Advice and Partnerships [TAP], HIV/TB/Malaria workstream leads, Grant Management Division [GMD] heads/regional managers, Strategy and Policy hub, Sustainability, Transition and Efficiency [STE] leads, SI Allocation Team, Finance manager, Procurement and Supply Management leads, resilient and sustainable systems for health [RSSH] leads, and Country Coordinating Mechanism [CCM] evolution leads; Fund Portfolio Manager [FPM], and country teams);
- Multilateral/technical assistance agencies implementing SIs and implementing partners with global/regional offices (e.g., Joint Working Group Secretariat, WHO, UNAIDS, Stop TB, etc.);
- Multilateral and bilateral agencies providing financial support to the selected SIs (USAID, Stop TB, PEPFAR, etc.);
- Private foundations (e.g., the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation);
- Implementing agencies at the country level, including technical partners, private entities and institutions, universities, etc.;
- Key stakeholders and interlocutors at country level in the selected countries, e.g., CCMs, Principal Recipients (PRs), disease programme heads from the Ministry of Health, other relevant government institutions (e.g., the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Justice), civil society organisation (CSO) networks, and individual CSOs.

The evaluation team ensured confidentiality and anonymity of key informants by obscuring any identifying features of specific individuals in reporting and maintaining the security and confidentiality of documentation and materials. The evaluation team agreed with the TERG when citing specific countries from the case studies would be appropriate. The purpose of the evaluation and intended use of information obtained from interviews, were explained to each stakeholder at the onset of the interview, and consent was requested and obtained. Care was taken that all interview questions and requests for further clarification/explanation were not perceived as “steering” the interview or response in any direction. Due to their face-to-face (although remote) nature, interviews were confidential, and information from interviews and submissions was anonymised. It will therefore not be possible to link any information in the report to any of the individual stakeholders listed, unless done so transparently, by design and with the explicit permission of the respondent. A full list of key informants interviewed at the global level is provided in Annex 8. Key informants interviewed at the country level are listed in the individual SI case studies (Annex 1).

SI case-studies: Seven SIs that were continued from the 2017-2019 allocation period to the 2020-2022 allocation period, and three new SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period were purposively selected using clear criteria for in-depth exploration and the development of case studies. For each of the continuation SIs, two countries were purposively selected to provide country level experiences. The criteria for SI selection are described in Section 4.1 below, while the limitations of this approach are described in Section 3.8 below. Key informants and relevant documentation were identified in consultation with the Global Fund Secretariat, and especially in close consultation with the SI PMO, SI leads and focal points for the selected SIs, and implementing partners at central and country levels. These data were organised in a framework to support analysis of the individual SI, and to contribute to the evaluation’s overall analysis.

3.4. Evaluation Approach

The evaluation team (the team) worked with the TERG and the Secretariat to build consensus around the evaluation scope and process through video consultations with TERG Focal Points with key

stakeholders in the Secretariat and the Technical Review Panel (TRP). The aim of these discussions was to ensure stakeholder ownership of the scope and objectives of the evaluation in order to clarify priorities and to explore the most appropriate methodological approaches while, at the same time, maintaining the overall independence of the evaluation team.

The evaluation looked at how the SI topics were developed, how the SIs work institutionally within the Global Fund Secretariat and the Board, who is responsible for operationalising them (selection, design and implementation arrangements) and how the Global Fund Secretariat and implementing partners implement the SIs at country level. The team explored how the SI implementation affected working with in-country stakeholders to determine the value added, including their catalytic effects.

The team carefully reviewed definitions of the word ‘catalytic’, both within the Global Fund and elsewhere, and how catalytic effect should be assessed. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI)¹⁴ described a two-track framework for catalytic change, with the two aspects being ‘transformative’ (growth-enhancing change) and ‘crowding-in’ (complementary to other development finance). The World Bank¹⁵ also refers to ‘transformational’ change in development engagements in a large comparative evaluation that noted four characteristics that supported such deep, systemic and sustainable change: overcoming binding constraints, cross-sectoral approaches, scaling up innovations, and behavioural change. Regarding design and implementation, factors identified as critical for transformational engagements included adapting programme design to country context and capacity as well as continuous effort supported by quality staff. A focus on selective, longer-term, sustained and programmatic engagements with involvement of beneficiaries in their design and implementation of the intervention were among the critical factors implicated in order to **‘enhance the likelihood that interventions catalyse faster development progress by taking a strategic and programmatic approach to induce systemic and behavioural change based on sound diagnosis of binding constraints’**¹⁶.

‘Catalytic’ is defined in some GF documents (including the 35th Board document)¹⁷ as: ***“The aim of SIs is to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature, but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives.”*** However, this definition is not used consistently.

The Secretariat in June 2021 used a different definition: ***“Catalytic is defined by a change that could not happen through grants alone and for which the SI resources provided measurable and quantifiable contributions”***. The submission of each SI in the 2020-22 allocation for GAC review and approval includes a statement on how the SI will be catalytic, but which definition used is not clear.

In the RFP for this review, ‘catalytic’ is defined in yet another way, as: ***“the contribution of SI investments in supporting inputs that enhance output, outcome and/or impact of Global Fund investments in countries, and in turn, the achievement of the objectives of the Global Fund Strategy. By their definition, these investments should be strategic, and mission critical, and cannot be funded through disease specific components of grants”***.

¹⁴ Rogerson S, 2011. What if development aid were truly ‘catalytic’? ODI background note. November 2011.

¹⁵ IEG World Bank Group 2016. Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity. Lessons from World Bank Group Experience.

¹⁶ IEG World Bank Group 2016. Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity. Lessons from World Bank Group Experience. Executive summary, pp. xii-xiv.

¹⁷ The Global Fund (2016), 35th Board Meeting: The Global Fund Strategy 2017–2022: Investing to end epidemics.

The various definitions used by the Global Fund between 2017 and 2021 each include one or more elements of the ODI and World Bank definitions (including innovation) to capture the idea of ‘transformation’ in catalytic change. The recent definition used by the Secretariat does include the need to measure catalytic impact, although does not specify how this can be done. The concept of complementarity with grants is noted in two Global Fund definitions, but does not refer to complementarity with the overall Global Fund funding landscape or note how this will be determined. No definition captures the intended leverage of additional funding from other sources (the ‘crowding-in’ mentioned by ODI).

As a way to reconcile these disparate definitions as well as make them measurable, the evaluation team drew upon the approach adopted in the SR2020 review,¹⁸ which does include elements of external sources mentioned above, but reviews catalytic potential and effects through a more operational and activities level than higher up the funding stream. The team considered ‘catalytic’ as leading to one or more of the following operational criteria (as described on page 107-108 of Annexes to the report) being met:¹⁹

- **More:** Additional funding is leveraged from other sources and/or additional activities are implemented;
- **Improved:** Activities that were conducted previously are now appreciably more efficient, effective and/or strategic;
- **Unique, new or innovative:** Activities or contributions that are exclusive or exceptional to catalytic funding and/or those that are entirely new, original or initiated because of catalytic funding;
- **Faster:** Activities that were implemented previously, but are now being implemented at an accelerated pace.

Using the above criteria, the team determined the extent to which the SI was catalytic: a) by design; b) in its implementation; and c) in its results. Additional funding was considered from both the Global Fund as well as other sources, including domestic resources. Factors other than funding that could have contributed to the catalytic effect, including new formulation, new guidelines, etc., were also considered. The team also explored synergistic effects, in terms of whether the SI catalysed more than the simple sum of the original country grant and the catalytic investment, including any ‘spill-over’ effects of SIs, e.g., whether there had been anecdotal reports of enhanced commitment between partners to fulfil other partnership obligations.

3.5. Analysis

Each pillar was reviewed against key principles as the basis for analysis. SIs were therefore considered in terms of relevance, coherence, efficiency, effectiveness, and value for money. Pillar 1 explored SIs from both allocation cycles (2017-2019 and 2020-2022) while Pillars 2 and 3 were focused on SIs implemented in the 2017-2019 allocation period.

Pillar 1 – Selection and prioritisation of SIs.

¹⁸ Technical Evaluation Reference Group Position Paper: Strategic Review 2020. Final Report. Volume 1. 31 August 2020. https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10498/terg_strategicreview2020_report_en.pdf

¹⁹ Technical Evaluation Reference Group Position Paper: Strategic Review 2020. Volume 2: Annexes. 31 August 2020. https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10496/terg_strategicreview2020position_annexes_en.pdf

Relevance: This area of analysis assessed the extent to which the Global Fund Board and Secretariat selected the right investment priorities, targeting the right beneficiaries, and based on the right evidence. The starting point was the overall intention of the SIs to be catalytic investments, contextualised with disease narratives and landscape documents to prioritise evidence-based activities. Since the evaluation focused on SIs continuing from the first to the second allocation, the team reviewed how the design evolved in the second allocation, and how lessons learned from the first allocation were addressed. The following questions guided the process:

- In terms of the priorities for the relevant thematic area, were the rationale and objectives of the selected SIs relevant and well-justified?
- From the perspective of the SIs' intention to support "game changing" catalytic activities and innovations, was a consistent understanding of what "catalytic" means applied across the SIs? What aspects of the SI resulted in catalytic impacts, and what can be learned in terms of appropriate targeting?

The team conducted a process review to determine how disease narratives or landscape documents or other analysis were used to identify the SIs, by exploring:

- On what basis were the SIs selected, and to what extent were the criteria adequate and well-defined to enable identification of the right priorities; i.e., how it was determined that the catalytic priority would be best operationalised as an SI. This analysis followed the SI process chain from the call for proposals (where relevant) to the ultimate selection of implementers.
- The effectiveness of the process to identify SIs in terms of the documents used, stakeholders consulted, and other approaches employed, as well as the time taken and the efficacy of the internal Secretariat process.
- Adaptation of the SIs from the first to the second allocation period, including the extent to which the changes were well-justified; how course correction took place (e.g., to better ensure complementarity with country grants), the learnings in terms of the agility of the SIs.
- The basis on which countries were chosen for SI implementation, and the extent to which decisions were based on requests from countries/CTs, compared to using epidemiological data.

Coherence: As the SIs were intended to supplement grant activities through targeted catalytic investments that could not be funded through the normal grants, the evaluation explored whether there were complementarities, interlinkages and synergies between the SIs and the Global Fund's grants programme²⁰ or whether there was any duplication of efforts with country allocations and other catalytic funding initiatives. The team also explored the extent to which the selected SIs were aligned with the Global Fund strategies, mandate, business model, and were positioned for impact. The SIs were reviewed to ensure that funding support would not have been as easily or better provided under country grants. Finally, the team explored whether there were areas where SIs may have been valuable, but were not developed.

Pillar 2 – Implementation arrangements

Efficiency: Efficiency examines how the SI inputs were translated into outputs. The team considered the key aspects of the SI model (key steps, requirements, criteria, review and approval processes) and critically examined which aspects worked well, and which worked less well. This entailed close discussion with key stakeholders involved in the SIs (the Secretariat, Board, SI Project Management

²⁰ Identified during the TRP/GAC review process as part of the templates for 2020-22 allocation cycle.

Office [SIPMO], GAC, TRP,²¹ implementing partners, etc.). Building on this analysis, the team examined the efficiency of the SI model from the perspectives of Global Fund Board, Secretariat and implementing partners. Key processes were mapped out, and each stage – development, contracting, financial disbursements, and reporting – was reviewed to determine what worked well and less well. The team examined the findings from the 2019 OIG Advisory Report, and the 2020 SI Boost Initiative, including the extent to which recommendations from these reports were addressed.

Initial interviews with key informants suggested that the Secretariat found that the transaction costs associated with the development and contracting of individual SIs were high compared with the costs associated with the delivery of country grants. Current practices in this area were explored with the Secretariat to identify opportunities to adjust the approach to be more efficient²².

Pillar 3 – Results: have the intended objectives been achieved?

Effectiveness: Effectiveness focused on the translation of outputs into outcomes, i.e., the realisation of the benefits that the SIs were designed to deliver. A first step to examining effectiveness was to consider the approach to developing the Results Frameworks²³ for the SIs, and reporting results. The team explored the extent to which contracted partners delivering SIs fulfilled their agreements through their project cycle management systems. The evaluation also explored the extent to which this facilitated credible and robust reporting of results at the SI level and allowed managing for results and achieving coherence with the Global Funds' investments, and the investments of others at the country level.

Value for money (VfM): Value for money analysis drew on the evidence and analysis available through the evaluation, to understand the extent to which the SIs demonstrated:

- *Economy*, in terms of whether the right service providers had been selected to implement relevant and high-quality services (pillar 1), and whether the established mechanisms resulted in contracting service providers at an appropriate cost, with incentives to ensure VfM and implementer performance in line with the intended SI objectives.
- *Efficiency*, in terms of financial absorption and implementation progress in relation to the achievement of outputs (pillar 2). Although data was sometimes limited, the level of transactions costs incurred by the SI model were considered by analysing both Secretariat and implementing agency project management costs as a proportion of the total SI budget.²⁴
- *Effectiveness*, in terms of whether the SI outputs translated into the achievement of intended outcomes (pillar 3).

Direct measurement of VfM was not possible, and as such, no definitive statements on whether VfM has or has not been achieved are made. Findings were therefore derived from the analysis related to whether the Secretariat managed the SIs to achieve VfM and the extent to which there is evidence to suggest that the SIs were likely to achieve VfM.²⁵

To the extent possible, evidence generated from the different data sources and methods outlined above were triangulated. For each main review question, the team matched data with evidence generated from interviews with in-country interlocutors, the Global Fund Board and Secretariat,

²¹ 2020-22 allocation cycle only.

²² A key distinction may be the number of GF staff working on each country grant vs. SIs.

²³ Now a requirement for the 2020-2022 allocation.

²⁴ Evidence suggested that while the amounts of funding allocated to SIs is relatively small (at least in comparison to grant allocations), they require a significant amount of time within the Secretariat, especially CTs, to manage, monitor and implement, particularly in countries with multiple SIs.

²⁵ The evaluation team notes that some SIs (e.g., Data, STE) are inherently very complex, and this has implications for how VfM is assessed.

global technical partners, and implementing agencies. Secondary data analysis from desk reviews added a second layer of triangulation for analysis.

3.6. Synthesis and Validation of Results

Analysis within the three pillars produced a set of robust findings and preliminary conclusions on the strengths and weaknesses of the Global Fund's overall approach to the SIs. The team then synthesised across the pillars to explore the degree to which strengths and weaknesses within one pillar affected the strengths and weaknesses in another pillar. This allowed for the development of a concise set of overall conclusions regarding the strengths and weaknesses of the overall SI approach in terms of delivery against the strategic intent of the SI approach.

A key factor of analysis and synthesis was to assess the strength of evidence, i.e., to consider the underlying "quality" of the evidence and its triangulation.²⁶ The robustness rating shown in the table below was used to assess findings, which has been effectively used across the team's previous review work, including for the Global Fund. The team carefully reviewed the quality of evidence for each of the findings, and only presented findings where the collated evidence was strong or moderate, as defined in Table 1 below. Where a single piece evidence was limited, this has been acknowledged in the narrative.

Table 1: Ratings for robustness of key findings

Rating	Assessment of the findings by strength of evidence
Strong (1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by data and/or documentation categorised as being of good quality by the evaluators; and Supported by the majority of consultations with relevant stakeholders on the specific issues at hand
Moderate (2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by majority of the data and/or documentation with a mix of good and poor quality; and/or Supported by the majority of the consultation responses
Limited (3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Supported by some data and/or documentation, which is categorised as being of poor quality; or Supported by some consultations and a few sources being used for comparison (i.e., documentation)
Poor (4)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finding is supported by various data and/or documents of poor quality; or Finding is supported by some/few reports only, with no data or documents for comparison; or Finding is supported only by a few consultations or contradictory consultations.

3.7. Quality Assurance

While the evaluation team was directly responsible for technical oversight and the quality assurance (QA) of deliverables and results, a QA team comprised of key officers of HMST and EHG provided oversight, guidance, and support to the team. The QA team maintained close communication and coordination with both the evaluation team and the TERG Focal Points and Secretariat. All team members were briefed on technical aspects, administrative and managerial procedures and

²⁶ **Triangulation:** extent to which a range of evidence (e.g., documentary evidence, feedback from a range of stakeholders etc.) point to same finding; **Quality:** reliability of the data and information collected as well as the significance of the source of evidence.

communication lines.

Given that the mission was conducted remotely, the TL and the DTL paid close attention to the management of the work. Bi-weekly team calls were conducted to ensure that the evaluation progressed as planned, and to foster cross SI discussion of emerging themes, results, gaps, and areas of synthesis. The TL and the DTL conducted periodic conference calls with the TERG secretariat to report on progress, adjust the work as necessary, and ensure that all team members had a common understanding of the task and expected results.

3.8. Limitations

In conducting this complex and varied evaluation across ten SIs and multiple countries, the following limitations were encountered:

- **The ongoing COVID-19 environment negatively affected the process of conducting interviews:** COVID-19 continues to add challenges to evaluations that include mixed methods and need engagement at the country level to provide examples and context to generate insightful findings. Remote interviewing, heavy workloads of the Secretariat and country level stakeholders, and effective knowledge management were all affected by this context. A small number of KIs requested never occurred, as agreement came too late to include them in the data. The team tried to mitigate the effects of this as much as possible through flexible scheduling.
- **Some SIs have multiple, complex designs, which posed a major constraint to coherent evaluation and analysis:** The content of the SIs was often highly complex, with multiple components implemented in many different contexts and countries as well as at a global level. This is challenging to analyse and synthesise, and is necessarily selective. The team's findings were developed from a focus on parts of the SIs in a few country contexts, and therefore generalisation bias may have been introduced from having too small a sample size to reliably analyse the multiple dimensions under evaluation. This bias may of course go either way in terms of being overly positive or negative, and the team has tried to minimise this risk through triangulating data from different sources, and deeper discussion across contradictory findings.
- **Group interviews can hinder individual responses:** Several of the interviews took place with multiple stakeholders from a related group of informants being interviewed on a single video call, for efficiency purposes. In addition, with the agreement of the evaluation team and the interviewees, a representative from the TERG Secretariat observed almost all interviews. Despite explaining the evaluation intentions and assuring confidentiality, this may have resulted in some individuals feeling restrained by the presence of others in the group. If a group bias was introduced, the team believes that it tended towards the positive. The team notes however, that this seemed to be a relatively small problem with most individuals appearing comfortable in speaking their minds – both positively and negatively.
- **Multiple evaluations shortened some interview time due to shared time slots:** Due to time constraints, and the fact that there were two evaluations of different catalytic funding pools being conducted simultaneously, some interviews were shared between SI and MCG evaluation teams. This resulted in some interviews being shortened into very few questions to fit into the one-hour interview allocations, thereby limiting data collection.
- **Availability of data for measuring catalytic effects:** The team notes that findings on several of the SIs were restricted by the timing of the evaluation, i.e., collecting and analysing data before some of the programmatic results for the full cycle up to the end of 2020 were available. Findings on other SIs were hampered by not having adequate data to measure any catalytic effect, due to gaps in the data that is routinely collected, and therefore available to

the evaluation team. The team addressed this by team-wide analysis and triangulation to best consider the appropriateness of the SI's positioning and readiness to report the catalytic outcomes. Where there are particular concerns with the limitations of the findings, these are noted in their presentation.

- **SI selection bias.** Ten SIs were purposively selected for in-depth review, based on criteria developed by the team and agreed with the TERG and Secretariat, and it is acknowledged that unintentional selection bias may have skewed the findings. It is also acknowledged that the selected SIs may not fully represent the universe of more than 20 SIs in the two implementation periods. The team mitigated this potential bias by ensuring that the selected SIs covered a range of thematic areas, Board prioritisations, implementation arrangements, previous performance and funding amounts.
- **Limited representation of in-country stakeholders.** Due to time constraints, both of the evaluation and of country stakeholders, the team was only able to obtain the perspectives of stakeholders in two countries per SI reviewed. This may have constrained the validity of country level perspectives. The team mitigated this by interviewing a wide range of country level stakeholders, and triangulating findings across them.

4. Typology and criteria for SI and country selection

4.1. Strategic initiative selection

Following preliminary discussions with the TERG Focal Points, it was agreed that the review would focus on the SIs as the unit of analysis.²⁷ The team explored a typology of SIs, and early analyses²⁸ suggested that the breadth of activities supported through the SIs could be clustered into three typologies, which relate to areas of particular strategic importance to the Global Fund:²⁹

1. Promoting/enhancing the uptake of innovations and introduction of new products;
2. Strengthening and sustaining systems;
3. Addressing areas that are at risk of being under-prioritised or de-prioritised.

Within this typology, a number of possible approaches to clustering were identified during initial interviews with key informants at the Global Fund Secretariat.

- **Thematic area:** Malaria, tuberculosis (TB), HIV, Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH)/cross-cutting);
- **Institutional and implementation arrangements;**
- **Performance rating** as per Secretariat reporting to the Management Executive Committee (MEC) as of September 2020. Ratings are: Green (meets or exceeds targets); Yellow (below target); Red (significantly below target);³⁰
- Level of Global Fund Board **prioritisation** based on the 41st Board meeting (May 2019), according to various funding scenarios. The level of prioritisation is categorised by group,

²⁷ The proposal submitted to the TERG had suggested using countries as the unit of analysis, and examining the various SIs in selected countries.

²⁸ For instance, as highlighted through the Strategic Review 2020 and various other reports.

²⁹ Note: Emergency Fund SI cuts across all these typologies.

³⁰ Note: with the exception of 'malaria vaccine', 'malaria elimination', and 'introduction of innovative health products', all the SIs were rated as Green by the MEC.

where Group 1 represents the priorities with the highest ratings and would be funded in all scenarios and Group 4 represents the priorities with the lowest ratings;³¹

- By level of SI **funding allocation**, which ranged from USD 3 million to USD 50 million;
- Identified **coherence with other catalytic funding**.

The team purposively selected **seven SIs** from the 2017-2019 allocation SI workstreams that continued into the new allocation period (covering all review objectives/pillars) and **three new SIs** from the 2020-2022 allocation, for in-depth review (focusing only on objective/pillar 1). The list of selected SIs, presented in Table 2, were selected based on the following criteria:

- At least two SIs selected from each typology cluster;
- At least one SI selected from each thematic area (HIV, TB, Malaria, RSSH/cross-cutting);
- Mix of implementation and institutional arrangements;
- Mix of SIs based on Board priority ratings;
- Range of funding allocations
- Range of MEC performance ratings.

Table 2. SIs selected for in-depth review

<i>SIs from 2017-2019 allocation continued into 2020-22 allocation (n=7)</i>							
Typology	SI	2017-19 Funding (USD million)	Thematic area	Implementing partners Tech/ Multilateral (M) Private entity (P)	Related to other catalytic funds	MEC Performance Rating (as of Sep. 2020) Green Yellow Red ³²	Board prioritisation (Group 1 is highest)
Promoting and enhancing the uptake of innovative approaches and new products	Catalysing market entry for new LLINs	2(+33) ³³	Malaria	1M 1P	Yes	Green	1
	CCM Evolution ³⁴	3.85	Cross cutting	2 P		Green	3
Strengthening in-country health system capabilities	Data Systems ³⁵	22	RSSH	5M 2P	Yes	Green	1
	PSM diagnostic and planning ³⁶	17	RSSH	10P	Yes	Green	2
	Sustainability Transition & Efficiency (STE)	15	Cross-cutting	5M 2P		Green	2
Addressing areas at risk of being under-prioritised or de-prioritised	Finding missing TB cases	11	TB	2M	Yes	Green	2
	Malaria Elimination	7	Malaria	1 M		Yellow	3
<i>New SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation (n=3)</i>							

³¹ The total allocation for catalytic funding for the 2020-22 period was agreed by the Board to be USD 890 million, so all Groups were funded.

³² Note: with the exception of 'malaria vaccine' and 'introduction of innovative health products', all the SIs were rated as Green by the MEC.

³³ USD 33 million reallocated from matching funds.

³⁴ Piloted in first allocation and continued in second allocation at a full investment of USD 15 million.

³⁵ The Data SI contains multiple components, and some of these have been implemented to different extents in different countries across the two allocations (and even prior to the formal adoption of SIs). The team focused on selected components.

³⁶ The PSM Diagnostics and Planning workstream in the first allocation period was continued in the second allocation period as PSM transformation.

Typology	SI	2020-22 Funding (USD million)	Thematic area	Implementing partners Tech/Multilateral (M) Private entity (P)	Related to other catalytic funds	Board prioritization (Group 1 is highest). <i>Note: none of the new SIs was prioritized as 1, and all but one were prioritised as 3 or 4</i>
Strengthening in-country health system capabilities	National laboratory systems & health safety (SDI Labs)	9	RSSH			3
Addressing areas at risk of being under- prioritised or de-prioritised	HIV prevention: AGYW in high prevalence settings	8	HIV		Yes	2
	Scale up TB preventive treatment for PLHIV	5	TB/HIV			3

4.2. Country selection for review in the 2017-2019 allocation period

The team held protracted discussions with the Global Fund Secretariat via the TERG Secretariat to agree on a set of countries to further explore the seven SIs selected for in-depth review for the 2017-2019 period. It was agreed to include a maximum of two countries per SI, in order to: a) take into consideration that the review was focused at the strategic level and countries would be used to validate assumptions under objective/pillar 1 and 2, and not to judge implementation of the overall SI at the country level; b) consider the extremely short implementation period of this review; c) adapt to the challenges of working remotely; and d) consider other country-level reviews underway or planned in April-May, at the beginning of the evaluation. Engagement at the country level primarily explored how well the implementation arrangements were working and assessed the extent to which the selected SIs were achieving their intended objectives. The team attempted to consider the counterfactual of what might have happened in the absence of SI funding through interviews.

The following set of countries was agreed to in consultation with the Global Fund Secretariat:

Table 3: Countries included in consultations by SI

	Malaria Elimination	Introduction of new nets	Finding Missing TB cases	Data	PSM	STE	CCM Evolution
Tanzania			x		x		
Mozambique		x	x	x			x
Tajikistan						x	
Nepal	x						
Cambodia				x		x	
Burkina Faso		x			x		x
Eswatini	x						

5. Findings

The following table summarises the evaluation's findings by evaluation objective and question. These are explained in more detail in the sections below.

Table 4: Draft Findings mapped to Objectives and Evaluation Questions

Objective	Evaluation Question (EQ)	Findings
Objective 1. To review how, and on what basis, areas for SIs were selected and whether they have been sufficiently prioritised.	EQ1. On what basis were SIs selected and prioritised? How clearly has the objective and the expected value added and 'catalytic effect' of each SI been articulated at the Board level deliberations as well as at the Grant Approval Committee (GAC)?	Finding EQ 1.1. For SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period, there was limited shared understanding between the Board, Strategy Committee, GAC, Secretariat and Partners of the meaning of the term 'catalytic', little clarity on how SIs should achieve a catalytic and/or strategic effect, and no metrics for assessing achievement of catalytic and/or strategic intent. This resulted in the selection of a diverse set of SIs that, while important to strategic and country needs, had limited coherence in terms of their strategic intents.
		Finding EQ1.2. There was an improvement in the prioritisation process in the 2020-2022 allocation period, based on lessons learned from the previous allocation period, and employing clear criteria for prioritisation based on replenishment levels. All but two SIs were continued from the previous allocation and six new SIs were selected. This resulted in an expanded and diverse set of SIs that face the same issues as for the 2017-2019 allocation – i.e., a group of SIs that are focused on important strategic issues, but still lack coherence in their strategic intents.
		Finding EQ1.3. Analysis suggests that the SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period are targeted at many, but not all, of the most pressing issues being faced by the Global Fund in its pursuit to achieve the Strategic Objectives.
	EQ2. To what extent have the designs of SIs demonstrated how to contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund's Strategic Objectives? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)	Finding EQ 2.1. While all the SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period were designed to address GF Strategic Objectives, descriptions of their catalytic intent (i.e., intended catalytic effect) were either absent or not explicitly articulated in the Paper of the 36 th Board Meeting. ³⁷ Furthermore, only one of the SIs in this allocation period included a complete TOC. ³⁸
		Finding EQ 2.2. All but one of the new and continued SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period have adequate descriptions of their strategic and catalytic intent in

³⁷ Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period. GF/B36/04 – Revision 2 16-17 November 2016, Montreux, Switzerland.

³⁸ While a TOC was not a criterion requested by the Board, inclusion of a TOC is standard good practice in results frameworks.

		<p>their designs. However, few of the designs fully considered the intervention logic and the conditions and assumptions that need to be addressed to achieve results. While 19 of the continued and new SIs have TOCs, many of these lack critical elements such as clearly articulated risks and assumptions, and identification of where in the TOC ‘catalysis’ should take place.</p> <p>Finding EQ 2.3. The lack of country level engagement in the design of an SI, and the timing of its implementation, can critically affect its catalytic and strategic potential.</p>
	EQ3. In general, was the catalytic funding allocated to SIs justified, or could interventions have been better supported through other sources, e.g., core allocations, or MCGs or MF?	<p>Finding EQ 3.1. Some, but not all, SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period have demonstrated innovation or catalytic change that could not have been achieved within the grants alone. This was achieved by leveraging additional funds, promoting innovative technologies and approaches, and advocating for recognition of, and attention to globally important but under-prioritised needs.</p>
	Objective 2. To review SI implementation arrangements and how performance is monitored to identify key contributing factors that made SIs more successful.	<p>EQ4. To what extent were SIs well managed by the Secretariat and well implemented by partners?</p> <p>Finding EQ 4.1. In general, SI coordination, partner contracting, planning, implementation and reporting have improved over time, both in response to lessons learned by the SI leads, and due to feedback from the OIG review, TRP summary of lessons learned,³⁹ and the SI Boost initiative.⁴⁰</p> <p>Finding EQ 4.2. While the largely non-competitive mode of selecting partners was justified, the details of how they were contracted and what was in the deliverable-based contracts (i.e., how the deliverables were defined) generated concerns of low accountability, as described in the OIG Advisory and SI Boost. The recent inclusion of elements of input-based contracting (i.e., the Global Fund reimbursing based on expenditure reporting) may: a) increase Secretariat and partner transaction costs, and b) reduce incentives away from achieving results and finding innovative ways to achieve these (see also Finding EQ6.2).</p> <p>Finding EQ 4.3. Changes requiring SIs to develop detailed investment plans (DIP) and accompanying results frameworks mean that much stronger</p>

³⁹ Note that TRP Lessons Learned (Q1 2021) have not yet been fully taken into account by the Secretariat and will be addressed in the 2022-2025 allocation period.

⁴⁰ To address recommendations from various internal and external studies, the SIPMO is leading a cross-functional effort to improve SI performance through integrated management in the next cycle, starting from SI design and approval in 2020 and going to SI closure in 2023.

		implementation and management is possible in the current allocation period. The establishment and expansion of the SI Programme Management Office (SIPMO) has contributed to stronger SI management.
		Finding EQ 4.4. There were good communication channels created during the 2017-2019 allocation cycle in SI teams and between partners. There is potential for further strengthening in the 2020-2022 allocation cycle, given that the increase in resources and personnel has meant robust multi-partner, multi-skilled teams are expected to mature over time.
		Finding EQ 4.5. Despite slow start-up for SIs due to contracting delays with partners and some delayed activities due to COVID-19, a high proportion of activities were completed under all SIs. This calls into question the rationale for the recent move towards more hands-on Secretariat management of UN technical partners.
	EQ5: What have been the quality assurance, transparency, performance monitoring, and accountability mechanisms? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)	Finding EQ 5.1. Insufficient rigour in partner contract design in the 2017-2019 allocation resulted in some SIs with unclear partner accountability and transparency, without a predefined process to resolve issues.
		Finding EQ 5.2. All but one of the SIs reviewed have improved management performance frameworks, with clearer results frameworks developed for the 2020-2022 allocation period, including more robust metrics that are better aligned with existing data reporting mechanisms or tools.
		Finding EQ 5.3. Mechanisms for monitoring and establishing quality assurance for the deliverables produced by TA contracted under SIs remain untested or yet unestablished, and much of the workload for quality assurance falls on the country teams.
		Finding EQ 5.4. The new SIs under the 2020-2022 allocation period (AGYW, TPT, and SDI Labs) have been designed and launched based on lessons learned from SIs in the previous allocation, resulting in stronger SI designs.
	EQ6 To what extent have the Global Fund partnerships and technical assistance been effective in the delivery of SIs?	Finding EQ 6.1. During 2017-2019 allocation period, despite a slow start, partner engagement improved over time, as the Secretariat and partners worked together to coordinate and implement activities under most SIs, often under considerable pressure. This teamwork and coordination fostered greater transparency and better accountability arrangements.
		Finding EQ 6.2. The response by the Secretariat to the OIG advisory and SI Boost Initiative to increase accountability may have introduced tensions with contracted partners through: a) the revised modes of

		contracting (more reliance on input-budgeting), and b) changes to partner budgets in favour of Secretariat central management of TA.
Objective 3. To assess whether the SIs have achieved their intended objectives, in particular the extent to which the SIs have been catalytic.	EQ7. To what extent has a catalytic effect been achieved by 2017-2019 SIs so that they contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund Strategic Objectives?	Finding EQ 7.1. All SIs have generally made progress towards their intended and stated objectives, although the progress of some components that operated in collaboration within target countries (such as New Nets and TB Missing Cases) has been affected by COVID-19. Finding EQ 7.2. The New Nets, TB Missing Cases, CCM Evolution, and Data SIs have clearly demonstrated delivery on several aspects of their catalytic potential, while others have yet to do so. Finding EQ 7.3. The 2017-2019 SIs reviewed have all contributed to one or more of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives (SOs), although the extent of SI contributions to the SOs is hard to quantify.
	EQ8. To what extent have the SIs contributed to achieving country NSPs, strategic objectives and targets?	Finding EQ 8.1. Since there has been limited comprehensive landscape analysis of potential overlap of SI funding with country grants, multi-country grants, matching funds, or prioritised above allocated request (PAAR) provided in both allocation periods, as well as with activities of other stakeholders both within and outside the Global Fund, it is difficult to assess extent of contribution from the SIs.
	EQ9. What are the common features of SIs that have had a catalytic effect?	Finding EQ 9.1. There is some indication that the SIs that best demonstrate (or have the potential to demonstrate) a catalytic effect are those with a strong focus on scaling up access to and utilisation of new/innovative/unique technologies and approaches at the country level with the aim of specific programme improvement, such as New Nets, TB Missing Cases, and Malaria Elimination (see Table 8). However, the evidence for this finding is not strong.
	EQ10. Value for money: Which SIs have provided value for money and why?	EQ10.1. The 2017-2019 SIs were not set up to measure or manage for VfM and as such insufficient evidence has been generated to demonstrate VfM. Nonetheless, analysis suggests that some SIs are more likely to offer VfM than others, with key drivers of VfM being a clear and coherent design, reasonable project management costs and regular Secretariat and implementing partner engagement.

5.1. Objective 1. To review how, and on what basis, areas for SIs were selected and whether they have been sufficiently prioritised.

EQ1. *On what basis were SIs selected and prioritised? How clearly has the objective and the expected value added and ‘catalytic effect’ of each SI been articulated at the Board level deliberations as well as at the Grant Approval Committee (GAC)?*

Finding EQ 1.1. **For SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period, there was limited shared understanding between the Board, Strategy Committee, GAC, Secretariat and Partners of the meaning of the term ‘catalytic’, little clarity on how SIs should achieve a catalytic effect, and no metrics for assessing catalytic achievement. This resulted in the selection of a diverse set of SIs that, while important to strategic and country needs, had limited coherence in terms of their strategic intents.**

The 2016 Strategy Committee document⁴¹ on Catalytic Investments notes the processes undertaken to prioritise the various catalytic investments. These included a set of consultations with technical partners (WHO, UNAIDS, Stop TB, RBM, UNICEF) and with communities and civil society organisations, as well as a review of lessons learned from 2014-2016 initiatives, regional proposals and incentive funding. Technical partners identified a set of 20 priority areas for catalytic investment, some of which were endorsed by civil society groups, in particular those focused on malaria and TB. However, input from the Communities and Civil Society Meeting revealed some reservations about the HIV priority area, where they noted that: *“While overall priorities are seen as appropriate, much refinement is required if they are to develop as focused, strategic and meeting the purpose of catalytic funding. Programmatic and prevention gaps must be better considered and reflected in further development”* (Slide 17).⁴²

The Communities and Civil Society Meeting expressed more serious reservations about the RSSH priority areas: *“The utilisation of Catalytic Funding for RSSH needs to be better defined – with a focus on community led and driven responses (including monitoring and holding relevant stakeholders accountable), rather than on elements that can and should be included in country allocations already”* (Slide 13).⁴³ They concluded that, *“Proposal under RSSH is not supported. The input from technical is considered unfocused and without clear connection/rationale as to why the proposed initiatives should be priorities for catalytic funding or the Global Fund more generally. Investment in HSS should be incorporated within country allocations with any work in the area of systems development prioritising community systems and responses given relative under-resourcing and need for rapid scale up (as per technical partner guidance)”* (Slide 18).⁴⁴

The Communities and Civil Society Meeting also emphasised the importance of country-led approaches and greater community engagement, including clear communication with country level stakeholders:

- *“Applications for Catalytic Funding must be country driven (including community and civil society recipients) and bottom-up in development, while also meeting the strategic and epidemiological needs”* (Slide 12)
- *“Mechanisms such as multi-country, matched funding and non-CCM proposals should all be utilised to meet the thematic priorities of Catalytic Funding, and should not be pre-defined or prescribed but determined by countries, communities and partners”* (Slide 14)

⁴¹ GF SC01 07 Allocation Methodology Catalytic Funding.

⁴² *ibid*

⁴³ *ibid*

⁴⁴ *ibid*

- “The parameters, purpose and process for accessing catalytic funding should be clearly and consistently communicated to countries and all stakeholders interacting with the Global Fund processes at the country level including key populations networks” (Slide 14)⁴⁵

Evidence from this evaluation suggests that these concerns and recommendations from communities and civil society remained largely unaddressed for catalytic investments in the 2017-2019 allocation period. There are also indications that they continue to remain unaddressed.

In mid-2016, the Strategy Committee solicited proposals for activities or initiatives meeting at least one of the following criteria: (i) Address strategic issues requiring immediate investment to prevent reversal of the gains made in the fight against the three diseases and building of RSSH; (ii) Address the critical barriers to achievement of the impact set out in the Global Fund Strategy; (iii) Provide short-term, targeted funding to respond to urgent needs of the three diseases and health systems in emergency contexts; AND cannot be addressed through allocations alone.

The Board Paper for Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period⁴⁶ sets out the catalytic investment priorities and associated costs recommended by the Strategy Committee. It notes that these priorities were identified by technical partners in consultation with the Secretariat, and that the priorities reflect critical needs that will assist in the delivery of the global plans for HIV, TB and malaria and the 2017-2022 Global Fund Strategy.

For each of the catalytic investment priorities, an indicative modality (Strategic Initiative, matching fund, or multi-country grant) was identified by the Secretariat, although it remains unclear what criteria were used to decide the modalities or how these were applied. The catalytic investment priorities for the 2017-2019 allocation period are outlined in Table 5 below (SIs highlighted in bold).

Table 5: Catalytic investment priorities for the 2017-2019 allocation period

Priority	Illustrative modality	Associated cost (USD million)
HIV		
1.1 Key Populations Sustainability and Continuity	Multi-Country	50
1.2 Key Populations Impact	Matching Funds	50
2. Human Rights	Matching Funds	45
3. Adolescent Girls and Young Women	Matching Funds	55
TB		
1.1. Incentivising Programming of Allocations to find missing TB Cases	Matching Funds	115
1.2. Addressing Specific Barriers to Finding Missing TB cases, Especially in Key Populations and Vulnerable Groups	Strategic Initiative	7
1.3 Development of Community and Innovative Approaches to Accelerate Case Finding	Strategic Initiative	3
1.4. TB Multi-country Responses	Multi-Country	65
Malaria		
1.1. Malaria Elimination: Cross-cutting Support in 21 Low Burden Countries	Strategic Initiative	7

⁴⁵ *ibid*

⁴⁶ GF/B36/04 – Revision 2, 16-17 November 2016, Montreux, Switzerland.

1.2. Malaria Elimination: Southern Africa	Multi-Country	20
1.3. Malaria Elimination: Mesoamerica	Multi-Country	6
2. Greater Mekong Sub-region	Multi-Country	119
3. Catalysing Market Entry of New LLINs	Matching Funds	33
	Strategic Initiative	2
4. Piloting Introduction of the RTS,S Malaria Vaccine	Strategic Initiative	15
RSSH		
Sustainability, Service Delivery and Health Workforce		
1.1. Sustainability, Transition and Efficiency	Strategic Initiative	15
1.2. Integration of Service Delivery & Health Workforce Improvements	Matching Funds	18
1.3. Technical Support, South-to-South Collaboration, Peer Review and Learning	Strategic Initiative	14
Data		
1. Data systems, data generation and use for programmatic action and quality improvement	Matching Funds	40
	Strategic Initiative	10
1.1. Data – National Strategic Planning for Data Systems		
1.2. Data – District Data Systems for Quality Improvement		
1.3. Data – Disaggregated Data Generation, Analysis and Use		
1.4. Data – Impact and Epidemiological Measurement, Reviews and Evaluations		
PSM		
1.1 PSM – Diagnosis and Planning	Strategic Initiative	20
1.2 PSM – Innovation Challenge Fund	Strategic Initiative	10
1.3 PSM – Developing Local Resources	Multi-Country	12
1.4 PSM – Pre-qualification of Medicines and IVDs	Strategic Initiative	12
CRG	Strategic Initiative	15
Broader strategic areas		
TERG Prospective Evaluations	Strategic Initiative	22
Emergency Fund	Strategic Initiative	20

It is difficult to assess whether the selected SIs were the most appropriate because, as far as can be ascertained, there is no record of which proposed SIs were not selected. Interviews with key stakeholders from the Board and elsewhere were unable to elicit this information.

Annex 1 of the Board Paper provides descriptions of the proposed catalytic investment priorities as articulated by technical partners and supported by the Secretariat. These descriptions outline the objectives and expected value added of each catalytic investment. A review of the objectives and expected value added of each selected SI reveals that these descriptions vary extensively in content and quality, as outlined below.

Disease-focused SIs: TB SIs are focused entirely on one clearly prioritised strategic imperative, namely Finding Missing TB Cases. The rationale, epidemiological context, objectives, proposed initiatives, linkages with other funding sources, innovative approaches, and connections with other cross-cutting initiatives are clearly articulated and well-justified. Malaria SIs address three strategic priorities: malaria elimination, catalysing the introduction of next generation long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs), and piloting the introduction of the RTS,S vaccine. The rationale, objectives, activities, links etc., for malaria SIs are also well described, but in somewhat less detail than for TB. For the 2017-2019 allocation period, there were no SIs focused on HIV, although the reasons for this remain unclear.

For RSSH/cross-cutting SIs: Data, PSM, CRG, and Emergency Fund SIs all describe the rationale, aims, epidemiological context (where appropriate), links with other initiatives, anticipated impact, and ‘what the SI will buy’. In contrast, the STE SI merely lists a set of proposed activities and underlines that it builds on lessons learned from 2014-2016. The 2017-2019 STE SI maintained that certain priority activities and scaled-up certain thematic areas all linked to the GF Strategy, STC Policy implementation at country level, the Secretariat’s efforts to strengthen domestic resource mobilisation, and on-going work to enhance VfM.

CCM Evolution, which started later, was not part of the original catalytic investment priorities for the 2017-2019 funding allocation as it was part of a separate workstream at the SC with a different timescale, and as such it could not be included into the catalytic investments which were approved by the Board in November 2017. At the 39th Board Meeting, *CCM Evolution: CCM Code of Conduct, CCM Policy and Level of Ambition*⁴⁷, the Board decided that USD 3.85 million of available funds⁴⁸ should be used to fund a pilot phase of the evolution of Country Coordinating Mechanisms (the “CCM Evolution Pilot”) in 2018 and 2019 under the CCM Strategic Initiative. Based on the recommendation of the SC, and to enable the Secretariat to utilise the funds for CCM, the Board decided to add CCMs as a “Strategic Initiative” to the list of catalytic investment priorities, potentially paving the way for 2020-2022 Strategic Initiative funding. During SC discussions about the level of additional funding to be allocated to CCM Evolution as an SI, the Board Paper notes that two perspectives emerged: one viewed CCMs as key to the Global Fund model and requiring increased investment, while others felt that the link between CCM performance and improved grant performance was uncertain.

The evaluation team notes that there is no attempt for any of the SIs to explicitly articulate the anticipated catalytic effect of the investments, and the term ‘catalytic’ appears nowhere in any of the descriptions of the SIs as outlined in the Board Paper on Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 allocation period. Interviews with multiple key informants from within and external to GF highlighted the lack of shared understanding of the meaning of the term ‘catalytic’.

Catalytic investments are described in the Board Paper as “serving the critical objective of catalysing country allocations to ensure delivery against the 2017-2022 Global Fund Strategy by investing in priorities *that are unable to be addressed through country allocations alone*, yet deemed crucial to ensure Global Fund investments are positioned to deliver against its strategic aims” (emphasis added). The Board Paper further notes that, where possible, catalytic investments are intended to build on country allocations to underpin direct investments in recipient countries and to strengthen countries’ responses to fight the three epidemics.

A unique variable in this Board description of catalytic investments is that they are priorities “*that are unable to be addressed through country allocations alone*” (emphasis added). Stakeholder interviews within the Secretariat and elsewhere revealed that, while there was some engagement of GF Country Teams in the design of SIs, there was limited consultation with them about country selection for implementation. For example, interviews within the Secretariat reveal that the selection of countries for the 2017-2019 PSM SI was done largely without consulting the country team health product managers, and focused mainly on countries with large GF investments, rather than where there was the greatest need.

Furthermore, interviews with multiple stakeholders at global and country levels, from within and external to Global Fund revealed that there was negligible consultation with in-country stakeholders

⁴⁷ GF/B39/04 – Revision 1 09-10 May 2018, Skopje https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/7398/bm39_04-ccmevolution_report_en.pdf

⁴⁸ Funds from Asset & Liability Management (ALM) identified by the Audit and Finance Committee under GF/AFC04/DP01.

about SI design or country selection for implementation. As one key stakeholder noted, *“I can’t think of one example where countries took the floor on the debate and discussion on SIs”*. For example, Tanzania was selected for implementation of the PSM Diagnosis and Planning SI although a presidential initiative on PSM transformation supported by all stakeholders, including the GF through its grants, was already ongoing since 2013-2014. The assumption in the 2017-2019 PSM SI design that the 20 targeted countries all needed a comprehensive PSM assessment and transformation plan was unfounded, and denotes a lack of engagement and knowledge of country needs. For the STE SI, while countries in the Eastern Europe and Central Asia (EECA) and Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC) regions were selected in consultation with country teams and based on demand due to the large number of transitioning countries in those regions, there was limited evidence of consultation in other regions.

The exception was the CCM Evolution SI, where various communication channels (consultations, in-person meetings⁴⁹, regional workshops⁵⁰, online and technical platforms, etc.) were used by the Global Fund to obtain feedback on strengthening CCMs. Over 260 partners, including 84 CCMs and various country stakeholders participated. Civil society groups were given the opportunity to provide feedback via the CRG technical platform.

A limited number of SIs were ineligible to be directly included in country allocations since they included novel interventions (New Nets, Malaria vaccine). For the remainder, it is hard to see how the Board can have assessed whether or not SI interventions would be unable to be addressed through country allocations, without having consulted in-country stakeholders on the design and implementation of SIs in their countries. Interviews with key stakeholders indicate that in the 2017-2019 allocation period, neither the Board, GAC, nor the Steering Committee used any documented criteria to assess the catalytic intent of specific SIs. This is explored further under EQ2. The SI Boost initiative further noted that in the 2017-2019 allocation period, the GAC had insufficient information and/or engagement to effectively review SI investments, including the technical soundness of the approach.

Finally, the SIs selected are focused on issues that are important to address for strategic and country needs. However, the SIs themselves are insufficient, in and of themselves, to fully address these issues, and it remains if the SIs use the limited funds available in a value adding and catalytic manner.

Finding EQ 1.2. There was an improvement in the prioritisation process in the 2020-2022 allocation period, based on lessons learned from the previous allocation period and employing clear criteria for prioritisation based on replenishment levels. All but two SIs were continued from the previous allocation and six new SIs were selected. This resulted in an expanded and diverse set of SIs that face the same issues as for the 2017-2019 allocation – i.e., a group of SIs that are focused on important strategic issues, but still lack coherence in their strategic intents.

The Paper of the 41st Board Meeting – Catalytic Investments for the 2020-2022 allocation period⁵¹ – notes that the submission of each SI in the 2020-2022 allocation for GAC review and approval includes a statement on how the SI will be catalytic. Interviews with key stakeholders however, reveal that the

⁴⁹ In-person meetings were held with the CRG Advisory Committee which comprises 20 partners and a CCM Working Group with a total of 22 participants.

⁵⁰ Five regional workshops included 179 people representing 66 CCMs who participated to provide input on differentiation for CCMs, strengthening CCM functioning, oversight, engagement, linkages with national structures and ethics. Six CCMs provided input electronically.

⁵¹ GF/B41/03 – Revision 1, 15-16 May 2019, Geneva.

understandings of the meaning of the term ‘catalytic’ were diverse, and metrics for assessing catalytic or strategic achievement remained elusive.

For the 2020-2022 allocation cycle, the SC, technical partners, and the Secretariat reviewed progress of existing SIs and considered potential new priorities. It was not initially clear whether the replenishment levels would be sufficient to cover all proposed catalytic investments (including SIs). To address this uncertainty, a prioritisation approach, based on various funding replenishment scenarios was applied to both new and existing SIs, applying strategic impact and operational criteria, and endorsed by the Strategy Committee.

Twelve SIs continued from the 2017-2019 allocation period and seven new SIs were prioritised. Because replenishment targets exceeded the identified threshold of USD 13.1 million, all 19 SIs prioritised under the various replenishment scenarios were approved for funding⁵². These are outlined in Table 6 below, including the Board prioritisation ratings for each SI. SIs selected for in-depth review under this evaluation are highlighted in bold. New SIs are highlighted in italics

Table 6: SIs prioritised under the various replenishment scenario

Thematic area	SI Workstreams	2017-19 (USD million)	2020-22 (USD million)	New N Continued C	Board prioritisation (Group 1 is highest)
Malaria	Elimination (E2020 and E2025)	7	8	C	3
	Vaccine	15	8	C	4
	New Nets	2+33⁵³	50	C	1
	Regional coordination for elimination	-	10	N	3
TB	Missing cases	11	14	C	2
HIV	AGYW	-	8	N	2
	Condoms	-	5	N	4
	TB preventive treatment for PLHIV		5	N	3
	Differentiated Service Delivery	-	15	N	3
STE	STE	15	18	C	2
RSSH/Cross-cutting	Data	22	35	C	1
	CRG	17	16	C	1
	HR	2	5	C	1
	PSM Diagnosis & planning (and transformation)⁵⁴	17	20	C	2
	CCM Evolution	3.85	15	C	3
	Innovative financing	-	20	N	4
	WHO pre-qualification of meds (2017-19) ⁵⁵	11	10	C	3

⁵² All the catalytic investments were approved for funding.

⁵³ Matching funds were converted to SI, Board decision, 2018.

⁵⁴ Continued from 2017-2019 allocation and renamed as PSM transformation.

⁵⁵ Continued from 2017-2019 allocation and moved from PSM 1.4 and renamed as ‘Accelerated introduction of innovative health products’.

Accelerated introduction of innovative health products (2020-22)				
Emergency fund	26	20	C	1
SD innovations (5 components)		47	N	3
SDI Comp I: South-South strategic support and learning ⁵⁶				
SDI Comp II: Community-Led Monitoring				
SDI Comp III: Human Resources for Health and Quality Improvement				
SDI Comp IV: National lab system improvement		9		
SDI Comp V: Strategic private sector approaches				

This prioritisation process for catalytic investments in the 2020-2022 allocation period drew on lessons learned in the previous allocation period, and was a significant improvement on the previous period, as it employed clear criteria and allowed the Strategy Policy Hub and Allocation Team to score each proposed catalytic investment against these criteria. Discussions with the Secretariat revealed that, while the process has improved over time, there may still be opportunities to further refine the prioritisation criteria, and the team addresses this in the recommendations.

Notwithstanding the improvements in prioritisation outlined above, the evaluation notes some residual issues of concern. Firstly, while there is documentation of the inputs from consultations with communities and civil society groups for catalytic investments under the 2017-2019 allocation period, the extent of consultation with these groups is less clear for the 2020-2022 allocation period. Secondly, the concerns and recommendations expressed by these groups about the catalytic investment priorities in the previous allocation period (see Finding EQ1.1) remain largely unaddressed. In particular, they note that *“utilisation of Catalytic Funding for RSSH needs to focus on community led and driven responses (including monitoring and holding relevant stakeholders accountable), rather than on elements that can and should be included in country allocations.*

Finding EQ1.3. Analysis suggests that the SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period are targeted at many, but not all, of the most pressing issues being faced by the Global Fund in its pursuit to achieve the Strategic Objectives.

Review of the challenges and priorities presented by the Secretariat in the run up to the Sixth Replenishment Conference suggests that the following strategic issues are targeted through the SIs: seeking to address some of the underlying policy and socio-economic determinants of the epidemics, including legal barriers (CRG SI; both allocations); addressing malaria insecticide resistance (New Nets SI; both allocations); targeting of AGYW among whom HIV infection rates remain high (AGYW SI; 2020-2022 allocation); introducing and scaling up differentiated HIV testing and anti-

⁵⁶ Continued from 2017-2019 allocation and put under SD innovations.

retroviral therapy (ART) delivery (Differentiated Service Delivery SI; second allocation); scaling up TB preventative treatment for PLHIV (TB treatment for PLHIV; second allocation); scale up TB case finding (TB Missing Cases SI; both allocations); strengthening prioritisation processes through efficiency analysis (STE SI; both allocations); and strengthening PSM and health management information system (HMIS) capacity (PSM and HMIS SIs; both allocations; identified by the Secretariat as two of three high risk areas to meeting the Strategic Objectives).

However, a number of important strategic issues are not addressed by the SIs, including the needs to:

- **HIV:** Strengthen targeted prevention programmes among key vulnerable population (KVP) groups and men (in high burden settings) among whom HIV infection rates remain high, and accelerate the adoption of optimal anti-retroviral (ARV) regimens.
- **TB:** Address drug resistance, and scale up and strengthen the diagnosis and treatment of multi-drug resistant (MDR) TB, as well as preventative treatment.
- **Malaria:** Increase access to and use of LLINs, and introduce and scale-up sophisticated transmission reduction strategies.
- **Cross-cutting:** Improve the quality and speed of treatment, and to introduce new treatment regimens, to deliver more people-centred care (programme quality was one of three areas identified by the Secretariat as a high risk to meeting the Strategic Objectives); strengthen community systems for rapid response and to expanding access to quality basic healthcare for treatment; and address ongoing gender disparities which continue to impede progress.

***EQ2.** To what extent have the designs of SIs demonstrated how to contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund’s Strategic Objectives? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)*

Finding EQ 2.1. While all the SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period were designed to address GF Strategic Objectives, descriptions of their catalytic intent (i.e., intended catalytic effect) were either absent or not explicitly articulated in the Paper of the 36th Board Meeting⁵⁷. Furthermore, only one of the SIs in this allocation period was accompanied by a complete theory of change (TOC)⁵⁸.

The TERG suggested that the evaluation team further explore the meaning of the term ‘catalytic’, including the extent to which it can be assessed. As discussed in Section 2.4, catalytic is defined (in the Evaluation TOR and some other GF documents) as: “The aim of SIs is to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature, but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives.” The Secretariat in June 2021 used a different definition: “Catalytic is defined by a change that could not happen through grants alone and for which the **SI resources provided measurable and quantifiable contributions**”.

In order to address the issue that SI contributions are measurable and quantifiable, the evaluation team drew upon the approach proposed in the inception report (and used in the SR2020 review), and considers ‘catalytic’ as leading to one or more of the following operational criteria being met or potentially met in the SI design – more, faster, improved, unique/new/innovative – as described in section 2.4 above.

⁵⁷ Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period. GF/B36/04 – Revision 2, 16-17 November 2016, Montreux, Switzerland.

⁵⁸ While a TOC was not a criterion requested by the Board, inclusion of a TOC is standard good practice in results frameworks.

The proposed criteria are both quantifiable and measurable. However, whether more/faster/improved/innovative activities lead to enhanced ‘effects’ can only be assessed if a robust theory of change is developed in each SI’s design before proposal and selection. Any theory of change is rooted in assumptions, which are the conditions that need to be in place to make the theory work. They explain the logic of the overall programme and behind the causal links, for example, showing that a set of activities will lead to outputs, and that those outputs will lead to an outcome, if assumptions hold (see box: Progress on Developing Theories of Change).

Key informants suggested criteria for defining impacts that, if demonstrated and ascribed to, SIs could be considered as catalytic. These included the generation of public goods that were impactful beyond the SI; the showcasing of exemplars for particular interventions; and the adoption of innovations or innovative approaches independently by partners that can be adopted and scaled up and would represent a major revolution or improvement in country health systems. In addition, key informants mentioned the ability of SIs to set an aspirational vision for reaching goals – including across borders and beyond single countries – and to overcome perceived bottlenecks by increasing the scale and reach of advocacy at ministerial and other government levels. This latter impact is however, difficult to quantify and measure directly.

The team reviewed the SIs selected in the 2017-2019 allocation period to examine if the catalytic intent of each SI was articulated, if only implicitly, in the Board Paper for the 36th Board Meeting, and if so, which of the four criteria for catalysis were addressed. This is outlined in the table below. SIs selected for in-depth review by the Evaluation Team are highlighted in **bold**.

Table 7: SIs prioritised in the 2017-2019 allocation period by catalytic intent

SI	Cost (USD million)	Articulation of catalytic intent as described (implicitly) in 36 th Board Paper	Catalytic criteria as expressed in the 36 th Board Paper
Addressing Specific Barriers to Finding Missing TB cases, especially in Key Populations and Vulnerable Groups. Development of Community and Innovative Approaches to Accelerate Case Finding⁵⁹	10	Implement innovative new activities and approaches that are needed to reach the missing people with TB.	Unique/ innovative
Malaria Elimination: Cross-cutting Support in 21 Low Burden Countries	7	Not explicitly articulated	None
Catalysing Market Entry of New Nets	2 + 33	Not explicitly articulated	None
Piloting Introduction of the RTS,S Malaria Vaccine	15	Leveraging additional funds from other partners	More
Sustainability, Transition and Efficiency	15	Not articulated except that it supports continued efforts to strengthen overall implementation of STC policy	None
Technical Support, South-to-South Collaboration, Peer Review and Learning	14	Investments will focus on catalysing additional strategic and technical support	More

⁵⁹ These two SIs were subsequently combined.

Data systems, data generation and use for programmatic action and quality improvement	10	Develop innovative tools, guidance, capacity and ensure quality; innovative analysis and use of data for action: innovative designs of empirical measurements	Unique/innovative
PSM – Diagnosis and Planning	20	Not articulated. ⁶⁰	None
PSM – Innovation Challenge Fund	10	Support research, development and testing of innovative, efficient, cost-effective and well-structured systems models, including public-private partnerships	Unique/innovative
PSM – Pre-qualification of Medicines and in-vitro diagnostics	12	Not articulated ⁶¹	None
CRG	15	Not articulated	None
Emergency fund	20	Operationalisation process is simple, flexible and rapid to deploy	Faster
CCM Evolution Pilot (15 countries)	3.85	A phased implementation of CCM evolution to equip CCMs to improve performance. Additional funding is leveraged from other sources for CCM Evolution Pilot to be implemented in three additional countries ⁶²	Improved More

Only six out of the 13 SIs prioritised for implementation in the 2017-2019 allocation period had an implicit articulation of catalytic intent in the 36th Board Paper. However, *none* of the SIs *explicitly* articulated catalytic intent in their design. It is acknowledged that articulation of catalytic intent does not ensure catalytic effect, and conversely, that catalytic impact can be achieved without catalytic intent being articulated. Nevertheless, this EQ assesses SI design, and these issues highlight flaws in SI designs.

Finding EQ 2.2. New and continued SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period all have adequate descriptions of their catalytic intent in their designs. However, few of the designs fully considered the intervention logic and the conditions and assumptions that need to be addressed to achieve results. While 19 of the continued and new SIs have theories of change, many TOCs lack critical elements such as clearly articulated risks and assumptions and identification of where in the TOC ‘catalysis’ should take place.

⁶⁰ “Catalytic priority on PSM is cross cutting and specific PSM issues related to HIV, TB and malaria will be addressed through the SC cross cutting work. Meanwhile, the HIV, TB and malaria streams/catalytic priorities will benefit from the strengthening of PSM systems carried out through this strategic initiative.” Extracted from: The Global Fund 36th Board Meeting GF/B36/04 – Revision 2 Montreux, Switzerland, 16 – 17 November 2016.

⁶¹ “The WHO prequalification programme will address medicines and IVDs for HIV, TB and malaria in priority and will contribute to increasing availability of quality assured medicines and IVDs procured by The Global Fund.” Extracted from: The Global Fund 36th Board Meeting GF/B36/04 – Revision 2 Montreux, Switzerland, 16 – 17 November 2016.

⁶² Additional CCM funding was financed through the SI. Sources other than the Global Fund (e.g., GIZ BACKUP Initiative) provided support for the implementation of Pilot Evolution activities in three additional countries – Burkina Faso, Malawi and Tanzania.

Box: Progress towards developing Theories of Change (TOC):

Building from the TRP recommendation (Lessons Learned) that the SIs would be helped by developing full TOCs, the evaluation found that: a) there was still no overarching TOC for the catalytic investments (SIs, matching funds or multi-country grants); and b) while there has been some progress, none of the SI's (except PSM) under the 2020-2022 allocation cycle has a full theory of change, and even PSM's TOC seems to have been developed inside the Secretariat, without input from external partners and others involved in the PSM space. A full TOC refers to evidence or diagrams where the elements of a logic model or results framework are clearly laid out and the assumptions and risks are also stipulated at the points where they are relevant. Full TOCs also set the projects within contexts and social or political environments that may affect their outcomes (as defined for example, by Yin 2013⁶³, Yin *et al* 2007,⁶⁴ or Vogel 2012⁶⁵). While simply listing assumptions and risks do not themselves create solid theories, logic models alone are insufficient. Without the assumptions stated explicitly, it is harder for implementers (and evaluators) to understand *why* they are doing what they are doing, in order to achieve their aims.

Most of the SIs evaluated had some form of a logic model (these are variously called “results frameworks”, “results chains” and “theories of change” in the Detailed Investment Plans). The team noted that, even among the sample of SIs reviewed during this evaluation, there were a variety of definitions of what the Secretariat teams understand a TOC should include. For example, some list one or two assumptions, some none, and only the PSM SI links these assumptions to the elements or factors in their logic models. Furthermore, none have contextual factors, none place the SI in the GF funding universe of other catalytic funding, and none are explicit about the internal and external risks that the success of the SIs is dependent upon. Nevertheless, it is apparent that most SIs are ‘on the road’ to having a full TOC, and recommend that SI leads and focal points be encouraged and supported to go further with their plans.

Finding EQ 2.3. The lack of country level engagement in the design of an SI, and the timing of its implementation, can critically affect its catalytic potential.

SIs and country grants are subject to review and approval in line with the allocation cycles, and there is a concerted effort to initiate or renew country grants as soon as possible. However, interviews with country teams and in-country stakeholders indicate that the introduction of SIs may be more time-sensitive, and suggest that the timing of SI implementation should be carefully considered on a case-by-case/country-by-country basis during its design.

CTs and in-country stakeholders interviewed noted that some SIs were best aligned with core grant start-up. Other SIs may have benefited from being initiated six months prior to country grant start-up, so that the SI could be incorporated into the country grant design. A few stakeholders suggested that the initiation of implementation for some SIs in some countries could have better been delayed by six months after core grant start, to allow country stakeholders to see how best to align the SI and country grant implementation.

There are reports of countries and CTs being informed of an SI too late in the country grant design process to jointly plan for implementation. For example, the introduction of the New Nets SI experienced problems in the first allocation with sequential timing and coordination with some country grants, although these issues were reported to be resolved in the continuation cycle. For the

⁶³ R. Yin, 2013, Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations, *Evaluation* 19(3) 321–332.

⁶⁴ R.K. Yin and D. Davis, 2007, Adding new dimensions to case study evaluations: the case of evaluating comprehensive reforms. *New Directions for Program Evaluation: Informing Federal Policies for Evaluation Methodology* 113: 75–93.

⁶⁵ Isabel Vogel, 2012, [Review of the use of ‘Theory of Change’ in international development: Report Review](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a5ded915d3cfd00071a/DFID_ToC_Review_VogelV7.pdf). Department of International Development, April 2012. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/57a08a5ded915d3cfd00071a/DFID_ToC_Review_VogelV7.pdf

Malaria Elimination SI, there was minimal coordination on timing for implementation between the SI and country grants in the two countries reviewed. In Nepal, the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) and PR were undertaking a country status assessment for 2020-2022 and were considering elimination plans, but there were indications that the SI was introduced too late to be included in the National Strategic Plan (NSP). Conversely, the timing for the initiation of TB Missing Cases SI in Tanzania was optimal, where its introduction ‘fell on fertile ground’ and the country was primed to incorporate the catalytic elements into its TB programme, although it seems that this was fortuitous rather than by design.

The lack of engagement of stakeholders at country level in SI country inclusion and design was outlined earlier in Finding EQ1. Similarly, as outlined above, lack of country-level engagement at the outset of SI implementation can inhibit its catalytic potential. This is clear for the STE SI, in which success depends on strong engagement and political commitment of country stakeholders to ensure stronger understanding of the importance of transition planning and a commitment to continued investments from domestic resources in addition to investments in strategic areas such as KVPs.

Although an improvement in the internal consultative process for country selection has been noted for the PSM DPT SI in the 2020-2022 cycle, there was still negligible involvement of country stakeholders in the SI design and in identifying the country strategic/catalytic investments. Interviews with key informants, especially at the country level, revealed the potential for revising the PSM DPT design in a manner that better supports a strategic/catalytic intent.

EQ3. *In general, was the catalytic funding allocated to SIs justified, or could interventions have been better supported through other sources, e.g., core allocations, or multi-country grants, or matching funds?*

Finding EQ 3.1. Some, but not all, SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period demonstrated innovation/catalytic change that could not have been achieved within the grants alone. This was achieved by leveraging additional funds, promoting innovative technologies and advocating for recognition of, and attention to globally important but under-prioritised needs.

Acknowledging that the catalytic intent of SIs was not always clearly articulated, it can nevertheless be seen that in certain cases, the impact of SIs was greater than simply achieving grant objectives. A strong example of this is the New Nets SI, which has profoundly shaped the market for next generation LLINs in an environment of rapidly evolving insecticide resistance, particularly to the pyrethroid class that is the only type approved to date for use on mosquito nets.

The New Nets SI leveraged large amounts of additional funding from Unitaid, and through negotiations with subcontractors and manufacturers, huge strides have been made in increasing availability of these nets since 2019, to the point where a minimum of 15 million have been ordered per year for 2020 and 2021 with increases likely in subsequent years. A volume guarantee has resulted in manufacturers remaining in business and dropping the unit price per net, benefitting global net supply and net procurers such as USAID/PMI in addition to GF itself and the countries it serves. However, the market shaping, cost-saving and procurement improvements only address one part (the top-up payment for net procurement) of the New Nets SI, which is yet to complete the first three work streams: 1) evidence generation by randomised control trial (RCT); 2) observational studies and evidence pilots; and 3) cost effectiveness analysis) to influence WHO policy guidance on net types.

Although the increased effectiveness against malaria incidence of the dual-active ingredient (AI) nets has yet to be demonstrated and the pilots have yet to yield results, a secondary impact of large-scale rollout is expected to be the delay or reversal of the development of pyrethroid resistance. The greatest cost proportion of this SI has been the top-up of costs of dual-AI nets compared to standard nets, and this will continue in the 2020-2022 allocation period without the Unitaaid co-financing agreement. This SI has therefore facilitated or accelerated the introduction of an innovative intervention (dual-AI nets), and catalysed the development of the global market for this new product, enabling their introduction into country grants from 2022 onward, assuming the WHO recommendation is forthcoming.

The CCM Evolution Pilot SI provides another example of additional funding being leveraged, in this case from technical partners, including GIZ BACKUP Health to implement the SI in three additional countries (Burkina Faso, Malawi and Tanzania). In the STE SI, partnerships were leveraged more than additional resources, for example, strengthening the capacity of country stakeholders on transition preparedness was done through joint efforts with Gavi and the World Bank, leveraging the World Bank Flagship course. In addition, the GF investment in resource tracking contributed to a harmonised approach to technical support for creating public goods and leveraging co-financing from development partners such as Gavi, the Gates Foundation, and USAID.

Amplified impact (or potential amplified impact) of SIs is demonstrated by the effect of focusing a global SI topic on a previously under-prioritised problem – particularly one that is difficult to address due to a lack of knowledge on how to proceed, or one that is not being addressed by country programmes for a variety of reasons, which may include:

- competing priorities, even within a disease area, such as desire to treat all known TB cases properly rather than finding unknown cases (TB case finding SI);
- unclear global guidance on how to stratify interventions appropriately or where to focus inadequate resources, such as how to choose between minimal LLIN or insecticide residual spraying (IRS) everywhere versus higher coverage of one or both in areas with higher malaria incidence or risk of outbreaks (Data SI, E-2020 and E-2025 SIs);
- neglect of certain key but hard to reach population groups, such as adolescent girls and young women (AGYW SI), or TB preventive treatment in HIV positive persons (TPT SI).

While some of the above-mentioned SIs, or at least some components, have been or could be implemented through country grants (such as AGYW, TPT and TB Missing Cases), numerous KIIs (see case studies) noted that this would have not have achieved the effect of galvanising attention and action on the SIs' objectives or allowed exploration of novel interventions or surveillance methods. The New Nets SI could not be implemented through country grants until dual-AI LLINs receive WHO provisional recommendation. There are indications that other SIs, such as Data, STE, and SDI Labs, benefited from not being included in country grants until the projects achieve maturity and the way forward was clear and unfettered by policy or other issues. This would be the case, for example, when TB Missing Cases/TPT or outreach to AGYW is fully entrenched in NSPs rather than being a stand-alone activity. Certain SIs, such as Data and STE, are unlikely to reach this milestone for at least one more SI cycle.

In the CCM Evolution SI, the nature of the support provided to CCMs requires flexibility (which SIs can offer) to ensure an effective response tailored to the needs of each CCM. Furthermore, to avoid conflict of interest, some activities need to be centrally administered.

In one of the two reviewed countries for the PSM DPT SI, there are projects ongoing that are catalytic in nature (for example, piloting innovative last mile supply chain approaches in Burkina Faso). As noted by the TRP, at the closure of the first cycle there was no analysis performed of the 20 targeted countries of the PSM DPT SI to analyse what had worked, what hadn't, what was achieved, how funds were used, how much it cost to measure the indicators, and why the milestone indicators were dropped. Hence, the catalytic effect may remain hard to document beyond anecdotal examples.

5.2. Objective 2. Evaluate SI implementation arrangements and how performance is monitored to identify key contributing factors that made SIs more successful.

EQ4. MANAGEMENT AND IMPLEMENTATION *To what extent were SIs well managed by the Secretariat and well implemented by partners?*

Finding EQ 4.1. In general, SI coordination, partner contracting, planning, implementation and reporting have improved over time, both in response to lessons learned by the SI leads, and due to feedback from the OIG review, TRP summary of lessons learned, and the SI Boost initiative.⁶⁶

This overall finding masks the variation between SIs, as the individual SIs and their histories are complex in terms of how they were managed, how the contracting has operated, and how the workplans and reporting are conducted. Most of the SI case studies saw a significant improvement in this area during the 2020-2022 cycle, given the new results frameworks with workplans budgeted inside them, detailed investment plans and templates that are now being prepared for financial and programmatic reporting. It should be noted that while this increase in attention to management detail is necessary for improving accountability, quality, performance and transparency of operations, it is likely to significantly increase transaction costs – especially those costs associated with management of the SIs within the Secretariat.

Finding EQ 4.2. While the largely non-competitive mode of selecting partners was justified, the details of how they were contracted and what was in the deliverable-based contracts (i.e., how the deliverables were defined) generated concerns of low accountability, as described in the OIG Advisory and SI Boost. The recent inclusion of elements of input-based contracting (i.e., the Global Fund requiring much more detailed budgets and reimbursing based on expenditure reporting) may compromise SI contribution to outcomes, lower incentives away from achieving results, and increase transaction costs (See also Finding EQ6.2).

For the first allocation cycle, most SIs used a mixed format for selecting and contracting UN agencies as implementing partners. The decision to use existing partners, which is largely well-justified, given the bespoke technical nature of many of the SIs, was driven by a Board decision to recommend pre-identified agencies (mainly technical agencies) to implement the SIs. In total, USD 68 million (USD 57 million signed by end of 2019) was assigned to existing partner technical agencies using three different contract formats. Under the 2020-2022 cycle, the mix of how the contracts have been apportioned is

⁶⁶ Note: a) the implementation arrangements (as planned and presented on paper) have been assessed for both cycles of the SIs, but the results or outcomes and use of the implementation arrangements or the factors that facilitated or constrained them can only be assessed for the first allocation; b) The EQ assumes management is done by Secretariat and implementation done by partners, but there is not always a clear distinction, especially for implementation. This is pertinent for the current allocation cycle.

yet to be finalised. KIIs with some SI leads and partners highlighted the increase in input-based elements in the contracts. While considered necessary to improve accountability, several internal and external stakeholders noted that this change is likely to incur higher transaction costs through greater reporting requirements for both financial and programmatic aspects of the projects. This increased accountability appears to have increased Secretariat responsibility and associated workload to manage the TA pools⁶⁷.

The SIs reviewed by the evaluation team used non-competitive selection processes for technical partner selection in both SI cycles, and for those SIs needing independent consultants for TA, the SI managers are using a public open-bidding request for proposal (RFP) mechanism to create pools of pre-qualified consultants for particular topics. There are several consequences of this trend of greater reliance on internal management of TA by the Secretariat, including for example, more work for the CTs/GMD to provide support around the TA (checking TORs, checking individuals sourced, liaising with the PRs to ensure the right TA is provided, and assessing the quality and relevance and use of the product). Other implications of increasing TA management by the Secretariat include the need for more oversight by the SI leads and the SIPMO.

Several key informants (from SI lead teams within the Secretariat and amongst some of the technical partners) also noted that this increase in financial and programmatic reporting illustrates a shift towards intensified management by the Secretariat. This carries a risk that, even as SIs are intended to encourage innovative approaches to addressing problems, these changes may disincentivise partners from exploring innovation. The team notes however, that these changes sometimes result in less funding for the partners, so their dissatisfaction with the changes could also stem from this.

Finding EQ 4.3. Changes requiring SIs to develop detailed investment plans and accompanying results frameworks mean that much stronger implementation and management is possible in the current allocation period. The establishment and expansions of the SI Programme Management Office (SIPMO) has contributed to stronger SI management.

While there are clear divisions of labour and responsibilities in several SIs (e.g., established in standard operating protocols [SOPs], stronger work-planning, results frameworks), some SI SOPs are rudimentary. For example, the tasks or roles described in the SOP documents for the TB Missing Cases SI, and the management of TA under the Data SI, are basic and may need further fleshing out for effective management and decision making as the SI rolls out.

Centralised management of SIs with dedicated oversight from PMO is now in place. The Secretariat SI teams managing the SIs are larger, have more resources, and appear better organised (with TORs, clear division of responsibility and accountability, and more detailed planning documents etc.), often with a more organised approach to shared administrative roles between SIs (e.g., the AGYW SI and CRG SI share an administrative person). The new SIs have built their management and implementation arrangements on the lessons learned from other SIs (AGYW, TPT, SDI Labs). EQ 5.4 presents the formal evidence around this finding. These all have been direct responses to OIG review recommendations and other reviews.

⁶⁷ Data is not available to show the whole shift in the forms of contracts, as most contracts had not been signed (data from SIPMO – townhall presentation June 2021), although the direction of travel appears clear from the detailed budgets reviewed by the evaluation team.

The PSM DPT SI is improving implementation arrangements in the second cycle. As planned, the country project/project office and resulting reports shall be made available across the Secretariat also for a wider understanding of the budget allocated/spent and potentially for systematic analysis of results. Positively, there has been a definition of roles and responsibilities internally in the GF Secretariat in relation to the implementation of the PSM SI between the SC team, CT/FPM specialists to overcome the identified challenge in the first cycle. Equally, the STE SI is using a variety of implementers, primarily competitively sourced TA providers and some technical partners for specific interventions.

Finding EQ 4.4. There were good communication channels created during the 2017-2019 cycle within SI teams and between partners. There is potential for further strengthening in the 2020-2022 allocation cycle, given that the increase in resources and personnel has meant robust multi-partner, multi-skilled teams are expected to mature over time.

The teams for the TB, CCM Evolution, Malaria Elimination, New Nets, PSM, STE, and Data SIs met regularly throughout the first cycle, which seemed to contribute to keeping most SIs on track once they had started. For example, some evidence from the minutes of the TB Situation Room suggests that, over time, the Situation Room was a useful (if sometimes contentious) space for solving problems and improving communication, and partners under the Data SI enthused about the advantages of the team coordination meetings, how well they worked, and how well-coordinated they were. There is also documentary evidence of a strong partnership approach and information sharing and discussion of lessons learned in the CCM Evolution SI through CCM Working Group Partner Meetings⁶⁸, and through meetings with TA providers/implementers.⁶⁹

Finding EQ 4.5. Despite slow start-up for SIs due to contracting delays with partners and some delayed activities due to COVID-19, a high proportion of activities were completed under all SIs. This calls into question the rationale for the recent move towards more hands-on Secretariat management of UN technical partners.

Most of the SIs under 2017-2019 cycle were hampered by delays at the start (contracting arrangements were complex), and poor output/outcome planning resulted in the monitoring sometimes looking weak as data are scarce or general. This was particularly the case in the early stages, and was picked up by the OIG review as it looked as though implementation would be severely hampered by these weaknesses. The recommendations were to standardise and tighten the reporting and financial frameworks for the SIs. However, activities were largely completed by the end of 2020 for most of the SIs reviewed, and there was little evidence of low rates of absorption in any of them. The delays were mostly explainable by COVID-19, which resulted in delaying TA missions, changing those missions to virtual assignments, or cancelling training activities. The New Nets SI struggled with a slow start due to delays in manufacturing in early 2020 because most dual-AI nets are made in China. This was compounded by shipping delays due to a shortage of containers. But the largest delays in the New Nets SI were in the evidence generation components, partly related to delays in protocol development and agreement by multiple partners, ethical approvals and the time needed (approximately two years) to generate results, as well as COVID-19 interruptions of fieldwork. The RCT in Benin and evidence pilots did not get underway until 2019-2020.

⁶⁸ CCM Working Group members: GIZ BACKUP, BMZ (German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development), SDC BACKUP Health Contribution, UNAIDS, USG/PEPFAR, Stop TB, Gates Foundation, Gavi, 5% Initiative, Expertise France, RBM, WHO.

⁶⁹ Summary notes and presentations from partner meetings.

This finding identifies a mismatch between the early warning signals that the SIs were not going to be implemented well due to structural difficulties, and the consequences of that warning being clearly seen in the new generation of the 2020-2022 cycle SIs, contrasted with the relatively strong reports of the end of the first cycle (2017-2019) with most activities being done, funds spent and results (where planned) either achieved or showing strong performance compared to baselines.

One of the lessons learned from the first cycle and reflected in the 2020-2022 cycle for the PSM SI has been the modification of the contracting modalities of the TA providers. The RFP modality for each single technical assistance project was extremely heavy, lengthy and time-consuming. For the 2020-2022 cycle, the SI team conducted a pre-selection of vendors in the four key areas for the four key thematic areas (data management; governance; optimised SC design; and private sector engagement), thus overcoming the lengthy process of developing and managing RFPs for each single country technical assistance project. The STE SI followed a similar process to identify key TA providers in the different themes covered by the SI. Country Teams were responsible for developing the TORs for each consultancy.

EQ5: What have been the quality assurance, transparency, performance monitoring, and accountability mechanisms? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)

Finding EQ 5.1. Insufficient rigour in partner contract design in the 2017-2019 allocation, resulted in some SIs with unclear partner accountability and transparency, and without a predefined process to resolve issues.

The evidence for this weakness is generally acknowledged by most leads and partners, and was brought out in the OIG review and other assessments during the first cycle. Some SIs had fairly clear accountability mechanisms in place (at least in theory) but many had weak reporting systems with long narrative reports, a basic lack of sound monitoring indicators or milestones, which translated into unclear results. This is reflected as an overall lack of transparency and little recognition of who was responsible when activities were either incomplete or activities were done that were not expected under the SIs. This led to tensions even in those SIs that were fairly logical in their accountability mechanisms. Detailed findings by SI are articulated more fully in the SI case studies.

Finding EQ5.2. All SIs reviewed have improved management performance frameworks, with clearer results frameworks developed for the 2020-2022 allocation period, including more robust metrics that are better aligned with existing data reporting mechanisms or tools.

Acknowledged weaknesses under the 2017-2019 allocation cycle in transparency, performance monitoring and accountability led the Secretariat to enhance its own requirements as to how the SI leads, their teams, and the partners contracted under the SIs are being asked to measure, monitor and report on activities, outputs and outcomes. The results frameworks are a mix of outputs and outcomes that will be independently measured or extracted from Progress Update and Disbursement Requests (PUDRs). For example, the TB Missing Cases SI results will use a mix of standard TB reporting through the PUDRs and new estimates of missing cases. Reporting by the CCM SI uses semi-annual output metrics and investment outcomes. Reporting lines for these frameworks have also been strengthened (e.g., for the CCM, Data, TB Missing Cases and New Nets SIs). In some cases, reporting requirements have been greatly increased, for example, monthly reports are now demanded by the SIPMO for some SI activity and financial reports.

In addition, reporting templates are in the process of being standardised for reporting to the SI PMO. The TB Missing Cases, AGYW's and Data SI results frameworks have between nine and 12 core

indicators each, all are expected to be measured semi-annually (against six benchmarks, across the full three-year cycle), most indicators appear to have meaningful baselines, and targets have been set under the workplan for monitoring deliverables, with ambitious “target competition periods” identified within the timeframe of each semester. Unlike the E-2020 SI, Malaria Elimination E-2025 has a clear results framework, starting from well-defined baselines with a results chain from activities, outputs, outcomes to impact/catalytic effects, using seven country level indicators and four completion milestones over three years. Similar improvement is seen in the results framework for the Nets Transition Initiative (revised name for the New Nets Project), which has seven indicators and 12 milestones in three workstreams. The indicators are focused on net supply, procurement, price and coverage, with only one indicator on the evidence generation component of this SI (one of the workstreams, and a large focus in 2017-2019 cycle). The SDI Labs SI has an elaborate results framework with 17 indicators to capture multiple aspects of this complex project at the lab worker and lab capacity levels; these include novel indicators of lab quality and capacity strengthening as well as two relating to TA completion and quality (client satisfaction).

The PSM SI results framework remains weak despite the pledge for improvement by the TRP. The current results framework does not link the key objectives to the deliverables. The milestones are very general and phrased in a way that does not facilitate identification or measurement (for example, three out of five are phrased as “Support activities to...”). The “on shelf availability” (OSA) indicator and the three new indicators listed in the 2020-2022 PSM SI result framework are not an adequate/informative measurement for an SI, and as detailed in the case study, also extremely expensive to measure. Further, the OSA key performance indicator (KPI) is considered controversial, further questioning the VfM of this measure. The STE SI results framework relies on activities implemented and not on outcomes.

The results frameworks also show some of the planned cross-fertilisation between SIs. Of note, the TB and Data SIs, and Data and AGYW SIs appear to have several interlinked indicators illustrative of this design feature that was requested for inclusion in the detailed investment plans, and was in response to feedback from the OIG and Boost SI reviews.

Finding EQ 5.3. Mechanisms for monitoring and establishing quality assurance for the deliverables produced by TA contracted under SIs remain untested, and much of the workload for quality assurance falls on the Country Teams.

Several partners expressed concerns about the TA quality assurance process – from design to the assessment of the technical content within the completed product – when they no longer have ownership of the TA process. The team notes that some of these issues are unresolved, as most contracts under the current allocation cycle have not yet been finalised, so this finding is based on qualitative key informant responses to the evaluation questions, and the evaluation’s study of the detailed budgets as presented for the assessment. While there has been little assessment of the quality of TA products under the first cycle of SIs, there are reports of inconsistencies, incompleteness of assignments and poor continuity of TA affecting quality. Multiple key informants interviewed during SI case studies (CCM Evolution, Data, TB Missing Cases, and PSM) highlighted the challenges in coordination of the TA provided by various technical partners. Issues of TA quality are not uncommon in the evolving milieu of epidemics and health systems, but multiple partners raised these as issues of concern, and the evaluation team is obliged to alert the Secretariat to the increased risk that it may carry as a result. Other implications may be disruption of some elements of partnership, which is examined further under EQ6.

The SI that established the largest pool of TA was the Data SI under the 2017-2019 cycle. The quality

of the TA deliverables has not yet been evaluated systematically. Some of the users of the pool (the CTs) use a reporting template consisting of 12 questions to report their satisfaction with the process and superficially report on the quality of the work. However, there is little evidence of other systematic quality assurance being performed on this pool of TA.

The TORs for several of the SIs also do not appear to be rigorously reviewed, yet they are an increasingly significant part of the SI operations. The need to provide QA for the TORs, sometimes the management and implementation of the TA, as well as the deliverables, meant the CTs' workload increased in the 2017-2019 allocation, and is predicted to increase further in the current 2020-2022 cycle (for example, in the SDI Labs SI which is very TA heavy).

Similarly, the PSM DPT SI is based on TA vendors managed by the SI team. Over 48 contracts have been issued under the first cycle for 20 countries, of which around 14 seem related to the in-country diagnostics from their title, and the remaining related to targeted transformation projects. There has been no quality assurance system, even rudimentary, put in place to evaluate the quality of the provided TA.

Under the CCM Evolution SI, TA was provided by various technical partners and TA providers. Although there were clear guidelines and processes on reporting for TA providers, reports and the level of detail on technical assistance varied across providers, with unclear mechanisms for quality assurance of deliverables.

Finding EQ 5.4. The new SIs under the 2020-2022 allocation period (AGYW, TPT, and SDI Labs) have been designed and launched based on lessons learned from SIs in the previous allocation, resulting in improved designs.

All continuing SIs have responded in multiple ways to the OIG, TRP lessons learned and the SI Boost reviews. An overview of which recommendations have been responded to and what remains is presented in Annex 2, which identifies the issues or recommendations that are still outstanding for the Secretariat to continue working on. While some recommendations remain a work in progress (e.g., the partnership framework), overall, these reviews have improved the SIs in both how they are designed and how they are and will be implemented.

EQ6: *To what extent have the Global Fund partnerships and technical assistance been effective in the delivery of SIs?*

Finding EQ 6.1. During the 2017-2019 allocation period, despite a slow start, partner engagement improved over time, as the Secretariat and partners worked together to coordinate and implement the activities under most SIs, often under considerable pressure. This teamwork and coordination fostered greater transparency and better accountability arrangements.

Most SIs experienced a slow start to the SI implementation period and most partners were contracted using a deliverable-based modality allowing for wide and flexible scopes of work under many of the activities. Partnership engagement was helped by regular meetings and strong coordination was experienced under several SIs (Data, Malaria Elimination, New Nets, STE, TB, CCM Evolution). This has led to increased trust between the technical partners and in several cases, to increased trust between partners and Secretariat groups/teams.

To illustrate this, there is an evidence of strong engagement of technical partners to support the delivery of the CCM Evolution SI, where partnerships were central to SI success. According to the KIs

interviewed, robust coordination of all partners' priorities (technical support and in-country processes) led to greater efficiency and maximum impact of the CCM Evolution Pilot in some countries. The current cycle has continued emphasis on partner engagement with expansion to new partners in some areas. For example, there is now a partnership with the CRG Department to work with regional civil society platforms and key population networks to provide engagement expertise and engage civil society as providers of support in some countries.

Finding EQ 6.2. The response by the Secretariat to the OIG advisory and SI Boost Initiative to increase accountability may have introduced tensions with contracted partners through a) the revised modes of contracting (more reliance on input-budgeting), and b) changes to partner budgets in favour of Secretariat central management of TA.

In response to the OIG Advisory and the subsequent SI Boost Initiative, the Secretariat is striving to improve and increase accountability of their contracted partners and themselves. This is being done by centralising the contracting, management of TA, budgeting and reporting for many of the SIs, and changing how the consultants are contracted, i.e., ensuring TA is directly managed by the Secretariat. Interviews with stakeholders from within the Secretariat and with technical partners themselves provide indications that these changes are resulting in some negative responses by some technical partners. Key informants expressed concern that the changes can disrupt relationships between technical partners and their pools of TA that they have recruited and trained. Partners also expressed concern about the lack of clarity as to how the TA is to be coordinated, given the existing heavy workload of many of the Global Fund country teams. Finally, some partners, especially UN agencies, expressed concerns about the associated reductions in their contract budgets.⁷⁰ In addition, interviews with stakeholders within the Secretariat and with partners highlighted concerns as to whether the GF is designed to manage this quantity of TA. To illustrate, the total percentage of the TB Missing Cases SI allocated to TA is now 63%, including half of the funds going through the RFP process for country-driven TA to be selected via a TA pool. The Data SI has almost doubled its investment in M&E TA from USD 2.7 million to USD 4.28million, including a 3% increase in staff costs at Secretariat level (DIP, 2020).

The timing of the OIG advisory was important. OIG findings were based on data collected in early to mid-2019 (but often looking at data from 2018 or even 2017), when SI activities had barely started, and COVID-19 had not appeared. In a comment on the consequences of some of the late starts to the SI projects the OIG reviewers noted: "One of the main consequences of the late signing of contracts was a shortened implementing period, in several cases increasing the risk of catalytic investment objectives being missed due to the shorter time frame".⁷¹ However, the evaluation team could not detect a major problem with implementation either at the global level or country level in terms of poor absorption of SI funds, or incomplete activities. On the contrary, evidence suggests that most SIs appear to be largely on track (in relation to their activities and interventions being completed or nearly completed by the end of the cycle), even if their outcomes or results are hard to determine, due to measurement limitations. The OIG's prediction of 'poor implementation' perhaps came too early, yet it has had considerable impact on design changes and implementation planning for the 2020-2022 cycle. These changes appear to be affecting partners, according to several key informants. The

⁷⁰ At the time of writing this report, the evaluation team does not have final numbers for the contracts and contract budgets, so this finding is based on the preliminary budgets and the KIs conducted with many stakeholders. This is because only one out of 20 contracts across all SIs have been signed, and final contracts were not available. Based on the detailed budgets for some of the most affected SIs, a considerable drop (over 25%) in total funds is observed for the UN agency partners, which may increase once all contracts are signed.

⁷¹ OIG review, p. 23.

potential damage to partnership trust has to be balanced against the need for better accountability, and possibly higher transaction costs.

4.3 Objective 3. To assess whether the SIs have achieved their intended objectives, in particular the extent to which the SIs have been catalytic

EQ7 CATALYTIC EFFECT AND RESULTS. *To what extent has a catalytic effect been achieved by 2017-2019 SIs so that they contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund Strategic Objectives?*

The findings on this evaluation question fall into three distinct parts that are described sequentially: first, whether SIs generally achieved their stated objectives, although an in-depth review of each is not within the scope of this assessment; secondly, whether they were catalytic; and thirdly, whether (together with country grants) they contributed to Global Fund strategic objectives.

Finding EQ 7.1. All SIs have generally made good progress towards their intended and stated objectives, although the progress of some components that operated in collaboration within target countries (such as New Nets and TB Missing Cases) has been affected by COVID-19.

There is evidence of delay in initiation of some SIs (e.g., New Nets) due to delayed contract revision and signing, staff hiring, and sub-contracting. However, other SIs started fairly quickly and achieved their stated objectives with full spend in the targeted timeframe (Malaria E-2020, Data, CCM Evolution Pilot, and TB Missing Cases).

The COVID-19 pandemic stalled the initiation and implementation of parts of SIs, especially those that have to be implemented at country level or with MOH/national programme collaboration (objectives 1-3 of New Nets, AGYW, TPT, STE, TB Missing Cases). However, SI components that are managed centrally or regionally have proceeded well despite COVID-19 (objective 4 of New Nets, Malaria E-2020, Data digital health information systems and most of the TA provision, PSM, and certain elements of STE).

The CCM Evolution SI used the response to COVID-19 as an opportunity to work more cohesively and collectively to advance and promote country leadership. The updated CCM Evolution approach included a shift from providing TA to CCMs being placed in the “driver’s seat”, and CCMs were provided with tools to improve their performance and move towards strategic levels of maturity in four key areas by leveraging peer-to-peer support between CCMs, CTs, and partners. The adapted approach focused on country-level input, including remote establishment of thresholds, a virtual induction and additive support from interventions.

The timescale of SIs – based as they are on three-year funding allocation cycles – may not be suited to complete achievement of their stated objectives, even without the delaying effect of COVID-19. For example, the definition of ‘malaria elimination’ accepted by the Global Fund from the WHO Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016-2030⁷² and the Malaria Elimination Framework⁷³ is the absence of cases of indigenous malaria transmission for at least three consecutive years. Therefore, if a country included in the SI has any indigenous cases in the first year, it will need a period longer than three years to reach elimination as per this definition. Similarly, there may be other serious

⁷² WHO, 2015. Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030.

⁷³ WHO, 2017. A framework for malaria elimination.

bottlenecks or issues that SIs are trying to overcome that cannot be easily achieved in three years. For example, for PSM, the diagnostic assessments and resulting new outline approaches for supply chain transformation and/or piloting of innovative approaches and tools require longer timeframes than a three-year cycle. As noted by the second cycle DIP, and as reported by one surveyed country, the processes (and contracts) initiative in the first cycle are continuing in the second one.

Finding EQ 7.2. The New Nets, TB Missing Cases, CCM Evolution and Data SIs have clearly demonstrated delivery on several aspects of their catalytic potential, while others have yet to do so.

All SIs by definition were proposed and funded in order to address catalytic priorities, using the definition of catalytic expressed in various ways in Board and Secretariat documents and which was interpreted in many diverse ways. The evaluation team retrospectively reviewed the 2017-2019 SIs performance through the lens of the proposed definition and criteria of catalytic, described above, and assessed the catalytic potential of the 2020-2022 SIs in the same way.

In their designs, all the SIs address at least one of the four aspects of 'catalytic'. One SI (AGYW) addresses all four criteria in its design, while the majority of the remainder address two or three catalytic criteria. Since GF core allocations are intended to do 'more', 'faster', the two criteria of 'innovative' and 'improved' are regarded as more reflective of the catalytic intent. Those which are intended to do 'more', 'faster' are better candidates for future inclusion in core allocations. The table in Annex 3 summarises the expected catalytic effects that were described in Board documents or were extracted from the SI documents reviewed by the team. Table 8 summarises catalytic effects observed in the 2017-2019 allocation period and anticipated in 2020-2022.

The SIs that were intended to do 'more' were exemplified by the Malaria E-2020 SI for including countries that are no longer eligible for GF funding, and the Data SI for raising the profile of surveillance, promoting enhanced information systems and leveraging partners to work in this space. SIs that intended to 'improve' activities did so by aiming to make them more efficient, effective or strategic. For example, the CCM Evolution SI and the SDI Labs SI had a strong focus on this catalytic criterion, as did AGYW and STE.

Two SIs that demonstrated 'innovative' potential (New Nets and CCM Evolution) also demonstrated other catalytic criteria ('more' funding and activities, and either 'improved' or 'faster' activities). Other SIs that were not specifically seen as 'innovative', but which nevertheless indicated this potential in their designs included: AGYW with its potential effect for investigating new approaches to solve a problem, TPT for scaling up insufficient reach, and TB Missing Cases for introducing previously underused technologies and trying out new methods of case finding. The PSM SI has also potential to be classified as an 'innovative' SI, as in certain instances it allowed piloting of innovative PSM approaches and tools that would not have been funded under the GF core allocation because of competing priorities at country level. However, this is not articulated in the DIP nor in the GF supply chain strategy roadmap, which is under elaboration. The DIP would benefit from articulating the strategic and catalytic nature of innovative approaches/models/tools and the proof of concept, including data management/eLMIS, supply chain design/last mile distribution, optimised supply chain design, and private sector engagement. The SDI Labs SI (still at an early stage) is an example of a well elaborated DIP (with a prospective evaluation plan) covering some related issues, that could be used for reference examples and complementary information.

Through its design process, the CCM Evolution Pilot SI catalysed the approval of revised Guidelines and Requirements for CCMs (CCM Policy with introduction of the CCM differentiation and the concept

of maturity levels) and introduced a new area: “CCM linkages”.⁷⁴ Catalytic in its design and implementation, CCM Evolution SI is seen as ‘improved’ (CCM in some countries became more strategic and have played a catalytic role in the development of co-financing commitment tracking tools); ‘more’ (additional funding has been leveraged from technical partners with additional activities implemented, e.g., extended linkages support in Malawi, Tanzania and Burkina Faso); and ‘innovative’ (introducing baseline and end-line assessments).

Several SIs were designed to enable ‘faster’ progress towards objectives to be achieved. For example, the goal of the New Nets SI was to speed up evidence generation for the increased effectiveness of dual-active ingredient LLINs, to promote WHO recommendation of these nets so that they could be purchased through regular grant procurement, and to roll them out in large volumes as quickly as possible to overcome existing insecticide resistance as well as mitigate against its further evolution. The TB Missing Cases SI also responded to the urgency of finding untreated TB cases as quickly as possible to enable them to access treatment. In addition, both AGYW and TPT were designed to speed the scale-up of access by under-prioritised groups to services. STE SI intended to do more to scale-up the implementation of the STC Policy by accelerating sustainability planning and transition readiness, and by improving the efficiency of GF investments. The PSM SI also has the potential to enable ‘faster’ progress to pilot and implementing innovative approaches and tools. Key informants at country level highlighted the importance of funding flexibility to enable faster piloting.

SIs demonstrating ‘more’ in 2017-2019 and new SIs with potential effect for ‘more’ (leveraging more funding or doing more activities) were New Nets, CCM Evolution, Data, Malaria Elimination, PSM, TPT, and AGYW. Common features of these SIs were that most of them focused on service delivery for disease outcomes or the monitoring of such outcomes.

The New Nets SI demonstrated clear catalytic effect by combining country net orders so that volume guarantees could be negotiated to achieve a unit price drop much sooner than expected, enabling GF and other net purchasers (e.g., PMI) to increase the number of new nets procured. It therefore fulfils the catalytic criteria of ‘more’, ‘innovative’, and ‘faster’ as well as achieving results that could not be done within country grants.

The Data SI has leveraged more funds and attention, improved efficiency of surveillance, and applied new methods to increase data standardisation and availability. It can therefore be regarded as having succeeded in the catalytic criteria of ‘more’, ‘improved’, and ‘innovative’, although the use of data has yet to catch up with availability.

The timescale needed to implement the SIs means that most others have not yet demonstrated catalytic potential, but seem likely to do so. In addition, COVID-19 has significantly delayed country level activities of some SIs, resulting in their continuation into the 2020-2022 cycle (e.g., New Nets evidence components), hampering the full realisation of catalytic potential.

Finding EQ7.3. The 2017-2019 SIs reviewed have all contributed to one or more of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives (SOs), although the extent of SI contributions to the SOs is hard to quantify.

In the 2017-2019 allocation period, each SI description identified the specific SOs that they were addressing, although specific KPIs were not mentioned in the Board documents. One group of SIs has greater focus on SO1, while still aiming to support and strengthen health systems for sustainability. A good example of this is the TB Missing Cases SI, which had a specific disease target. The Malaria

⁷⁴ The Global Fund, Country Coordination Mechanism Policy Including Principles and Requirements, May 2018.

Elimination E2020 SI was also concerned with reducing cases and mortality, by removing disease risk altogether. It did not specify a target number of countries in the SI, although it was guided by the malaria global technical strategy of ten countries reaching elimination by 2020. The TPT and AGYW SIs also increased the reach of treatment for underserved populations.

The other SIs are more process-oriented and RSSH-focused (SO2). These include the CCM Evolution, Data, PSM, SDI Labs, and STE SIs, although there is evidence that PSM may have a strategic impact when used to pilot innovative approaches/proof of concepts, as in Burkina Faso. AGYW has potential for achievements under SO3, which concerns human rights and gender.

SO4 is focused on mobilising increased resources. An exemplar here is the New Nets SI, which has brought in large Unitaids matching funds for supply of commodities (dual-AI LLINs), and market shaping resulted in reduced prices. Other examples include the Data SI with its support for district health information system software (DHIS2), which is a large co-funded programme to develop integrated data platforms, which attracted a number of other investors/donors such as PMI, PEPFAR, USAID, CDC, and the Gates and Rockefeller Foundations. The PSM DPT SI is reported to have increased GF financial investments in PSM in country grants during the 2020-2022 allocation period for five countries.⁷⁵ Increased coordination of the SC team with the country team has also resulted in increased shared information and SI-planned PSM investment by country.⁷⁶

The Global Fund conducts regular reviews of progress on each Strategic Objective, as judged by the KPIs associated with each^{77, 78}. The most recent annual review of KPIs at the end of 2020 reported the progress of each KPI and strategic performance overall. However, KPIs are unable to capture the totality of impact across all SIs. For example, the contribution of the Malaria Elimination SI to SO1 is hard to evaluate under the KPI framework because the number of cases is small as malaria elimination approaches. In addition, by only considering one of the funding streams (SI) in any particular context (as in this report) it is not possible to discern the relative contribution specifically from SIs. Evaluations considering the full landscape of funding to particular countries or regions would be highly informative to reduce overlap or missed opportunities in future SIs, other catalytic funding and country grants.

EQ8. CONTRIBUTION TO NSPs. *To what extent have the SIs contributed to achieving country NSPs, strategic objectives and targets?*

Finding EQ8.1. **Since there has been limited comprehensive landscape analysis of potential overlap of SI funding with country grants, multi-country grants, matching funds, or PAAR provided in both allocation periods, as well as with activities of other stakeholders both within and outside the Global Fund, it is difficult to assess the extent of contribution from the SIs.**

It is important for SIs to take account of the Fund's broader portfolio of support and ensure that SI objectives and designs consider complementarity, overlap, missed opportunities, and other catalytic funding streams, as well as multi-country/country grants where they overlap, as well as potential negative impacts of SI. The flow of information needs to go both ways between SI designers and countries preparing proposals, as discussed below. Funds from SIs are intended to benefit countries and strengthen their progress toward strategic objectives, but the flow of funding is usually indirect (such as top-up costs of dual-AI LLINs) or applied at central level and not clearly visible at all levels

⁷⁵ Figure 1, SI Projects Impact on SC Grant Funding in Ethiopia, Ghana, Malawi, Nigeria & Uganda, p. 5. PSM Transformation DIP.

⁷⁶ Clarification: The PSM DPT SI focuses nearly exclusively on the supply chain components (storage/distribution/LMIS) of the PSM cycle and not on market shaping areas aimed at increasing demand, introducing new medicines/diagnostics and reducing prices.

⁷⁷ GF_B45_14_Strategic Performance Report end-2020.pdf

⁷⁸ GF_B45_14_Annex 1_Detailed KPI results.pdf

(e.g., for consultant TA, development of guidelines, cross-cutting activities on data, PSM systems, or STE planning).

A lack of consultation and synergy is shown by the absence of mechanisms to coordinate and synergise the inputs of SI and other types of catalytic funding, including multi-country/regional grants and matching funds. While SIs are intended to be complementary and additive to other funding streams, and may operate appropriately at regional or global levels, it is important that they are designed and planned taking into account the overall milieu. The evaluation noted that, in country selection for inclusion/focus in SIs, concurrent multi-country grants in the same countries have not always been fully considered (a prime example being MOSASWA/E8 malaria grants in Southern Africa, where three countries are also in the Malaria Elimination SI in both allocations, in addition to several having their own malaria country grants). There are indications that better coordination and information exchange would improve both the SI and the multi-country grants. The additive or complementary effect of a single stream (SIs, in this case) cannot be assessed without a full consideration of all the other inputs.

Regarding whether the results of SIs influenced subsequent country NSPs, the time frame of implementation to date is too short to assess this, although the evaluation noted some examples of SI results being included in performance framework (PF) targets in concurrent or subsequent country grants. For the New Nets SI, the inclusion of nets subsidised by this SI was explicit in the 2020-2022 funding requests for Mozambique and Burkina Faso. Both countries used a combination of PBO (not covered by the New Nets SI) and dual-AI nets in different districts.

- In Mozambique, next-generation nets comprised the great majority of the LLINs requested: 13,508,408 next generation LLIN (81%) and 3,155,793 standard LLINs (19%) for the 2020 LLIN round. The breakdown of PBO and dual-AI net numbers was not given in the funding request, but they were assigned to different districts.
- In Burkina Faso, in 2019 standard LLIN were still the majority proportion (9,341,339, 77%) of the LLIN distributed, followed by next generation PBO nets (1,299,245, 11%) and the dual-AI LLIN (1,533,618, 13%).

SIs that aimed for catalytic ‘improvement’ will likely positively influence the country NSPs, although this is hard to judge yet because many countries developed NSPs at the start of the 2017-2019 allocation and are still in force. The Data SI will influence surveillance targets and measurements, and enable progress to be measured more efficiently as standardisation increases. Some NSPs already had the E-2020 SI targets and measurements included in the grants; most of the countries in the E-2020 and E-2025 that are still eligible for GF malaria funding already had elimination goals and target years in their NSPs.

There is evidence that potential overlap between SIs and multi-country grants was not always taken into account in designing optimal SI strategies. For example, E-2020 includes South Africa, Eswatini and Botswana in Southern Africa, and all three countries overlap with the multi-country E8 grant, and the first two countries with MOSASWA multi-country grants, in addition to malaria country grants in all three countries (see Annex 4, Map A). The TERG conducted a Thematic Review of Southern Africa malaria elimination in 2018⁷⁹, and the team notes that this overlap was not fully addressed during design of the malaria elimination SI 2020-2022, the SI on Regional Coordination on Malaria Elimination

⁷⁹ TERG Thematic Review of Elimination of Malaria in Southern Africa April 2018.
https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/7457/terg_malariaeliminationinsouthernafricathematicreview_paper_en.pdf

(not reviewed as part of this evaluation), multi-country grant renewals or country grants in countries included in multiple funding streams (Eswatini, Botswana, South Africa, and Mozambique).

E-2020 in Central/South America includes five countries (Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras) that are also in EMMIE/RMEI (Annex 4, Map B). Two other EMMIE/RMEI countries were added in E-2025 SI (Belize, Panama). Other non-EMMIE/RMEI countries in E-2020 and E-2025 are Ecuador, Mexico, and Suriname; and Haiti, Nicaragua, and French Guiana (a territory of France) were added to E-2025. El Salvador and Paraguay were included in E-2020, but achieved elimination by 2021. While several of these countries and the French territory have never been or are currently not eligible for GF funding, they are noted because they are included in the SI and relevant multi-country grants. Other minor overlaps were for Vanuatu (added in E-2025 and included in the Malaria Elimination in Melanesia and Timor Leste Initiative (MEMTI) and the multi-country Western Pacific grant); China (E-2020, now eliminated) and Thailand (added E-2025) in the Regional Artemisinin Initiative (RAI).

There is potential overlap between the SDI Labs and health security component four and the multi-country National TB Programme-supranational reference laboratory (NTP SRL) grant in West Africa that should be explored, as well as partner initiatives in this space (e.g., USAID on TB diagnostics). For country level grants, SIs are on occasion used as an add-on source of funding (e.g., PSM in Tanzania) or potentially as replacement for matching funds (e.g., TB Missing Cases). It must be noted, however, that the methods for supplementing critical gaps is not easy to achieve when full allocation amounts are utilised, needs are not put in PAAR, or PAAR is not able to be financed.

It is not clear who at the GF Secretariat would be responsible for understanding and managing the overlap between the different funding modalities. For each country, presumably the country teams would be expected to know about different funding streams and intended activities in their area of responsibility. Interviews suggested that the FPM often did not know about the SI that might affect them or how it was intended to complement other existing funding. The same applies to knowledge of SIs by MOH staff and programme managers in country.

Knowledge about the New Nets SI was quite widespread at the country level since these were popular items with high advocacy value, despite the delay in evidence generation of their improved effectiveness. The New Nets SI enables programmes to substitute dual-AI nets for standard nets at no additional cost to the country grant. Awareness at country level is not as widespread for the E-2020 initiative, which has limited input financially at country level. Programme staff in one country studied (Nepal) had become more aware of E-2025 because they were engaged in an Elimination Readiness assessment, and appreciated the updated advice about surveillance and programme needs that would facilitate elimination certification and prevention of reintroduction. Eswatini, on the other hand, did not see large additional benefit from E-2020 since they have been aiming for elimination for many years already, including through participation in E8 and MOSASWA, with attention to border crossers and the problem of illegal farmers outside the regular government health system.

The Data SI contains numerous examples of how the continuing (if slow) development of evidence-based programming (i.e., the use of data, and specifically the use of epidemiological and programme data from DHIS2 platforms and other sources) is leading to improved quality of NSPs and subsequent

improved quality of funding requests. This was recognised explicitly by the TRP in its lessons learned report in 2020⁸⁰ and can be usefully compared to its earlier report in 2018.⁸¹

EQ9. What are the common features of SIs that have had a catalytic effect?

Finding EQ9.1 There is some indication that the SIs that best demonstrate (or have the potential to demonstrate) a catalytic effect are those with a strong focus on scaling up access to and utilisation of new/innovative/unique technologies and approaches at the country level with the aim of specific programme improvement, such as New Nets, TB Missing Cases, and Malaria Elimination (see Table 8, below). However, the evidence for this finding is not strong.

The SIs reviewed in depth by the evaluation represent a mix of different sizes (i.e., budgets ranging from USD 3-33 million, plus additional or matching funds in some cases), designs, partners, implementation arrangements, contracting and oversight approaches. Even though all of the SIs have had at least one type of catalytic effect, as described under EQ7, it is difficult to summarise the diverse catalytic impacts of this conglomeration of different entities in a coherent fashion. Thus, the SIs can be categorised in multiple ways, such as by: (a) their main strategic objective (either disease outcomes or RSSH improvements, or a mixture); (b) whether the overall focus is strategic or operational, and/or (c) the prominence given to innovative technologies and approaches utilised at country level (which was greater for TB Missing Cases, New Nets; and less so for PSM, STE SIs). It must also be acknowledged that some SIs have multiple components, and these differ in their achieved or potential catalytic effects. Table 8 summarises current evidence for the catalytic criteria of each SI by implementation period, with the focus on achievement in 2017-2019 and potential in 2020-2021. In this Table, a revised categorisation of SIs is shown, which emerged during a close study of the SIs, replacing the typology originally envisaged.

Table 8 demonstrates that SIs focused on scaling up access to and utilisation of new/innovative/unique technologies and approaches at the country level with the aim of specific programme improvement were able to fulfil more of the catalytic criteria ('More', 'Faster', 'Improved' and 'Innovative') than SIs with a greater emphasis on RSSH improvements, or those that were aimed at improving features of the GF business model.

⁸⁰ TRP Lessons learned 2020: Strategy Committee GF/SC15/23, 15th SC Committee Meeting, 25, 26 and 30 March 2021.

⁸¹ TRP Report on RSSH Investments in the 2017–2019 Funding Cycle. GF/SC08/04—Annex 2; 8th Strategy Committee Meeting; October 4–5, 2018, Geneva, Switzerland, 2018.

Table 8: Assessment of all SIs included in TERG evaluation for evidence of catalytic criteria achieved or potential by allocation period

Disease or RSSH	INITIAL CATEGORY Inception report	REVISED CATEGORY This report	Strategic Initiative	Component	Catalytic criteria achieved Allocation period 2017-2019				Catalytic criteria potential Allocation period 2020-2022			
					MORE	FASTER	IMPROV	INNOV	MORE	FASTER	IMPROV	INNOV
Malaria	UNDER-PRIORITISED	DISEASE FACING	Elimination									
Malaria	INNOVATION	DISEASE FACING	New Nets	<i>RCT evidence</i>								
				<i>Evidence pilots</i>								
				<i>Cost-eff analysis</i>								
				<i>Procurement</i>								
TB	UNDER-PRIORITISED	DISEASE FACING	TB Missing Cases									
HIV	UNDER-PRIORITISED	DISEASE FACING	AGYW		NA	NA	NA	NA				
HIV	UNDER-PRIORITISED	DISEASE FACING	TPT		NA	NA	NA	NA				
RSSH/ Cross-cutting	RSSH	CORE BUSINESS	STE									
RSSH/ Cross-cutting	RSSH	RSSH	Data	<i>D-HMIS</i>								
				<i>TA</i>								
RSSH/ Cross-cutting	RSSH	RSSH	PSM DPT									
RSSH/ Cross-cutting	INNOVATION	CORE BUSINESS	CCM Evolution									
RSSH/ Cross-cutting	RSSH	RSSH	SDI	<i>National lab improvement</i>	NA	NA	NA	NA				

Colour coding for ranking of evidence for catalytic effect:

	Good evidence of catalytic effect
	Limited evidence of catalytic effect
	Not clear
NA	Not applicable

EQ 10.1. The 2017-2019 SIs were not set up to measure or manage for VfM and as such insufficient evidence has been generated to demonstrate VfM. Nonetheless, analysis suggests that some SIs are more likely to offer VfM than others.

The most fundamental constraint to each of the SI's potential to offer VfM – their ability to deliver economy, efficiency and effectiveness – has been their design. As above, many of the SIs have lacked a clearly defined catalytic intent and evidence-based intervention logic on how to achieve it. Other key drivers of prospects to achieve VfM have related to:

- **The level of Secretariat engagement with implementing partners:** A number of examples demonstrate that regular meetings helped to foster strong working relationships with technical partners and ensure that the Secretariat was aware of implementation progress and progress towards results, even where workplans and performance frameworks were not well defined.
- **Clarity on the scope of work and implementation progress:** Scope has been difficult to establish even once implementation has finished for some of the SIs studied as part of this evaluation.
- **Where project management and transactions costs have been kept to a reasonable level:** This has been highly variable across the SIs, however project management and transaction should be limited to no higher than 30% of the total budget (and ideally much lower).⁸²

While these factors have not been universally present in any of the SIs, analysis suggests that these factors have been most strongly in place for the following SIs:

- **New Nets:** Despite a lack of planning at the outset of the SI and the absence of measures to manage for VfM, the SI is highly relevant and there is a strong justification for a centrally managed partnership with Unitaid to achieve a catalytic outcome, which appears likely to be achieved.
- **TB Missing Cases (communications and innovative case finding):** Despite a slightly unclear justification for an SI (mainly as case finding approaches are already funded through the core allocation and matching funds), the inclusion of some activities under the SI that have offered questionable VfM, and high management costs, the SI does address an area of weak performance against strategic targets. It has been well implemented and with evidence suggesting that positive results are being achieved (even if ambitious goal was not met under 2017-2019 cycle).
- **CCM Evolution:** Despite addressing an operational issue with the business model rather than a strategic one, and as such having a less clear intervention logic and pathway to achieving its desired catalytic intent, the SI has been well managed and implemented (despite some issues with TA coordination), and with evidence of positive results being achieved.

⁸² A review of the project management costs associated with administering grants for some other organisations suggests that costs vary between 7% (usually for government grantees) and 30% (usually for international NGOs and UN agencies). For instance:

- Program management accounts for 7% of Gavi's total HSS support over the strategic period 2016-20, of which the vast majority is provided to governments. Accessed [here](#).
- TB REACH application guidelines state that human resource, M&E and administrative overhead costs should account for no more than 32% for grants up to USD 1 million, provided mainly to NGOs. Accessed [here](#).
- For USAID, overheads charged by contractors/grantees vary between 7-30% of grant value, depending on whether the contracted agency is profit or not for profit. Accessed [here](#).
- For DFID grants made through the Global Partnership for Education overall program management and administrative costs can go as high as 30% in rare cases where there are lower value grants in fragile and conflict-affected states. Accessed [here](#).
- The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation place a cap on indirect (i.e., general overhead and administration) costs of 15%, although direct program management costs (which could include staff salaries, travel expenses, materials) could be charged in addition to this. Accessed [here](#).
- Analysis of grants provided through PEPFAR between 2007 and 2016 found that indirect costs accounted for between 8-20% of total grant value, although again this does not include direct program management costs. Accessed [here](#).

- **Data (digital HMIS and M&E TA components):** Despite a slightly unclear justification for an SI (mainly as many of the SI activities could be funded through the core allocation, although some have benefitted from a centralised approach), the data system strengthening component does address an area of historically weak performance against strategic targets, has been well implemented, and evidence suggests that positive results are being achieved. There is a lack of evidence to demonstrate that sufficiently high-quality M&E TA was provided to demonstrate VfM.

These factors have been least present for the following SIs:

- **STE:** The SI seeks to operationalise a Global Fund policy, including by bolstering Secretariat capacity, which is relevant to meeting the Global Fund Strategic Objectives. However, it has incurred fairly high project management costs and evidence suggests that the SI outputs have not been widely utilised at the country level, which is critical to achievement of results.
- **PSM diagnosis and planning:** Along with a slightly unclear justification for an SI (mainly as PSM strengthening approaches could be funded through the core allocation), the SI has included some activities that have offered questionable VfM, incurred significant Secretariat management and KPI measurement costs, and was delayed. There is a lack of evidence to demonstrate, and mechanisms in place to ensure, that sufficiently high-quality TA was provided to deliver VfM. There is also evidence that the SI design is not appropriate to achieve a strategic and/or catalytic effect (neither of which were defined upfront).
- **Malaria Elimination:** The justification for the SI is unclear (mainly as it funds areas of WHO's core mandate) and has incurred very high project management and transactions costs, mainly as WHO foundation costs. Despite poor planning at the outset of the SI there is evidence of strong implementation progress being made, and the agreed milestones and outcome-based payments have been made. It is, however, unclear if/how the SI has contributed to the most important strategic or catalytic result, i.e., increased number of countries having achieved elimination and certification.

6. Conclusions

Drawing on an analysis of the findings (summarised in Table 4), and synthesising across the three pillars, the evaluation team developed a set of five conclusions, mapped against the evaluation question findings. These conclusions are summarised in Table 9 and expanded in the narrative that follows. For reference, the evaluation questions (EQs) are presented in Table 10 below.

Table 9. Conclusions mapped to findings

Mapped to findings	Conclusions
EQ1.1 EQ1.2 EQ1.3	C1. The current approach to the selection of programmatic issues for SIs to focus on has ensured that SIs are relevant to programmatic needs and aligned with the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives. The SIs do not however, address all of the most critical issues affecting the achievement of the Global Fund Strategy, and it is not always clear how/why some issues were selected over others.
EQ3.1 EQ7.1 EQ7.2 EQ7.3	C2. Despite a lack of clarity on what is meant by the term 'catalytic', the SIs are largely designed to add value and achieve some sort of 'catalytic' outcome. They are, however, inadequate in and of themselves to resolve the issues they are targeted towards. Given their limited funding and scope they should not be seen as a panacea, and there is only limited evidence that the SIs have systematically been used to leverage the wider systems-scale change required to meaningfully address the issues that the SIs are targeted at.
EQ2.1 EQ2.2 EQ2.3 EQ4.1 EQ4.3 EQ5.1 EQ5.2 EQ5.3	C3. While SI design has improved over time, design limitations persist that constrain the SIs to achieve the desired catalytic intent, for instance with poorly defined intervention logic linking outputs to outcomes and impacts. SI designs have also suffered from a lack of country stakeholder engagement, poorly defined performance frameworks, and limited planning for sustainability.
EQ8.1 EQ9.1 EQ10.1	C4. There have been missed opportunities to fully harmonise the SIs to other types of Global Fund support (e.g., where matching funds complement the SI support at the country level and SIs support core grant implementation). This has constrained SI effectiveness at the country level because it limits opportunities for synergy and reducing overlaps, and does not take advantage of the Fund's broader infrastructure for country-led programming.
EQ4.2 EQ4.4 EQ4.5 EQ5.4 EQ6.1 EQ6.2	C5. Between the first and the second allocation periods, improvements in partner contracting, SI coordination, implementation, planning and reporting across the portfolio indicate a capacity to learn from experience and to respond positively to various reviews. This will be needed as the Global Fund considers how to adapt its business model to address known issues and achieve the more difficult areas of its Strategy.

Table 10. Summary of Evaluation Questions

Evaluation Questions (EQ)
EQ1. On what basis were SIs selected and prioritised? How clearly has the objective and the expected value added and 'catalytic effect' of each SI been articulated at the Board level deliberations as well as at the Grant Approval Committee (GAC).
EQ2. To what extent have the designs of SIs demonstrated how to contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund's Strategic Objectives? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)
EQ3. In general, was the catalytic funding allocated to SIs justified, or could interventions have been better supported through other sources, e.g., core allocations, or MCGs or MF?
EQ4. To what extent were SIs well managed by the Secretariat and well implemented by partners?
EQ5. What have been the quality assurance, transparency, performance monitoring, and accountability mechanisms? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)
EQ6. To what extent have the GF partnerships and technical assistance been effective in the delivery of SIs?
EQ7. To what extent has a catalytic effect been achieved by 2017-2019 SIs so that they contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund Strategic Objectives?
EQ8. To what extent have the SIs contributed to achieving country NSPs, strategic objectives and targets?
EQ9. What are the common features of SIs that have had a catalytic effect?
EQ10. Value for money: Which SIs have provided value for money and why?

The conclusions described more fully in the narrative below highlight the strengths and weaknesses of the current approach to identifying and delivering SIs in terms of their purpose as defined by the Global Fund Board. This is "to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature, but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives".

C1. The current approach to the selection of programmatic issues for SIs to focus on has ensured that SIs are relevant to programmatic needs and aligned with the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives. The SIs do not however, address all of the most critical issues affecting the achievement of the Global Fund Strategy.

As evidenced, the SIs can provide solutions to priorities and challenges to achieving the Global Fund's objectives. As such, they can be seen as relevant programmatic interventions from the perspective of the Global Fund. Notwithstanding their overall relevance, in a context where there are insufficient funds to allow development of SIs covering all the identified challenges, the salient issue is whether the right SIs have been prioritised and delivered. This needs to be seen within the context that the current SIs cover some, but not all of the important challenges. To date, this prioritisation seems to have been done within the context of decisions on which of the three catalytic investment modalities – SIs, matching funds or multi-country grants – will be used to address particular challenges. Experience to date is that this process, at least for the 2017-2019 allocation period, has not been entirely transparent, and the rationale for prioritisation decisions taken are difficult to discern ex-post. Perhaps of more importance, this process appears to have been focused on the Secretariat and technical partners, with limited engagement by country stakeholders. There appear to be limited mechanisms for considering whether there is alignment with country level priorities.

Within the population of possible SIs identified through the process above, there has been an evolution of a more systematic approach to prioritisation from the 2017-2019 to the 2020-2022 allocation period. The approach to prioritisation for the 2020-2022 allocation period entailed development of scenarios to respond to possible replenishment levels and employed a set of criteria

based on strategic impact and operational considerations. Ultimately, the prioritisation was not needed, as replenishment levels were sufficient to fund all SIs identified for selection. Of note, however, is that because of the high replenishment levels, SIs that had scored low against the prioritisation criteria were still funded for implementation, which is contrary to what some would see as the added value of catalytic investments. This is discussed under Conclusion 2 below. As highlighted in finding 1.3, the lack of country level engagement in the design of an SI, and the timing of its implementation, can critically affect delivery of its catalytic and strategic potential.

C2. Despite a lack of clarity on what is meant by the term ‘catalytic’, the SIs are largely designed to add value and achieve some sort of ‘catalytic’ outcome. They are however, inadequate in and of themselves to resolve the issues they are targeted towards. Given their limited funding and scope they should not be seen as a panacea, and there is only limited evidence that the SIs have systematically been used to leverage the wider systems-scale change required to meaningfully address the issues that the SIs are meant to address.

All the SIs in the 2017-2019 allocation period were designed to address Global Fund Strategic Objectives, although descriptions of their catalytic intent (i.e., intended catalytic effect) were either absent or not explicitly articulated in the Paper of the 36th Board Meeting.⁸³ This gap has been recognised by the Secretariat, and the new and continued SIs in the 2020-2022 allocation period all have adequate descriptions of their strategic and catalytic intent in their design.

Notwithstanding this recognition, the gap is understanding how the strategic and catalytic intent is expected to work in practice and deliver results. This requires clear articulation of both the conditions and assumptions that need to be addressed by SIs to achieve the intended catalytic results. Logically, this would be set out as part of the theory of change (TOC) developed for each of the SIs. However, many of the TOCs lack critical elements such as clearly articulated risks and assumptions, and identification of where the catalytic effect occurs within the TOC.

Various definitions of catalytic can be found that have been used within the Global Fund between 2017 and 2021. The evidence suggests there is a limited shared understanding among the Board, Strategy Committee, Grants Approval Committee (GAC), Secretariat and Partners of the definition of ‘catalytic’, little clarity on how SIs should achieve a catalytic and/or strategic effect, and no metrics for assessing achievement of catalytic and/or strategic intent. As a way to reconcile these disparate definitions, as well as make it feasible to evaluate catalytic effect and intent, the evaluation team drew upon the approach adopted in the SR2020 review and considered ‘catalytic’ as leading to one or more of the following operational criteria (as described in the Annexes to the report) being met:⁸⁴

- **More:** Additional funding is leveraged from other sources and/or additional activities are implemented;
- **Improved:** Activities that were conducted previously are now appreciably more efficient, effective and/or strategic;
- **Unique, new, or innovative:** Activities or contributions that are exclusive or exceptional to catalytic funding and/or those that are entirely new, original or initiated because of catalytic funding;

⁸³ Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period. GF/B36/04 – Revision 2, 16-17 November 2016, Montreux, Switzerland.

⁸⁴ Technical Evaluation Reference Group Position Paper: Strategic Review 2020. Volume 2: Annexes. 31 August 2020, pp. 107-108. https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10496/terg_strategicreview2020position_annexes_en.pdf

- **Faster:** Activities that were implemented previously but are now being implemented at an accelerated pace.

This evaluation team found that the design of each SIs addresses at least one of the four aspects of ‘catalytic’.

The team also reviewed definitions of the word ‘catalytic’ used more broadly in development, and how a catalytic effect should be assessed. The Overseas Development Institute (ODI) described a two-track framework for catalytic change, with the two aspects being ‘transformative’ (growth-enhancing change) and ‘crowding-in’ (complementary to other development finance). The World Bank also refers to ‘transformational’ change in development engagements in a large comparative evaluation that noted four characteristics that supported such deep, systemic and sustainable change: overcoming binding constraints, cross-sectoral approaches, scaling up innovations, and behavioural change. Regarding design and implementation, factors identified as critical for transformational engagements included adapting program design to country context and capacity as well as continuous effort supported by quality staff. A focus on selective, longer-term, sustained and programmatic engagements with involvement of beneficiaries in their design and implementation of the intervention were among the critical factors implicated in order to ‘enhance the likelihood that interventions catalyse faster development progress by taking a strategic and programmatic approach to induce systemic and behavioural change based on sound diagnosis of binding constraints’.

The evaluation team’s analysis suggests that catalytic investments are actually seen by Global Fund as investments that leverage additional funds, promote innovative technologies and approaches, and advocate for recognition of, and attention to globally important but under-prioritised needs. This suggests that catalytic investments *de facto* prioritise what the ODI terms as ‘crowding-in’ with some movement into ‘transformational’ change. Two questions therefore arise. Firstly, is the balance between ‘crowding-in’ and ‘transformational’ change correct, given the strategic objectives of catalytic investment by the Global Fund? This evaluation’s conclusion is that the current portfolio of Global Fund’s strategic initiatives has inadequate focus on transformational change. Secondly, as more emphasis is needed on supporting transformational change, this raises the question of whether the Global Fund’s current business model can be adapted to support the required selective, longer-term, sustained and programmatic engagement of beneficiaries in SI design and implementation. Conclusions 3, 4 and 5 below would suggest that the challenges would be significant.

C3. While SI design has improved over time, design limitations persist that constrain the Global Fund’s ability to demonstrate the desired catalytic intent.

SIs implemented under the 2017-2019 allocation period have all contributed to one or more of the Global Fund SOs. All made good progress towards their intended and stated objectives, although the progress of some components that operated in collaboration within target countries (such as New Nets and TB Missing Cases) has been significantly affected by COVID-19. However, the extent of SI contributions to the SOs has been hard to quantify. For instance, the team’s analysis of VfM across the 2017-2019 SIs shows that the SIs lacked credible approaches to measure or manage for VfM (effectiveness in particular), and as such, insufficient evidence has been generated to demonstrate VfM, which would have required evidence of their contribution to outcomes. Nonetheless, the evaluation analysis suggests that some SIs are more likely to offer VfM than others, with key drivers of VfM being a clear and coherent design, reasonable project management costs, and regular Secretariat and implementing partner engagement.

These weaknesses have been acknowledged by Global Fund, and led the Secretariat to enhance its own requirements as to how the SI leads, focal points, teams, and the partners contracted under the SIs, are being asked to measure, monitor and report on activities, outputs and outcomes. Current results frameworks are a mix of outputs and outcomes that will be independently measured or extracted from PUDRs. However, experience with implementation of results-based management across development organisations shows that there are limitations on the degree to which such approaches can fill the identified gap. It also risks unintended consequences, in terms of restricting the scope to respond to both specific country contexts and achieving coherence with grants at the country level (as discussed in Conclusion 4 below), as well as greater transaction costs associated with increased reporting demands for both international and in-country partners.⁸⁵

Bearing this and Conclusion 2 in mind, there are some tentative indications that the SIs which best demonstrate (or have the potential to demonstrate) a catalytic effect are those with a strong focus on scaling up access to and utilisation of new/innovative/unique technologies and approaches at the country level with the aim of specific programme improvement (see Table 8).

C4. There have been missed opportunities to fully harmonise the SIs with other types of Global Fund support (e.g., where matching funds complement the SI support at the country level and SIs support core grant implementation). This has constrained SI effectiveness at the country level because it limits opportunities for synergy and reducing overlaps, and does not take advantage of the Fund's broader infrastructure for country-led programming.

For the Board, the SIs are intended “to provide limited funding for centrally managed approaches that cannot be addressed through country allocations due to their cross-cutting or off-cycle nature, but are critical to ensure that country allocations deliver against the Global Fund Strategic Objectives”. Implicit in this definition is that the SIs at country level are designed and managed to be coherent with Global Fund grants. Evidence shows limited mechanisms to coordinate and synergise the inputs of SIs and other types of catalytic funding, including multi-country grants and matching funds, to deliver coherence across the catalytic investments in any country. The same applies in terms of coherence between catalytic funds and the country allocations. There is evidence that this gap is leading to missed opportunities to avoid duplication and overlaps. For example, during the 2017-2019 allocation period E-2020 includes South Africa, Eswatini and Botswana, countries which directly overlap with the multi-country E8 grant, two of which overlap with MOSASWA multi-country grant (Eswatini and South Africa) and directly overlap with malaria country grants in all three countries (see Annex 4, Map A). The team noted that this overlap was not fully addressed during design of the Malaria Elimination SI 2020-2022, the SI on Regional Coordination on Malaria Elimination (not reviewed as part of this evaluation), multi-country grant renewals or country grants in countries included in multiple funding streams (Eswatini, Botswana, South Africa, Mozambique).

There is a lack of clarity, within the Secretariat, regarding the responsibility for understanding and managing overlap between the different funding modalities. For each country, presumably the country teams would be expected to know about different funding streams and their intended activities. Interviews conducted during this evaluation suggested that Fund Portfolio Managers (FPMs) often had limited knowledge about the SI(s) that might affect their country grants or how they are intended to complement other existing funding. The same applies to knowledge of SIs by Ministry of Health (MOH) staff and programme managers in country, which suggests that SIs are not well

⁸⁵ The experience of multiple development organisations and the limitations, tensions and trade-offs associated with this area are discussed in detail in Vähämäki and Verger (2019). <https://www.oecd-ilibrary.org/docserver/3fda0081-en.pdf?expires=1627553801&id=id&accname=guest&checksum=CF8B805F7796ADCEA712F83DCD0F0F92>

integrated into country-level coordination mechanisms, and thus raises concerns over the degree to which they may overlap or duplicate support from other partners.

The above challenge is not unique to the Global Fund. Based on experience and interviews with comparator organisations such as Gavi, the Global Partnership for Education, and bi-lateral donor organisations issues of coordination of investments managed at country, regional and central levels present a serious challenge.

C5. Between the first and the second allocation periods, improvements in partner contracting, SI coordination, implementation, planning and reporting across the portfolio indicate a capacity to learn from experience and to respond positively to various reviews. This will need to be continued as the Global Fund considers how to adapt its business model to address known issues and achieve the more difficult areas of its Strategy.

During the 2017-2019 allocation period, despite a slow start, partner engagement improved over time, as the Secretariat and partners worked together to coordinate and implement activities under most SIs, often under considerable pressure. This teamwork and coordination fostered greater transparency and better accountability arrangements. In general, SI coordination, partner contracting, planning, implementation and reporting have improved over time, both in response to lessons learned by the SI leads, and due to feedback from the OIG review, TRP summary of lessons learned⁸⁶, and the SI Boost initiative.⁸⁷ Changes requiring SIs to develop DIPs and accompanying results frameworks mean that much stronger implementation and management is possible in the current allocation period. The establishment and expansion of the SIPMO has contributed to stronger SI management.

Possibly three risks lie with the current trends in this area. These are:

- In response to the OIG Advisory and the subsequent SI Boost Initiative, the Secretariat is striving to improve and increase accountability of their contracted partners and themselves, by centralising the contracting, management of TA, budgeting and reporting for many of the SIs, and changing how the consultants are contracted, i.e., ensuring TA is directly managed by the Secretariat. Interviews with stakeholders from within the Secretariat and with technical partners themselves provide indications that these changes are resulting in some negative responses by some technical partners. Key informants expressed concern that the changes can disrupt relationships between technical partners and their pools of TA that they have recruited and trained. Partners also expressed concern about the lack of clarity as to how the TA is to be coordinated, given the existing heavy workload of many of the Global Fund country teams.
- Centralising the contracting, management of TA, budgeting and reporting for many of the SIs under the SI managers does not address the challenge of enhancing coherence of SIs with other investments, whether they be those of the Global Fund or other investors. The required coordination mechanisms between FPMs and SI managers are weak at the Secretariat level and SI managers are not well placed to engage in country level coordination mechanisms.
- Whilst the present response may address the concerns flagged in the OIG Advisory and the subsequent SI Boost Initiative, there is a trade-off that needs to be recognised. If the decision were taken to shift the balance between SIs as mechanisms to deliver 'crowding-in' and

⁸⁶ Note that TRP Lessons Learned (Q1 2021) have not yet been fully taken into account by the Secretariat and will be addressed in the 2022-2025 allocation period.

⁸⁷ To address recommendations from various internal and external studies, the SIPMO is leading a cross-functional effort to improve SI performance through integrated management in the next cycle, starting from SI design and approval in 2020 and going to SI closure in 2023.

‘transformative change’ then adapting SI design to country context and capacity as well as continuous effort at country level by quality staff will be critical. Involvement of beneficiaries in SI design and implementation will also be vital. The current trend to centralisation will make such a shift more challenging to deliver.

7. Recommendations

The evaluation TORs noted that this evaluation should be strategic in its focus, and discussions with the TERG and the Secretariat emphasised the need for a small number of high-level recommendations. The team notes that the portfolio of SIs, including the ten SIs reviewed, vary in size, implementation period, thematic area and the strategic and operational challenges that they address. For the reviewed SIs, the funding ranges from USD 3.85 million to USD 35 million, while the challenges include areas at risk of being under-prioritised or deprioritised, weak health systems capabilities, and the need to enhance the uptake of innovative approaches and new products. It was therefore difficult to develop policy prescriptions that embraced the range of SIs. The team has provided a set of strategic recommendations designed to strengthen the design, prioritisation, implementation and harmonisation of the SIs across the Global Fund's broader portfolio of support. These recommendations are outlined below and summarised in Table 11, mapped to the specific conclusions.

A recurring theme in almost all interviews, and reiterated in discussions with the TERG and the Secretariat, was the need for a clearer and shared understanding of the term 'catalytic' as applied to SIs. The team proposed a definition that allows measurement of catalytic as applied to SIs, using four operational criteria focused on activities, commodities and processes ('More', 'Faster', Improved and 'Innovative/Unique/New'), and these criteria were used to evaluate the various SIs.

As noted earlier, other development agencies (e.g., the World Bank⁸⁸), explore 'catalytic' in terms of 'transformational change', and note that "transformational engagements were differentiated most clearly from non-transformational engagements by the extent to which the effects of the intervention were sustained, often because they involved comprehensive approaches to stimulating and sustaining systemic and behavioural change".⁸⁹ Among the mechanisms identified by the Bank to support deep and sustained transformative change is scaling up and replicating innovative approaches, which broadly aligns with this evaluation's definition if the criteria are coalesced. Given that the Global Fund essentially invests in activities and commodities in order to strengthen systems and structures to achieve results, the team believes that the proposed definition can be helpful in identifying the activities, products and processes that can catalyse change in order to achieve an impact (i.e., a 'catalytic impact'). This can most clearly be demonstrated if the catalytic activities/processes are incorporated in a robust TOC that highlights the point(s) where catalysis is expected to occur, as well as defining the associated risks and assumptions.

This leads to recommendation **R1: The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent and shared definition of what 'catalytic' means to the Global Fund. Alongside this, develop criteria that are measurable and relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality.**

Conclusions C1, C2, and C3 highlight the limitations in the SI selection and design processes and their limitations in leveraging the wider systems-scale change to address the issues they target. This leads to recommendation **R2: The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria:**

- a. **the level of programmatic risk the issues pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives if the SIs are not implemented;**

⁸⁸ World Bank Group, 2016, Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity - Lessons from World Bank Group Experience,

⁸⁹ *ibid*

- b. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multi-country grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; and**
- c. the robustness of the business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs.**

These changes should result in fewer but more strategically focused SIs, with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the Global Fund's Strategic Objectives.

The evaluation notes that there have been significant improvements in SI design from the first allocation period to the second, and proposes four measures to further strengthen SI design. The first relates to the identified need to engage selected stakeholders at the country level in SI design, country selection, implementation arrangements, and timeframes. This can be achieved by formalised and systematic engagement between SI leads/focal points and FPMs/CTs at critical junctures (SI design, country selection, implementation timeframe). The second relates to embedding a robust TOC within SI design that is developed collaboratively between the SI lead/FP and respective external partners, and which highlights where the intended catalytic effect(s) will occur (i.e., the points of 'catalysis'). The third looks at sustainability, and suggests that each SI design should include an 'exit strategy' with realistic milestones and timeframes, even if these are anticipated to span more than one funding allocation. The fourth builds upon good practice highlighted in the CCM Evolution, CRG, and TB Missing Cases SIs, which had an evaluation component embedded in their designs, with a baseline and endline. The team notes that the SDI SI has recently commissioned an external evaluation, and it is strongly recommended that evaluations should be incorporated into the designs of all future SIs.

This leads to recommendation **R3: Continue to strengthen the SI design process such that:**

- a. stakeholders at the country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe;**
- b. the inclusion of a robust theory of change that defines what the SI does, and where the SI fits within the GF funding universe;**
- c. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and**
- d. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design.**

As noted in Conclusion C4, while there is evidence of some harmonisation between SIs and other internal and external funding sources, the evaluation also identified some overlaps and duplications. This highlights the need for, at the very least, an overview within the Secretariat of all catalytic investments, and indeed across the Global Fund's overall portfolio of support. This leads to recommendation **R4: The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund's broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across GF stakeholders.**

Conclusion C5 highlights the significant progress made over time in SI management, partner contracting, implementation, monitoring and reporting across the portfolio. However, several stakeholders from within the Secretariat and external to the Global Fund highlighted concerns that the recent re-introduction of some elements of input-based contracting are resulting in disincentives and tensions between Global Fund and its UN partners, who occupy the 'same development ecosystem'. Given the strengthening of partner relationships during the course of the SI 2017-2019 allocation period, the evaluation team believes it is their responsibility to alert the Secretariat to these tensions, so that the risks to partner relationships can be managed and mitigated. This leads to recommendation **R5: The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented**

and the partners implementing them. Additionally, continue to incentivise partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is up-front agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.

Table 11: Summary of recommendations mapped to conclusions

Mapped to conclusions	Recommendations
C2	R1. The Strategy Committee should develop a clear, consistent and shared definition of what ‘catalytic’ means to the Global Fund. Alongside this, develop catalytic criteria that are measurable and relevant to each SI, and define the expected impact from this modality.
C1 C2 C3	R2. The Strategy Committee should put in place a stronger mechanism to identify a strategic and coherent set of issues for potential SI selection, and prioritise those against the following criteria: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. the level of programmatic risk they pose to the achievement of the Global Fund Strategic Objectives; b. the feasibility to address the issue and the suitability of the SI modality (country or multi-country grant, matching funds, OPEX) to do so; c. the robustness of the business case for each SI that outlines the benefits and costs of implementing the SI alongside any trade-offs or opportunity costs. <p>These changes should result in fewer, but more strategically focused SIs, with sufficient resources to make a meaningful contribution to the systems changes to meet the SOs.</p>
C3	R3. The Secretariat should continue to strengthen the SI design process such that: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. stakeholders at country-level are consulted in the SI design, country selection, and implementation timeframe; b. the inclusion of a robust theory of change that defines where the SI fits within the GF funding universe; c. each SI has an exit strategy with clearly defined timeframes and milestones; and d. each SI has an evaluation incorporated into its design.
C4	R4. The Secretariat should identify a mechanism to ensure greater harmonisation between the SI activities and objectives and the Fund’s broader portfolio of support, necessitating structured timelines for SI outputs and engagement in core grant processes, and improved coordination across GF stakeholders.
C5	R5. The Secretariat should continue to evolve contracting, management and oversight arrangements to ensure appropriateness for the nature of activities being implemented and the partner implementing them. Additionally, continue to incentivise partner performance towards the achievement of results, by well-managed performance-based contracts where there is up-front agreement and transparency on outputs and outcomes and who is responsible for monitoring and measuring these.

List of Annexes

1. SI case studies
2. Recommendations made by OIG, TRP and SI Boost Initiative with observations on whether or not recommendations have been acted upon.
3. SIs reviewed for each allocation period by strategic objective, noting catalytic impact expected and justification given for not funding through country allocation (from Board documents or extracted from documents).
4. Maps showing relationships and overlaps between malaria strategic initiatives, multi-country grants, and country grants in two regions (Southern Africa and Mesoamerica)
5. Evaluation Framework
6. List of Strategic Initiatives under evaluation scope
7. List of people interviewed
8. List of references

Annex 1. Case Studies

Please see separate document for presentation of the following case studies:

1. **AGYW:** Adolescent Girls and Young Women
2. **CCM Evolution:** Evolving CCMs to Deliver on the GF Strategy
3. **Data RSSH:** Data systems, generation and use for programmatic action and quality improvements
4. **ME:** Malaria Elimination
5. **New Nets:** Addressing insecticide resistance through accelerated Introduction of New Nets
6. **PSM:** Procurement, supply and management
7. **SDI Labs:** Service Delivery Innovation – Laboratory component
8. **STE:** Sustainability, Transition and Co-Financing/Efficiency
9. **TB Missing Cases:** Finding Missing People with Tuberculosis
10. **TPT:** Tuberculosis Preventative Treatment

Annex 2. Recommendations made by OIG⁹⁰, TRP⁹¹ and SI Boost⁹² with observations on whether or not recommendations have been acted upon.

Recommendations	Responded to?	Comments
OIG Advisory on Managing Strategic Initiatives		
OIG1 Management of contracted partners		
1.1 Develop a partnership framework which outlines the key principles and values for how to engage technical partners	In process, but not completed	Contracting has been altered
1.1.1. Approaches to contracting, budgeting, monitoring and accountability	Yes, underway	Contracting has been made much more detailed
1.1.2. Roles and responsibilities of Global Fund departments in engagement of technical partners	Yes, underway	Standard operating procedures with R&R or RACI documents are accompanying many of the SIs but not all
1.1.3. Detailed and transparent reporting to the Board regarding costs incurred by technical partners	Yes, this is likely with current budgets and contracts more detailed results frameworks	Too early to tell but results frameworks linked to budgets are much more rigorous and detailed than before (closer to input budgeting for close financial visibility of spend by partners).
1.2 Standardise or harmonise Technical Partner contracts where possible.	Not clear	Unclear to evaluation team as contracts not visible yet (i.e., not approved).
1.2.1. Detailed budget of all allowable costs	Yes	All SIs viewed sent detailed budgets to GAC for review and approval
1.2.2. Clear performance metrics to evaluate status of the projects and inform decision making	Yes, underway	Metrics developed and/or under development for each SI – visible in new results frameworks and reported on in townhall meeting by SIPMO.
1.2.3. Reporting requirements expected of the Technical Partner and measures to enforce the requirements	Yes, much improved	The weight of reporting – both financial and programmatic – is considerable now, with semi-annual indicators in all results frameworks, even quarterly and monthly data being required of some SIs.
OIG 2 Secretariat Management. Strengthen the SI Coordinating Office to provide shared administrative services with all SI project teams and define and enhance the relationship between the Coordinating Office and other departments to better engage specialists across all functional areas to streamline roles and responsibilities.	Yes, underway	Roles and responsibilities still being worked on but mostly very much clearer than under first cycle. Evidence from documentary review and KI interviews indicated clear division of responsibility and accountability, with clear TOR for every position. Not all positions are filled yet.

⁹⁰ OIG Advisory Review: Managing Strategic Initiatives 2019 (September) Geneva, Switzerland.

⁹¹ TRP Lessons Learned 2020 Strategy Committee, GF/SC15/23, 15th SC Committee Meeting, 25, 26 and 30 March 2021.

⁹² SI-Boost 2020 Compendium v share_ 2021

OIG 3 Ensure forward budgeting, planning and disclosure of management costs for Strategic Initiatives	Yes, much improved	
OIG 4 Define processes for managing SIs and leveraging existing ones where possible	Yes, much improved	Evidence seen of shared administrative roles in several SIs. Some positions are part time, serving other SIs or being temporarily allocated to the SI (e.g., CRG program officer for AGYW SI).
4.1 Grant Making and the Executive GAC Approval Process	Yes	This process and the documentation required for it have been heavily revised, but this has increased the transaction costs for getting approval (time and labour by SI teams and GAC individuals).
4.2 Grant Monitoring including strengthening the progress update review and disbursement decision making processes	Yes, underway	
4.3 Grant Closure	Not clear	Most SIs had to be extended/carried over past their original end date (due to COVID-19, delay in initiation, or inadequate time frame to achieve objectives).
Technical Review Panel - Lessons Learned *		
TRP 1 Strategic value and management across SIs		
1.1 Group, streamline and systematise SI selection	Yes, somewhat improved	Prioritisation is still a challenge, although because of the size of the replenishment this was not an issue in terms of leaving SI proposals out. Everything was funded, which does not necessarily mean the right SIs were selected. Also, there are SIs which were a major concern to the TRP but were not reviewed again nor greatly modified, yet were still funded.
1.2 Enhance synergies and efficient coordination between SIs	Yes	Most SIs in their DIP put explicit approaches used to create more synergies between the SIs' broader visioning across the Secretariat improved.
1.3 Rationalise allocation of funds between and within SIs	Partly addressed	The process of prioritisation conducted before the last replenishment (generating extensive different scenarios) was much more transparent than the previous round. However, this sometimes necessitated grouping disparate items into one SI to ensure they could be prioritised. A bigger issue is allocation of funds by type of catalytic investment and type of SI to achieve a broad balance of process optimisation, cross-cutting technical improvements, innovative product development and promoting under-prioritised issues.
TRP 2 Theory of Change Global level	No, outstanding	Developed for the 2020-2022 allocation however, according to the KIs interviewed, SI PMO directives on development of the TOC were unclear regarding the level of TOC that should be developed (e.g., AGYW SI or AGYW Portfolio).

TRP 3 Measuring changes and results for individual SIs	Yes	The development of the results frameworks has meant most SIs now have consistent and relevant means to measure progress. However, a lack of consistency in how to and what to measure for catalytic effects means this will still provide challenges to proving catalytic effects as a result of the SIs. This is partially linked to the lack of specific TOCs (see next comment)
3.1 SI-specific TOCs	Partial, to be completed	Most SI lead teams regard their results frameworks as theories of change. This is a definitional issue but it means that the specific SIs do not have some of the main characteristics of TOCs, such as assumptions and context/other partners etc.
3.2 Align SI indicator frameworks with the country or MCG as well as with the GF KPIs (as appropriate)	Yes, greatly improved but still to be completed	Some results frameworks explicitly state those indicators that are relevant for both SI and come through the PUDRs (i.e., are grant facing); but this is not the case for some SIs. The GF KPI indicator for supply chain is not adequate to measure the strategic/catalytic impact of the SI and its adequacy is questioned (see Case Study and EHG/ITAD, the Global Fund Strategic Review 2020).
SI Boost**		
1. Increasing the rigour of the GAC approval process	Yes	See above under OIG recs 4.1
2. Improving GMD alignment, synchronisation and coordination	Yes, greatly improved, but still to be completed	While improved, it can still get better. This is one of the directions necessary to tie the SI closer to making the grants more effective and the GF impact greater on the epidemics.
3. Strengthening SI Partner contracting process and requiring greater transparency in Partner reporting	Yes	An unintended consequence may be higher transaction costs and concern from some partners about manageability. See EQ 6 and case studies.
4. Defining preferred operating modalities for specific SI deliverables	Partially done	This is underway but some concerns expressed over the amount of TA being now managed by the GF, especially around the QA process of the TA deliverables.
5. Improving M&E and reporting model	Yes, underway	See OIG 1.2.3 and TRP 2
6. Developing corporate approach to resourcing across SIs	Yes, underway	Not clear in the information that has been provided or reviewed by the evaluation team.
7. Articulating clear roles and responsibilities between SI Coordination Office, SI teams and functional business partners	Yes, underway	This is in process. Some areas much improved, while others are still awaiting significant action (e.g., partnership framework).

* TRP Lessons learned: This report included lessons learned from 13 SIs reviewed so far by the TRP in late 2020 and early 2021. TRP was invited to review the 15 SIs as part of the revised process to reaching approval by the GAC.

** SI-BOOST developed seven main areas for improvement (these are reported above): five reinforced and followed up on OIG Advisory findings.

Annex 3. SIs reviewed for each allocation period by strategic objective, noting catalytic impact expected and justification given for not funding through country allocation (from Board documents or extracted from documents).

Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
		2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
Malaria	Elimination	SO1	SO1	Not noted	Enable more effective use of country allocations (e.g., accelerating program quality and effectiveness). Enhance coordinated response for multi-country contexts. The current SI is implemented using both a deliverable and outcome-based approach (case reductions and certification), which reflects the collective effort of country programs and partners.	Networking between countries and TA support from WHO to many countries simultaneously. Support to countries that are not eligible for GF allocations.	No, this priority cannot be funded through country allocations as it is supporting WHO committees and processes, provision of technical assistance and capacity building support to countries. Additionally, part of this technical support is also provided to countries that are not eligible for the Global Fund malaria allocation.
Malaria	New Nets	SO1	SO1, SO4	Enhanced availability of dual-AI LLINs at lower price	Incentivise increased funding from allocations to priority areas. Drive innovative or ambitious programming to accelerate progress towards Strategic Objectives. Enable more effective use of country allocations (e.g.,	Evidence generated in one country is used for application in others. Output 4 is to work with net manufacturers to stimulate and guarantee supply and procurement of new LLINs at affordable price.	No, it is not possible to factor insecticide resistance into the country allocations. This priority focuses on early adoption and market shaping for nets that are WHO prequalified, but not yet included in WHO policy guidance with a justification of their higher cost. The pilots allow: early access in strategic locations; evidence building of

Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
		2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
					accelerating program quality and effectiveness).		cost-effectiveness to inform future price negotiations and country decision making; and leveraging of volumes to prompt price reductions. This work is independent from specific country grants but will benefit all malaria endemic countries in upcoming cycles, once WHO policy is in place and scale-up of these products is underway.
TB	Missing cases	SO1, SO2, SO3	SO1, SO2, SO3	Expected to observe large increase in notified TB cases – acknowledged other partners contribution to the efforts to “find the missing cases” including the FIND.TREAT.ALL and UNHLM 2018 targets that increased attention to TB issues in political agendas. While vague on specifics, an advantage was that this was a very clear, focused initiative and everyone understood what was being targeted.	Expected Catalytic Effect and sustainability Drive innovative or ambitious programming to accelerate progress towards Strategic Objectives. Enable more effective use of country allocations (e.g., accelerating program quality and effectiveness). Build on momentum generated in 2017-2019 period to mobilise partners towards a common objective of finding and treating missing persons with TB. Catalyse inclusion of the	Not enough money to do this through the regular grants; also, finding missing cases would not be prioritised by country stakeholders without significant support of matching funds plus the TA and advocacy support around those MF.	It is explicitly stated in the DIP that the activities cannot be funded through the country grants. Although implementation at the country level will be through matching funds, specialised support is needed in terms of tool development, learning across countries and targeted technical assistance. International collaboration for technical assistance is crucial for the right technical assistance to countries. Country grants are not conducive to the contracting mechanisms and systems for payments

		Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
					implementation evidence and learning to help inform development of ambitious and targeted TB NSPs. The tools and approaches developed will be scaled-up for uptake at country level to ensure sustainability and achieve the ambitious targets set and move ahead towards ending TB on time.		necessary, due to various challenges in procurement processes and payment mechanisms. Country programs have differing capacity and challenges for contracting directly for TA.
HIV	AGYW	SO1, SO2, SO3	SO1, SO2, SO3	Not applicable	The AGYW SI will catalyse countries' grants investments on AGYW programs, with a view of achieving greater impact towards the HIV incidence reduction target of 58% among AGYW.	Not stated	Main driver for AGYW SI is to be strategic rather than reactive. Matching funds make it hard to incentivise countries to put a strategic focus on AGYW.
HIV	TPT		SO1	Not applicable	TPT SI will provide high quality technical assistance to complement the matching funds and grant allocations in order to drive innovative and/or ambitious programming at country level to accelerate uptake of TPT. Need for catalytic efforts to build capacity and willingness of HIV programs	Not stated	Country-level TA could be funded through country allocations. However, global and regional coordination, convening, measurement and enabling intensified support for taking these efforts to scale needs catalytic funding. Once HIV programs have acquired capacity and assumed responsibility for TPT provision,

Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
		2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
					to take primary responsibility for including TPT as an essential component of the HIV care package.		this should become part of country grant provision.
RSSH/Cross-cutting	STE	SO1, SO4	SO1, SO2, SO4	Focus of STE is on priority countries but since each component is implemented separately it is difficult to assess how catalytic this has been in terms of outcomes at country level. This SI depends on country's capacity and political commitment. Allocative Efficiency Modelling applied to 20 disease components in 15 countries, informing NSP updates, FR development and transition planning. TRA implementation, development of transition preparedness during grant review and approval. Wide variety of country of country and context-specific	Leverage additional funding outside GF including domestic financing. Drive innovative or ambitious programming to accelerate progress towards strategic objectives. Enable more effective use of country allocations. In addition: 1) provides targeted TA to address key bottlenecks in portfolios preparing for transition or working to enhance sustainability where allocation size make it challenging to address via grants; and 2) enhances health expenditure tracking to facilitate improved implementation of GF co-financing policy as well as national budgeting and planning.	STE SI activities can be funded through grants as agreed by the Board and the SI supports portfolios with smaller allocations. A number of activities are listed to scale up and enhance the implementation of the STC Policy. The Board document states that areas under RSSH such as STE are prioritised because they are explicit areas in which the Global Fund has a comparative advantage in catalysing impact through programming at country level, and where barriers have been identified. The Board approved the Secretariat's request to further explore opportunities to operationalise RSSH	Many initiatives to strengthen sustainability and transition preparedness are funded through country allocation or supported via grant design however centralised SI funding provided through partner agreements was deemed necessary to ensure standardisation, and to minimise duplication and fragmentation.

Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
		2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
				transition planning, some of which was financed through the SI. Moderately catalytic, but not clear why this could not be funded through other sources.		investments through matching funds and to build on country allocations, rather than through centrally managed strategic initiatives.	
RSSH/Cross-cutting	Data	SO1 SO2, SO3, SO4	SO1 SO2, SO3, SO4	Innovative approaches in: capacity strengthening; HMIS system support (regional mode); and efficient TA Pool deployment. Creation and enhancement of an M&E TA pool for resolving bottlenecks, leading to verified M&E system design improvement, increasing performance. Creation of a partnership with universities and scale-up across other regions to strengthen analytical capacity and better use of in-country data for program improvements. Enabled systematic implementation of	Use of data for better strategic decisions and allocative efficiency of country health programs. Effective use of country allocations (including grant M&E budgets) through operationalisation of technical guidance and analytical capacity strengthening. Strengthened partnerships in data quality and use, including private sector.	Not clearly stated in memo	Data SI activities are not expected to be funded through grants as most focus on global goods, regional platforms, and catalytic activities across borders and systems. These activities are: 1) Production of global public good that has cross-country utility (guidance, tools, software); 2) Alignment of global guidance on data standards and analysis for incorporation into digital information systems, including DHIS2 (used by 75% of Global Fund High Impact and core countries); 3) Capacity building and TA coordination and quality control with regards to new HMIS deployments; 4) Timely short-term TA deployments for key secretariat priorities (GF targets for KPI 6d, CHIS,

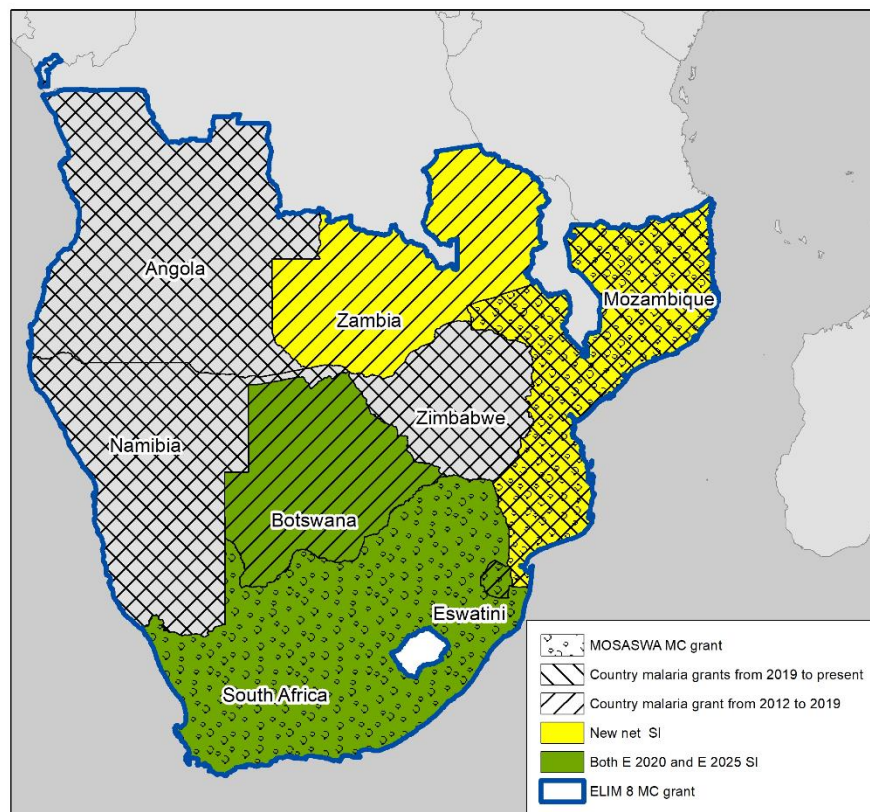
Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
		2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
				Thematic Reviews and Evaluations. Measurable impact on current Funding Requests, such as more emphasis on importance of data and epi-analysis.			HMIS/LMIS) in areas that are highly specialised/new and where there are few experts readily available to grants (e.g., interoperability - both in digital HMIS and HISPs); 5) A pool of technical assistance for specialised areas in M&E is fundamental as countries sometimes do not have the mechanisms in place to contract and grants are blocked in their implementation.
RSSH/Cross-cutting	PSM	SO2	SO1, SO2, SO4	Catalytic priority for PSM is cross-cutting and specific PSM issues related to HIV, TB and malaria will be addressed through the supply chain cross-cutting work. Meanwhile, the HIV, TB and malaria streams/catalytic priorities will benefit from the strengthening of PSM systems carried out through this SI.	As defined in the GF board document: Leverage additional funding outside of Global Fund. Drive innovative or ambitious programming to accelerate progress towards Strategic Objectives. Enable more effective use of country allocations (e.g., accelerating program quality and effectiveness).	Not stated	The arguments indicated in the GF board document refer to the “limited focus on these priorities by countries and their cross-cutting nature”, and to the fact that “sourcing technical assistance in the grants can often be difficult due to sourcing issues, expertise required, and limited fiscal space within the grants”.

Disease or RSSH	Strategic Initiative	Target SO*		Expected catalytic impact		Justification for not funding through country allocations	
		2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022	2017-2019	2020-2022
RSSH/Cross-cutting	CCM Evolution	SO1, SO2	SO1, SO2, SO3	Unique (pilot), innovative and catalytic approach to enhance health governance across a variety of contexts. Catalytic opportunity to change “business as usual”.	Catalytic opportunity to change “business as usual” by equipping CCMs to carry out core operations of inclusive oversight and meaningful engagement in positioning with national structures for sustained health governance. Enable more effective use of country allocations (e.g., accelerating program quality and effectiveness); leverage additional funding outside of Global Fund; and catalyse complementary funding through country co-financing for CCMs as well as leveraging donor funding.	To avoid conflicts of interest, some activities need to be centrally administered, whereas others could be embedded in direct funding to CCMs. The nature of the support provided to CCMs (both within the basic and strategic support) makes it difficult to predict in advance and the SI requires flexibility to ensure an effective response tailored to the needs for each CCM.	To avoid conflicts of interest, some activities need to be centrally administered, whereas others could be embedded in direct funding to CCMs. The nature of the support provided to CCMs (both within the basic and strategic support) makes it difficult to be predicted in advance and requires flexibility to ensure an effective response tailored to the needs for each CCM.

* SO1: Maximise impact against HIV, TB and malaria
SO2: Build resilient and sustainable systems for health.
SO3: Promote and protect human rights and gender equality
SO4: Mobilise increased resources

Annex 4. Maps showing relationships and overlaps between malaria strategic initiatives, multi-country grants, and country grants in two regions

A: Southern Africa



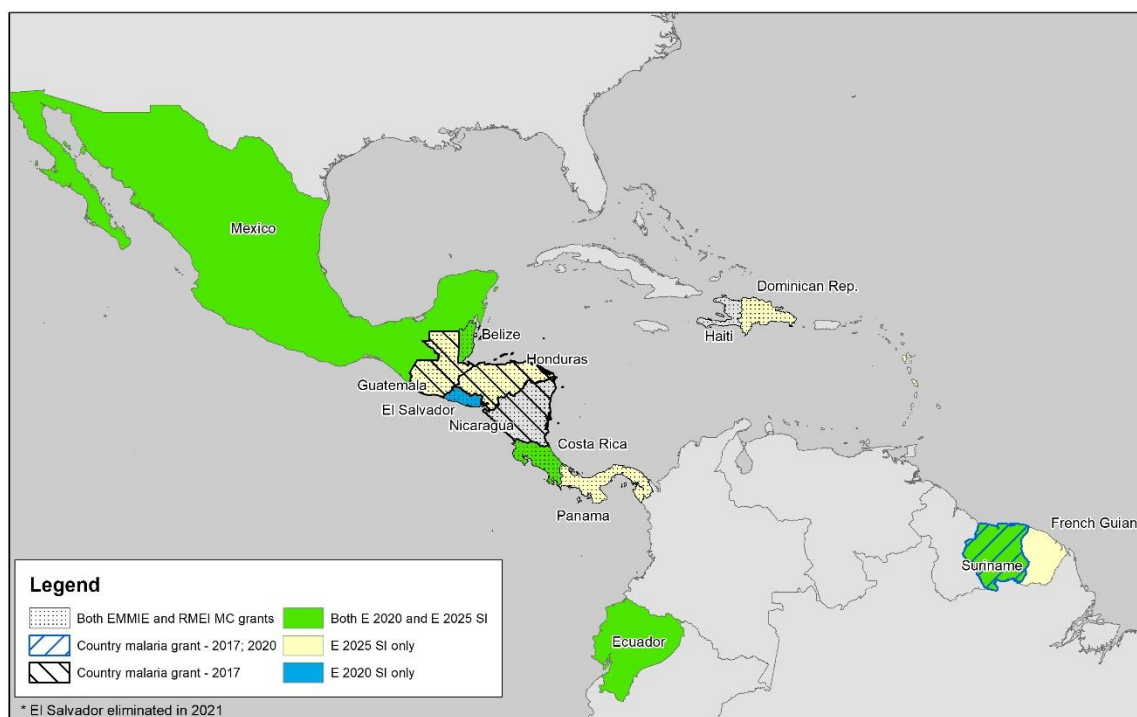
Cartographer: Peter Wood, PhD. James Cook University and Great Barrier Reef Legacy Inc., Cairns, Australia.

Note that under the Elimination 8 multi-country (ELIM 8 MC) grant, the frontline countries are Namibia, Botswana, South Africa and Eswatini; the second Line are Angola, Zambia, Zimbabwe and Mozambique.

Not shown:

1. RBM CRSPC 2017-2019 (under RSSH 1.3, Technical Support, South-to-South, Peer Review and Learning), which provided TA, NSP/program review and/or implementation support to High Burden/High Impact and eliminating countries in Southern Africa (Eswatini, Mozambique, Namibia, Zambia, and Zimbabwe).
2. 2020-2022 Malaria Regional Coordination and Targeted Technical Assistance for implementation and elimination SI, implemented by RBM partnership–CRSPC. This plans to support Southern Africa under Deliverable 3 (Sub-regional co-ordination structures fully functional in Southern Africa, Sahel, Southeast Asia and possibly the Great Lakes) and may support others under Deliverable 1 (At least 15 priority countries supported in LLIN campaign planning and implementation annually).

B: Mesoamerica



Cartographer: Peter Wood, PhD. James Cook University and Great Barrier Reef Legacy Inc., Cairns, Australia.

Not shown:

Paraguay (in E-2020 SI; eliminated in 2019);

Argentina (not in any SI; eliminated in 2019).

Annex 5. Evaluation Framework

Key elements	Questions/Indicators	Data Collection and sources of information / Data analysis
Selection & prioritisation of SIs (relevance) The degree to which the design, selection and prioritisation of SIs has been relevant and appropriate to achieve their selected purpose and objectives	<p>How, and on what basis, are SIs selected and prioritised? How clearly has the objective and the expected value added and ‘catalytic effect’ of each SI been articulated at the Board level deliberations as well as at the Grant Approval Committee (GAC)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What criteria are used in selecting and prioritising SIs? Which entities (inside and outside of GF) are involved in the SI selection and prioritisation process? To what extent were country teams and technical teams engaged in SI prioritisation? Can strategic engagement within the Secretariat be enhanced? What is/are the review process(es) before Board approval of each SI? How robust are these? Can the approval process be strengthened? Ultimately, where are the final decisions made about which SIs to fund? Was the prioritisation based on a theory of change? Has the selection and prioritisation process improved from the 2017-19 allocation to 2020-22 allocation? If yes, in what ways? <p>To what extent have the designs of SIs demonstrated how to contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund’s Strategic Objectives? (2017-2019 allocation cycles);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent were the SIs designed to be catalytic? What is meant by the term ‘catalytic’? <p>In general, was the catalytic funding allocated to SIs justified, or could interventions have been better supported through other sources, e.g., core allocations, or multi-country grants, or matching funds?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any synergies between SIs and other GF funding sources (e.g., MF)? Has there been any duplication of efforts between SIs and other GF funding sources? Has there been any synergies and/or duplication between SIs and external funding sources? 	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Board reports, SI monitoring frameworks, LFA, OIG and TRP reports, TERG reviews (including the STC and SR2020 reviews), contractual and reporting documentation of implementing partners, risk management reports, reports to the Board, Global Fund generated survey data, as well as available specific country-level and SI-specific program evaluations and GAC reports.</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Fund Board, Global Fund Secretariat (including SI PMO, previous SI PMO manager for the 2017-2019 cycle, SI leads and focal points, SC leadership, Ethics Office, SIID, TAP, HIV/TB/Malaria workstream leads, GMD heads/regional managers, Strategy and policy hub, STE leads, SI allocation team, previous SI allocation manager, Finance manager, PSM leads, RSSH leads, CCM evolution leads); Multilateral/technical assistance agencies who are implementing SI and implementing partners with global/regional offices; (Joint Working Group secretariat, WHO, UNAIDS, Stop TB, etc.); Multilateral and bilateral agencies providing financial support to the selected SIs (USAID, PEPFAR, Gates Foundation, etc); <p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content analysis of documents and literature through application of a desk review tool; Analysis of stakeholder experience and opinions; Triangulation between different sources of information.
Implementation arrangements The extent to which the SIs have been managed	<p>How were SIs implemented and managed?</p> <p>Implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the implementation arrangements and how were implementers identified and selected? What factors and/or constraints facilitated or hindered implementation? 	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Board reports, SI monitoring frameworks, LFA, OIG and TRP reports, TERG reviews (including the STC and SR2020 reviews), contractual and reporting documentation of implementing partners, risk management reports, reports to the Board, Global</p>

<p>by the Secretariat and implemented effectively and efficiently, including partnerships and technical assistance.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent have the recommendations and action points from the recent OIG Advisory Report on SIs been addressed? Was there any conflict of interest between agencies selecting/prioritizing SIs, and those implementing them? How was COI managed and mitigated? <p>Management</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the divisions of responsibility and accountability between SI leads, focal points, technical teams and country team? Are these appropriate? How can SI management by the Secretariat be improved? Should the SI PMO be strengthened, and if so in what way? <p>What have been the quality assurance, transparency, performance monitoring, and accountability mechanisms? (2017-2019 allocation cycle)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> How is the performance of SIs assessed, and by whom? To what extent and in what way has the performance of technical support been monitored/assessed (2017-2019 allocation cycle)? <p>To what extent have the Global Fund partnerships and technical assistance been effective in the delivery of SIs?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To what extent did technical support agencies provide quality TA? How was quality of TA assured? Could partnerships and TA have been improved? Are there examples of effective TA coordination mechanisms for SI-funded TAs at country level? To what extent have different delivery arrangements driven or incentivised performance of partnerships? (2017 to 2019 allocation cycle) Can partner contracting be improved? What are the relative merits/constraints of Secretariat management of TA vs contracting out TA management? To what extent have SIs enhanced partnership arrangements globally? 	<p>Fund generated survey data, as well as available specific country-level and SI-specific program evaluations and GAC reports.</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SI PMO, HIV/TB/Malaria workstream leads, GMD heads/regional managers, STE leads, PSM leads, RSSH leads, CCM Evolution leads Implementing agencies at country level, including technical partners, private entities and institutions, universities, etc. Other global agencies with experience in management of large amounts of technical assistance; Key stakeholders and interlocutors at country level in the selected countries, e.g. FPM, Country Teams, CCMs, PRs, disease program heads from MoH, other relevant government institutions (e.g., MoF, MoJ), CSO networks, CSOs, etc. <p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content analysis of documents and literature through application of a desk review tool; Analysis of stakeholder experience and opinions; Triangulation between different sources of information.
<p>Results</p> <p>The extent to which the SIs have achieved their intended objectives, and in particular, to what extent have the SIs been catalytic?</p>	<p>To what extent has a catalytic effect been achieved by 2017-2019 SIs so that they contribute, together with grants under the country allocation, to the delivery of Global Fund Strategic Objectives?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the SI catalytic nature been diverted during implementation from its original design? Are some SIs strategically important, but not necessarily catalytic? <p>To what extent have the SIs contributed to achieving country NSPs strategic objectives and targets (2017 to 2019 allocation cycle)?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have there been any unintended positive or negative effects? <p>What are the common features of SIs that have had a catalytic effect?</p>	<p>Desk review</p> <p>Board reports, SI monitoring frameworks, LFA, OIG and TRP reports, TERG reviews (including the STC and SR2020 reviews), contractual and reporting documentation of implementing partners, risk management reports, reports to the Board, Global Fund generated survey data, as well as available specific country-level and SI-specific program evaluations and GAC reports.</p> <p>Key informant interviews</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Global Fund Secretariat (including SI PMO, previous SI PMO manager for the 2017-2019 cycle, SI leads and focal points, SC leadership, SIID, TAP, HIV/TB/Malaria workstream leads, GMD heads/regional managers, Strategy

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> What factors exhibited by the selected SIs enable and/or hinder achieving a catalytic effect? (e.g., size of SI grants, implementation arrangements)? <p>Which SIs have provided good value for money?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What were the characteristics of these SIs that provided VfM? Which SIs have shown synergies? (2017 to 2019 allocation cycle) <p>Which SIs were not such good value for money?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What factors inhibited their ability to provide VfM? 	<p>and policy hub, STE leads, SI allocation team, previous SI allocation manager, Finance manager, PSM leads, RSSH leads, CCM evolution leads);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multilateral/technical assistance agencies who are implementing SI and implementing partners with global/regional offices (Joint Working Group secretariat, WHO, UNAIDS, STOP TB, etc); Multilateral and bilateral agencies providing financial support to the selected SIs (USAID, PEPFAR, Gates Foundation, etc); Key stakeholders and interlocutors at country level in the selected countries, e.g. FPM, Country Teams, CCMs, PRs, disease program heads from MoH, other relevant government institutions (e.g., MoF, MoJ), CSO networks, CSOs, etc. <p>Data analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Content analysis of documents and literature through application of a desk review tool; Analysis of stakeholder experience and opinions; Triangulation between different sources of information.
<p>Lessons learned</p> <p>To what extent should the GF continue to invest in SIs as a component of catalytic investments? How can SI selection, prioritisation, content and implementation arrangements of future SIs be improved?</p>	<p>What are the emerging recommendations for improving the selection/prioritisation, content, and implementation arrangements of future SIs?</p> <p>SI selection & prioritisation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can the processes of SI selection, review, prioritisation and final Board approval of SIs be strengthened? Can transparency and accountability of SI selection be enhanced? What lessons can be learned about the timing of Board approval for SIs and for the country allocations. How can these best be synchronised? <p>SI implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the key lessons learned for GF in managing large amounts of technical assistance? What lessons can be learned from other global organisations that manage large amounts of TA? <p>Are there types of strategic initiatives that should be included as a part of regular grants rather than as separate strategic initiatives? If so, what are they and why?</p> <p>Should catalytic funding include SIs at all? What would be the implications at global, regional and country levels if SIs were discontinued?</p>	<p>Analysis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Analysis of team findings from stakeholder interviews and documents reviewed for each of the three pillars. <p>Synthesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Synthesis of findings and analysis across the three pillars to generate conclusions and strategic recommendations.

Annex 6. Strategic Initiatives that fell under the scope for review

Thematic area	SI Workstreams	2017-19 (USD million)	2020-22 (USD million)	New: N Continued: C Discontinued: D	# countries ⁹³
Malaria	Elimination (E2020 and E2025)	7	8	C	12
	Vaccine	15	8	C	3
	New Nets	2	50	C	
	Regional coordination for elimination	-	10	N	
TB	Missing cases	11	14	C	14
HIV	AGYW	-	8	N	12
	Condoms	-	5	N	4
	TB treatment for PLHIV		5	N	
	Differentiated Service Delivery	-	15	N	5
STE	STE	15	18	C	43
RSSH/Cross-cutting	Data	22	35	C	34
	CRG	17	16	C	16
	HR	2	5	C	12
	Diagnosis & planning (and transformation) ⁹⁴	17	20	C	22
	Innovative challenge fund	7	-	D	
	Local resources	7	-	D	9
	CCM Evolution	3.8	15	C	18
	Innovative financing	-	20	N	
	WHO pre-qualification of meds (2017-19) ⁹⁵	11		C	
	Accelerated introduction of innovative health products (2020-22)				
	Emergency fund	26	20	C	10
	SD innovations (5 components)	-	39	N	
	SDI Comp I: South-South strategic support and learning ⁹⁶	22		C	
	SDI Comp II: Community Led Monitoring				
	SDI Comp III: Human Resources for Health and Quality Improvement				
	SDI Comp IV: National lab system improvement				
	SDI Comp V: Strategic private sector approaches				

⁹³ Note – Data on countries may need to be updated

⁹⁴ Continued in 2020-2022 allocation and renamed as PSM transformation

⁹⁵ Continued in 2020-22 and renamed as 'Accelerated introduction of innovative health products' and moved from PSM 1.4

⁹⁶ Continued in 2020-2022 allocation under SD innovations

Annex 7. Key informants interviewed at global level

Name	Designation
Dr. Abdalla Sid Ahmad Osman	Former Strategy Committee Chair
Anderson Amaechi	Program Officer, TERG Secretariat
Dr. Victor Bampoe	UNAIDS
Michael Byrne	Head, TAP
Cindy Carlson	TERG Focal Point
Carol D'Souza	Manager, Allocation
Mark Edington	Head, GMD
Harley Feldbaum	Head, Strategy & Policy Hub
Nicole Gorman	Senior Policy Advisor, Strategy & Policy Hub
George Gotsadze	TERG Focal Point
Annelise Hirschmann	Head, LAC, EECA in GMD
Andrew Hammond	OIG Lead on 2019 SI Advisory Report
Peter Hansen	Former Head, Results
Emily Hughes	Senior Manager, SI PMO
Johannes Hunger	Head of Strategic Information
Ryuichi Komatsu	Senior Advisor, TERG Secretariat
Osamu Kunii	Head, SIID
Aida Kurtovic	Former Chair of GF Board
Benjamin Loevinsohn	Head of RSSH
Silvio Martinelli	Head, Access to Funding
Vivian Mathieu	Manager, PDT
Margherita Mauri	Consultant, SI PMO
Abigail Moreland	Head, GPSS in GMD
Linden Morrison	Head of HI Africa 2, GMD
Patricia Moser	TRP Chair
Sheikh Mubashar	WHO
Cynthia Mwase	Head, Africa and Middle East, in GMD
Billy Pick	TRP Vice Chair
Sara Shahriari	Senior Programme Officer, SI PMO
Eliud Wandwalo	Head of TB
Urban Weber	Head, HI Asia, GF
Yun Wei	Specialist, Allocation
Melanie Renshaw	Roll Back Malaria
Lucica Dittu	ED Stop TB
Marijke Wijnroks	Chief of Staff
Kieran Daly	Former Chair of the Strategy Committee
Yun Wei	Specialist, Allocation, Strategic Information Department

Annex 8. Global Documents Reviewed

Note: Country and case study-specific resources are referenced in the case studies.

The Global Fund (2015), Strategy, Investment and Impact Committee: TERG Position Paper: Sustainability

The Global Fund (2015), Strategy, Investment and Impact Committee: TERG Position Paper: Health Systems Strengthening

The Global Fund (2016), The Global Fund Strategy 2017–2022: Investing to end epidemics, Geneva, Switzerland

The Global Fund (2016), 35th Board Meeting, 2017–2022 Strategic Key Performance Indicator Framework, GF/B35/07a – Revision 1, 26-27 April, Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire

The Global Fund (2016), 36th Board Meeting: 2017-2019 Allocation Period. 16 – 17 November, Montreux, Switzerland

The Global Fund (2016), Audit and Finance Committee under GF/AFC04/DP01

The Global Fund (2016), Catalytic Investments GF/SC01/07, Strategy Committee PowerPoint, 14-15 June

The Global Fund (2017), Strategy Committee: Strategic Review 2017

The Global Fund (2017), Guidance Note: Sustainability, Transition, and Co-financing of programs supported by the Global Fund

The Global Fund (2017), Building Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health through Global Fund Investments: Information Note

The Global Fund (2017), Global Fund Strategic Performance Management Framework

The Global Fund (2018), Country Coordination Mechanism Policy Including Principles and Requirements, May

The Global Fund (2018), 39th Board Meeting: End-2017 Key Performance Indicator Results, GF/B39, 9-10 May, Skopje, North Macedonia

The Global Fund (2018), Report on RSSH Investments in the 2017–2019 Funding Cycle. Technical Review Panel

The Global Fund (2018), Malaria in Southern Africa, Technical Evaluation Reference Group Position Paper, May

The Global Fund (2018), Strategy Committee Meeting; October 4–5, Geneva, Switzerland

The Global Fund (2019), 41st Board Meeting, Strategic Investments for the 2020-2022 Allocation Period, GF/B41/03 – Revision 1, 15-16 May, Geneva, Switzerland

The Global Fund (2019), Description of the 2020-2022 Allocation Methodology

The Global Fund (2019), 11th Strategy Committee Meeting, Strategic Initiatives Update, GF/SC11/14, 17-18 October, Geneva Switzerland

The Global Fund (2020), Strategic Review 2020 final report, Vol. 1 and Vol. 2, 31 August 2020, EHG

The Global Fund (2020), The Global Fund Strategic Initiatives, 2020-2022, July

The Global Fund (2020), SI Boost 2020: Improving SI management for the next cycle

The Global Fund (2020), Global Fund 2017-2019 Strategic Initiatives Progress Update, PowerPoint presentation to MEC, 30 September

The Global Fund (2020), 45th Board Meeting, Report of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, GF/B44/09, 11-12 November, virtual

The Global Fund (2021), 2020 TRP Lessons Learned, Strategy Committee (GF/SC15/23), 15th SC meeting, March 2021, virtual

The Global Fund (2021), 45th Board Meeting, Strategic Performance Report end-2020, GF/B45/14, 11-12 May, virtual

The Global Fund (2021), 45th Board Meeting, Annex 1 to the End-2020 Strategic Performance Report: Detailed KPI Results, GF/B45/14_Annex 1, 11-12 May, virtual

OIG Advisory Report (2019), Managing Strategic Initiatives, 13 September, Geneva, Switzerland

Rogerson S. (2011), What if development aid were truly 'catalytic'? ODI background note. November

Vähämäki, J. and C. Verger (2019). Learning from Results-Based Management evaluations and reviews, OECD, ISSN: 22220518 (online), <https://doi.org/10.1787/22220518>

Vogel, I. (2012), Review of the use of 'Theory of Change' in international development: Report Review. Department of International Development, April

World Health Organisation (2015), Global Technical Strategy for Malaria 2016–2030, Geneva Switzerland

World Health Organisation (2017), A framework for malaria elimination, Geneva Switzerland

World Bank Group (2016), Supporting Transformational Change for Poverty Reduction and Shared Prosperity: Lessons from World Bank Group Experience. Independent Evaluation Group

Yin, R. 2013, Validity and generalization in future case study evaluations, *Evaluation* 19(3) 321–332

Yin, R.K. and D. Davis, 2007, Adding new dimensions to case study evaluations: the case of evaluating comprehensive reforms. *New Directions for Program Evaluation: Informing Federal Policies for Evaluation Methodology* 113: 75–93