

# **Technical Review Panel Update**

## **48<sup>th</sup> Board Meeting**

GF/B48/13  
15-17 November 2022, Geneva, Switzerland

### **Board Information**

Purpose of the paper: The objective of this paper is to update the Board on the TRP's work since the last Board meeting in May 2022.

## Context

1. The Technical Review Panel (TRP) is an impartial and independent team of experts appointed by the Strategy Committee (SC) with the responsibility of providing rigorous, independent technical assessment of funding requests made to the Global Fund. The TRP also serves as an advisory body to the Board and may provide technical advice and guidance on strategic focus, technical soundness, potential for impact, sustainability and value for money, including regular lessons learned. The TRP carries out its mandate with support from the TRP Secretariat and under the oversight of the SC, to which it reports periodically.

## Where are we now? Progress to date

2. Since May 2022, the TRP has continued to prepare for the 2023-2025 allocation period. In doing so, it worked on the following key deliverables.
  - The TRP published its [TRP Observation Report for the 2020-2022](#) allocation period. The report presents lessons learned from the TRP's review of funding requests and aims to guide applicant development and presentation of strategically focused and technically sound funding requests in the 2023-2025 allocation period, in line with the new Global Fund Strategy. Key messages of the report were presented at the July 2022 SC meeting.
  - **Recruitment of TRP members** to serve in the next allocation period is nearly complete. The recruitment process has included wide outreach to attract diverse qualified experts from across the world, a criteria-based longlist screening process, and robust review by shortlisting review panels constituted by the SC Working Group overseeing the recruitment. An update on the overall outcome of the recruitment process was provided at the October 2022 SC meeting. The candidates recommended for selection into the TRP pool are now undergoing reference and due diligence checks by the Ethics Office. Final approval of the recommended candidates will be submitted to the SC through an electronic decision point (EDP) by the end of 2022.
  - The TRP collaborated with the Secretariat in the development of **Funding Request Application Materials** for the 2023-2025 allocation period, which were published on the Global Fund external website and made available to applicants in July 2022.
  - The TRP presented its **2021 performance assessment** during the July 2022 SC, in line with TRP accountability to the SC. The TRP noted key achievements in fulfilling its mandate, such as the review of funding requests equivalent to US\$1.2 billion, its engagement with the Secretariat, and development of lessons learned reports as part of its advisory role. The TRP considered recommendations of the OIG Advisory on Evolution of the TRP and made strides in its differentiated approach to review of funding requests particularly while working in a virtual environment. The TRP will further enhance its tailored approach to engagement with technical partners and will continue to work with the Secretariat on the implementation of the OIG advisory recommendations related to strengthening differentiated approaches to funding request reviews.
  - The TRP presented its proposed **2023 TRP workplan and corresponding budget drivers** at the October 2022 SC meeting, noting that exact budget figures would be available later. Core activities include funding request review, governance and reporting, as well induction of TRP members – noting that nearly all TRP members will not have had experience with

in-person reviews. Key budget drivers include honoraria provided to TRP members for their contributions (noting the honorarium is not strictly based on level of effort nor is it equivalent to market consultancy fees), travel to Geneva for TRP members and meetings organization costs. A final annual workplan and budget will be presented electronically to the SC for recommendation to the Audit and Finance Committee (AFC) for approval and subsequent AFC recommendation to the Board for inclusion in the Global Fund's 2023 Operating Expenses Budget ahead of the November Board meeting.

- The TRP is updating its key operating documents and procedures in line with the revised TRP Terms of Reference, reflecting, among other things, lessons learned in the course of the current allocation period. Through assigned Working Groups, the TRP is updating the **TRP Review Approach Guidelines** (guide on differentiated funding request reviews), **TRP Conflict of Interest Procedures**, the **TRP Operating Manual** and the **TRP Performance Assessment Framework and corresponding tools**.

## Key messages and priorities

3. **Update on TRP Recruitment.** Presentation at the 20<sup>th</sup> SC meeting in October 2022, included discussion on the following TRP recruitment matters.

- SC members commended all involved for the huge amount of work to undertake this recruitment process and acknowledged the major step forward in addressing issues and challenges in gender diversity, geographic and language representation.
- SC members noted that PPR is currently a fast-moving space and that members with recent global knowledge and experience on the TRP was important, as well as ensuring that the TRP leverages WHO knowledge and experience to inform its role.
- SC members noted that the TRP Chair's term finishes in August 2023, in the middle of the busiest year of the allocation period, and questioned what options were available to ensure a smooth transition.
- SC members highlighted that it was important to ensure that the non-disease expertise areas work closer with each other, specifically Health Financing and Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH).
- SC members noted that there could be benefit in exploring mentorship and outreach for those candidates that didn't quite make the recommended list, with a view to the next round of TRP recruitment in 2025.
- SC members queried if the recommended candidates represented an improvement in terms of representation from communities and those with lived experience of the diseases.
- TRP and Secretariat provided the following responses:
  - The Secretariat confirmed that the recommended candidates represented an improvement in gender diversity, with candidates who identified as non-confirming, as well as reiterating the large number of candidates that the shortlisting panel reviewed. The Secretariat added that the Equity Human Rights and Gender shortlisting panel commended the very strong pool of candidates proposed for the TRP pool.
  - The Secretariat highlighted that there was also good representation of candidates with double expertise, including RSSH & Pandemic Preparedness and Response (PPR) and RSSH & Health Financing and that the Secretariat together with the TRP will do their best to ensure that there is crossover between expertise areas.

- The Secretariat noted that TRP Leadership elections have occurred previously during the first year of the cycle. Additionally, the first two windows will have been completed before the TRP Chair handover in August. The Secretariat will review options regarding election timing, extension and handover period and will give an update to the SC in March 2023.
  - The TRP Chair confirmed that the recruitment has identified several experts with PPR expertise to cover the requirements of the next cycle and that the TRP has deepened its commitment to meaningful engagement with Technical Partners.
4. **Performance Self-Assessment and the 2020-2022 TRP Observation report.** Discussion at the 19<sup>th</sup> SC meeting in July 2022, included discussion on the matters.
- SC members commended the TRP on the report and noted that there were many recurring recommendations, such as prioritizing investments, addressing gender-related barriers, prevention, reliance on external technical assistance and interventions for key populations.
  - Given the repetition of such issues across reports, SC members requested information on how the report's recommendations would be communicated to the broader partnership, informed by and appropriately prioritized based on country context by the Secretariat. SC members reinforced the need for technical partner engagement on enacting recommendations and more broadly throughout the next allocation period.
  - SC members noted the opportunity for the SC and other Global Fund stakeholders to discuss issues of decolonization, racial, ethnic and indigenous inequalities.
  - The TRP and Secretariat provided the following responses:
    - The TRP Chair agreed on the need to prioritize engagement between the TRP and technical partners. The TRP Chair reinforced the TRP's commitment to differentiation of funding request review, as part of the broader end-to-end differentiation of grant management, while being mindful of balancing cost with quality of review.
    - The Secretariat highlighted its commitment to disseminating the report's messages through a debrief with partners, the TRP lessons learned database and the issues sent directly to applicants through the TRP review forms, the follow up of which shall be overseen in collaboration with the Global Fund Grant Approvals Committee. Additionally, the Secretariat flagged the importance of incorporating learnings and input from the TRP and other stakeholder in application materials.

## What are the next steps for Committees and Board?

5. SC decision recommending the 2023 TRP budget for AFC approval and recommendation to the Board for inclusion in the Global Fund's 2023 Operating Expenses Budget in early November 2022.
6. SC endorsement of plans for recruitment of TRP members to serve in the upcoming allocation period.
7. Three TRP Review Windows are planned for the year 2023 in April (Window 1), July (Window 2) and September (Window 3) and approximately 80% of the allocated funding for the 2023-2025 allocation period is expected to be reviewed in the first year. The TRP will continue preparations for the upcoming reviews in collaboration with the Secretariat to design a robust induction program for current and new TRP members and ensure TRP reviews are efficient, differentiated, and aligned with the new Global Fund Strategy.