
41st TERG Meeting Report

3-5 JUNE 2020

High Level Summary

Objectives of the 41st TERG Meeting

1. To discuss the first draft report of the Strategic Review (SR) 2020 and provide guidance;
2. To discuss updates and provide guidance to the Prospective Country Evaluations (PCE) in 2020 and option for PCE beyond 2020;
3. To discuss thematic reviews in 2020, including on HIV primary prevention;
4. To discuss other business matter and follow-up actions

Outcomes

1. The TERG has agreed evidence from the Strategic Review (SR) 2020 and the TERG thematic review on HIV primary prevention should feed into the development process for the next Global Fund strategy.
2. The TERG was overall satisfied by SR 2020 draft preliminary results and the draft inception report for the thematic review on HIV primary prevention presented by the consultants.
3. There were areas in the draft SR 2020 preliminary report results, e.g., in the executive summary and areas of potential recommendations that could be strengthened and be clearer; potential recommendations should be limited in number, targeted, and actionable.
4. The review on HIV primary prevention should emphasize value for money (VfM) in its scope and include additional criteria such as the HIV prevention budget in selecting countries for case studies. The timeline of the review can be flexible and the review team can be given additional time to mitigate the potential effects of COVID-19. However, at least preliminary findings are needed for the September TERG meeting.
5. As for the TERG business continuity plan, it was agreed by the TERG that Helen Evans will take over the role of the TERG Chair in case of emergency or other circumstances that would not allow the Chair to assume her responsibilities (note that the nomination of a vice-Chair has been on hold due to a broader discussion on M&E including future shape of independent evaluation function).
6. The TERG guidance on PCE work in 2020 indicated the focus should be on the full grant cycle analysis of “what changes/when/how/why” (2017 Funding Request – 2020 Funding Request/Grant Making). This should be done using the lenses of equity, RSSH, and sustainability. Focus topics should be used to analyse the root causes of good and/or weak grant performance and value for money in achieving impact. The main objective of the grant analysis is to have a view of what happens over a full grant cycle and to understand to what extent the Global Fund model is facilitating the achievement of the Global Fund objectives at the country level.
7. The TERG discussed a number of options on the future of PCEs beyond March 2021 and the TERG Chair will present the preferred alternative to the 13th meeting of the Strategy Committee.
8. Other potential thematic review topics were discussed and will be coordinated with the Global Fund Secretariat.
9. Looking forward, the TERG would like to see further coordination and collaboration between PCE teams and the relevant teams in the Global Fund Secretariat.

Next Steps

- The TERG’s SR2020 Steering Group to provide further guidance and work with the SR2020 consortium on draft slide decks and the next iteration of the report as well as in the context of the co-creation of recommendations;
- TERG’s PCE Working Group to continue to elaborate on the PCEs and discuss with the Strategy Committee (SC);
- The team for the thematic review on HIV primary prevention to finalize the inception report in coming weeks and submit preliminary findings of review before the 42nd TERG meeting, to be held from 1 to 3 September 2020.
- Focal points to develop thematic review TORs in consultation with the Secretariat and other stakeholders.

Opening session

Chair: Cindy Carlson

Introductory remarks, declaration of conflicts of interest, and updates from Board and Committee meetings

The TERG Chair opened the meeting by welcoming everyone to the first virtual TERG meeting. She thanked the TERG Secretariat, the presenters and the TERG members for their intensive work and preparation in making this meeting happen. After introducing key objectives of the meeting, she asked the TERG members to disclose any conflict of interest and to adopt the agenda.

The TERG Chair discussed highlights of the recent Strategy Committee (SC) and Board meetings:

- Global Fund (GF) responses to the COVID-19 pandemic through grant flexibilities up to 5% and additional C19RM (COVID-19 response mechanism) support up to US\$500 million and documenting the impact of COVID-19 on the three diseases (the GF is monitoring this through a biweekly survey);
- the future and implementation of the M&E of the Global Fund and strategy development;
- the Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE) synthesis report and thematic review on HIV primary prevention; and
- Community, Rights and Gender work vis-a-vis the importance of access to services, breaking down barriers and community level monitoring.

She concluded that there was strong interest from the SC on the HIV prevention thematic review and there should be more equity lens used in the PCE work.

Updates on Monitoring & Evaluation

The Chief of Staff updated on the M&E of the Global Fund following her pre-recorded presentation, clarifying various improvements have been made already in monitoring but there's more scope for improvement in evaluation. Good discussions happened in the SC meeting regarding this, but the momentum has slowed down due to COVID-19 pandemic. In response to some weaknesses in the monitoring approach, improvements in the modular framework have been introduced. As a follow up to the M&E review and part of the response to the TERG assessments:

- in the short term, the TERG Secretariat team has moved organizationally into the Strategic Information Department. This is to strengthen support to the TERG aiming to better explore synergies within the department, and to increase management participation and engagement with TERG work; and
- in the medium term, a strategic M&E framework will be developed directly linking to the new strategy. Also, a Theory of Change (ToC) model will be developed for the next strategy, though the current strategy has had a ToC developed retroactively.

These two points will make decisions on evaluations much easier in future. In parallel to the development of a broader M&E framework for the next strategy, an evaluation calendar up to the end of 2022 will be developed. It will give a very comprehensive overview of all planned evaluations and reviews at the global and country level.

Also, issues were raised on the role of the TERG in providing programmatic assurance. It will be helpful to develop a timetable of the M&E activities and to agree on which groups do what, and when. The key role of the TERG will be the independent evaluation function within Global Fund monitoring and evaluation but also provide critical learning opportunities and assurance. As often pointed out by the Inspector General on several occasions, there are distinct roles between the OIG and the TERG despite perceptions of overlap.

Updates on Strategy development process

Following the pre-recorded presentation, the Head of the Strategy and Policy Hub clarified the process of strategy development, such as the timeline, including the end point. The new strategy will cascade into the

investment case and the allocation methodology and the future funding cycles. However, due to COVID-19 challenges, the strategy development has started slowly with consultations with various constituencies and stakeholders.

The need was highlighted to build the evidence base with Strategic Review (SR) 2020 and thematic reviews to inform the next strategy. Topics such as country ownership and health systems, on which views of stakeholders are divided, need to be reconciled with evidence. The Secretariat considers that key topics and issues have been largely identified but agrees that some specific issues need to be elaborated with “why” and clearer direction on how to resolve conflicting perspectives.

Strategic Review (SR) preliminary findings and general discussion

In response to the pre-recorded presentation and a draft preliminary report as well as an overview by the SR team, members of the TERG Steering Committee on SR 2020 provided commentaries. The highlights included the progress and challenges of working on the SR 2020 review in spite of the COVID-19 pandemic. There was a broad agreement that the first draft report was a strong start and the analysis in the draft report is beginning to take shape. Other points included:

- The SR 2020 report should be developed taking a more holistic and integrated approach; themes and areas of potential recommendations should be supported by evidence provided across the different modules;
- The SR 2020 team should emphasize what areas of support the Global Fund should prioritize and deprioritize when developing the new strategy, based on the SR2020 evidence and analysis;
- The Secretariat requested key findings to be clearer and to inform recommendations. It also asked the TERG to consider how to clarify some inconsistencies between global targets and Global Fund strategy targets in the draft report. The Secretariat suggested that the SR2020 should acknowledge on-going initiatives to improve RSSH support based on TERG reviews, Technical advice and Partnerships reviews etc.;
- The executive summary should be further developed, to be clearer, more robust and more holistic.
- While the draft report is rich in analysis and findings, the evidence needs to be further enhanced when the remaining country case studies are completed; and
- The report should answer some of the issues (e.g., granularity and specificity of recommendations), which have been requested by the Secretariat. The SR 2020 team should consider offering differentiated sets of recommendations based on probable economic and capacity scenarios as all donors and implementing countries continue to address consequences of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Finally, there were discussions on co-creation of recommendations between the Secretariat Working Group and the TERG Steering Committee in early July.

Session 1: Thematic review session

Chair: Beatriz Ayala Ostrom

HIV primary prevention

The session chair explained the rationale for the review and the importance of understanding what the Global Fund can do differently to improve and strengthen HIV primary prevention. This review aims to inform the development of the next strategy as well as the policy and guidance for grant management activities. Summarizing its pre-recorded presentation, the review team gave a brief overview, outlining the scope, conceptual framework, methodology and criteria for country selection.

The TERG Focal Points provided commentaries, followed by other TERG members and participants. Issues discussed included:

- Challenges of measuring/targeting HIV prevention programs, a broad spectrum and wide variety of prevention programs in contrast to treatment, and differences in investment and implementation platforms in HIV prevention versus treatment;

- the importance of cost effectiveness of HIV prevention modules (value for money), integration of HIV prevention and human rights investments, gender responsive investments and prioritizing the right prevention interventions;
- how much money is budgeted, spent, and how well, on HIV prevention activities, and mechanisms to fill in the gaps for HIV prevention funding since most of the money in implementing countries comes from donors, rather than domestic financing;
- limited available resources allocated for prevention compared with the costs of delivering on outcomes;
- challenges with size estimates especially in data poor areas, strengthening community systems in HIV prevention programs and the quality of prevention programs; and
- the need for the HIV prevention review to consider benchmarking with other disease prevention programs and including the 2020 funding request in their analysis.
- Selection criteria for countries

In response to these discussions, the review team agreed these were very important points that will be captured in the final inception report. The review team also mentioned they will consult with communities and global level partners for this review.

Another thematic review

After the participants, except the TERG members and the TERG Secretariat as well as a few invited resource persons, had left the meeting call, the TERG proposed and discussed several potential topics as another TERG thematic review to be initiated later in 2020. Timing and potential usefulness of evaluations, pros and cons of conducting specific reviews, and advantage of independent evaluation as opposed to Secretariat-led evaluation were considered.

Session 2: Business matters session

Chair: Cindy Carlson

During this session, the TERG discussed its business contingency plan. The main point of this plan is to anticipate who, among the TERG members, would fill in for the role and responsibilities of the TERG Chair in case of emergency, illness etc. (especially because the nomination of a TERG vice-Chair has been postponed until a broader M&E and the function of an independent evaluation are decided). It was agreed by the TERG that Helen Evans will take over the role of the TERG Chair in case of any eventualities.

DAY 2, June 4

Executive session (1)

Chair: Helen Evans

SR2020

TERG members were requested to suggest how to highlight and cluster strategic issues and operational issues, and relevant additional points on the SR2020 report. It was noted that one of the challenges about making recommendations is that the Global Fund is dealing with a range of countries/regions with a variety of contexts and different kinds of issues. It was agreed that some degree of "differentiation" based on scenario options that take into account the various issues arising from geopolitical and economic uncertainty and/or contextual factors in the recommendations would be important.

Other discussion points included guidance with regards to the findings, analysis and recommendations, which were captured and presented to the SR2020 team on Day 3 of the meeting (see below).

As a next step, TERG members will review and provide feedback and guidance on the first draft in a comment template. Additionally, the TERG was asked to improve the slide deck for presentation to the SC in June.

Thematic review on HIV primary prevention

The following points were discussed on the HIV primary prevention thematic review: the selection criteria of country case studies; the scope of the review; the timeline for this review; preference for country visits; and incorporating available information from PCE countries into this HIV review, in order to broaden the scope of information on this issue, rather than selecting PCE countries and considering fewer countries.

It was emphasized that the review team should use available data to conduct the analysis as much as possible, because there is no perfect data and measurements, in response to the challenges of measuring HIV prevention activities.

Another Thematic Review

The TERG agreed that any thematic review selected to be undertaken this year should have a clear scope, definition and timeline of execution. A preferred timely and appropriate topic for TERG evaluation was agreed, while the TERG restated that undertaking any review(s) should be grounded on an evaluation calendar and in sync and deliberation with the GF Secretariat on the feasibility and relevance and in discussion with the Strategy Committee.

Session 3: PCE

Chair: Dan Whitaker

Updates and preliminary findings

Acknowledging Country Evaluation Partners (CEPs) had provided their own pre-recorded presentations from the eight countries, both consortia's Global Evaluation Partners (GEPs) presented updates and preliminary synthesized findings across the eight PCE countries. Since the last February TERG meeting, there were iterations, which also including country teams (CTs), to agree on the focus topics. The GEPs also developed methodology documents to support the CEPs in their analysis of the grant cycle, examine the changes from the 2017 funding requests and across the grant cycle through equity, sustainability and RSSH lenses.

The lead discussants thanked the GEPs and the CEPs for their work in the challenging context of COVID-19 and for the country presentations provided in advance of the virtual meeting. They then provided various comments, followed by the TERG focal points and the Secretariat. TERG members noted, among others:

- some of the questions to be addressed this year are from the Grant Management Division's Grant Portfolio Solutions and Support (GPS) Department. To provide useful information for revisions on grant management processes and policies, the TERG encourages the PCE teams to communicate regularly with the GPS team; and
- the PCE teams should endeavor to respond positively to Secretariat country specific requests while reiterating that the priority focus for this year is the grant cycle analysis. Each of these requests will be considered on a case by case basis, according to the country evaluation partners resources capacities.

The GPS team provided many comments on the usefulness of the PCE and encouraged the PCE teams to continue to deliver such valuable findings, taking advantage of having the consultant teams in country. There were also positive comments from CTs together with some suggestions on what the PCE could examine in order to help maximize grant impact in countries.

Insights on Global Fund's role in the COVID-19 response in PCE countries

The GEPs briefly presented their preliminary summary observations and findings on the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the eight PCE countries to respond to the TERG's specific questions. The slides had already been viewed by all participants before the session.

The TERG thanked the GEPs for their presentations on consolidated preliminary findings COVID-19 and raised a few questions to be more clearly addressed:

- How are the decisions made when moving money from a project/programme and where the money was moved from in the context of COVID-19? This requires sufficient details with regards to specific activities or areas, or savings, to avoid misinterpretations; and
- What are the positive and negative unintended consequences of COVID-19 pandemic?

Many issues were discussed from decline in the use of health services to competitions in using some diagnostic tools e.g., GeneXpert machine. Procurement and supply chain issues; responses by other funders and partners; and short-term and long-term impact of COVID-19 pandemic will all be important factors affecting Global Fund grant implementation. The Secretariat, in particular the GPS Department, found these preliminary findings very useful to understand the impact of COVID-19 pandemic on grant implementation and how to ensure the fight against the three diseases can continue.

Overview of plan for 2020

The PCE teams presented their plan for 2020, explaining they are at the data collection stage. The Funding Requests analysis is expected to be finalized by the end of August.

DAY 3, June 5

Executive session (2)

Chair: George Gotsadze

The points raised on PCE were discussed. The TERG deliberated on the good progress for 2020 work despite the challenging environment. At the same time, the TERG discussed some concerns, such as how to ensure PCE work remains useful for country stakeholders, country teams and other Secretariat teams, in addition to high level understanding for the Board and Strategy Committee with broader strategic and policy implications.

Options for PCE 2.0 was also extensively discussed and it was agreed that the TERG Chair will consult and discuss further with the Secretariat and the Strategy Committee.

Closing session

Chair: Cindy Carlson

In the closing session, the TERG Chair presented the TERG's high level guidance from this meeting to the teams of consultants.

SR2020

Below points were presented. A few points were clarified and agreed. The TERG agreed to provide further detail comments on a draft preliminary report.

Overall Report

- First draft is a strong start, with analysis beginning to take shape
- The SR 2020 team needs to ensure the executive summary of the draft report can be read as a stand-alone piece, is punchy and clear on the main messages.
- The TERG and Secretariat teams are expecting to see clear evidence or elaboration of evidence in the SR 2020 report that can inform development of the GF strategy
 - Need to be as clear as possible about the evidence underpinning key findings and conclusions on the SO1 modelling and make recommendations
- Findings and analysis from Workstream 3 need to be clearly informed by, and flow logically out of, the other two workstreams plus findings from additional interviews and document review. Other themes the team could draw on include e.g.:
 - Analysis of modelling, assumptions and counterfactuals used now and suggest what could be used for the next strategy;

- Analysis of the grant M&E disconnect that creates challenges and disincentives for implementers to report on strategic enablers, structural barriers and contributions of their work on disease impact.

Conclusions and Recommendations

- Conclusions should be holistic and based on key themes arising from across all the SR2020 workstreams, but not presented by workstream;
- Recommendations should then relate directly to the main conclusions;
- The team is asked to make sure that the recommendations are:
 - Limited in number and prioritized;
 - More practical, implementable and granular;
 - Presented based on two or three different scenarios given global uncertainties;
 - Cover both the second half of this strategy period and the next strategy.
- Importance of using co-creation of recommendations to test utility, but this should not compromise SR2020 independence.

HIV primary prevention review

The TERG Chair further presented the TERG guidance in response to the draft inception report.

Scope

- Important to emphasize VfM aspects in this review
- Use of 2017-2019 allocation period for this review and where possible also funding requests in the 2020-22 allocation period to compare prevention related requests.

Criteria for Selection of Countries

- No overlap with SR 2020 countries, and using country capacity as a criterion in selecting countries;
- Use total contribution of GF in HIV prevention and countries with relatively high incidence in either the general population or in at least one key population;
- Include countries demonstrating best practices and weaknesses based on incidence reduction and where there is high usage of VMMC interventions;
- Choose countries that can, as far as possible, accommodate face to face interaction (though recognize some countries will have to be contacted for remote interviews)
- Don't include PCE countries as part of country case studies but please do use PCE generated information on HIV prevention as another source of data
- Specify the missing country selection criteria above on Table E.2 in the draft inception report and include them for country selection criteria for final decision.

Flexible Timeline

- The timeline can be flexible and the CEPA team can be given time to do a more thorough job because of the effects of COVID-19 pandemic, preliminary findings of the report should be made available for the September TERG meeting.
- Important to keep in mind the time for the start of the development of the new GF strategy as this review feeds into it

PCE

Lastly, the TERG guidance on PCE was presented and discussed, to be followed by written guidance.

Overall

- The TERG appreciated the good progress being made on PCE work and the updates on COVID-19 related aspects.

- The TERG reiterated the clear agreement that the PCE2020 core focus is a full grant cycle analysis of “what changes/when/how/why”. The main objective of this analysis is to have a view of the full grant cycle and to understand how the Global Fund model is facilitating (or not as the case may be) the achievement of the Global Fund objectives at the country level. Attention should be paid to:
 - Depth more than breadth, through detailed analysis on the *how* and *why* of the grant cycle, including solid root cause analyses or equivalent;
 - Ensuring the workstreams are brought together into a single full grant cycle analysis;
 - Using focus topics to provide an emphasis and more granularity on both positive and negative aspects of the grant cycle/business model processes and how these are or are not conducive to achieving equity, RSSH and sustainability;
 - Sharing with TERG country Focal Points by the end of June, how focus topics will be unpacked by outlining what specific questions will be answered. It is important to also discuss and get consensus on these with the respective CTs some of whom seem to be unclear on the focus and detail the PCE’s work this year.

Tools

The tools that both PCE consortia have developed, including guidance documents, are comprehensive and should be used across the teams.

Responses to GF Secretariat Requests

The TERG is keen to ensure the PCE responds positively to the requests for additional work from across the Secretariat, while reiterating that the priority focus for this year is the grant cycle analysis. Each of these requests should be considered on a case by case basis, according to CEPs resources.

The GF Secretariat has started reviewing and revising grant management policies and processes. Specific requests include grant making, revisions impediments and data monitoring/reporting requirements.

COVID-19

The PCE teams need to keep eyes on COVID-19 as part of PCE work, e.g. service disruption, unintended consequences, positive or negative, on the grant cycle, who makes decisions and how are they made. However, no separate report is needed. TERG encourages periodic calls with the Global Fund Secretariat to provide feedback on what they are hearing and observing in their countries and to complement what partners, such as UNAIDS, PEPFAR and WHO, are doing.

The TERG Chair concluded that the 41st TERG meeting posed unique challenges due to the first experience of virtual meeting for the TERG, but declared it was a successful one, acknowledging the effort and preparation by all participants.

Annex List of Participants

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