

# **Independent Evaluation Panel Commentary: Allocation Methodology Evaluation 51<sup>st</sup> Board Meeting**

GF/B51/11B  
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## **Board Information**

Purpose of the paper: This paper provides the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) Commentary to the evaluation of the Global Fund Allocation Methodology. This document should be read in conjunction with the Final Evaluation Report and the Secretariat Management Response.

## Executive Summary

This report provides a Commentary of the evaluation of the Global Fund Allocation Methodology by the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) of The Global Fund (TGF).

The evaluation had as its objectives to provide an independent evaluation of the Global Fund's approach to resource allocation launched in 2013. The aim was to maximize impact, inform evidence-based decision making on these issues ahead of the 8th replenishment, and to support more effective delivery of TGF Strategy.

This is one of the first assessments carried out in TGF's new evaluation function. **It should be noted that not all processes and systems were in place as this evaluation started; therefore, some expectations built into the quality assessment instruments were not in place in the design and implementation of the evaluation.**

This document reports on the Independent Evaluation Panel's assessment of the quality and independence of the evaluation. Independence refers to the independence of the evaluators in the whole evaluation process (for example, data collection, analysis, and recommendations. Quality considers the appropriateness of the methodology, (follows or adapts the methodology as appropriate), rigor of analysis, as well as alignment of data, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

### Main IEP Conclusion

**The IEP endorses the evaluation.** The evaluation has demonstrated satisfactory quality. While the IEP was not involved in the selection process through TEC and meeting with the evaluators in the inception phase, the independence was fairly and objectively observed. The evaluation is acceptable to inform decisions on the evolution of TGF's resource allocation methodology and its components (catalytic investments, Global Diseases Split, RSSH allocation, technical parameters) as well as the cyclical review process. The evaluation offered some reasons for their inability to assess impact due to the contributory nature of GF's interventions. Instead, it focused on the allocation methodology's equity, efficiency, and transparency. The evaluation went on to develop a framework for which it attempted to look at relevance and effectiveness of the current allocation methodology.

The Panel provides specific comments on the evaluation, as well as recommendations for improving the quality of evaluations in future.

## **1.0 Introduction**

This report provides a commentary of the evaluation of the Global Fund Allocation Methodology evaluation by the Independent Evaluation Panel (IEP) of The Global Fund (TGF).

The evaluation had as its objectives to provide an independent evaluation of the Global Fund's approach to resource allocation. The Global Fund commissioned an external evaluation of the Global Fund's approach to resource allocation to maximize impact, to inform evidence-based decision making ahead of the 8th replenishment.

This is one of the early assessments carried out in TGF's new evaluation function. It should be noted that not all processes and systems were in place when this evaluation was initiated and implemented; therefore, some expectations built into the IEP's Quality Assessment Framework were not in place in the design and implementation of the evaluation.

Two members of the IEP served as Quality Assurance Focal Points. Their role is to accompany the evaluation from beginning to end to both contribute to quality improvement and ensure independence through the observation of key activities.

Using a common tool for quality assessment (QA), two other members of the IEP independently assessed the final evaluation report. The assessment includes both numerical and qualitative assessment. With 55 sub questions, the QA assesses the key elements of the evaluation - Executive Summary, Object of evaluation, Purpose, Objectives, Logic Model or Theory of Change, Methodology, Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations. The findings presented here consider performance in each of these areas, comment on the Recommendations, and highlight issues that could be considered to improve evaluation quality in future.

The IEP held a discussion at its February 2024 meeting, led by its four Focal Points involved in the evaluation, to reach consensus on the quality and independence of the evaluation.

## **2.0 Assessment of the quality and independent conduct of the evaluation**

The Independent Evaluation Panel assesses two dimensions of TGF evaluations. It assesses the quality of the evaluation as expressed in its report and the independence with which the evaluation is conducted.

### **2.1 IEP position on the quality of the evaluation**

The evaluation has demonstrated satisfactory quality; however, weaknesses are noted with respect to the framework and methodology as well as the executive summary. It

should be noted that, the evaluation was commissioned, designed, and carried out prior to the completion of the assessment tool against which it was scored. Under these circumstances, the panel opted to endorse the report and highlight shortcomings in this commentary.

## 2.2 IEP position on the independence of the evaluation

For the reasons outlined here, while the IEP endorses this evaluation it cannot fairly and objectively comment on independence. Observations of independence have not been optimal. We have observed a lack of involvement of the IEP focal points in the scoping and especially the contracting phases, to the point the IEP provides a fair observation of the degree of independence of the evaluation process in these phases. As noted above, these were processes not fully in place at the start of TGF's allocation methodology's evaluation and processes have since been clarified.

## 3.0 Findings

3.1 The **purpose of the evaluation** is well-defined. It clearly states why the evaluation was needed at this point in time, which is to assess TGF allocation methodology's relevance, **effectiveness** and **impact**. At inception, however, the evaluators proposed to focus on the allocation methodology's equity, **efficiency**, and **transparency**. The evaluation acknowledged inability to assess impact due to the contributory nature of GF's interventions. The evaluation developed a framework to look at relevance and effectiveness of the current allocation methodology.

3.2 The evaluation outlines **the intended use and users** of the evaluation. It clearly states that TGF commissioned an independent evaluation of its approach to resource allocation to maximize impact to inform evidence-based decision making ahead of the 8th replenishment.

3.3 The description of **evaluation questions** and sub questions is clear and well-structured.

3.4 The report describes the **methods** used in different parts of the evaluation.

1. It explains the rationale behind using **prospective and retrospective analysis** to answer different evaluation questions. It uses a combination of quantitative and qualitative data as well as a benchmarking exercise.
2. It explains that impact modelling of the current allocation methodology could not be done within the scope of this evaluation due to the **contributory nature** of TGF's partnership.

3. It presents but does not robustly justify the alternative methodology. The analysis leaves ambiguity about the chosen methods and their suitability for the systematic evaluation of the **complex processes and outcomes**.
4. The report acknowledges several **methodological limitations** which do affect the quality of the evaluation, including the limitations of the data collection tools used for the evaluation and variable knowledge of the allocation methodology among key informants.
5. The report notes sub optimal and inconsistent survey responses from **CCMs/country level** - (there are around 4,000 CCM members and alternates from 107 countries). This may have led to a bias towards the views and opinions of others such as board members, SC, Secretariat, Technical partners etc.

3.5 The evaluation does not systematically discuss the strength of **evidence** informing evaluative judgements, specific conclusions and recommendations. This decreases the clarity, openness and transparency of the analysis and confidence in the findings.

3.6 The report describes the **criteria for prioritizing and formulating its 10 recommendations**, distinguishing as critical recommendations (i.e. essential and necessary), important recommendations (i.e. to be prioritized) and potential considerations (i.e. to be anticipated in the short-term, medium-term, and long-term). The recommendations for the GDS allocation helpfully consider how decisions might be improved in the short-term and revisited considering new, stronger evidence in future funding cycles (see recommendation 3). Conversely, recommendations 6 and 7 about the RSSH allocation apply to the short-term and all future cycles. Seeing limitations affecting the depth of analysis of the RSSH allocation, the development of recommendations seems discrepant with good practice identified by the evaluation by which TGF has demonstrated a constant willingness to review, challenge, and improve the methodology.

3.7 The evaluation is extensive and **responds to all questions**, providing useful analysis of a series of **forward-looking alternatives**.

3.8 The report poses **important accessibility challenges** for its intended users. In particular, the **executive summary** could be more explicit about limitations, provide a synthesis on conclusions and recommendations of the main report, and clearly state where the evidence substantiating specific recommendations is weaker.

3.9 Whereas an **analytical framework is provided in the evaluation**, it falls short of expectations in guiding both evaluation judgements and the reader as it fails to delineate what are evaluators' assumptions and theories are regarding evaluation questions. As a result, the evaluation does a good job of answering the key evaluation questions that are posed but without clarity on the assumptions behind the evaluators' choices and interpretations. In particular, the apparent shortcomings in the specification of the

evaluators' "**political lens**" have led to shortcomings in the systematic analysis of the political aspects of the allocation methodology.

3.10 The evaluation has no clear mention of how it was guided by **ethical issues and considerations**.

None of these points disqualify the evaluation from endorsement. They are raised to express areas where the Global Fund could improve the utility of its evaluations.

#### **4.0 Implication analysis on the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the evaluation**

4.1 The **recommendations are actionable**, providing guidance for specific components of the allocation methodology.

4.2 The recommendations are **relevant to the primary intended users**.

4.3 The report includes a description of the **foreseeable implications** of alternative courses of action available to the Global Fund, as perceived by key stakeholders.

4.4 The Panel invites the Strategy Committee and the Board to consider the **limitations of the evaluation's** methodology and varying strength of evidence when using this report in its decision-making about the allocation methodology.