External Evaluation of the Prospective Country Evaluations (PCEs)

Final Report

Prepared for //TERG

By //Nick York, Naomi Blight, Sam Sternin, Sidney Sampson and Sunday Atobatele

Date /26/07/21

DISCLAIMER

Acknowledgements

The evaluation team would like to acknowledge the following who have kindly assisted in this exercise:

- The Steering Committee, chaired by Professor Mira Johri of the University of Montreal School of Public Health, who have played a key role in steering the evaluation, setting the terms of reference, ensuring independence, and guiding on specific issues where required. The Steering Committee members were:

    – Professor Mira Johri (chair)
    – Professor Helen Evans (TERG vice chair)
    – Dr Mari Nagai (TERG)
    – Dr Peter Barron (TERG)
    – Dr Izaskun Gaviria (Senior Fund Portfolio Manager, Global Fund Secretariat)

- The TERG Secretariat, led by Ryuichi Komatsu. We would particularly like to thank Sara La Tour who has been the day-to-day focal point and helped to set up interviews and facilitate access to relevant documents.

- Key informants from different groups who have given up their time to be interviewed including:

    – staff in the Global Fund Secretariat
    – TERG members and representatives from Global Fund governance structures
    – evaluators from the Global and Country Evaluation Partners
    – representatives of Global Fund's global and country partners and donors
    – representatives of country stakeholders including government and civil society

Table of Contents

Table of Figures

List of Tables

Acronyms and Abbreviations

CCMs	Country Coordination Mechanisms
CLE	County-level Evaluation
CEPs	Country Evaluation Partners
CIESAR	Centro de Investigación Epidemiológica en Salud Sexual y Reproductiva
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
FCE	Full Country Evaluation
FPMs	Fund Portfolio Managers
GEPs	Global Evaluation Partners
GERAAS	Global Evaluation Reports Assessment and Analysis System
GEROS	Global Evaluation Reports Oversight System
GHS	Global health security
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus / Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IHME	Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation
JHU	Johns Hopkins University
KIIs	Key Informant Interviews
LFAs	Local Fund Agents
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MoH	Ministry of Health
OIG	Office of the Inspector General
PATH	Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
PCE	Prospective Country Evaluation
PRs	Principal Recipients
PWID	People who inject drugs
QA	Quality Assurance
RFP	Request for Proposals
RSSH	Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health
SC	Strategy Committee
SDGs	Sustainable Development Goals
SR	Sub-recipient
STC	Sustainability, Transition & Co-Financing

TERG	Technical Evaluation Reference Group
TOC	Theory of Change
TOR	Terms of Reference
UHC	Universal Health Care
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations AIDS (acquired immune deficiency syndrome)
UNEG	United Nations Evaluation Group
UNOPS	United Nations Office for Project Services
VFM	Value for Money
WHO	World Health Organization

Executive Summary

Objectives

This evaluation provides an independent assessment of the Prospective Country Evaluations (PCEs) that was undertaken by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) from 2017-2021. The primary objectives of the evaluation are: (i) to assess the extent to which the PCEs, through the country evaluation platforms, have generated the expected content and quality of evidence; and (ii) to assess the extent to which the PCEs have been useful for improving the programs at the country level and have provided inputs to improve the Global Fund business model, and if they added value in clear distinction to other mechanisms. Secondary objectives of this evaluation include analysis of the enabling and constraining factors: to analyse why PCEs have achieved or not their objectives and factors influencing implementation, quality, and usefulness of the PCE products and process, identifying lessons learned, and assessing the PCE contribution to in-country analytic capacity.[1] The Global Fund's is undertaking a review of its overall approach to monitoring and evaluation and should revisit the findings and recommendations of this evaluation once the wider work on the review of the overall approach to M&E is complete.

Methodology

The evaluation team undertook a limited review of key documents and a small number of inception interviews, resulting in an evaluation matrix, detailed evaluation questions, and data collection tools that were validated by the Steering Committee (SC) at the end of the inception phase. This was followed by implementation of a mixed-methods approach, consisting of further documentary review and primary data collection from over 150 purposefully selected key informants from the Global Fund Secretariat, the TERG and Global Fund governance structures, the Global Fund Strategy Committee, the GEPs, each of the eight CEPs, representatives of Global Fund's global and country partners and donors and a range of stakeholder groups in each of the eight PCE countries including government and civil society. Data was analysed through a series of team meetings where emerging findings were discussed and tested, as well as through the thematic coding of findings using MaxQDA. The strength of the evidence for each key finding was assessed based on factors including the breadth of the supporting primary data (number of mentions, breadth of stakeholder types, number of countries), triangulation with secondary data, and the presence or absence of contradictory data.

The evaluation was conducted with oversight from a steering committee comprised of TERG and Global Fund Secretariat representatives with an independent chair. Preliminary drafts of the findings, report and recommendations were shared with the TERG, CEPs, GEPs and the Global Fund Secretariat for written feedback and in a validation workshop, with relevant elements incorporated into the final report whilst maintaining independence. Key limitations included the short timeframe for the evaluation and the limited number of stakeholder interviews in two of the eight countries due to external factors.

---

[1] Global Fund, Request for Proposals: TERG- External evaluation of the prospective country evaluations (PCEs)", February 2021

Findings

The first finding is that while the **PCE purpose** (as laid out in the objectives and expected benefits of the PCE)[2] represented valid needs of the different Global Fund stakeholders, **the original scope turned out to be excessively broad**. Some objectives were not appropriate for an evaluation (improving data quality, building capacity for data analysis and evaluation), others required different evaluation approaches to satisfy their intended audiences/users (real time program quality improvement at country level versus generating global synthesis findings on the Global Fund business model), and some could not be satisfied by the selected evaluation design (full impact pathway assessment). This challenge was recognized by the TERG, GEPs and CEPs within the first year of the PCEs and led to **an appropriate focusing of the PCE objectives over time.** However, these were **not always clearly communicated** to all stakeholders (country and global stakeholders) resulting in confusion, lack of alignment, and poor management of expectations of different stakeholders. There was a **diverse audience** for PCE findings, who each wanted to use the findings in different ways and the PCE was unable to meet the needs and expectations of all stakeholder groups.

The second finding is that as a result of the above, the **PCE design** had a number of flaws that impacted the ability to deliver on the stated objectives. While the design evolved over the four-year period in line with the narrowing objectives, **the numerous changes in data analysis requirements and evaluation methodologies created significant challenges** and burdens on the global and country evaluation teams. Some of the **design innovations were broadly welcomed** by a majority of stakeholders, most notably the Deep Dives and Focus Topics. However other design features resulted in **lack of ownership by various key stakeholders and intended audiences** (including country-level actors and the Secretariat) and **major delays in the dissemination of evaluation findings and recommendations**, both of which compromised the usefulness of the evaluations for certain stakeholders.

The following Table 1: Assessment of PCE Objectives summarizes the extent to which **the initial PCE objectives were assessed to have been met, based on the following classification:** Not Met, Somewhat Met, Mostly Met, Achieved[3]:

---

[2] Global Fund, PCE Charter – Prospective Country Evaluations, May 2017

[3] Objectives are rated "not met" when the preponderance of evidence across all or most of the 8 countries and/or across multiple stakeholder group types and secondary data is that they were not met, with only minor anecdotal examples to the contrary. Objectives are rated as "Somewhat met" when there is evidence of success in up to half of the countries; where some parts of the objective may have been met but others not; where there were significant minorities of stakeholder groups that pointed to successful cases. "Mostly met" refers to objectives where there is significant undisputed evidence across more than half of the countries; where a majority of stakeholder groups suggested that there was success; and/or where most but not all parts of the objective were achieved. "Achieved" is where the preponderance of evidence across all or most of the 8 countries and/or across multiple stakeholder group types and secondary data suggests the objective was largely or completely met, with only minor anecdotal examples to the contrary.

Table 1: Assessment of PCE Objectives

PCE objective[4]	Primary user(s)	Rating	Notes on rating	Relevance
Assess the extent to which the Global Fund contributes to impact.	Global level (Secretariat teams, Strategy Committee, Board) and country-level		The original objective of impact analyses was discontinued due to the methodological impossibility of using the primary data sources available to the CEPs to rigorously assess impact. Nevertheless, an alternative methodology of contribution analysis was developed which provided useful insights into the Global Fund contributions along the impact pathway.	The prospective approach was shown not to be a relevant design, but the need to assess impact at country level is clear.
Provide ongoing feedback enabling countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust program implementation in real time	Country-level stakeholders		There was near-universal agreement that this 'real-time' element was not achieved, with only minor exceptions.	
Analyze implementation and degree of accomplishment of Global Fund Strategic Objectives, with a particular focus on Global Fund policies and practices; RSSH; and gender and human rights	Global level (TERG, Strategy Committee, Board)		Independent insights into various elements of business model effectiveness (including the whole grant cycle analyses) were largely appreciated by global level audiences. Additionally, country-level stakeholders appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback directly to the Global Fund Strategy Committee and Board. Reports included specific analyses against Global Fund Strategic Objectives. While reports included a focus on RSSH, gender, and human rights issues, in a minority of countries major critiques or concerns about their treatment of these topics were raised, and this element is assessed as 'mostly met.'	High, given the Global Fund business model, having an independent lens on country level performance is essential, direct to the Board. However, it also requires wider coverage than 8 countries and more effective processes for follow through and accountability
Identify risks and challenges that impede program performance, and opportunities to inform and improve program quality for	Country-level stakeholders, TERG, Strategy		Country PCE reports did identify risks, issues, and challenges, and included numerous analyses of value-for-money. However, there were relatively few examples of follow-through on potential solutions. The lack of clear accountability	

---

[4] Ibid.

PCE objective[4]	Primary user(s)	Rating	Notes on rating	Relevance
impact, effectiveness, and value-for-money	Committee and Board.		mechanisms for PCE recommendations at country level was highlighted by most country-level stakeholders.	
Strengthen country M&E systems for robust measurement	Country-level (PRs, SRs, MoH, etc.)		Data quality improvement was recognized to be an inappropriate expected benefit for an evaluation and was de-prioritized. Anecdotal evidence that PCE findings created pressure for data quality improvements in some countries were disputed by several stakeholders.	Independent evaluation depends on good data systems, and assesses where there are gaps, but should not be the route to build them directly.
Development of country capacity in M&E as a means to improve program implementation	Country-level (PRs, SRs, LFAs, MoH, CCM)		Although this objective was somewhat de-prioritized, it was explicitly included in the TOR for this evaluation. We found that the PCE resulted in some capacity enhancements for some CEPs that could be used to improve program implementation in the future.	Although a relevant and important objective, this is better addressed through other routes.
Identify and disseminate best practices to improve the Global Fund model	Global level (Secretariat teams) and country-level		No evidence was found of any use of PCE best practices to improve program quality and impact either between PCE countries or beyond the 8 PCE countries. Some evidence exists that PCE findings on issues, challenges, and bottlenecks contributed to proposed changes in the business model.	Could be a key objective but a single instrument cannot be equally effective for learning at country and global level, so the trade-off needs to be addressed.

Given the different and at times clashing objectives and needs of the different stakeholders and intended audiences for the PCEs and the differential levels of achievement of the various PCE expected benefits and measures of success as outlined above, it is unsurprising that this evaluation found highly divergent perspectives on the PCE quality, use and impact.

In terms of the *quality of the PCE reports*, it is important to distinguish between the global synthesis reports and the country-level reports. Our independent analysis of the global synthesis reports finds that they were generally methodologically sound, with reasonable analysis, and presentation of primary and secondary data accompanied by appropriate commentary on limitations including the quality of secondary quantitative data. The quality and specificity of recommendations increased over time, as would be expected due to gradual improvements in CEP capacity and appropriate narrowing of PCE objectives and methods. A serious identified shortcoming is the lack of an accountability mechanism to ensure follow-up on previous years' findings and recommendations by the Global Fund Secretariat. Interviewed stakeholders' perceptions of the quality of global synthesis reports varied significantly, with global-level audiences (TERG, Strategy Committee, Board) expressing more positive perspectives and country-level audiences (FPMs, PRs/SRs, CCMs, MoH teams) more critical of both the validity of the qualitative data collected by CEPs and the contextualisation and interpretation of that data. For country-level reports, our assessment is that quality varied significantly across countries and that it improved over time; this is generally supported by the feedback received in our evaluation interviews across all stakeholder categories.

Similarly, perspectives on the **use and impact of PCEs** varied significantly across different stakeholders and intended users. The stakeholders for whom obtaining an **independent assessment of Global Fund business model elements** was the main priority were **most positive about the impact of PCEs**, citing numerous examples of how findings inform Board and Strategy Committee decisions and influenced proposed improvements to the business model. Stakeholders most focussed on obtaining **real-time data and analysis to enable adjustments to ongoing Global Fund grant implementation** (FPMs, PRs and SRs, CCMs) **and Ministry of Health programs and policies** relating to health systems and the three disease areas (FPMs, Ministry of Health disease teams, CSOs) **were most critical**, with only a very small number of validated cases of 'real-time' improvements identified by the evaluation team. The balance of evidence on the **PCE's impact on medium-term outcomes** (for example influencing the design of Global Fund proposals, or revisions to medium-term MoH disease strategic plans) **was mixed**. Numerous examples of such impact are documented in both global synthesis and country PCE reports, and several of these cases were validated by a significant minority of country-level stakeholders across different categories (PRs/SRs, MoH disease teams, CCMs). However, a large majority of both country-level and Secretariat stakeholders (across multiple secretariat teams and functions, not solely FPMs) challenged or questioned the validity of some or most of these claims, questioning the utility of the findings, the attribution to the PCEs of changes based on issues already widely known, and emphasizing the numerous factors limiting the PCE impact (see below).

The evaluation identified a number of **factors that facilitated and inhibited the implementation and impact of the PCEs**, including:

Facilitating factors	Hindering factors
• Consultative approach in PCE implementation • Capacity, expertise and reputation of the CEPs and GEPs • Flexibility in some countries in feeding 'interim' results in at country level and into grant development processes	• Complex initial set-up between three consortia • Lack of clarity and consistency in the PCE objectives, methodologies, and roles set by TERG • Complexities of PCE design/management processes

Facilitating factors	Hindering factors
• Adaptive PCE methodology and approach	• Diverse audiences and diverse needs of those audiences from PCE reports • Lack of accountability for implementation of PCE recommendations • Limited focus and analysis on gender and key populations • Tension between need for global synthesis of PCE reports and inclusion of country priorities • Lack of country ownership • Lack of capacity of CEPs in some countries • High turnover within the CEPs • Security challenges in some countries

In terms of **Value for Money** and the related issue of the **comparative advantage of PCEs** vis-à-vis other Global Fund monitoring and evaluation processes, our findings are also mixed. Value for money assessed against delivery of the original expected benefits/measures of success is quite low: 2/7 were not met, 4/7 were somewhat met, and only 1/7 was fully achieved. This improves somewhat if the de-prioritized objectives are removed, with 3/5 somewhat met or achieved (60%). While the PCEs clearly served a valuable function in terms of the independent evaluation function which is not currently addressed by other elements in the Global Fund's M&E processes, alternative and separate designs of M&E tools to addressing the different PCE objectives would likely be more cost-effective (see recommendations below). A lack of comparable cost data for the closest equivalent to PCEs (Gavi's FCEs) or alternative means of evaluation limited our ability to assess the efficiency and economy aspects of Value for Money.

Conclusions

The *original PCE design was not well-suited to its original purpose*. There is as an inherent tension between the need for independent, strategic global synthesis regarding the Global Fund business model to inform the TERG and the SC, and the need for prospective, programme focused findings to inform and respond to country needs. Although the PCEs *made independent, important and relevant recommendations* based on sound analysis, for example on the grant cycle, they were not in any sense real-time and typically came too late to drive decisions in the Global Fund Secretariat and at country level. Two of the original objectives of the PCE were achieved, including the very important objective of high-quality country and global level reports synthesised for the Board but the other objectives were largely not achieved. The major gap was on learning and utility, and the wider objective on capacity building for M&E and on data quality were misconceived as deliverables for the PCE in the first place.

The usefulness of the PCE reports was limited overall and could have been improved considerably for each of the stakeholder groups if certain key conditions for learning, such as ownership of findings and appropriate accountability mechanisms, had been met. However, the move by the TERG over time to *narrow the scope and to focus on the Global Fund business model* was helpful in improving coherence against the emerging objectives and these reports were considered to have greater utility by a broad range of stakeholders.

In terms of analysis and use of reliable and adequate data, the evaluation also finds that the *content and quality of the reports, particularly the synthesis reports in the last 2 years*

has been good, combining analysis of secondary data with qualitative data in relevant ways to reach valid conclusions drawing on evidence at country level as intended.

Enabling factors impacting on the success of the PCE included the capacity and reputation of CEPs and GEPs, the adaptive methodology and approach, and in some cases the consultative approach needed and flexibility from CEPs in feeding 'interim' results in at country level and into grant development processes so as to maximise PCE impact.

The most significant ***Hindering factors affecting PCE success*** included the complex design and set-up, the diverse objectives and audiences, the lack of accountability for implementation of PCE recommendation, tension between need for global synthesis of PCE reports and inclusion of country priorities, lack of country ownership, lack of capacity of CEPs in some countries.

Recommendations

The following recommendations start from the assumption that the PCE should not be continued in its present form. The recommendations should also be considered in light of the comprehensive M&E framework the Global Fund is currently developing. The PCE should be replaced with a different design, which builds on the strengths of what has been achieved, addresses various implementation challenges and recognises the following:

1. Annual synthesis reports which draw on independent country level evaluation reports to present a more comprehensive assessment of the Global Fund business model are useful and should continue. This function is not readily available through other existing Global Fund M&E mechanisms.

2. The mode of implementation of independent country evaluation – and the synthesis which is one of the outcomes of this - needs considerable design modifications to address current deficiencies and deliver better value for money.

   *A new design requires further detailed work, but in anticipation of that the evaluation team has been requested to offer a set of **design considerations and options** which are set out in Table of the main report.*

3. Much better arrangements for learning[5] from independent country evaluation are needed and the TERG and Global Fund senior management should jointly give this attention, working with other stakeholders to understand what will help learning. The issues to address which would help support learning include[6]:

   Greater ownership at country level; country engagement and use; greater receptivity to independent evaluation in the Global Fund secretariat; utility of findings for programming; accountability for follow up and action; timescales for commenting on reports; and follow up and dissemination.

---

[5] 'Learning' in this context is intended to mean learning at several different levels: at global level by the Board and the Global Fund Secretariat, at country level within countries and across countries, and also learning by other stakeholders such as donors and Global Fund partners.
[6] These may already be addressed in the M&E review which is ongoing.

Recommendations 4-8 below are specifically aimed at addressing this.

4. There should be sufficient time allotted by the SC for in-depth discussion of the synthesis findings at SC and Board level, to ensure ownership and follow through from the highest level.

5. More effective accountability mechanisms at both an organisational and country levels are required to ensure action on the recommendations.

6. More timely and effective dissemination of the country and synthesis reports is required, including public access, so that all stakeholders can access the findings.

7. Greater space should be built into the approach for tailoring at country level to ensure ownership, utility, and learning.

8. Although the PCEs were unable often to provide real-time feedback, continuous program quality improvement and testing of innovations as originally envisioned in the PCE Charter, this evaluation found strong demand for this across country stakeholders and the Secretariat. Separating this function from the independent evaluation and financing an operational/implementation research agenda driven by the CCM and FPMs priorities would be an important contribution to support programmatic learning and improvement. The Global Fund may wish to explore how best to fund this type of research.

9. The objective of capacity building around M&E, while important, cannot easily be delivered directly by the PCE or its successor and should be addressed through other routes as is already the case.[7] To the extent that strengthened country-level analytical capacity is a secondary result of independent evaluation, that capacity can be leveraged to support other country or regional monitoring, evaluation, and research needs.

10. Improving data quality, which is also an important objective, also cannot easily be delivered directly by independent evaluation[8] and should be addressed through other routes such as the Global Fund's grants for RSSH.

---

[7] See for example the various work which is ongoing to strengthen M&E at country level, supported by the UN and World Bank Group, such as the Global Evaluation Initiative: https://www.globalevaluationinitiative.org/

[8] Independent evaluation does of course depend on improving data availability and quality, as has been shown in the PCE. This evaluation has highlighted instances where PCEs helped draw attention to data deficiencies, which is an indirect contribution to the data improvement agenda. It is also one route for improving use of data through high quality analysis. This in turn can help create incentives for improved data quality over time, so there is a mutual dependency. By making recommendations on data quality, independent evaluation contributes indirectly to data quality improvement.

Introduction

Evaluation scope and objectives

This evaluation provides an independent assessment of the achievements and usefulness of the Prospective Country Evaluations (PCEs) from 2017-2021. The evaluation covers all eight of the PCE countries[9] and considers the usefulness and achievements of the PCEs from the perspective of a range of stakeholders, as identified from the stakeholder analysis completed in the evaluation inception phase.

The evaluation serves both accountability and learning purposes, focusing on:

- **Purpose and design:** the extent to which there was common understanding of the purpose and objectives of the PCEs and whether the design was 'fit for purpose' to achieve those objectives.
- **Content and quality of the PCEs:** the extent to which the PCEs have generated the expected content/quality of evidence and enabled the Global Fund to better understand and evaluate pathways from investment to strategic impact.
- **Utility and use of the PCEs:** the extent to which the PCEs have been useful for improving programs at a country level, added value in contrast to other mechanisms, provided useful inputs to inform the Global Fund's business model and have contributed to building country capacity.
- **Enabling and constraining factors:** to analyse why PCEs have achieved or not their objectives and factors influencing implementation, quality, and usefulness of the PCE products and process.

The evaluation will be used to identify lessons learned to inform the Global Fund's approach to country level evaluation and how this is used to inform Global Fund policies and processes going forward as well as providing accountability regarding the PCE investment.

Evaluation background and context

Background to the PCEs

In 2016, the Global Fund Board[10] endorsed the decision for the Global Fund Technical Reference Group (TERG) to be allocated $22 million to implement the PCEs for a three-year period[11], as part of its mandate to provide comprehensive assessment of the implementation and the impact of the Global Fund Strategy 2017-22 "Investing to End Epidemics". The PCEs were based upon the design of the Gavi Full Country Evaluations which ran from 2014-17 and which aimed to take a prospective approach enabling collection of information in real-time allowing key issues to be identified as they arise, including equity issues, and enabling course corrective action.

The PCEs were intended to provide in-depth, prospective country level evaluation and to generate evidence regarding the effectiveness and impact of the implementation of Global Fund supported programs in the eight selected countries. PCEs were expected to establish

---

[9] Cambodia, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Guatemala, Mozambique, Myanmar, Senegal, Sudan, Uganda

[10] Global Fund, Report of the Technical Evaluation reference Group, 38th Board Meeting, November 2017

[11] The initiative was subsequently extended for a fourth year and the budget raised to $28 million. The current funding, initially ending in March 2021, has been extended to the end of June 2021.

evaluation and learning platforms that supported dynamic, continuous monitoring and evaluation, learning, and problem solving, and add value to, but not duplicate existing M&E mechanisms.

The PCEs were implemented by two global consulting partners[12] selected through competitive tender, who then subcontracted eight country evaluation partners. Management support to the PCE process was provided by the TERG Secretariat, with oversight from the TERG. At a country level, high-level, in-country advisory groups were formed to provide guidance, facilitate data access, and maximize the use of PCE recommendations.

For the first two years, the focus on the PCEs was on funding requests and grant making processes[13] and the Global Fund Business model[14], whereas in 2019, the scope was narrowed for the PCE to undertake "deep dive" approaches[15] on specific issues for each country embedded within a wider contribution analysis methodology which considered the contribution of the whole grant to national program outcomes. In 2020, the focus moved to examine the entirety of the grant cycle, from funding request to (almost) closure, looking through all of NFM2 and into the NFM3 funding request processes, through the lens of equity of access to services and programmes, as well as components of RSSH, and STC investments to improve understanding of some of the drivers underlying grant revisions.[16]

The PCE Charter[17] sets out the responsibilities, accountabilities and which stakeholders should be consulted and informed regarding the various steps of the PCE implementation in detail for the TERG, TERG Secretariat, GEP, CEP and the Global Fund Secretariat.

- The key responsibilities and accountabilities for the TERG pertain to the procurement and selection of consortium contractors, the approval of the PCE Charter, the approval of the inception report, the endorsement of findings, accountability for determining how to communicate country strategic recommendations, and strategic recommendations. For the TERG Secretariat, the responsibilities and accountabilities are largely in similar domains, with the addition of responsibility for monitoring PCE implementation.

- For the GEPs, the responsibilities and accountabilities include the submission of an inception report, designing evaluation and learning platforms, creating evaluation platforms, training, development of ToC and evaluation questions (and data collection tools, evidence matrices), disbursing funds to CEPs, quarterly updates, monitoring PCE implementation, coordination across the eight countries, capacity development, in-country-review and portfolio analysis, country findings and recommendations, annual country evaluation reports, strategic country recommendations, annual dissemination meetings in countries, annual cross-cutting synthesis reports, cross-country learning and strategic recommendations.

- For the CEPs, the responsibilities and accountabilities are with regards to designing and creating evaluation and learning platforms, in-country adaptation of ToC and evaluation questions, the acceptance of the approach and methodology by country actors, quarterly updates, producing findings, in-country review and portfolio analysis, country operational and strategic recommendations, annual country evaluation reports, and annual in-country dissemination.

- Lastly, the responsibilities and accountabilities for the Global Fund Secretariat are with regards to the signature of contracts with global evaluators, and disbursing funds to global evaluators.

---

[12] Initially three but Johns Hopkins University's involvement ended in early 2019.
[13] Global Fund, Update from the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, 39th Board Meeting, May 2018
[14] Global Fund, Summary Report, 37th TERG Meeting, January 2019
[15] Ibid.
[16] Global Fund, Report, 40th TERG Meeting, February 2020
[17] Global Fund, PCE Charter, May 2019

The PCE Charter also sets out the PCE governance structure, which is built around four streams, the TERG, the Global Fund Secretariat, the PCE implementers (Global Evaluation and Country Evaluation Partners), and the Country Actors. The TERG acts as the Steering Committee for the PCE, supported by the TERG Secretariat. As the model evolved, it was decided that two TERG focal persons would be assigned to each PCE country to provide closer oversight and represent the TERG to facilitate timely decision-making, to guide PCE implementation, review and advise on methodology, to address and resolve country-specific issues as they arise and to promote learning of PCE recommendations and dissemination strategy.

Figure 1: PCE Governance Structure
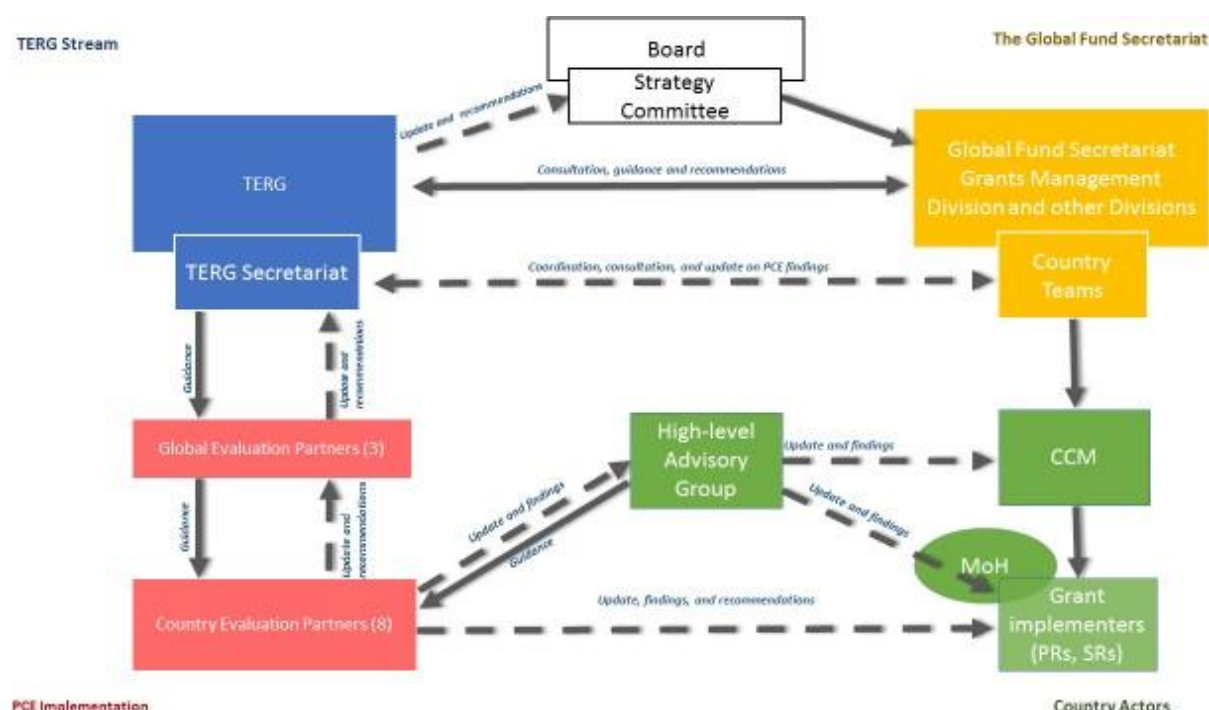
Evaluation context

In understanding what would be most useful from this evaluation, the feedback received from the TERG was that it would be useful to have a deliberately forward-looking approach which identifies options and alternatives for moving ahead with a country evaluation platform, on the assumption that the current model will need to evolve. In addressing this need and coming up with sensible recommendations, we have sought to assess the PCE's strengths and weaknesses relative to alternative tools and approaches.

The Global Fund's ongoing work/review of its overall approach to monitoring and evaluation is also relevant. The work of the TERG, and within that the PCEs, is only one element within a range of different tools, which vary in coverage, independence, timeliness, and cost. Information and evidence would typically come, in any large organisation, from a range of sources including operational evaluation, independent evaluation, day-to-day monitoring and reviews of business processes, audit etc. It would make sense to situate findings in the PCE in the context of this evolving thinking, which was not yet complete at the time of writing. It may therefore make sense to revisit the findings and recommendations of this evaluation once the wider work on the review of the overall approach to M&E is complete.

Methodology and approach

This evaluation of the Global Fund's PCEs has been undertaken by an independent, external evaluation team. The evaluation team used a mixed-methods approach[18] to collect data which was linked to the key evaluation questions as set out in the evaluation TOR and refined during the inception phase:

- To what extent have the PCEs achieved the expected content and quality of evidence?

- To what extent have the PCEs been useful for improving Global Fund programs at a country level?

- To what extent have the PCEs been useful for providing inputs to improve the Global Fund business model?

- What factors influenced the quality and the usefulness of the PCEs findings?

- What are the lessons learned?

In the inception phase, the evaluation team developed an evaluation matrix, which set out the evaluation questions, sub questions and data sources and stakeholder groups relevant to each question.[19] This was used to frame the analysis and development of the evaluation report.

Findings for this evaluation were derived from two main evidence sources: interviews with key stakeholders and a review of key documents, including PCE reports, TERG meeting minutes, PCE guidance documents and examples of communications relating to the PCEs.

The evaluation team conducted interviews with over 150 key informants from the Global Fund Secretariat, the TERG, the Global Fund Strategy Committee, the GEPs, each of the eight CEPs and a range of stakeholder groups in each of the eight countries. Over 70 of the key informants were country stakeholders, although relatively fewer in Myanmar, Senegal, and Sudan. The sample of stakeholders interviewed was identified using a purposive sampling approach following a stakeholder analysis undertaken in the inception phase.

Table 2: Stakeholders interviewed by stakeholder group

Number of stakeholders interviewed	
TERG	12[20]
Global Fund Governance (Strategy Committee, Board, Technical Review Panel)	11
OIG	2
Global Fund Secretariat	21
TERG Secretariat	4
Global evaluation partners	9
Country evaluation partners	8 teams
Country Stakeholders	DRC: 11 Cambodia: 15

---

[18] Further detail on the methodology can be found in the inception report.
[19] See Annex 3 for further details.
[20] Current and former TERG members

Number of stakeholders interviewed	
	Guatemala:12
	Mozambique:10
	Myanmar: 8
	Senegal: 5
	Sudan: 4
	Uganda: 12
Global partners	2
Donors	1

The full list of documents reviewed by the evaluators is included in Annex 4. Documents were prioritized in terms of relevance and importance, with the most critical reports being reviewed by at least two team members and coded using MaxQDA. In addition, a sample including all PCE global synthesis reports and all country reports from 4 of the 8 PCE countries (selected to include a representative sample across the 3 original GEPs) were subject to additional in-depth quality review using a standard evaluation frame, with the combined sample then used to triangulate findings in the Content and Quality section.

The evaluation team synthesized both interview and documentary data through a series of team meetings where emerging findings were discussed and tested, as well as through the thematic coding of findings using MaxQDA. These regular team analysis meetings enabled the team to cross-reference findings across countries, stakeholders, stakeholder groups and from documentary review. To ensure sufficient triangulation of evidence and robustness of evidence, the evaluation developed and applied a 'Strength of Evidence' framework, defining findings as Very strong, Strong, Moderate or Narrow.[21] Having applied this framework, the evaluation team established that all of the findings included in this report are Very strong, Strong, or Moderate, with the exception of the following three points which were rated as Narrow:

- Reported adjustments of PCE country reports in one country that are alleged to have downplayed improper use of Global Fund resources.
- Lack of evidence on the use of programmatic best practices identified in PCEs across PCE countries or non-PCE countries.
- Reported influence of the PCE on the discontinuation of the 'Tailored for Material Change' application approach.

Preliminary findings were presented to the TERG ahead of the drafting of this report. The recommendations have been developed and refined following discussion workshops with the Evaluation Steering Committee, TERG members and the Global Fund Secretariat. The report has been finalised after receipt of comments from the TERG, the Global Fund Secretariat, GEPs and CEPs.

The independence of this evaluation was discussed with the independent Steering Committee chair at an early stage to mitigate the acknowledged risks of the conflict of interest that arises from members of the TERG being involved in commissioning, commenting on and steering the evaluation of the PCE.

---

[21] The full criteria for strength of evidence are set out in Annex 6.

Limitations

The principal limitation affecting this evaluation relates to its timing. The limited timeframe for the evaluation[22] has meant that it has not been possible to reach all intended stakeholders for interview given scheduling challenges, nor was it possible to undertake follow-up interviews for further validation of specific findings. The evaluation was undertaken precisely at the moment when many country stakeholders were in the middle of developing grant proposals for imminent submission to the Global Fund, resulting in further limits in their availability.

Additionally, Sudan was withdrawn from the PCE process at the end of 2020, so that the evaluation team had challenges in engaging national stakeholders there and only 4 out of the intended 7-9 interviews per country were completed. This has meant that there are limited perspectives from Sudan in the evaluation findings. In the case of Myanmar, the evaluation team were unable to interview government stakeholders given the current political context there.

The limited timeframe of this evaluation has also meant that there has been suboptimal time available for data analysis and validation of findings (i.e., country debriefs, validation of themes with different stakeholder groups). However, as outlined above, a 'Strength of Evidence' framework has been applied to ensure the robustness of findings by examination of the number of stakeholders and stakeholder groups purporting a specific view. Comments from interviewees who informed the evaluation team they had insufficient knowledge to answer a particular question were omitted. However, the evaluation team were unable to go further than this in terms of weighing the strength of evidence against the length of an individual's engagement in the PCE or the capacity in which they had been engaged as, for ethical reasons, it would not have been appropriate to privilege certain respondent groups over others. The comments and feedback on the draft report received from different stakeholder groups were also analysed, with those raised by a wider range of relevant stakeholder categories given more weight than those only flagged by a small number or narrow set of stakeholders. Additionally, sampling (in terms of stakeholder groups and number/designation of individuals in each) was signed off by the TERG in the inception phase with input from CEPs and Global Fund Country Teams so as to ensure that those stakeholders most familiar with the PCE process might be included in this evaluation process.

A broader limitation which has not affected the evaluation process itself, but the framing of the evaluation recommendations, is that the TERG has already made the decision to bring the PCE in its present form to an end at the end of June 2021. The Global Fund is also currently developing (through a parallel consultation process) a comprehensive monitoring and evaluation framework which includes the function and form of independent evaluation, although the framework is not yet available for review. As such, recommendations for this evaluation need to be clearly derived from the findings of this evaluation, but also need to reflect this wider context. This evaluation will feed into the development of this review, particularly with regards to the future of independent evaluation and country-based/led evaluation.

Despite these limitations, the degree of consistency in the feedback received on most findings means that we do not believe that these limitations have significantly impacted on the robustness and quality of the evaluation findings. Where evidence is contradictory or different stakeholder groups had widely divergent perspectives, this is noted in the report.

---

[22] 7 weeks overall with 3 weeks data collection

Findings

PCE purpose and design

This section of the report presents findings regarding the PCE purpose and design. We explore the PCE original purpose and design as well as changes in the design and methodology as described by the different stakeholders and in relevant documentation.

The PCEs were designed to be in-depth, country-level, prospective[23] evaluations that utilize a variety of methods to provide a detailed picture of the implementation, effectiveness, and impact of Global Fund-supported programs across eight countries[24]. Their goal was to generate evidence on the ongoing program implementation and inform both global, regional, and in-country stakeholders to accelerate the progress towards the strategic objectives of the Global Fund.

The initial goal, objectives and expected results of the PCE were set out in the RFP issued in November 2016. These were outlined again with some amendments in the PCE Charter which followed in May 2017, which also contained a separate list of expected benefits and measures of success. The PCE objectives continued to evolve over the course of the PCE as learning about the process has advanced.

---

[23] The evaluation team observed in interviews that there was not a single, shared understanding between stakeholders of what 'prospective' meant in terms of the PCEs. When we assess the extent to which the PCEs are 'prospective' throughout this evaluation, we are using the definition as outlined in the PCE Charter "Providing real time information to allow countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust programmatic and administrative practice in order to increase the impact of Global Fund and national investments in health and the three diseases". PCE Charter, May 2017

[24] PCE Charter, May 2017

Table 3: Review of PCE objectives, measures of success for the objectives, and the evolution in the objectives over time

PCE RFP (Request for Proposal)	PCE Charter objectives	PCE Charter Expected benefits / measures of success	Objectives from recent documentation
Examining the pathways between Global Fund investment and impact at country level and assessing impact on measurable outcomes for the three diseases, including the Global Fund contribution	Assess the extent to which the Global Fund contributes to impact		• In 2018 and 2019, the PCEs were asked to integrate process and impact work; ongoing grant and business model tracking; deep dives using a results chain approach; impact modelling; and synthesis within country – across grants. Grant tracking was to understand how the business model affects implementation at country level[25,26]. • In 2020, the TERG revised the scope of the PCE to examine the entirety of the grant cycle, from funding request to (almost) closure, through the lens of equity of access to services and programmes, as well as components of RSSH, and STC investments. The PCE were to analyze how grants have been changed throughout the course of the grant cycle, what content has changed, why and when the changes were made. The purpose was to try to understand some of the drivers underlying grant revisions[27]
Facilitating continuous improvement and learning lessons that can improve the Global Fund model.	Provide ongoing feedback enabling countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust program implementation in real time.	Independent assurance of strategy (all SOs) and business model effectiveness	No documented revisions.

---

[25] Global Fund, 36th TERG meeting notes, September 2019
[26] Global Fund, 38th TERG meeting notes, September 2019
[27] Global Fund, 39th TERG meeting notes, September 2019

PCE RFP (Request for Proposal)	PCE Charter objectives	PCE Charter Expected benefits / measures of success	Objectives from recent documentation
Providing real time information to allow countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust programmatic and administrative practice in order to increase the impact of Global Fund and national investments in health and the three diseases.		Continuous data and program quality improvement, testing of innovations	No specific revisions were documented. However, in the 39th TERG meeting, TERG members asked that the prospective aspect of the PCE should be used more suggesting that this aspect had not been a core focus.
Assessing fulfilment of the Global Fund strategic objectives including how Global Fund policies and practices as applied at country level facilitate, or impede, impact	Analyze implementation and degree of accomplishment of Global Fund Strategic Objectives, with a particular focus on Global Fund policies and practices; RSSH; and gender and human rights.		The scope of this objective widened when the TERG asked to see more of the 'whole picture' i.e. the overall effect on the national program in terms of contribution to national results frameworks as opposed to just the Global Fund funds and policies, RSSH and gender &The TERG understands this is usually presented as part of the synthesis report but should also be part of the country level analysis.
Identifying outstanding risk and challenges to inform and improve program quality and Global Fund grant implementation for maximum impact, effectiveness, and value-for-money.	Identify risks and challenges that impede program performance, and opportunities to inform and improve program quality for impact, effectiveness, and value-for-money	Identification of risks, issues and challenges; development, follow-through and assessment of potential solutions Lessons learned for application more broadly across the Global Fund portfolio to further improve program quality and maximize impact	No documented revision
Strengthening country monitoring **and evaluation systems**	Strengthen country M&E systems for robust measurement	Timely use of better-quality data including detailed	No documented revisions

PCE RFP (Request for Proposal)	PCE Charter objectives	PCE Charter Expected benefits / measures of success	Objectives from recent documentation
		mapping of data sources and plans	
Establishing country platforms that support dynamic, continuous monitoring and evaluation, learning, and problem solving	Develop country capacity for evaluation to improve program implementation	Development of country capacity in M&E to improve program implementation

Strengthened country ownership and partnership that are inclusive for the above | There was no documented revision to this however, interviews with a range of stakeholders (including GEPs, TERG, CEPs and the Global Fund Secretariat) felt that this objective had been deprioritized over the course of the PCEs. |
| Identifying and disseminating best practices that can improve the Global Fund model. | Identify and disseminate best practices to improve the Global Fund model | Refinement of evaluation approaches for, and possibly beyond, the Global Fund

Independent assurance of strategy (all SOs) and business model effectiveness | The scope of dissemination was widened when the TERG asked that PCE findings and analysis be disseminated to a broader audience to ensure that PCE results inform and influence programme and policy[28]. |

---

[28] Global Fund, 39th TERG meeting notes, September 2019

For the purposes of this evaluation, the objectives as defined in the PCE Charter of May 2017 are taken as the starting point against which achievements were assessed (unless otherwise noted). This reflects the fact that there were changes between the RFP phase and the actual launch of the PCE process once the GEPs and CEPs had been selected. The PCE Charter expected benefits/measures of success are also considered however they do not cover several of the key objectives (see Table 3 above). Finally, while assessing the PCEs against these starting objectives, our analysis takes into account the explicit changes in emphasis/focus as documented above.

Changes in PCE scope and resultant effects

Not surprisingly, the initial scope of the PCEs was deemed in hindsight as too broad and unrealistic to achieve its various intended purposes by different stakeholders, including the TERG. Documentation in the 36th and 38th TERG meeting reports and interviews with TERG stakeholders demonstrated that the scope of the PCE was narrowed over time because the initial scope was too ambitious. As a result, the focus of the PCEs shifted more to evaluating the programs, keeping the business model in view, rather than the outcomes and impact of Global Fund investments. TERG stakeholders described the changes in scope of the PCE as being an inevitable consequence of learning over time and course correction to the design and methodology were necessary. For instance, during the 36th TERG meeting29 in 2018, the TERG noted that the initial synthesis reports of the PCEs lacked analysis of the components of RSSH. So, the TERG recommended deeper level analysis on RSSH related matters based on the three results chains. This was reiterated in the 38th TERG meeting30 where the TERG decided that the PCEs should conduct deep dives per disease in 2019 in addition to grant tracking with a view of how the business model affects the implementation at the country level.

GEPs also highlighted the challenges the changes to scope and methodology had for the synthesis process. For example, between 2019-21, the EHG/UCSF design incorporated deep dives within a wider results chain quantitative 'impact assessment' as well as within a contribution analysis whole grant approach. The IHME/PATH consortia took a different approach, much more focused on deep dives/focus topics. When it came to the synthesis process, of essentially synthesizing two different processes, GEPs outlined that at times some of the depth of analysis was lost.

At times for GEPs and CEPs stakeholders, it seemed that these differences between the consortia were not fully understood by the TERG. Additionally, it was indicated in interviews that there was not always a shared understanding between GEPs/CEPs and the TERG as to PCE scope. CEPs and GEPs reported that they would prepare an analysis based on their understanding of TERG requirements but that when they came to present it at the TERG, they would be asked for something different, and at times, given contradictory guidance from their TERG focal points to what was instructed by the TERG. Evidence from TERG documents also acknowledges that the changes were confusing, noting that that the biggest implication of the changes was "considerable confusion and effort on the part of the CEPs and GEPs to operationalize the result chains alongside the theory-based approaches."

At a country level, PRs and SRs reported that the lack of clarity on roles and purpose of the PCEs affected the perception about the PCEs, and sometimes caused duplication of efforts. For instance, in two countries, the PCEs were reportedly perceived as causing extra work for the PRs and SRs and being a burden to the system.

The PCE teams were also in some cases contracted to do additional evaluations that were not part of the initial PCE mandate. For instance, in four countries, they were asked to do

---

[29] Global Fund, 36th TERG meeting notes, September 2018
[30] Global Fund, 38th TERG meeting notes, April 2019

some TB MDR evaluation. In Myanmar, the PCEs were requested by the Global Fund Country Team to do a specific evaluation with people who inject drugs (PWID) which the Global Fund country team and other national stakeholders found useful. This was considered as a positive change as it demonstrated to the Global Fund country team that the CEPs could be valuable for conducting other Global Fund evaluations.

Not only did the PCE scope change, the PCE teams also changed during the evaluation period. The PCE consortium initially had three GEPs. However, after the first 18 months the TERG decided not to continue with the contract with to Johns Hopkins University (JHU), the GEP for Senegal and Mozambique. In Mozambique, the CEP was supposed to be composed of two institutions, the INS and a University, but the university team was removed and replaced by two consultants working with the INS team. In Sudan, the CEP team had a high turnover rate.

Understanding of PCE purpose

In terms of understanding of the purpose of the PCE, interviews revealed a gap between the description of the PCEs in documentation, at the TERG level and the understanding at country level. The TERG interviewees emphasized that the primary objectives of the PCE was to inform the Global Fund business model and to get an independent idea of how the Global Fund processes work at the country level to help improve country-level programs, policies, and grants. In contrast, a majority of the country level stakeholders (CEPs, PRs, LFAs, CCMs, etc.) and Global Fund Secretariat stakeholders interviewed considered that the purpose of PCEs was predominantly focused on the Global Fund business model, to provide an independent perspective to the TERG and Global Fund Board. Neither of the perspectives fully communicate the documented objectives of the PCE.

For some stakeholder groups at country level, there was a lack of understanding of the mandate of the PCEs. For instance, in two countries most SRs had never heard of the PCE and the few who had heard of the PCEs were not aware of their mandate and functions. Also, LFAs in two countries expressed confusion on the mandate and activities of the PCEs compared to what was being done by the LFAs, such as in the review of program performance through secondary analysis of primary data in country. While this was less common, it shows a general lack of shared understanding of the purpose of the PCE among relevant stakeholders.

As well as diverse understanding of the PCEs' purpose across stakeholder groups, there were diverse audiences for the PCE findings and recommendations as well: the TERG and the SC; the Global Fund Secretariat and country stakeholders. There were also different purposes and audiences for the Annual Country reports and the Global Synthesis reports. It was noted in interviews with various stakeholders that the needs of these different audiences had not been fully mapped out in the PCE design process and that the trade-offs regarding how these varying needs were met were not fully articulated. This, coupled with the numerous and ambitious PCE objectives was a significant challenge for the GEPs and CEPs in terms of their ability to deliver reports that were considered as good quality and useful to serve these diverse purposes.

Country-level Participation in the PCE design

The PCE was conceptualized and designed by the TERG based on the GAVI Full Country Evaluation (FCE) model and approved by the Global Fund Board/Strategy committee. GAVI's experience with the FCEs had demonstrated that a prospective approach to evaluation could enable collection of real-time information, allowing key issues to be identified as they arose and enabling course corrective action. This approach was subsequently adapted by the TERG

for the PCEs[31]. Eight countries were purposefully selected, two[32] of which were countries where GAVI was already conducting FCEs and were selected for collaboration.[33] Initially three Global Evaluation Partners (GEPs) were contracted to conduct the PCEs (IHME/PATH, JHU, and EHG/UCSF/Itad), to be supported by the Country Evaluation Partners (CEPs).

Evidence from various stakeholder groups show that country engagement at the design phase of the PCE (in terms of the design of the implementation model, the selection of countries etc.) was very limited and varied across the countries. The PCE Charter highlighted that the GEPs were to develop a Global ToC and consult with the country stakeholders to agree on country specific ToCs and evaluation questions. However, there is no evidence to suggest that country-level ToCs were developed. Country-level stakeholders (MoH, PRs and SRs) in six countries stated that they were not consulted in the design of the PCEs. Rather, they were informed about the PCEs, after the global objectives and methods had been designed by the GEP and agreed by the TERG. CCMs and PRs in two countries mentioned that the evaluation questions were TERG driven and not really focused on answering the questions that country stakeholders had prioritized in the initial stakeholder consultation meetings organized at the very beginning of the PCEs, and this negatively impacted on country ownership. In addition, in-country partners in one country stated that there was minimal consultation with them on evaluation priorities, so the PCE efforts sometimes duplicated theirs. They also raised concerns about the PCE being similar to the TERG thematic evaluations. LFAs and PRs in three countries also thought the PCEs conducted some work that were similar to the LFA and OIG's work and were unclear of its added value.

Appropriateness of PCE evaluation design and methods

PCE evaluations were designed using a mixed methods approach with the intent that primary qualitative data would be gathered by the CEPs, triangulated with secondary qualitative data generated from other Global Fund actors (PRs, SRs, LFAs) as well as national health data. There were mixed views as to the appropriateness of the PCE methodology. The PCEs were intended to be prospective evaluations, to generate real-time qualitative findings, triangulated with existing quantitative data, to inform programme implementation. However, the majority of the interviewees from different stakeholder groups noted factors inherent to the PCE design which limited the extent to which PCEs were in fact prospective. Key to this was the structure in place to implement the PCEs and the multiple layers of validation and the need for sign-off by the secretariat before findings could be disseminated. This meant that by the time a PCE report had gone through this complex process, the findings were often out of date, or issues identified had already been addressed. While the GEPs were able to ensure a consistent approach to quality and synthesis, and this was essential given the variations in capacity at country level, the fact that findings had to go through several layers before being used impeded fast learning at country level.

GEPs also noted in the first couple of years of the PCE, the TERG was very keen to demonstrate the impact of the Global Fund grants, which was challenging for the CEPs/GEPs to deliver given the data limitations at a country level. This was coupled with slow access for the CEPs to programmatic data and created a challenge in making the qualitative and quantitative data align in a timely way. These delays further reduced the extent to which the PCE findings were prospective and reinforced a frequent narrative from the Global Fund Secretariat that the PCEs were presenting them with findings they were already aware of.

One of the key challenges for the GEPs/CEPs was the tension between designing and delivering evaluation which were aligned to country priorities, considered useful to Global Fund Secretariat Country Teams and which also had enough commonality to enable the synthesis

---

[31] PCE Charter, May 2019

[32] Uganda and Mozambique

[33] Global Fund, 38th Board meeting, November 2017

of evaluation finding. Furthermore, the process of synthesising at global level, which was essential for the independent evaluation objective and to get a view on the business model at a strategic level, in effect removed some of the benefits of the prospective element of the PCE at country level due to the delays mentioned above. Conversely, the lack of flexibility in the methodology was noted as a challenge by CEPs in four countries who highlighted that the TERG and GEP methods were very rigid and not always appropriate for their country contexts. For instance, in Sudan, there were concerns among the CEP and other partners that the methods did not take into account the conflict context in the country.

The findings on the appropriateness of the PCE design and methods are summarized in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Appropriateness of PCE design and methods

	PCE principles[34]	Key Findings	Assessment
1	Country-focused	• The design of PCEs did not facilitate them being country focused. They were overly focused on TERG evaluation priorities and there was minimal country input at the original PCE design phase. • PCEs were designed at the global level and implemented at the country level. Country-specific ToCs were not developed. • Country priorities were somewhat taken into account in the later years via the Deep Dives.	• The implementation of the PCEs differed from their original design which stated that they should be tailored to the country needs and that the country level must inform the global level priorities.
2	Partnership oriented	• Most country stakeholders (MoH, PRs, SRs, LFAs) were not involved in PCE design for their countries and some were not clear on the objectives and roles of the PCEs. This affected buy-in and ownership in many countries. • Global Fund Country teams, PRs, and SRs were engaged for report dissemination and in most cases, they provided feedback on methodology and findings. There were however concerns from the CEPs that the synthesis and country reports were not reflective of the country contexts. In one country, concerns were raised about a perceived conflict of interest of one of the institutions in the CEP as they were also a global fund sub recipient.	• There was a deviation from the design for partnership which states that the CEPs, under the guidance of the GEP, TERG focal points, and country teams were to work with in-country stakeholders to ensure proper introduction and clarity of roles and were to develop country ToCs. • In the case where a CoI was referenced, an (undated) Conflict of Interest Management Plan details the measures taken to manage this risk. It is unclear if/when this was discussed by the TERG. It is however clear that this mitigation plan was not effectively communicated to other country stakeholders.

---

[34] Taken from the PCE Charter

	PCE principles[34]	Key Findings	Assessment
3.	Adding value, not duplicating efforts	• The PCEs were designed to add value to the existing M&E work that was undertaken in countries. However, the majority of the stakeholders at the country level (FPM, LFAs, PRs, SRs, CCMs) across most countries and a number of the Global Fund Secretariat teams expressed the view that the PCE mostly duplicated existing efforts. For instance, LFAs interviewed highlighted that in some instances, the research questions of the PCEs were similar to their own areas of enquiry and often generated similar findings to those of the LFAs, TERG thematic reviews, and even reviews by other partners. This was attributed to the lack of clarity on the scope and methods of the PCE from inception, as well as the fact that different instruments are used within the Global Fund to deliver findings to different audiences.	• According to the PCE charter, the PCE teams were expected to build on and add value to existing work by improving coordination and partnerships while avoiding duplication of efforts. Some of the PCE objectives however were similar to those of the countries' existing M&E structures leading to perceptions that there was duplication.
4	Prospective approach and continuous improvement	• The consensus among all stakeholders was that the PCEs were not prospective. Findings were retrospective and this was due to the nature of PCE design. The process of collecting, analyzing, and validating information took time and the reports came in too late for the country to use.	• The design was better suited for retrospective evaluations • A delay in the development of the ToC further caused a limitation for the prospective approach to the evaluation. • An additional cause was the complex layers of validation and quality assurance of PCE findings as well as their delayed dissemination.
5	Flexibility	• CEPs in most countries expressed that the methodology developed by the GEPs and agreed by the TERG was not flexible and was sometimes ill-suited for certain country contexts, such as those with conflicts and high level of insecurity. • Conversely the GEPs faced the challenge of trying to enable a country-led process, whilst needing to synthesize across consortia, across countries, across themes.	• The PCEs were to be implemented to cover an agreed framework but with some flexibility to address unanticipated issues beyond the framework. However, the GEPs instituted an approach of using a common framework for all countries, all of whom had different contexts was quite rigid and affected the PCE findings.

PCE Content and quality

This section of the report looks at the extent to which the PCEs generated the expected content and quality of evidence to inform the various PCE objectives. The analysis presented in this section is based on (i) the evaluation team's independent review of the quality of the synthesis and country reports and (ii) different stakeholders' perceptions of the quality of reports. It must be acknowledged as well that stakeholders' perceptions of quality are very interlinked with whether and how they can use PCE reports and as such, a number of the issues highlighted by stakeholders regarding as to whether reports are of expected quality are detailed under the 'Impact and Use' section.

Evaluation team assessment of the quality of synthesis reports

It is important to note that the evaluation team has not undertaken a formal quality assurance exercise of each of the PCE synthesis reports, which was beyond the scope of the evaluation. Additionally, whilst the country reports were quality assured by the GEPs and each consortia had internal QA mechanisms for its deliverables and reports were commented on by TERG, TERG Secretariat and the Global Fund Secretariat, there are no formal quality Assurance assessments applied to PCE reports by the TERG[35] which the evaluation team could use to understand how quality of reports was understood and measured or changed over time. We have therefore considered each of the synthesis reports in relation a number of the areas considered in quality assessments of evaluations conducted by other multilateral organisations in terms of the quality of the structure and style, purpose and scope, methods, findings and recommendations.

---

[35] Such as the Gavi Evaluation Quality Assurance tool designed by IOD PARC whereby all evaluations are quality assured and scored against a specific set of criteria with qualitative feedback on strengths and improvements provided.

Table 5: Quality assessment of PCE Global Synthesis Reports

	General observations
Style and structure	Across all four synthesis reports, the presentation of findings seems solid, with a mix of evidence sources provided, a mix of quantitative and qualitative data, and some good use of charts/graphics. Overall, the quality of the writing was high, and reports are professionally presented/formatted. Reports vary in length from 37-48 pages.
Purpose and scope	The purpose and scope of the PCEs has evolved considerably and dynamically over the course of the four synthesis reports. For 2018, the research agenda is clearly the TERG's agenda – this aligns very closely with the overall PCE objectives, although there is almost no evidence of any country-priorities reflected in research priorities. For the 2019 report, the objectives of the PCE are already expressed in a modified manner, with no discussion of capacity building, and very little emphasis on country priorities. Real-time, or continuous programmatic improvement remains an explicit objective. The 2020 report presents synthesis findings in three main results chapters, structured around three of the four Global Fund Strategic Objectives, following the grants in a prospective manner through the second year of grant implementation (except for Guatemala where the new malaria and TB grants launched during 2019). It also focused particularly on independent validation of Global Fund value for money as well as implementation of various grant revision processes. For 2021, the focus shifts to look at specific cross-cutting issues in more detail e.g., RSSH, equity, as well as looking at whether lessons learned have been applied. Capacity building is not highlighted. Strong focus on business model as opposed to implementation. From a quality perspective, the evolution in scope seems relevant to the learning gathered over the course of the PCE process in terms of what was useful to the TERG and what was feasible with the data available. The fact that the scopes of the four reports are so different limits the ability to look at the report as showing progress in particular areas over the four years as they are so different.

Methodology	Overall, the quality of the methodology for these synthesis reports is appropriate and justified to the requirements of the scope as they have evolved over the four years. There is some improvement in triangulation of findings from year 2 onwards, but this is to be expected given that year 1 was mostly the inception year and overwhelmingly reliant on documentary review.
	In the 2018 report, the breadth and variety of global cross-cutting questions seems excessive, showing some lack of prioritization. The report states that research questions were developed and agreed upon with Country and Global Fund stakeholders, but this also seems inconsistent with feedback from our interviews regarding a TERG driven agenda. Already from year 1, concerns are raised about the 'real-time' or 'prospective' aspect of the evaluation. The report's own limitations section suggests that many of the challenges observed across the 4-year PCE process were already evident at the end of the first year.
	For the 2019 report, a mixed-methods approach is used with more primary, qualitative data gathered. The strength of evidence ranking table seems quite comprehensive and shows variable levels of evidence across countries. There is a limitations annex that outlines fairly comprehensively the data challenges encountered in trying to answer some of the TERG-driven questions at country level. This is insightful and potentially useful, although its inclusion as an annex might have limited the extent to which this content was used.
	The 2020 report includes new analyses using a health system modelling (HSM) approach to examine how Global Fund inputs contribute to national program outputs, and how these outputs then lead to impact. Process tracing, root cause analysis and contribution analysis were also used to ascertain what, when and how efficiently grants were being operationalized, the extent to which the Global Fund business model was helping or hindering grant implementation, and the ways in which grants contributed to national program outcomes and Global Fund strategic objectives (SO1-3).
	For the 2021 report, the PCE conducted detailed financial analyses of Global Fund budgets throughout the grant cycle for NFM2 grants as well as available budgets from funding requests to grant making during NFM3. Budgets were analysed by recipient, disease, module, intervention, and focus topic. Observed changes in financial resources and prioritization between activities were triangulated using qualitative data collected during KIIs, document review, and additional interviews. Using the Global Fund's modular framework, the PCE tracked resources for RSSH and human rights, gender, and other equity (HRG-Equity) related interventions. HRG-Equity modules and interventions were identified using Global Fund's disease-specific technical briefs on gender, human rights, and key populations; gender technical briefs; and validated through conversations with the Global Fund Secretariat's Community, Rights and Gender (CRG) team.
Findings	The evaluation team finds that there has been a clear improvement in the quality of findings of the synthesis reports over time. In the 2018 report, many of the key findings do seem to fall into the category of things that were already widely known with a lack of specificity (e.g., *Evidence suggested country stakeholders associated Global Fund application processes, irrespective of type of funding request adopted – program continuation, tailored review or full review – with substantial transaction costs.*). The findings from 2019 onwards are more specific. The 2019 report has a limitations annex that outlines fairly comprehensively the data challenges encountered in trying to answer some of the TERG-driven questions at country level. It also has a strength of evidence ranking table which seems comprehensive and shows variable levels of evidence across countries. This suggests that findings were developed through a robust process of triangulated between different evidence sources. Findings in the 2020 report are presented with key messages which aids the reader and the recommendations relevant to each are presented alongside the findings, demonstrating a clear conceptual link

	between findings and recommendations. There are useful vignettes and findings specific to the three diseases. The report has a chapter on *Use of findings and added value of the PCE platform,* which is particularly useful given that the Global Fund itself does not have a mechanism to monitor the implementation and use of PCE findings. The findings in the 2021 report are visually engaging and there is detailed, explicit analysis on RSSH and human rights, gender and equity. The report has a chapter on how the grant design process was informed by lessons from NFM2, NFM3-specific elements of the business model, and new information and policy to determine grant priorities, budget allocation and performance framework elements. This analysis of looking 'over the grant cycle' was seen as particularly useful by stakeholders.
Recommendations	Overall, the quality of recommendations has improved. The 2018 recommendations are somewhat generic and vague, for example: "we suggest that the review and grant-making processes of program continuation and tailored review, as well as catalytic funding and Matching Funds strategies may benefit from further review." In the 2019 report, there was no section in this report to discuss follow-up of the previous year's recommendations; this underlines the lack of accountability mechanisms that has come up in several interviews. Whereas many of the 2018 recommendations were generic, the recommendations in 2019 and onwards were more specific and actionable. This was also the case for the 2020 and 2021 reports, where recommendations were also targeted to particular stakeholder groups. It is notable that there was significant repetition and continuity in the recommendations across the reports over the four-year period, highlighting the lack of appropriate accountability mechanisms to address findings and recommendations in a timely manner.

Stakeholder perceptions of report content and quality

Improvement in quality over time: A number of stakeholders from various stakeholder groups highlighted an upward trajectory in perceptions of the quality of PCE reports over time. Earlier on in the process, synthesis reports were noted by TERG members as being overly long and of being quite dense with poor readability of key findings, whereas more recent synthesis reports contained useful summary boxes to present key findings. This improvement in quality over time was attributed to the fact that it took the PCE teams most of the first year of the PCEs to understand the Global Fund business mode. This was due to the complexities of the Global Fund business model and the increased clarity and guidance from the TERG regarding expectations. There was also an impression from across stakeholder groups that the move to a Deep Dive approach had helped to improve report quality by giving increased focus to analysis.

Methodology and data collection process: One of the factors affecting the perception of the PCE report quality was who the CEP teams engaged in data collection, and how accurately their views were reflected. In one country, a Global Fund partner leading the work on a disease area outlined that they had not been consulted in the PCE data collection; although their data was used in PCE reports and they felt misrepresented. When they tried to address this, they felt the reaction from the CEP was very defensive. Interviews with a number of stakeholders from both the Global Fund Secretariat and country stakeholders highlighted concerns around who was engaged as respondents for PCE's qualitative data collection; in some cases, this was perceived as leading to bias in the findings generated as, with a small interviewee sample, findings could become skewed to a particular viewpoint. A minority of stakeholders also reported having been interviewed for the PCEs but found that their perspectives were not then included in the subsequent analysis at either global or country level.

It was also mentioned in relation to two countries that SRs and key vulnerable populations were not sufficiently engaged, or their voices represented in the PCE process. In one example, KVPs shared that they had provided detailed critiques of the Global Fund's business model, human rights approach, and poor treatment of SRs (particularly those predominantly staffed by and serving KVPs). Our review of the PCE reports in that country suggests that while some of the issues were mentioned and a number of recommendations included, the degree of urgency and the specificity of the critiques of the Global Fund business model and practices were not well reflected in either global synthesis or the relevant country reports. Our review is not in a position to ascertain the validity of the proposed critiques, nor whether the decision not to include them in the reports was deliberate or unintentional, appropriate, or inappropriate. Findings presented in PCE reports in relation to three countries were mentioned by Global Fund Secretariat and country stakeholders as not having been sufficiently triangulated.

Many stakeholders acknowledged that most data used in the PCEs were generated by and known to country-level stakeholders, either because they were the primary respondents in data collection or because secondary data were generated from the country's own data systems. The majority of Global Fund Secretariat saw little value-added in the additional data generated by PCEs, as it was highlighting issues, they either had advanced sight of (through LFA reports) or were already aware of. However, TERG and Global Fund Strategy Committee interviewees observed that whilst these issues may have been well-known by the Global Fund Country Teams, they were not necessarily well communicated beyond the Secretariat and that the PCEs served to raise these issues more widely within the Global Fund. In some countries, country stakeholders who had been involved in other Global Fund evaluation processes highlighted that there was some similarity between the research questions which brought into question for them the efficiency of how data was collected and used across the various Global Fund mechanisms.

Validation and quality assurance of findings: Global Fund Secretariat stakeholders were by far the most critical group in terms of their perception of the PCE report quality. The majority of the Global Fund Country Team stakeholders interviewed outlined that they had often had to

make extensive revisions and commentary on PCE reports, to the point that some felt they were rewriting them. It was also noted in at least two countries and by the Global Fund Secretariat (including both country team staff and more broadly) that they were usually given unreasonably short deadlines to review long reports.

The GEPs were tasked with quality assurance of PCE reports; although the evaluation team did not identify any specific quality assurance process or mechanism used to ensure consistency across countries or between the two consortia. One of the challenges mentioned repeatedly in terms of report quality was the time frames for report commenting and finalisation processes. These were often very pressurised, with little time for country stakeholder feedback into reports before they were sent to the TERG. In a few cases, this was noted as causing inaccurate findings in a report.

In one country, the CEP submitted findings which were quite critical and pointed towards both misallocation and misuse of Global Fund financing. The CEP felt that in the report revision process they were pressured to omit or water these findings down which they felt affected the quality and veracity of the evidence presented. It was also felt that this resulted in a missed opportunity for the Global Fund to formally raise the issue of financial transparency and accountability with the government.

Quality of recommendations: Perceptions of the quality and usefulness of recommendations were mixed across countries and stakeholder groups. In some cases, and particularly in the early part of the PCE process, recommendations were thought to be too many, and demonstrated the nascent understanding of a number of the CEPs of the Global Fund business model in that some were not suitably contextualised or implementable. One country stakeholder commented that recommendations could have been more usefully framed and timed around new funding requests so as to maximise their impact.

In four countries, country level stakeholders outlined that the PCE reports had provided useful recommendations, which were suitably specific so as to add value to the work regarding the three diseases, whilst also addressing broader HSS concerns. In another country example, a stakeholder highlighted the utility of some of the broad, cross-cutting recommendations made, highlighting that there was already a lot of information available regarding disease areas but what was often missing was examination of the broader issues affecting programme implementation, for example, program management, human resources, data management, and other cross-cutting issues which were harder to measure than the 'hard' outputs.

Contextualization of findings: In several countries, and in the majority of interviews with the Global Fund Country teams and the Secretariat, issues were highlighted on the need to adapt findings to country context. The CEP knowledge of local context should have supported the contextualisation of findings but CEP stakeholders in three countries reported that the reports they sent to GEPs were at times altered quite significantly by the GEP and that the revised findings and recommendations did not always take into account political sensitivities in a country so as to enable them to 'land well' with government stakeholders. In another country, it was highlighted that the recommendations did not take into account the country context in terms of the available capacity and resources to implement recommendations.

Quality/Capacity of the CEP: One of the factors affecting country stakeholder perception of quality was the experience and standing of the CEP team; in three countries, the reputation and standing of the CEP team and lead were described as having played an important role with regards to whether reports are viewed as quality. Contrastingly though, in two countries, stakeholders referenced the lack of seniority of the CEP team in terms of their ability to engage effectively with government representatives and senior actors within the health sector.

PCE use and impact

This section outlines the level of use of PCE findings and recommendations by different stakeholder groups / audiences and assesses their potential impacts. There were a wide range of different perspectives on this topic, with some stakeholders and documents describing the PCEs as highly useful and impactful while others could not cite examples where PCEs were felt to have influenced planning, policy, or implementation. We highlight those differences in perspectives both between and within stakeholder categories, seeking where possible to triangulate between different sources of information. This section is divided by the principal potential users of PCEs as originally envisaged in their design, namely (i) those involved in the design and implementation of Global Fund programs or grants at country level (in both PCE and non-PCE countries); (ii) other country-level stakeholders including Ministry of Health disease teams and other in-country donors or organizations; (iii) Strategic/global use of PCE findings by different teams within the Global Fund Secretariat, the TERG, and the Strategy Committee and Board.

Assessing the balance of evidence in the section below, *the overall finding is that despite numerous positive examples of PCE use and impact, there* was *clearly greater weight of evidence towards the negative side in the user experience of impact, and a significant missed opportunity to have obtained greater use and impact at all levels through greater weight to country evaluation priorities, more timely results dissemination, and more proactive follow up backed by accountability at the country level.*

Impact and use in Global Fund grants

This assessment of the PCE use and impact by actors involved in the design and delivery of Global Fund grants at country level is divided into two sections: impact and use in the 8 PCE countries, and impact and use in other non-PCE countries. In each case, the starting point is the proposed objectives as contained in the original PCE TOR, with additional issues and cases beyond those objectives also addressed.

Table 6 below summarizes the findings at a macro-level, with further detailed discussion in the paragraphs that follow. This primarily relates to the use of PCE results by SRs, PRs, and LFAs; by the CCMs; and by FPMs – those most directly involved in the design, delivery, and oversight of Global Fund grants at country level.

Table 6: Summary of Findings Against Country-Level Objectives with Examples

#	PCE country-level objectives	Summary of findings	Illustrative examples[36]
1	Strengthen country M&E systems for robust measurement	• In most cases, the PCEs did not improve the quality of the data used by Global Fund programs because PCE teams relied primarily on secondary data (with the exception of qualitative interviews and observations) that was often sourced from the Global Fund programs and/or MoH systems. • In a limited number of cases, analyses by PCEs highlighted data quality issues, though there are different perspectives on whether this was a value-add or if the issues were already widely known.	• In at least 5 countries, Global Fund secretariat and country stakeholders including PRs, SRs, LFAs, and MoH partners specifically mentioned that PCEs relied on quantitative data largely provided from PRs, SRs, and LFAs. • In at least one country, ministry of health, secretariat, and PR/SR stakeholders and the country PCE report confirm that MoH data used for analysis was unreliable and out-of-date, limiting the usefulness of the analysis. • Almost all of the PCE synthesis reports highlighted the lack of reliable country data as a major constraining factor of the PCEs; the 2018 synthesis report specifically mentioned the negative impacts of the lack of budget for primary data collection.[37] • In Myanmar, virtually all stakeholders interviewed praised the CEP's practice of regularly convening all Global Fund supported program managers and implementers as well as other development partners to validate data, findings and analysis on the three diseases.
2	Identify risks and challenges that impede program performance, and opportunities to inform and improve program quality for impact,	• PCE findings were used to adjust project policies, practices, and allocations when findings were shared (often on an annual basis) • PCE findings were used to inform the design of subsequent funding proposals to the Global Fund	• The Mozambique Malaria program reallocated human resources to provinces with higher prevalence levels based on PCE analysis and recommendations[38], and included more funds for operational research capacity

---

[36] All of the examples mentioned here were documented in a minimum of (i) a global PCE synthesis report and/or a country PCE report; (ii) an interview with a GEP and/or CEP; and (iii) an interview with at least one other type of stakeholder for example the Ministry of Health disease team leaders, Global Fund PRs/SRs, or the FPM. There were a number of additional examples which were not included as there was insufficient data from one of the three types of sources listed above.

[37] Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation 2018 Synthesis Report, 2018

[38] Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation 2020 Synthesis Report, 2019; and Euro Health Group, Mozambique Malaria Grant Contribution Analysis, 2021

#	PCE country-level objectives	Summary of findings	Illustrative examples[36]
	effectiveness, and value-for-money	though in others PCE results were presented *after* funding proposals had been submitted. In many countries, there was little or no evidence of follow-through on country-level PCE recommendations, and there was a lack of accountability mechanisms in the Global Fund for tracking this follow-through. In addition to this having been highlighted in numerous country stakeholder interviews, the fact that in several PCE country reports virtually identical recommendations appear in multiple years' PCE reports is further indication of the lack of progress.	in the NFM3 proposals based on inputs from the PCE. • Guatemala 2020 PCE Deep Dive findings enabled PRs and SRs to identify issues with TB sputum test collection and take corrective actions[39] • The Cambodia PCE Deep Dive on multi-month scripting policy was helpful in the development of the NFM3 proposal[40] • Root-cause analysis in the Senegal PCE identified bottlenecks affecting RSSH grant execution, informing the revised design for the next grant.[41] • Financial analysis in the HIV Deep Dive in Mozambique of varying disbursement levels[42] led to reallocation of certain activities from government PRs/SRs to CSO PRs/SRs for HIV to improve absorption. • In 2020, PCE findings in the DRC were used to inform the revision of its performance-based-financing indicator to better support the implementation of a targeted testing strategy.[43] • In Myanmar, PCE findings and inputs into the AIDS Epidemiological Model were used to inform the Global Fund funding request for 2021-2023.[44] • In Guatemala, a number of examples were cited whereby PCE analysis on indigenous populations[45] was used to enhance Global Fund

---

[39] Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation: Guatemala 2019-2020 Annual Country Report, 2020
[40] Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation 2020 Synthesis Report, 2020
[41] Ibid.
[42] Euro Health Group, Mozambique HIV Deep Dive, 2020
[43] PATH/IHME. "Prospective Country Evaluation: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2019-2020 Annual Country Report" Geneva 2020. pp.15-16
[44] Euro Health Group. "Prospective Country Evaluation Annual Report 2020 (Myanmar)" 2020. p.18
[45] CIESAR, IHME, PATH. "Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala: 2018 Annual Country Report" 2018. p.26; CIESAR, IHME, PATH. "Evaluacíon Prospectiva de País Guatemala: Informe anual de país 2020-2021" 2021. p.11, p.34

#	PCE country-level objectives	Summary of findings	Illustrative examples[36]
			proposals across all three disease areas and for RSSH. • Conflict situation in Sudan hampered many processes. However, PRs stated that the recommendations from the country reports helped the country MOH develop a consolidated contingency plan. PCE findings also helped validate some already known findings which provided strength to a SR's application for funds
3	Provide ongoing feedback enabling countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust program implementation in real time	• In all 8 countries, stakeholders including PRs, SRs, and others complained that the lack of continuous feedback severely hampered the ability to make real-time program improvements.	• In Guatemala, multiple PRs reported that they regularly met with the CEP team to discuss program implementation, receive feedback, and make adjustments. This is one of the very few examples given of continuous feedback mentioned across the 8 countries surveyed.
Other uses and impacts not specified in the original PCE charter			
5	Use of independent recommendations for advocacy	• In at least 3 of the 8 countries, Global Fund project stakeholders reported that independent confirmation of 'known facts' was useful in advocating to MoH to address longstanding issues.	• PCE findings on the limited role of Civil Society[46] used to successfully advocate for improved participation of CSOs in the DRC CCM

Discussion:

While several stakeholders commended the PCE's use of data and specific analyses conducted, there was virtually unanimous agreement that PCEs did not result in improved quantitative data at the country or project level. A wide range of stakeholders at country level including PRs, SRs, LFAs, MoH teams, and others questioned the value-add of the PCEs precisely because they relied primarily on the same data available to (or generated by) these stakeholders themselves. This view was supported by the majority of Global Fund Secretariat country team stakeholders.

In countries where health system data is of questionable quality, those data quality issues were far beyond the remit or the capacity of PCE teams (global or country level) to directly impact on. In one country, the CEP suggested that the knowledge that the CEP would be doing detailed analysis of the data may have increased MoH attention to data quality issues,

---

[46] PATH, IHME, Prospective Country Evaluation Democratic Republic of the Congo: 2018 Annual Country Report, 2018

and this was separately affirmed by MoH stakeholders; however, the generalizability of this finding across the other countries is not known.

One challenge in establishing the extent of use and impact of PCE results in Global Fund grants relates to the fact that in many cases, PCE findings or recommendations may have *contributed* to changes or improvements without such changes being solely causally attributable to the PCEs. The examples cited in 6 above are those where the review (i) observed evidence of the finding/recommendation in the global and/or country PCE report; (ii) received information from the GEP and/or CEP on the impact of their work; and (iii) where at least one other country-level non-GEP/CEP stakeholder interview specifically mentioned that instance of the PCE having influenced the project or subsequent project design. There were a number of examples[47] which met the first two criteria but not the third – these have not been included due to the lack of sufficiently robust evidence.

A common critique across multiple countries and stakeholder groups was that PCE results were shared with grant teams and/or FPMs at such a late stage that they were no longer pertinent or had already been addressed. In at least two countries, multiple stakeholders mentioned the missed opportunity to impact Global Fund project design because the PCE results were disseminated one to two months *after* the new proposals had been submitted to the Global Fund. In only one country, it was reported that the CEP informally shared their key findings and recommendations with in-country stakeholders before they had been officially validated and approved by TERG, precisely in order to ensure they could be used in proposal development. In this case, they emphasized that this was done unofficially and that they considered this a violation of the PCE guidelines and instructions they had received. In at least two countries, PRs and SRs commented that LFAs provided more useful, impactful, and independent 'prospective' feedback on an ongoing basis than the PCEs did; this was also mentioned by several different categories of stakeholders within the Global Fund Secretariat. In at least four countries, stakeholders underlined that – with the exception of some 'Deep Dive' topics in 2019 and 2020 – the research agenda and questions were driven by TERG priorities and did not generally reflect priority operational issues that could have been of use or impact to PRs, SRs, CCMs, and KVPs. In at least one country, the fact that the report was not available in the local language was highlighted as another barrier, though this review also notes that country reports were available in local languages in some countries including Senegal and DRC (French) and Guatemala (Spanish).

One of the PCE objectives discusses the importance of how Global Fund policies and practices as applied at country level facilitate, or impede, impact. Although accountability for addressing this issue would lie at the Secretariat level, one might anticipate that country-level actors involved in grant implementation would have a stake in this agenda. Most of the country PCE reports had specific sections assessing how various aspects of the business model either helped or hindered grant execution, with a strong focus on the implications for program start-up, quality, and financial absorption rates. While these helping and hindering factors were also mentioned across many of the country stakeholder interviews, the overwhelming consensus was that almost none of them were actually addressed by the Global Fund during the four years of the PCEs. This generated considerable frustration by PRs, SRs, and others who emphasized the need for greater accountability even while recognizing that changes in policies and procedures at the global level might take some time.

By far, the stakeholder group with the most negative perceptions on the usefulness and impact of the PCEs on Global Fund grants at country level were the Global Fund Secretariat staff, including and beyond the FPMs. In over half of the countries studied, the majority of observations from Secretariat staff were negative. In at least two countries, key Secretariat staff cast doubt on whether the PCEs had any positive impacts whatsoever – and these include the countries from which some of the positive examples above were drawn. These widespread negative sentiments from a variety of Secretariat actors should also be set against

---

[47] See, for example, the detailed list of examples in Chapter 5 of the 2020 PCE Synthesis Report.

the significant minority opinion, which was that the usefulness of the PCEs increased over time with the 2019 and 2020 deep dives providing the most added value. Nevertheless, even in these cases it was mentioned that the comparative advantage of the PCE in conducting this type of analysis compared to other, existing Global Fund research, monitoring and evaluation mechanisms was unclear.

Finally, the PCE synthesis reports cited a number of occasions when the CEPs were able to provide support to Global Fund grantees on issues that went beyond the scope of the PCE[48]; several of these were also validated in the interviews conducted with non-GEP/CEP in-country stakeholders such as Ministry of Health disease teams, CSO representatives, or PRs/SRs. While beyond the scope of this review, this may suggest that CEPs are, in some countries, viewed as having the capacity to provide useful research services and this is worth taking into account when considering future plans.

(B) Global Fund grants in in non-PCE countries

One of the PCE Charter objectives was to "**identify and disseminate best practices to improve the Global Fund model"**, and this was further detailed in a measure of success that stated "Lessons learned for application more broadly across the Global Fund portfolio to further improve program quality and maximize impact", including in non-PCE countries. The review team was unable to identify any cases of programmatic best practices from one PCE country being applied to another or where a stakeholder from a non-PCE country mentioned the impact or use of PCE results, though the number of non-PCE country staff interviewed was limited so this result should be taken with caution. Several stakeholders commented on the lack of visibility/dissemination of PCE reports within the Secretariat, especially the country-level reports (many of which are not available on the Global Fund website) but also some of the global synthesis reports. Furthermore, the apparent lack of use or impact in non-PCE countries is consistent with the observation that most Global Fund Secretariat stakeholders – the most likely channel for the cross-sharing of PCE findings or recommendations – were critical of the value of PCEs overall.

Use of PCE by other country stakeholders

Beyond the use of PCE findings and recommendations by Global Fund grant-related stakeholders (-PRs, SRs, LFAs, CCMs, and Secretariat country team members), the original objective was also that these would prove useful to other country-level stakeholders including the Ministry of Health disease teams and health systems strengthening actors, other in-country donors or international organizations, and other local stakeholders including Civil Society Organizations (beyond their roles as PRs/SRs).

First, the results from the interviews conducted indicate that awareness of the PCE varies significantly across different in-country stakeholder groups and across countries. Several of the other in-country donors and civil society groups reported that they were unaware of the PCEs, had not read the PCE reports, and could not recall attending the country PCE dissemination meetings. In contrast, the majority of Ministry of Health disease team leaders for diseases supported by the Global Fund in each country reported that they were quite involved in the PCEs having provided information (qualitative and quantitative) to the evaluations, read the reports, and participating in the dissemination meetings.

Similar to the use of PCE findings and recommendations by Global Fund supported projects, the perspectives of other country stakeholders on the usefulness varied but, in most cases, their usefulness was seen as limited. Country-level respondents across all 8 countries cited the delays in the release of the reports, the selection of themes and issues driven by TERG priorities rather than country agendas, and the fact that many findings were already known to

---

[48] See, for example, the discussion on TB data discrepancies in IDRC, IHME, PATH, Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda: 2019-2020 Annual Country Report, 2020

them as limiting factors. A small number of stakeholders – particularly Civil Society actors in several countries – mentioned the dissemination workshops as having been useful forums for discussion of the issues raised by PCEs (previously known or not) and the fact that PCEs enabled an independent channel of communication with the Global Fund, but they bemoaned the lack of any accountability mechanism to ensure follow-up.

Ministry of Health disease team leaders were generally somewhat supportive of the PCEs, with several noting that they were helpful in quantifying certain trends or issues that had been of concern for some time. In particular, the Deep Dives of 2019 and 2020 were cited as opportunities where greater country input into selection of themes produced more useful results, though several still noted that even these topics were constrained by TERG priorities as opposed to being fully driven by country research priorities. In at least one country, Ministry of Health personnel noted that the lack of disease-specific expertise in the CEP and GEP hindered the formulation of more practical and concrete recommendations. However, stakeholders in both Senegal and the DRC felt that the three diseases were taken into account well with specific, relevant recommendations. In at least three countries, the CEP leaders were well known to MoH stakeholders and their overall pre-PCE credibility helped bolster the attention paid to the PCE results.

While different perspectives are to be expected given the variety of stakeholders, country contexts, and compositions of the CEP teams, a number of instances where PCEs did impact national policies and programs beyond Global Fund grants were cited in country PCE reports, global PCE synthesis reports, and by at least one non-GEP/CEP interviewee:

- In Senegal the PCE findings prompted the Ministry of Health and Social Action to convene a wide range of stakeholders to develop a Tuberculosis Acceleration Plan[49], which also included a joint technical support plan between PRs, SRs, and non-Global Fund implementers.

- PCE analyses in Cambodia enabled the development of a national program initiative to improve health clinics' retention of people living with HIV, as well as to more targeted investment of HIV services due to identified sub-national disparities[50].

- The PCE malaria resource tracking findings from Uganda were used to inform the Malaria Program Review and the development of the 2020-2025 Malaria National Strategic Plan and related funding requests[51].

- In Guatemala, a number of stakeholders mentioned that PCE findings highlighting the data quality issues of national HIV management information system[52] spurred the Ministry of Health to focus more on improving data quality.

An interesting critique from one country was that the PCE results were in fact quite useful and valuable, but that they were insufficiently well disseminated within the country. While it was recognized that the CEP in this country had been quite proactive in disseminating their report through e-mail, the internet, and workshops, it was suggested that they could have included a broader set of stakeholders (including Members of Parliament, the Ministry of Finance, and others who might have been interested to see the analyses on budgetary absorption) and that a summary of results could have even been produced in an indigenous language spoken by a large minority group, to enable better accountability vis-à-vis KVPs. It was nevertheless asserted during several interviews that improved dissemination without enhanced accountability may not result in increased PCE impact.

---

[49] Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation 2020 Synthesis Report, 2020
[50] Ibid.
[51] Ibid.
[52] CIESAR, IHME, PATH, Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala: 2018 Annual Country Report, 2019

Global Fund business model, policies and strategy

Overall, the evaluation found that Global level stakeholders (Global Fund Board, TERG, TERG Secretariat) had mixed perspectives on the usefulness and impact of PCEs with few interviewees able to provide clear examples of use. There was a strong disconnect between the aspiration of the PCEs, what they 'could have' delivered in terms of insights to inform the Global Fund business model, policies and strategies, versus what was actually achieved.

Several global level stakeholders emphasized the value of having independent validation of both achievements and challenges at country level, even if some of these may have already been known to country-level stakeholders and members of the Secretariat. In addition, several cited the value of several of the synthesis report analytical sections including the deep dives, analysis of financial aspects of the Global Fund business model, fully grant cycle assessment, and contribution to impact analyses. This was mentioned in both several interviews as well as in confidential supporting documentation shared with the evaluators. While these were mentioned across a range of interviews, there was less specificity around how these analyses were used or impacted policies, programs, or practices; to the contrary, documentary evidence demonstrates that the lack of appropriate follow-up on PCE recommendations and accountability mechanisms was also decried at the highest strategic levels.

There were a number of factors cited as to why there was not greater uptake of PCE findings at a global level. Strategy Committee and Board stakeholders highlighted that timing as a key factor affecting the reports' usefulness. Given the packed agenda of the Strategy Committee and Board meetings to discuss the PCE findings, there was often only limited time and often the reports were received fairly close to when the meetings took place, limiting stakeholders' ability to 'digest' the findings and their implications in advance. Through the large number of interviews conducted for this evaluation, it has been clear that the majority of Global Fund secretariat stakeholders felt the PCEs were of limited value, across multiple teams within the Secretariat. It was also highlighted that some of the annual synthesis findings may only be taken up once the next strategy is operationalised as changes in the business model take time (for example, to the Global Fund focusing less on absorption and increasing the focus on budgeting).

One of the key challenges outlined by different stakeholder groups was with regards to the accountability for implementation of PCE recommendations. Although the PCE Charter set out the accountabilities and responsibilities for different stakeholder groups with regards to the PCE, the accountability for implementation and follow up for recommendations at a global or country-level is not outlined. There is no clear 'owner' of the PCE within the Global Fund Secretariat. This created a challenge for the implementation of the recommendations of the Global Synthesis reports and also at a country level. In at least two countries, PRs and SRs expressed frustration that their detailed and concrete feedback on problems, challenges, and barriers in the existing Global Fund business model did not result in any perceptible changes. They pointed to the fact that many of their inputs were included in country PCE reports, but there was no mechanism for accountability or formal feedback/response to the issues they raised from the Secretariat. While they understood that some procedural and policy changes might take time, they questioned the effectiveness of the PCE as an exercise aimed at improving the business model given the lack of impact they observed.

Positive examples of strategic uptake of PCE findings identified:

- One of the key strategic changes noted by Global Fund Secretariat and Strategy Committee stakeholders was derived from the 2018 PCE Synthesis report, which found that there were often lengthy start up delays to grants due to the need for subcontracting SRs. As a result of this finding, the Global Fund moved to a model

where countries would have 'implementation ready' grants rather than 'disbursement ready' grants[53].

- GEPs received feedback that PCE findings on RSSH contributed to the body of evidence established by the TERG RSSH review, the OIG RSSH Review and TRP RSSH review and that PCE evidence was synergistic and complementary to these evidence sources.

- Integration of PCE synthesis report recommendations in the design of NFM3.

- The 2018 PCE report outlined that the matching funds application was duplicative with the main application, thereby incurring high transaction costs relative to the amount of funding available. Consequently, there was a shift to matching funds being integrated into the main funding request.

- PCE findings (including this evaluation on the PCE process and impact) will inform/have informed current thinking on the future of the Global Fund evaluation function. The 2020 Global Fund Strategic Review (conducted by EHG/Itad) was also referenced by stakeholders as having been informed strongly by PCE data and perspectives and evidence gathered throughout the PCE process.

- The 2020 PCE synthesis report highlights that changes have been made to the type of application approaches in the 2020-2022 application cycle. The 'Tailored for Material Change' application approach has been dropped, which was a decision partly influenced by PCE findings from the DRC that the process was overly complex and time consuming and did not result in intended efficiencies. This change though was not referenced in stakeholder interviews and so could not be validated.

Capacity building

Building country-level evaluation capacity was an explicit objective as documented in both the original PCE RFP[54] as well as the subsequent PCE charter[55] (both as an objective and as a measure of success). However, in interviews with TERG members, there were divergent views given as to the prominence of capacity building as an objective of the PCEs; some TERG members saw it as seen it a core objective of the PCE, while others felt it was meant to be more of a 'by-product' or secondary objective. The evaluation team has not identified any documentary evidence that explicitly states that the capacity building objective was deprioritised over time. But interviewees from both the TERG, GEPs and CEPs were clear that this objective was gradually and explicitly deprioritized over the course of the PCE process, particularly from 2019 onwards.

It is also evident that there were different and diverse understandings of what capacity building in relation to the PCEs should look like from the outset of the PCE process in terms of capacity building for who, how and how strengthened capacity might be evidenced or what results might be achieved. Examples of the differences in what was understood/expected of capacity building in terms of the PCEs by various stakeholders interviewed included: developing data and analytical capacity/quality in health ministries, developing core evaluation capacities in research, improving understanding of the Global Fund's business model among the local evaluation providers; learning by doing and skills transfer, for example on evaluation methods; and ensuring a sustainable approach as countries prepare for graduation, and reducing the risk of having parallel systems.

Expectations regarding capacity building were high in the Secretariat, where some saw the PCE as meant to fill a critical gap on robust M&E capacity. However, it was acknowledged by both GEP and TERG stakeholders that although the PCE budget was perceived as high, it did

---

[53] PCE report, 2020
[54] RPF
[55] Global Fund PCE Charter, September 2017

not include the necessary resources to deliver broader capacity building beyond the CEP itself. As such, resource constraints meant that the GEPs could not in practice provide the levels of support that was required to address the gaps.

How far was the capacity building objective met?

The evidence on how far capacity building was achieved in the PCE process was very mixed. Most stakeholders critiqued the lack of explicit and measurable capacity building plans and processes, and a number commented that it was insufficiently resourced, which is perhaps not surprising if those commissioning it had not intended it to be a primary deliverable. A fair summary of what was achieved overall is that there was some 'learning by doing' and skills transfer between the GEPs and CEPs in terms of quantitative and qualitative research skills as well as vastly increased knowledge of the GF business model, and to lesser extent from CEPs to country stakeholders from the interactions as part of the PCEs, but this was inconsistent and opportunistic rather than systematic. The approach was not well linked into other mechanisms at country level, including the CCMs and Government capacity, or with other Global Fund capacity building interventions.

From a GEP perspective, the key demonstration that capacity has effectively been built is that it took a much more active role in analysis and reporting in the early years, and a less active role in later years as CEP capacity grew. It was noted by GEPs and CEPs that there was a tension at times beyond the dual roles of the GEPs in ensuring quality for deliverables and delivering capacity building and that the former may have at times detracted from the later.

There were several positive examples of feedback on capacity building, albeit limited to one or two countries. In a small number of countries, it was felt that the PCE process built the technical evaluation of the CEPs and in one country the involvement of experts (e.g., public health experts was thought to lead to skills transfer during the meetings to MoH. In at least one country the PCE was seen as having contributed a technical assistance role, in helping at national level in adapting programmes within the grant period and in conducting workshops for strengthening community data platforms and on DHIS2. It was also noted that research capacities and skills had improved, including among junior CEP staff, as a result of interacting with the GEP. This included asking more focused questions and using a wider range of methods. The PCEs were seen by some in the CEPs as useful to gain a better shared understanding of the Global Fund's processes, programs and systems.

Some of the feedback on capacity building was strongly negative, noting that the design process had not been sufficiently collaborative and inclusive to understand needs and create country level ownership, the first requirements for effective capacity building. There was no mechanism is place to establish a 'baseline' of capacity' and to understand how it had been improved over time.

In the case of Mozambique and Senegal, stakeholder expectations regarding capacity building were raised from the outset of the PCE process as this was of particular interest to JHU and was key to how the PCE had been initially presented to country stakeholders by JHU. Country stakeholders in both countries in interviews were disappointed that these efforts had not taken place and the change in consortia and in the prioritisation of capacity building as part of the PCE had not been clearly communicated to them.

The evidence confirms that the building capacity objective had some validity, even if it was not taken forward in a clear and consistent way. There is a shared awareness that there are critical gaps around M&E capacity and a need to continue to build data systems and understanding of the Global Fund's business model. The concept of a country evaluation platform and/or trusted provider is seen as having merit in itself. At the same time this needs to be more systematically approached, linking into relevant institutions such as the health ministries, CCM evaluation sub-committee, local academic institutions etc. as part of a sustainable approach. Capacity building also takes time and cannot realistically be done within a 3-year period and as a spin-off of a major evaluation effort, and this was not clearly understood.

Looking forward, there are some positives to build on including the knowledge and relationships that have been built in the CEPs and the interest in the concept of a call down evaluation capability at country level.

Factors influencing the quality and the usefulness of the PCEs

This section of the report provides a summary of the enabling and hindering factors affecting the quality and usefulness of PCE findings.

Facilitating Factors

Table 7: Enabling factors

The key enabling factors identified which affected the content, quality and usefulness of the PCE report (and process are outlined in further detail previously in the report but summarised below:

Enabling factor	Impact	▪ Relevant stakeholder
Consultative approach in PCE implementation	▪ Improved ownership and use of the PCE findings ▪ Trust and strong relationships between CEPs and country stakeholders built over time ▪ Establishment in selected cases of more direct lines of communication between GEPs, CEPs, country stakeholders and Fund Portfolio Managers (FPMs) on an ad-hoc basis	▪ Global Fund Secretariat, country stakeholders (CEPs, PR), Partners, GEPs
Capacity, expertise and reputation of the CEPs and GEPs	▪ Some CEP members were highly knowledgeable and respected in their fields in the health sector and this aided their ability to navigate the particularities or sensitivities in countries ▪ Perception of high-quality evaluation products ▪ Aided (in some cases) acceptance of PCE findings	▪ CEPs, GEPs, TERG, Global Fund Secretariat
Flexibility in some countries in feeding 'interim' results in at country level and into grant development processes	▪ Ability to deliver 'prospective' findings as intended and support use of PCE findings	▪ CEPs, country stakeholders
Adaptive PCE methodology and approach	▪ Whilst the changes to the PCE methodology and approach were challenging to some extent to GEPs and CEPs, they are evidence of an adaptive approach used by the TERG to address perceived weaknesses in the PCE and associated outputs and to maximise the	▪ CEPs, GEPs, TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, country stakeholders

| | utility and impact of the PCE findings and recommendations.,
■ Adaptations led to perceptions in improvements in the quality and utility of PCE reports over time
■ Introduction of deep dives and focus topics was considered more responsive to country and Global Fund Secretariat need.
■ Added value at a strategic level through the Global Synthesis exercise which provided leaning that would not have been possible through single country evaluations, | |

Hindering factors

The table below presents key factors which have hindered PCE content, quality and usefulness. It is important to note that not of these apply to all the PCE countries but were applicable globally or to number of different contexts. Some were addressed over the course of the PCE process but may still have had an impact on results.

Table 8: Hindering Factors

Hindering Factor	Impact	Relevant stakeholder
Complex initial set-up between three consortia	• Difficulties in aligning methodologies and tools and in synthesising findings across countries • Challenges in synthesising findings across the consortia (i.e., in 2019 when different approaches used) • Significant time required for GEPs and CEPs to gain required understanding of the Global Fund business model (with some consortia more familiar with the Global Fund than others) • Unclear and indirect lines of communication between TERG and country level and GEP	GEPs, CEPs, TERG, TERG Secretariat, SC
Lack of clarity and consistency in the PCE objectives, methodologies, and roles set by TERG	• Created perceptions of duplication across different Global Fund instruments • Burdensome for GEPs/CEPs to adapt methods, approaches, tool each time	Global Fund Secretariat, Country teams, TERG, GEPs

	• Lack of clarity/consensus given to countries by TERG focal points	
Complexities of PCE design/management processes	• Cumbersome and time-consuming processes for report validation and quality assurance • Limited access of CEPs and GEPs to Global Fund Secretariat, impacting on Secretariat ownership and engagement, their perception of the accuracy and utility of evaluation findings • Unclear and indirect lines of communication between TERG and country level and GEP • GEPS/CEPs worked to tight timeframes and deadlines to meet PCE deliverables; with 3 TERG meetings a year and for each, reports and PPTs were prepared, Reports were quality assured by GEPs, validated by the CTs, and submitted 2 weeks ahead of the TERG meeting. From a GEP perspective, the continuous cycle of deadlines left extremely little room for wider capacity development or taking national priorities into account.	Global Fund Secretariat, Country teams, TERG, GEPs, CEPs, SC
Diverse audiences and diverse needs of those audiences from PCE reports	• Given the breath of the PCE objectives, the GEPs/CEPs struggled to produce reports which were able to meet these diverse needs, affecting stakeholders' perceptions of their quality and use • Tension between the needs for 'country led; country owned' reports versus the need for global synthesis of evaluation findings • Rigidity of evaluation frameworks, one-size-fits all for 8 very different countries	TERG, Strategy Committee, Global Fund Secretariat, GEPs, SC
Lack of accountability for implementation of PCE recommendations	• Unclear/weak processes for implementing and following up PCE recommendations given the lack of an institutional 'owner' of PCEs within the Global Fund Secretariat. Furthermore, there was limited	PRs, SRs, GEPs, TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, SC

	time for discussion of PCE findings by the Strategy Committee which limited analysis and uptake of PCE findings Delayed and limited dissemination of both global synthesis and country PCE reports	
Limited focus and analysis on gender and key populations	• Insufficient inclusion of key populations in PCE data collection, limited analysis of gender and key populations in PCE reports (although this was addressed in the 2019 and 2020 synthesis reports)	Global Fund Secretariat, SR
Tension between need for global synthesis of PCE reports and inclusion of country priorities	• Lack of tailoring to country priorities, methodological challenge in	TERG, Strategy Committee, Global Fund Secretariat, GEPs, CEPs, country stakeholders
Lack of country ownership	• Weak alignment between PCE focus and countries' priorities	In-country stakeholders (MoH, PR, CCM)
Lack of capacity of CEPs in some countries	• Delay in turning out quality outputs, weaknesses in perceived quality/validity/use of reports	TERG secretariat, Global Fund Secretariat, CEPs
High turnover within the CEPs	• Limited impact of capacity building, lack of continuity, loss of institutional memory	GEPs, TERG
Security challenges in some countries	• Inability of GEPs to travel meaning that support and capacity building to CEPs (where arguable there was most need) was at times provided remotely.	Global Fund Secretariat, CEPs, GEPs

Value for money

This section considers the value for money and value-added of the PCE in two respects

- What value did the PCE add compared to other existing M&E mechanisms?
- What was the overall value for money (VFM), and was it worth $28m?

Value added by the PCE compared to other M&E mechanisms in the Global Fund

To provide a solid answer on this evaluation question, a comprehensive analysis and comparison of the PCE with the full range of mechanisms used by the Global Fund would be needed. This turned out not be possible in the relatively limited time available and the evaluation team was given clear guidance to focus directly on the PCE itself and not to look at issues which are in any case being covered by the ongoing wider work on M&E. The comments in this section therefore draw on a more qualitative assessment from a range of sources including documents, interviews and the expert views of the evaluation team.

The existing monitoring and evaluation mechanisms the Global Fund, other than the PCE, TERG Thematic reviews, MECA's country Programme Reviews and country evaluation, the Office of the Inspector General (OIG) reports, the Technical Review Panel (TRP) reports and the reports by the Local Funding Agents (LFA). Country level performance monitoring mechanisms assess the extent to which Global Fund investments lead to disease reduction, that funds are managed accountably, and that the procurement and supply of health products are managed appropriately. Global performance mechanisms monitor the contribution of the Global Fund in attracting additional resources and mitigating the negative impact of HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria.

The key ways in which the PCE could have been expected to add value relative to the mechanisms are:

- An independent evaluation perspective, including voice to the Board from country level.
- The annual synthesis of lessons from 8 countries providing an overall picture on the Global Fund business model, not available through other routes.
- Documenting and validating lessons which may already be more or less understood by those working on the programmes but have not been independently assured and evidenced to a high standard or articulated to the Board.
- A prospective approach including a continuous 'laboratory' at country level with the potential to learn more quickly than is possible through ex post evaluation.
- A basis for learning using high-quality independent evaluation, both at global and at country level, and across countries.

Understanding pathways to impact using prospective methods and primary data both quantitative and qualitative.

In the views of the evaluation team, the first three of these have been at least partially met, while the last two have not, for reasons which have been discussed elsewhere in this report. The last objective is however now being addressed through a more practical approach focused on specific topics and the Global Fund business model, which in itself is very useful.

Meanwhile different stakeholders expressed varying views as to the additional benefit derived from the PCEs across the countries and how it might be improved, which can be summarised as follows:

- The creation of a route for independent voice from country level is widely seen as adding value, and the need for independent country level evaluation is also not in doubt, in other words, this is meeting an important need not met elsewhere.

- The PCEs are mainly able to draw on secondary data, which is already well known to those working at country level, so is unable to add new insights. On the other hand, by bringing qualitative data into play and also an independent analytical perspective, the country platforms and deep dive studies have shed light on issues more clearly and documented them in useful ways.

- There was some confusion at country level about how the PCE relates to existing Global Fund auditing mechanisms. The same in-country stakeholders (CCM, MoH, PRs, SRs) have had to grant interviews for data gathering for both OIG and PCE teams without a clear-cut understanding of the differences in their objectives.

- The LFAs provide more "prospective" type feedback for ongoing course corrections. In two countries, it was observed that LFAs only look at quantitative targets whereas PCE adds value by also looking at quality.

Value for money assessment

The evaluation team used the following criteria to assess the VFM of the PCE:

- Effectiveness: Were the PCE's intended objectives[56] achieved?

- Efficiency: Were the resources[57] used in the most efficient way with efficient supporting processes, and were the objectives delivered in a timely manner?

- Economy: Was the procurement of evaluation services done economically?

No clear comparator exists to produce a definitive statement on VFM in relation to cost efficiency. In principle, the GAVI FCE would provide some comparison, but cost data are not publicly available and GAVI, while it has some similarities in focus on health and being a global fund, is really a different type of organisation in scope and size from the Global Fund.

Given this limitation, the team used the available evidence to provide an indicative assessment, as explained below in Table 9 which shows the assessment against each of the 3 VFM criteria adopted here, and **Error! Reference source not found.** which shows the assessment on effectiveness.

The summary assessment on VFM is that:

- VFM was limited when assessed against the original objectives of the evaluation.

- There was, however, significant value achieved against the modified objectives, and this increased over time.

- Value could have been much greater with improved conditions for learning and better follow up.

---

[56] Intended objectives are considered from two perspectives:

First, the original objectives when the PCE was commissioned, as set out in RFP and the Charter; Second, the more focused objectives as modified by the TERG by years 3 & 4.

[57] Resource includes the cost of the services provided by the evaluation partners, the resource used in managing the evaluation and the resources used in participating in the evaluation.

Table 9 Assessment against the 3 VFM criteria

	Assessment	Notes
Effectiveness	Limited effectiveness when assessed against original objectives over the whole 4-year period. More effective when assessed against revised objectives and by years 3 and 4	2 of the original 8 objectives were achieved by years 3 and 4. That is, the primary aim to deliver high quality evaluations that synthesise from country to global level was met, and these drew on high quality country level evaluation in 8 countries as intended. Three other objectives (around pathways to impact, learning by doing for CEPs, and proposed improvements to the Global Fund business model) were partially achieved. The period required to learn how to implement the model was extended i.e., 3 years. The original design was not effective for the intended purpose and the prospective approach could not be implemented. Considerably more was achieved against the more focused objectives, particularly in delivering the primary aim of high quality, independent synthesis for the Board and Strategy Committee on the Global Fund business model, the value of the deep dive studies and the learning by doing in the CEPs, on the Global Fund business model.
Efficiency	Cost efficiency is not fully observable, due to lack of comparator. Timeliness was not consistently achieved.	The PCE is unique - no exact comparator is possible for cost effectiveness analysis as it does not exist in other organisations and/or the data are not publicly available on costs. The period of learning required for developing and implementing the PCE was long, as expected, at 3 years within a 4-year investment period. On feedback loops, these were not timely throughout, partly due to the multi-layered and complex design of the PCE.
Economy	Limited information	We understand the decision to use 3 GEPs was intended partly to ensure contestability/leverage in procurement. In practice this added complexity and 1 did not have their contract renewed after 21 months of engagement with the PCE. A more economical approach would be to use a single GEP in future.
Overall VFM	Hard to assess due to lack of comparators but an indicative assessment is: VFM was limited against the original objectives. VFM was more positive against the modified objectives.	The main reasons why VFM was limited was - The original objectives were not feasible and were not achieved - There was a lack of learning at global and country level from the PCE, which is a key objective. - The multi-layered design reduced timeliness. The positive contributions to value include: - An essential contribution was to provide independent evaluation and lens at country level, which is valuable in its own right - The modifications to design were important and improved value - A more feasible approach to assessing pathways to impact was developed. - Some capacity was built which could help evaluation in future for Global Fund

Table 10 Assessment of Effectiveness

Overall objective	Specific approach/deliverable	Years 1- 2	Years 3 - 4	Notes
Analyse implementation and degree of accomplishment of Global Fund Strategic Objectives, with a particular focus on Global Fund policies and practices; RSSH; and gender and human rights	Annual PCE synthesis for TERG and SC	Still in learning stage	Achieved	Extended learning phase in first 2- 3 years leading to modifications. High quality synthesis delivered by years 3 and 4 and discussed at SC.
Identify risks and challenges that impede program performance, and opportunities to inform and improve program quality for impact, effectiveness, and value-for-money	Annual reports in the 8 countries	Partly achieved	Mostly achieved	Most annual reports are good quality, particularly by the final year, albeit not widely disseminated.
	Deep dive and other products	Not applicable	Achieved	Useful modifications were made and delivered, particularly in 5 countries.
Provide ongoing feedback enabling countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust program implementation in real time	Real-time findings	Partly achieved	Partly achieved	A strong attempt was made to implement the continuous platform concept. Fast feedback and learning were constrained by the speed of reporting through multiple layers.
Assess the extent to which the Global Fund contributes to impact.	Pathways to final impact using quantitative data	Not Achieved	Not applicable[58]	Not feasible due to lack of data and realities of country capacity to implement this approach. Objective was dropped early on.
	Focus on intermediate impact and use of mixed methods	In development at this stage.	Achieved	A useful, more feasible alternative approach was developed looking at intermediate outcomes and pathways to impact, relying on mixed methods.

---

[58] The pathways to impact were by this stage being pursued through a focus on intermediate impact and use of mixed methods.

Overall objective	Specific approach/deliverable	Years 1- 2	Years 3 - 4	Notes
Identify and disseminate best practices to improve the Global Fund model	At global level by the SC and other stakeholders	Not achieved	Partly achieved	Conditions for effective learning were not met insufficient time for discussion at SC; ineffective and timely dissemination; lack of receptivity and ownership from stakeholders; weak accountability for action on recommendations. However, some recommendations on improvements to the Global Fund Business model were identified (years 1-2) and partly operationalized (years 3-4).
	In the 8 PCE countries	Not achieved	Partly achieved – could have been much greater	Deep dive studies were useful and led to learning. Learning at country level could have been much greater with more tailoring and ownership of PCE at country level, and stronger follow up.
	Cross country learning directly or via the global level	Not achieved	Not achieved	Limited if any evidence of any learning in other Global Fund countries was evident from documents or interviews.
	Learning by CEPs including understanding of Global Fund business model	Learning stage	Achieved in 7 countries.	TERG clarified that this was a secondary objective, and it was achieved through learning by doing without a systematic and planned approach.
Strengthen country M&E systems for robust measurement		Not achieved	Not achieved	This should not have been seen as an objective of the PCE, although evaluation can help strengthen data indirectly

Was the PCE worth $28m?

To answer this question, it is important to be clear on what range of PCE objectives is being considered:

- For a wide-ranging set of objectives including all of those set out in the original RFP and PCE charter, $28m could be regarded as quite a limited budget, particularly if it is intended to cover capacity building, data quality and monitoring aspects as well as independent evaluation. When compared with the size of the Global Fund portfolio that is being assessed[59], $28m is not particularly large, at around 0.8% of the disbursements in the 8 countries across the period 2017-21 or 1.0% for the period 2017-20. The PCEs were funded through catalytic investments.

- However, by the end of the period the objectives had become more focused - the primary objective was by then clearly that the PCE would deliver country level evaluation and synthesis for the Board to inform lesson learning on the Global Fund business model. With this revised scope, $28m is on the face of it a relatively large budget, to deliver annual synthesis reports and informed by evaluation in 8 countries over a 4-year period.

- One of the reasons for the costs is inherent to the PCE model, since it requires having a continuous platform in 8 countries over 4 years. A more conventional approach of having evaluation teams in country only during the evaluation process would be much cheaper. However, this would not be able to deliver the intended 'prospective' approach. In practice, the PCE was also not able to deliver the prospective approach which is a key reason why the evaluation team finds that the VFM of the PCE as originally designed was limited.

- It is also important to note that since independent evaluation is a 'must have' for the Global Fund, it would presumably have a high value attached to it, and high opportunity cost if not delivered.

59

https://data.theglobalfund.org/investments/locations/MOZ,GTM,MMR,SEN,SDN,UGA,KHM,COD#investments---disbursements 2017-2020 total disbursements across the 8 countries: $2,780 million, 2017-2021 total disbursements across the 8 countries: $3,228 million

Conclusions

The section starts by summarising the conclusions against the 5 overarching evaluation questions as agreed at inception stage. This followed by a summary of the conclusions on whether the PCE objectives themselves were met. Finally, a set of recommendations is offered together with design considerations to help inform decisions on country-level evaluation going forward.

Conclusions on the Evaluation Questions

The 5 main evaluation questions agreed at inception stage are as follows:

1. Did the PCE achieve the expected content and quality of evidence?
2. To what extent have the PCEs been useful for improving Global Fund programs at a country level?
3. To what extent have the PCEs been useful for providing inputs to improve the Global Fund business model?
4. What factors influenced the quality and the usefulness of the PCEs findings?
5. What are the lessons learned?

Evaluation Question 1. Content and quality of evidence

The first main question in this evaluation was to what extent the PCE achieved the expected content and quality of evidence. This includes the following specific questions:

- Was the design coherent, in relation to the original and emerging objectives?
- Did the evidence measure achievement of the Global Fund's strategic objectives?
- Did the evidence inform implementation of those objectives?
- Did the PCEs provide real-time and forward-looking recommendations?
- Use of reliable and adequate data to provide sound analysis and reach credible findings and valid conclusions, confirmed across the PCE countries

Starting with design, the PCE was a new type of hybrid evaluation which had been tested in Gavi but was otherwise rather unusual in scale, in being prospective and in combining an external/independent approach with an in-country platform sustained over 3-4 years. The objectives as already noted were extensive, and they also changed but as we have understood them, the most important requirements for the TERG were:

- Providing an independent perspective on the Global Fund's work at country level, commissioned externally by the TERG from respected independent evaluators.
- Delivering a rigorous approach to measuring outcomes and impact, drawing on a prospective approach instead of the normal approach to country evaluation
- Strategic learning for the Global Fund on how its business model was working in practice, focusing on the grant process, with the aim of taking learning from 8 countries to other countries and allowing course correction.
- Learning for country stakeholders based on ownership of the findings:
- as a by-product, strengthening capacity at country level, although this was not well understood. Some saw this as a core objective, and increasingly important.

The first main finding is that the **original design was not well suited to the purpose**. It was innovative but considerably too ambitious, covered too wide-ranging a set of objectives, and

in certain key respects could not be delivered. In particular, the prospective approach was not feasible and there were also problems with implementation and a long learning curve.

This was recognised at quite an early stage, and the evaluation also finds that the decisions taken by the TERG to narrow the scope and to focus on the Global Fund business model were **helpful in improving coherence against the emerging objectives.** This included the move to focus on a set of deep-dive issues in different countries, and the grant cycle analysis in the 2020-21 report. The broader objectives around M&E capacity building and data quality were also sensibly deprioritised, narrowed (to focus on learning by doing) or dropped.

The PCE reports had a diverse and broad audience across stakeholder groups who had different needs and expectations of the PCE reports. There as an inherent tension between the need for strategic global synthesis regarding the Global Fund business model to inform the TERG and the SC, and the need for prospective, programme focused findings to inform and respond to country needs. This, coupled with the broad PCE objectives meant that the PCE was at times trying to be "all things to all people" but struggled which affected stakeholders' perceptions of the use, quality and relevance of PCE outputs.

In terms of analysis and use of reliable and adequate data, the evaluation also finds that the **content and quality of the reports, particularly the synthesis reports in the last 2 years has been good,** combining analysis of secondary data with qualitative data in relevant ways to reach valid conclusions drawing on evidence at country level as intended.

The reports were clearly focused on the strategic objectives and the Global Fund's business model and played an important role in offering an independent lens on how the business model plays out in the eight selected countries. The ambitious aim of having prospective and real-time measurement of impact was not achieved, but a more realistic way of getting at intermediate impact was developed instead.

Although the PCEs made important and relevant recommendations based on sound analysis, for example on the grant cycle, **they were not in any sense real-time and typically came too late to drive decisions in the Global Fund Secretariat and at country level**.

As is a key role for independent evaluation, the independence of the PCE is a critical factor. Even if the evidence was already well-known in a less formal sense by practitioners, it is likely that the PCE provided **an important assurance role** in formalising and adding weight of independent evidence to the decision- making process at the level of the Strategy Committee of the Board. This is a function which is not met in other ways. There was, however, some criticism from country level based on 2 countries that the process of synthesising had filtered the more challenging findings too much.

Evaluation Questions 2 and 3. Utility of the PCE with regards to country programs and the business model

The second and third questions relate to the extent to which the PCE was useful for improving the programs at the country level and for providing inputs to improve the Global Fund business model?

This includes:

- How far were the needs of countries and country use considered in design?
- Was it useful to country stakeholders and how was it used by them?
- Did the PCE help to improve Global Fund programs at country level and what changed?
- Any useful lessons on the Global Fund business model?
- What did it add to understanding of the Global Fund's grants at country level?
- Did it identify bottlenecks in program implementation to inform improvements?

- What effect did it have on the reputation of the Global Fund with stakeholders?

The main conclusion in this area is that that the **usefulness was limited overall and could have been improved considerably for each of the stakeholder groups if certain key conditions for learning had been met. However, usefulness did improve over time following the focusing on the deep dives.**

The evaluation team have carefully reviewed a number of specific examples that have been brought to our attention, in the interests of balancing the evaluation report, where the PCE is considered by the TERG and TERG secretariat to have been useful and helped the Global Fund and countries to inform program improvements and other decisions.

What is striking is that interviews with key users at country and global level did not confirm this picture – they did not consistently point to those examples themselves or validate this perception. In contrast, their consistent message was that the PCE was not particularly useful since the evidence and data were not new. Or alternatively they pointed to aspects which were useful, such as the credibility and quality of the country evaluation teams in certain countries but felt the PCE process could have been much more useful with greater tailoring, dissemination and/or follow-up. There was a very different perception on utility between those designing and commissioning the evaluation from those using it. Ultimately the judgement on utility has to be informed by the views of the intended audience and users – the proof of the pudding is in the eating.

As already discussed, it is also clear the key conditions for learning – such as ensuring ownership of key stakeholder groups - were not effectively met, so regardless of the quality of analysis and the reports themselves the likelihood of them being used was constrained at the outset. Utility was particularly lower for key stakeholder groups in the Global Fund secretariat – who saw them as not adding value to what they already knew - and at country level, where insufficient tailoring, ownership and follow up were the main factors.

The usefulness for the primary audience of the Board Strategy Committee was prioritised by the TERG as the primary reason for the PCE, and the reports were well targeted at this audience. It is also highly unlikely that a single evaluation instrument can meet the needs of the different stakeholder groups equally well. Even in this area, the utility would have been greater if more time had been allowed to discuss the findings and then to use the Board and senior management to promulgate the findings.

Evaluation Question 4. Factors affecting quality and usefulness

The fourth main question is: What were the enabling and hindering factors affecting quality and usefulness of the PCE? These have already been summarised in Facilitating Factors

Table 7 and **Error! Reference source not found.** of the main report, but in brief they are as follows:

Enabling factors

- Consultative approach in PCE implementation.

- Capacity, expertise and reputation of the CEPs and GEPs.

- Flexibility in some countries in feeding 'interim' results in at country level and into grant development processes.

- Adaptive PCE methodology and approach.

Hindering factors

- Complex initial set-up between three consortia.

- Lack of clarity and consistency in the PCE objectives, methodologies, and roles set by TERG.

- Complexities of PCE design/management processes.

- Diverse audiences and diverse needs of those audiences from PCE reports.

- Lack of accountability for implementation of PCE recommendations.

- Limited focus and analysis on gender and key populations.

- Tension between need for global synthesis of PCE reports and inclusion of country priorities.

- Lack of country ownership.

- Lack of capacity of CEPs in some countries.

- High turnover within the CEPs.

- Security challenges in some countries.

It is worth noting that some of these factors are specific to the PCE itself but others relate to the Global Fund more broadly (i.e., processes, policies and culture- such as accountability for follow up on findings and recommendations) as well as others are contextual (e.g., capacity and security aspects in country).

Evaluation Question 5. Lessons learned

The final evaluation question is on lessons learned and key takeaways, including:

- How best to ensure that independent country-level evaluations effectively inform governance and discussions at secretariat and country/regional level?

- What needs to be streamlined to ensure the PCEs provide the most effective responses to the specific country issues/questions?

- Best practices and how they can be used for further improving the programs through a wider dissemination of best practices?

- How did countries which did not participate in the PCEs benefit from the learnings of the PCEs?

- How can the PCE model be adjusted to ensure greater sustainability from a VFM and capacity perspective?"

The main lesson on ensuring that independent country-level evaluations effectively inform the Global Fund is that providing high quality, relevant reports based on sound, credible and independent analysis is not by itself enough to ensure use in forming the Global Fund's decision making.

It is essential to ensure a realistic design which has a manageable range of objectives and that can be fully implemented and understood by those involved – the implementation issues in the PCE, due to its complexity, were a major factor. It is also essential to build ownership among stakeholder groups, through effective consultation and tailoring, and ensure effective follow up on recommendations at all levels.

On the question of streamlining, the steps already taken by the TERG to narrow the scope and focus of the PCE were clearly in the right direction, so some lessons were learned quite early on. However, the design overall was still quite complex and multi-layered. The lesson here is that further unpacking the design and using different evaluation instruments to target different evaluation audiences is also required. This is discussed further in the next section on recommendations and design considerations.

Regarding countries which did not participate in the PCEs, this is a major gap which needs to be addressed in future designs, to extend coverage beyond the 8 countries in any future country-level evaluation and to ensure more effective dissemination and lesson learning.

The main lesson on value for money and sustainability is that the concept of having a continuous platform at country level – although it has helped to build capacity and learning - is not financially sustainable and is one main reason why value for money of the PCE against the original objectives was limited. This is particularly an important point to consider if greater coverage across countries is also required, as it would be prohibitively expensive to have a country platform in a large number of countries. Other options to replace the continuous platform are discussed further below in the section on design considerations going forward.

How far were the PCE objectives achieved?

This has already been extensively covered in the main report and in the discussion on effectiveness as part of overall value for money. In summary (see also Table 11 below)

- Two of the original objectives of the PCE were achieved, including the very important objective of high-quality country and global level reports synthesised for the Board

- the other objectives were largely not achieved.

- Against the revised objectives, effectiveness was significantly better, as the steps taken to focus on the Global Fund business model and deep dives was a positive move.

- The major gap was on learning and utility, and the wider objective on capacity building for M&E and on data quality were misconceived as deliverables for the PCE in the first place.

Table 11 9: Achievement of PCE objectives

PCE objective[60]	Primary user(s)	Rating	Notes on rating	Relevance
Assess the extent to which the Global Fund contributes to impact.	Global level (Secretariat teams, Strategy Committee, Board) and country-level		The original objective of impact analyses was discontinued due to the methodological impossibility of using the primary data sources available to the CEPs to rigorously assess impact. Nevertheless, an alternative methodology of contribution analysis was developed which provided useful insights into the Global Fund contributions along the impact pathway.	The prospective approach was shown not to a relevant design, but the need to assess impact at country level is clear.
Provide ongoing feedback enabling countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust program implementation in real time	Country-level		There was near-universal agreement that this 'real-time' element was not achieved, with only minor exceptions.	
Analyze implementation and degree of accomplishment of Global Fund Strategic Objectives, with a particular focus on Global Fund policies and practices; RSSH; and gender and human rights	Global level (TERG, Strategy Committee, Board)		Independent insights into various elements of business model effectiveness (including the whole grant cycle analyses) were largely appreciated by global level audiences. Additionally, country-level stakeholders appreciated the opportunity to provide feedback directly to the Global Fund Strategy Committee and Board. Reports included specific analyses against Global Fund Strategic Objectives.

While reports included a focus on RSSH, gender, and human rights issues, in a minority of countries major critiques or concerns about their treatment of these topics were raised, and this element is assessed as 'mostly met.' | High, given the Global Fund business model, having an independent lens on country level performance is essential, direct to the Board.

However, it also requires wider coverage than 8 countries and more effective processes for follow through and accountability |
| **Identify risks and challenges that impede program** | Country-level | | Country PCE reports did identify risks, issues and challenges, and included | |

---

[60] Ibid.

performance, and opportunities to inform and improve program quality for impact, effectiveness, and value-for-money			numerous analyses of value-for-money. However, there were relatively few examples of follow-through on potential solutions. The lack of clear accountability mechanisms for PCE recommendations at country level was highlighted by most country-level stakeholders.	
Strengthen country M&E systems for robust measurement	Country-level (PRs, SRs, MoH, etc.)		Data quality improvement was recognized to be an inappropriate expected benefit for an evaluation and was de-prioritized. Anecdotal evidence that PCE findings created pressure for data quality improvements in some countries were disputed by several stakeholders.	Independent evaluation depends on good data systems, and assesses where there are gaps, but should not be the route to build them directly.
Development of country capacity in M&E as a means to improve program implementation	Country-level (PRs, SRs, LFAs, MoH, CCM)		Although this objective was somewhat de-prioritized, it was explicitly included in the TOR for this evaluation. We found that the PCE resulted in some capacity enhancements for some CEPs that could be used to improve program implementation in the future.	Although a relevant and important objective, this is better addressed through other routes.
Identify and disseminate best practices to improve the Global Fund model	Global level and country-level		No evidence was found of any use of PCE best practices to improve program quality and impact either between PCE countries or beyond the 8 PCE countries. Some evidence exists that PCE findings on issues, challenges, and bottlenecks contributed to proposed changes in the business model.	Could be a key objective but a single instrument cannot be equally effective for learning at country and global level, so the trade-off needs to be addressed.

Discussion

There are some important positive aspects of the PCE initiative which should be recognised and kept in view or built on selectively going forward, provided they can be adapted appropriately. At the time when the PCE was commissioned, the Global Fund had gaps in its approach to independent evaluation and there was a need to respond to this, and it is unlikely that this need has gone away. Particularly, there was and still is a need to focus attention on how the business model and grant mechanisms play out at country level and for the Global Fund to understand the bottlenecks and factors affecting programme implementation.

The evidence from this evaluation supports the idea that independent country-level evaluation is useful, indeed essential, but it cannot concurrently support global synthesis for strategic learning (which requires a limited number of questions that are focused on an overall strategic agenda) and country level learning (which requires detailed tailoring to country level). The element of the PCEs most widely cited as useful were the deep dives, precisely because these were the topics with (relatively) greatest country specificity and ownership.

One of the roles of a future independent evaluation function could be to set a small number of strategic priorities/questions in discussion with the Board and other stakeholders and more broadly to facilitate a discussion across the organisation on what stakeholders need from the process, what other questions should be included, taking careful account (with effective consultation processes) of the business needs.

This evaluation supports the view that there was a need to provide a lens from an external perspective which would allow views of other stakeholders, such as governments and civil society, to be heard. Without this, the Global Fund Board would be unsighted on strategic issues and perspectives at country level.

A key design challenge was that the objective of independent evaluation led to a highly structured and multi-layered approach with a major role for the global evaluation partners. While the GEPs were able to ensure a largely consistent approach to quality and synthesis, and this was essential given the variations in capacity at country level, the fact that findings had to go through several layers before being used impeded fast learning at country level.

Meanwhile, the process of synthesising at global level, which is essential for the independent evaluation objective and to get a view on the business model at a strategic level, in effect removed some of the benefits of the prospective element at country level, to the extent that country specific findings became filtered or less obviously contextualised at country level in a way which would allow them to be used directly by country decision makers.

There is limited evidence of the PCE generating generalisable findings regarding how the business model is playing out in different contexts, for learning across all the Global Fund countries. There is limited evidence of dissemination of PCE findings to other Global Fund Country teams and of the wider application/use of lessons learned. This is surprising given the rich material in the synthesis reports and the relevance of the topics they focused on.

A major lesson is that independent evaluation itself depends on having effective processes for learning and a culture of using evaluation effectively. Within the Global Fund, there appears to be a less well-developed understanding of the role of independent evaluation than one would expect for an organisation of this type. Independent evaluation is there to provide strategic learning at the Board level, independent assurance, a different lens/perspective, and a robust challenge function. It is not the best way to achieve rapid learning at operational level, in effective attempting to provide operational teams with information about issues that they are immersed in.

One aspect of using evaluations effectively is allowing sufficient time for commenting and sufficient time for discussing findings, followed by detailed follow through and action. The lack

of 'airtime' at Board level to discuss the rich and detailed reports produced by the PCE is quite striking and was heavily criticised by key informants involved in these meetings. There is also need for accountability mechanisms at both country and global level for following up on recommendations.

In summary, the original objectives of the PCE were found to be valid in this evaluation so there is merit in the original intent, of having a robust independent evaluation function, an effective evaluation platform at country level, a mechanism for capacity building and a means for fast learning through deep dives and focus topics on key issues. With hindsight, it is now clear that a single evaluation instrument could not meet all of these objectives.

Meanwhile the Global Fund has evolved – including a wider debate on its approach to M&E - and other options are now presenting themselves for meeting the objectives individually, although not collectively in a single instrument. The future design of country-level evaluation and global synthesis, to replace the PCE with a more effective instrument or set of instruments, needs detailed work which would also be informed by the discussion on the wider evaluation approach.

Recommendations

The following recommendations start from the assumption[61] that the PCE should not be continued in its present form. It should be replaced with a different design, which builds on the strengths of what has been achieved, addresses various implementation challenges and recognises the following:

- The importance of the objectives around independent and country level evaluation, that the PCE sought to address, which are not met through other routes.

- That the use of a single instrument to address the diverse objectives of the PCE and meet the needs of its various audiences had limited success and was overly complex.

- The importance of safeguarding independence while also ensuring quality and utility of evaluations.

The recommendations are:

1. The annual synthesis reports drawing on independent country level evaluation reports to present a more comprehensive assessment of the Global Fund business model are useful and should continue. This function is not readily available through other existing Global Fund M&E mechanisms.

2. The mode of implementation of independent country evaluation – and the synthesis which is the outcome of this - needs considerable design modifications to address current deficiencies and deliver better value for money.

   *A new design requires further detailed work, but in anticipation of that the evaluation team has been requested to offer a set of **design considerations and options** which are set out in Table 12 below.*

---

[61] Confirmed by the TERG at an early stage of this evaluation.

3. Much better arrangements for learning[62] from independent country evaluation are needed and the TERG and Global Fund senior management should jointly give this attention, working with other stakeholders to understand what will help learning. The issues to address which would help support learning include[63]:

Greater ownership at country level; country engagement and use; receptivity to independent evaluation in the Global Fund secretariat; utility of findings for programming; accountability for follow up and action; timescales for commenting on reports: and follow up and dissemination.

Recommendations 4-8 below are specifically aimed at addressing this.

4. There should be sufficient time allotted by the SC for in-depth discussion of the synthesis findings at SC and Board level, to ensure ownership and follow through from the highest level.

5. More effective accountability mechanisms at both global and country levels are required to ensure action on the recommendations.

6. More timely and effective dissemination of the country and synthesis reports is required, including public access, so that all stakeholders can access the findings.

7. Greater space should be built into the approach for tailoring at country level to ensure ownership, utility and learning.

8. The Global Fund should explore which funding source would best enable operational or implementation research, driven by the CCM and FPM's priorities, and separately from independent evaluation[64].

9. The objective of capacity building around M&E, while important, cannot easily be delivered directly by the PCE or its successor and should be addressed through other routes as is already the case.[65] To the extent that strengthened country-level analytical capacity is a secondary result of independent evaluation, that capacity can be leveraged to support other country or regional monitoring, evaluation, and research needs.

---

[62] 'Learning' in this context is intended to mean learning at several different levels: at global level by the Board and the Global Fund Secretariat, at country level within countries and across countries, and also learning by other stakeholders such as donors and Global Fund partners.

[63] These may already be addressed in the M&E review which is ongoing

[64] Although the PCEs were unable to provide rapid feedback, continuous program quality improvement and testing of innovations was originally envisioned in the PCE Charter. This evaluation found strong demand for this type of learning and feedback across country stakeholders and the Secretariat. To offer an alternative route, financing an operational/implementation research agenda driven by the CCM and FPM's priorities could be an important contribution to support programmatic learning.

[65] See for example the various work which is ongoing to strengthen M&E at country level, supported by the UN and World Bank Group, such as the Global Evaluation Initiative: https://www.globalevaluationinitiative.org/

10. Improving data quality, which is also an important objective, also cannot easily be delivered directly by independent evaluation[66] and should be addressed through other routes such as the Global Fund's grants for RSSH.

Table 12: Design considerations and options for future independent evaluations

Evaluation objective	Design considerations	Design options
How to deliver global learning based on annual synthesis of country-level evaluation	Annual synthesis is meeting an important need for independent evaluation and global learning on how Global Fund business model plays out in practice in countries. Relies on having a consistent approach across countries – a shared set of questions on the global issues. Covering several objectives at once, with multiple layers is not an optimal design. Has not met the need for tailored learning in country – unavoidable trade-off. There were instances of critical findings being 'watered down' in the PCE report revision process; thus impacting the independence of evaluation findings.	It is assumed that the aim is to develop a simpler/more focused approach which has fewer layers but allows an annual synthesis to continue. There are two options we can suggest[67]: Option 1: competitively contract a single global evaluation provider (GEP) to produce an annual synthesis and a set of country case studies focusing on a specific aspect/topic of the Global Fund business model. The topic and set of countries would change each year. This would allow more country level context to be built in, since the rigidities of the PCE approach as a single instrument would be relaxed. Option 2[68]: develop a rolling program of independent CLEs which are commissioned separately by the TERG. The CLEs would cover global questions, agreed well in advance, but also some country specific questions. The GEP would then draw on these CLEs to do a retrospective synthesis each year. Under either option, the GEP would focus solely on the global learning aim i.e., no longer have responsibility for supporting country platforms or individual country-level learning. They would help the TERG and Global Fund with dissemination of the synthesis. Filtering is less likely if there are separate products aimed at the appropriate audiences, including the country level evaluations aimed at the country level stakeholders. In the PCE model the synthesis was the primary purpose and it was difficult to tailor at country level as well. Under option 2 it is possible to have more tailoring and assure independence for each individual country

---

[66] Independent evaluation does of course depend on improving data availability and quality, as has been shown in the PCE. This evaluation has highlighted instances where PCEs helped draw attention to data deficiencies, which is an indirect contribution to the data improvement agenda. It is also one route for improving <u>use</u> of data through high quality analysis. This in turn can help create incentives for improved data quality over time, so there is a mutual dependency. By making recommendations on data quality, independent evaluation contributes indirectly to data quality improvement.

[67] It would be possible to develop other options, but these two provide a useful starting point for discussion.

[68] This assumes that the TERG is supported by an in house team which has the capacity to assure quality.

Evaluation objective	Design considerations	Design options
		level report, prior to the synthesis process, which makes it easier to achieve both objectives.
How to deliver country-level evaluations which are high quality and reflect a good knowledge of the Global Fund business model	Learning within countries is potentially valuable, as shown by the deep dives, but it cannot be fully met through the same instrument as global learning. The CEPs have developed useful knowledge of the Global Fund business model, supported by the GEPs, and fed into the synthesis. The prospective approach could not in practice be fully implemented and a different approach is required. The country platforms have benefited from the GEP support through learning by doing, but the overall model is resource intensive and could not easily be extended to other countries. Country coverage is important.	Discontinue the continuous evaluation platform in 8 countries, and also move away from the prospective approach towards a more standard evaluation approach delivered within a specified deadline per assignment, rather than a standing capacity. Replace it with <u>framework agreements[69] with a range of country and regional providers</u> who can expect business from the Global Fund (and possibly other bilateral and multilateral donors) over time and are therefore incentivized to develop knowledge of Global Fund business model, with an element of continuity. Invite the high performing CEPs to bid to be on those framework agreements, but also bring in other country and regional providers. Under the framework agreements, the country and regional providers would do one of the following: - If Option 1 is pursued, they would provide country case studies for the GEP, in a subcontractor role[70]. - If Option 2 is pursued, they would deliver CLEs in one or more countries in a region Either option provides a route for existing CEPs to apply to be on the framework agreement and leverage the knowledge of the Global Fund they have developed, applying to other countries in their region.[71]

---

[69] Under a framework agreement, suppliers bid to carry out country level evaluations, and have been preselected for their relevant expertise, capability and knowledge of the Global Fund. Doing a series of evaluations for the Global Fund helps to build skills and encourages both sides of the relationship to invest in mutual learning.

[70] The GEPs may prefer to deliver country case studies themselves using their own associates and partners, since that may be efficient for them- but under this option they would be encouraged to consider using the framework agreement contractors and building that relationship further.

[71] Alternative approach: if the country platform concept is felt to be particularly valuable, recognising the learning which has happened in the GEPs, an alternative approach might be that the Global Fund could work with other partners in country (e.g., national governments, UNICEF, GAVI, national governments) to develop a shared evaluation capacity in the health sector. This would share the cost across a range of partners, making it more financially viable, country relevant, contestable (if more than one provider was supported in each country) and broadly useful.

Evaluation objective	Design considerations	Design options
How to select countries	The 8 countries were carefully selected but there was limited if any cross-country learning and wider coverage is needed.	Rather than focusing on 8 countries, it would be desirable to select CLEs from the full range of Global Fund countries. Options include: - a rolling programme so that a different group of countries is selected each year and a good range of target countries is covered within, say, a 5-year period. This would support accountability. If there is a need for continuity (for example continued work on the full grant cycle), a small subset of countries could be retained across the entire period. - Selecting countries that share similar issues and challenges, based on the topic being targeted for the global synthesis and global learning – this would help to promote cross country learning. - Selecting countries according to Global Fund priorities for that period.
How to ensure global learning – selection of topics and other conditions for effective learning	The deep dives focus on the Global Fund business model and more focused approach to synthesis has been shown to be more useful and should be built on. Learning is more likely if certain conditions are met around dissemination and follow up, receptivity, accountability etc.	Selection of the topics for the annual synthesis would build on the deep dive approach and strategic considerations for the SC. It would also take account of the issues that the Global Fund secretariat has identified as necessary for its learning, across many countries, to build stronger ownership with this key stakeholder group. The synthesis would also need to align with other thematic work by the TERG to avoid duplication. In addition to the selection of topics outlined above, other recommendations around learning (see recommendations 4-6) would need to be implemented in order to improve use and impact.
How to ensure country learning if that is an objective for this instrument.	Questions have been mainly driven by the synthesis requirement – there has been limited ownership and tailoring at country level There is a fundamental and unavoidable trade-off i.e., a single instrument cannot at the same time be well tailored to an individual country context and be comparable with other countries for synthesis.	If option 2 is pursued, build in a better balance between global questions and country questions to cover both aspects in a fairer way which would improve ownership and learning. Alternatively: - Recognising the fundamental trade-off, make no attempt to tailor by country and focus only on the synthesis for global learning - It would then be essential to address country level learning through other routes e.g., operational research studies in countries, program reviews, decentralised evaluation etc. This achieves a lower standard of independence.

Annexes

Annex 1 : TOR

Please click on the image below to open the full 24-page TOR document.

A. SCOPE OF WORK

Introduction

This evaluation aims to conduct an external assessment by an independent service provider of the Prospective Country Evaluations (PCE)' achievements and usefulness during the original three years and one year of extension period by assessing the extent to which the PCEs have achieved their original overall objectives.

This external evaluation commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Global Fund (the TERG) will draw lessons learned to inform future TERG work and independent country evaluation at the Global Fund.

The selected Service Provider will be informed in March 2021. The Service Provider should provide an inception report by mid-April 2021. The Service Provider is expected to present a draft report (pre-TERG report) at the TERG meeting to be held in Geneva 2-4 June 2021. The timelines for the specific deliverables for this review are given in the section: Deliverables below.

Background

The Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) was established by the Global Fund Board to provide the board, through its Strategy Committee, with independent advice and to support the Secretariat's monitoring and evaluation function. As a key part of TERG's mandate to provide comprehensive assessment of the implementation and impact of the Global Fund Strategy 2017-2022: "Investing to End Epidemics", the TERG received $22 million to implement the Prospective Country Evaluations (PCE) initiative for a three-year period². This decision was endorsed by the Board in 2016. The initiative was subsequently extended for a fourth year and the budget raised to $28 million. The current funding, initially ending in March 2021, has been extended to the end of June 2021. The PCEs are in-depth, country level, prospective evaluations utilizing a variety of methods to provide a picture of the implementation effectiveness and impact of Global Fund supported programs in selected countries. Through this initiative, eight

---

² As the PCE was based on GAVI's Full Country Evaluations (FCEs), the feasibility and acceptance of the concept was assessed against GAVI's FCE in Uganda as an example. According to GAVI's experience, a prospective approach enables collection of information in real-time allowing key issues to be identified as they arise, including equity issues, and enabling course corrective action. The complexity of the Global Fund programs covering the three diseases compared with vaccination was obvious and it was accepted that developing the PCE model would be challenging.

Global Fund RFP Invitation Notice (TGF-21-011)   2

Annex 2: Objectives of the PCEs in 2016

RFP 2016

The following text is extracted from the original RFP issued in Nov 2016, from the sections which relate to goal, objectives and expected results:

Prospective Country Evaluations ("PCEs") are in-depth, country-level, prospective evaluations that utilize a variety of methods to provide a detailed picture of the implementation, effectiveness and impact of Global Fund-supported programs in selected countries.

Goal

The goal of PCEs is to generate evidence on the ongoing program implementation and inform stakeholders in order to accelerate the progress towards the Strategic Objectives ("SO") of the Global Fund Strategy by:

- Examining the pathways between Global Fund investment and impact at country level in the context of country and other development partner investments;
- Facilitating continuous improvement of program implementation and quality and testing innovative solutions and maximizing impact; and
- Learning lessons that can improve the Global Fund model.

Objectives

The PCE will establish country platforms that support dynamic, continuous monitoring and evaluation, learning, and problem solving with the objectives of:

1. Developing and applying a multi-year framework for assessing the impact of country programs and systems on measurable outcomes related to the three diseases, as well as the extent and ways in which the Global Fund is contributing to that impact.

2. Examining and analysing implementation and degree of fulfilment of the Global Fund strategic objectives for 2017-2022 with a particular focus on whether and how: ·Global Fund policies and practices as applied at country level facilitate, or impede, impact towards ending epidemics; ·Global Fund investments in systems for health in countries focus on boosting resilience and ensure sustainability, including health systems and community responses; and human rights and gender are taken into account in implementation of Global Fund support at country level, within all steps of the policy to program implementation chain and effectiveness and outcomes of the support.

3. Identifying outstanding risk and challenges (related to both Global Fund practices and country contexts and practices that impede program performance), and opportunities that would strengthen programmatic outcome, in order to inform and improve program quality and Global Fund grant implementation for maximum impact, effectiveness, and value-for-money.

4. Strengthening country monitoring and evaluation systems that contribute to robust measurement of outcomes and impact and improving national and Global Fund approaches to improved monitoring and evaluation systems.

5. Identifying and disseminating best practices that can improve the Global Fund model.

6. Providing real time information to allow countries and Global Fund to adapt and adjust programmatic and administrative practice in order to increase the impact of Global Fund and national investments in health and the three diseases.

Additional country-specific objectives will be developed in accordance with priorities and needs identified in collaboration with country stakeholders.

EXPECTED RESULTS

Through PCEs, it is expected to achieve the following results in eight selected countries

- Timely use of better quality data including detailed mapping of data sources and plans;
- Identification of risks, issues and challenges; development, follow-through and assessment of potential solutions;
- Continuous data and program quality improvement, testing of innovations;
- National capacity building in M&E and program implementation –sustainability;
- Strengthen ownership and partnership for the above;

Furthermore, beyond the selected countries,

- Lessons learned for application more broadly across the Global Fund portfolio to further improve program quality and maximize impact;
- Refinement of evaluation approaches for, and possibly beyond, the Global Fund; and
- Independent assurance of strategy (all SOs) and business model effectiveness.

Annex 3: Evaluation framework

Below we present our evaluation framework which sets out the revised evaluation questions and sub-questions, the proposed data collection methods and the key stakeholder groups to address each question.

Key evaluation Question	Evaluation sub-question	Data collection method(s)	Stakeholder group(s)
1. To what extent have the PCEs achieved the expected content and quality of evidence?	1.1 To what extent was the design of the PCE coherent with its initial and emerging objectives and purpose?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, Strategy Committee, Global Fund Secretariat, GEP, CEP
	1.2 To what extent have the PCEs generated the expected content and quality of evidence to inform the implementation, and measure degree of achievement of the Global Fund's strategic objectives for 2017-2022?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, Strategy Committee, Board, Inspectorate, Global Fund Secretariat, CCMs
	1.3 To what extent have the PCEs generated the expected content and quality of evidence related to the effect of country programs and systems on measurable outcomes to the three diseases?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, Inspectorate, Country MOH disease teams, Partners and Donors
	1.4 To what extent have the PCEs provided real-time and forward-looking findings and recommendations to different stakeholder groups at global and country levels?	KII, group interview	TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, LFAs, CCMs, CSOs, MOH, Partners and Donors
	1.5 To what extent have the PCEs produced reliable and adequate data?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, LFAs, GEP, CEP, MOH

	1.6 To what extent have the PCEs provided sound analysis, credible findings and valid conclusions across the PCE countries?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, Inspectorate, M&E team
2. To what extent have the PCEs been useful for improving Global Fund programs at a country level?	2.1 To what extent were the needs of countries and country use of PCE considered in its design, and how has this evolved over time?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, CCMs, PRs/SRs, GEPs, CEPs, MOH, Partners and Donors
	2.2 To what extent have the PCEs been useful for improving Global Fund programs at a country level?	KII, group interviews	Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, CCM, MOH, LFAs
	2.3 To what extent were the PCE findings and recommendations considered to be of value to country stakeholders? How were they used by different country stakeholders?	KII, group interviews	CCMs, PRs/SRs, LFAs, CEPs, MOH, CSOs, Partners and Donors
	2.4 What are the most significant programmatic changes (positive/negative) to Global Fund programs which are attributed to the PCEs by different stakeholders?	KII, group interviews	Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, CCMs, MOH, GEP, CEP
	2.5 What are the most significant programmatic changes (positive/negative) to other (non-Global Fund) country programs, policies, or practices which are attributed to the PCEs by different stakeholders?	KII, group interviews	TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, MOH, LFAs, CCMs, CSOs
	2.6 What type of in-country technical evaluation capacity was enabled through the PCE arrangement, including cross-CEP learning, and what could be improved?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, GEPs, CEPs, PRs/SRs, MOH, LFAs, CCMs, CSOs, Partners and Donors
3. To what extent have the PCEs been useful for providing	3.1 To what extent did the PCE enable the identification of bottlenecks affecting programme implementation and areas where improvement was needed?	KII, group interviews	Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, LFAs, GEPs/CEPs

inputs to improve the Global Fund business model?	3.2 Did the PCE have an effect on the reputation of the Global Fund with country governments, PRs and Sub-Recipients (SRs)?	KII, group interviews	Global Fund Secretariat, CCM, PRs/SRs, MOH, Partners and Donors
	3.4 What additional value did the PCE findings and recommendations add to the Global Fund's understanding of its grants at country level compared to other Global Fund monitoring and evaluation tools and mechanisms?	KII, group interviews	TERG, Strategy Committee, Global Fund Secretariat, LFAs, Inspectorate
	3.5 Have the PCEs brought up lessons learned that can (and have) improved the Global Fund business model?	KII, group interviews	TERG, Strategy Committee, Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs
4. What factors influenced the quality and the usefulness of the PCEs findings?	4.1 What are the key facilitating and hindering factors encountered during the PCEs implementation at the country and the global level?	KII, group interviews	GEPs, CEPs, TERG, Global Fund Secretariat, PRs/SRs, LFAs, CCM
	4.2 What were the key facilitating and hindering factors that influenced uptake/follow-up on PCE recommendations at the country and global levels?	KII, group interviews	TERG, GEPs, CEPs, MOH, CCM, Global Fund Secretariat
5. What are the lessons learned?	5.1 What are the ways that the TERG can best ensure that independent country evaluations effectively inform discussions at secretariat, country/regional levels and governance, with a perspective on strategic generation of, ownership over, and use of evidence by relevant stakeholders at the country level in the long term?	KII, group interviews	Strategy Committee, Global Fund Secretariat, CCMs, MOH, GEPs, CEPs, Partners and Donors
	5.2 Based on the findings of this evaluation, what are the PCEs best practices (and cases to utilize them) for further improving the programs through a wider dissemination of best practices?	KII, group interviews	TERG, GEPs, CEPs, Global Fund Secretariat, CCMs
	5.3 How can the PCE model be adjusted to ensure greater sustainability from a cost and capacity perspective?	KII, group interviews, document review	TERG, GEPs, CEPs, Global Fund Secretariat, LFAs, CCM, MOH, Donors

Annex 4: Bibliography

Board meetings

- 40th Board Meeting, Report of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, GF/B40/08, Geneva, 14-15 November 2018
- 41st Board Meeting, Report of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, GF/B41/11, Geneva, 15-16 May 2019
- 42nd Board Meeting, Report on the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, GF/B42/09, Geneva, 14-15 November 2019
- 44th Board Meeting, Report of the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, GF/B44/09, 11-12 November 2020
- Global Fund 36th Board Meeting, Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period, GF/B36/04 Revision 2, 16-17 November 2016
- Global Fund 37th Board Meeting, Update on the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) work, GF/B37/20, 03-04 May 2017
- Global Fund, 38th Board Meeting, Report of the Technical Evaluation, Reference Group, GF/B38/13, 14-15 November 2017
- Global Fund, 39th Board Meeting, Update from the Technical Evaluation Reference Group, GF/B39/13, 09-10 May 2018

Cambodia

- Cambodia PCE – Standard Operating Procedure
- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation Annual Report 2019, December 2019
- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation Annual Report 2020, 25 January 2021
- PCE – Technical Evaluation Reference Group, TERG, Issues for Urgent Follow Up, March 2019
- Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE), Final Annual Report 2018, revised and submitted January 2019
- Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE), Final Annual Report: 2017 IQC Contract No: 20171717, March 2018

Cross Consortia

- Conference call: ToC and coordination/collaboration among the three consortia, Monday 3 April 2017
- Discussion paper on PCE coordination, collaboration and synthesis Prepared for the June 2017 TERG meeting
- Guidance on queries raised at the Copenhagen workshop
- PCE observations and reporting
- PCE: Collaboration/coordination among the three consortia

Democratic Republic of Congo

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, DRC REPORT, Partnership in the Global Fund application cycle: Evidence from the DRC's 2017 application process, March 2019
- L'évaluation prospective pays République démocratique du Congo, RAPPORT ANNUEL PAYS 2018, Mandaté par le Groupe technique de référence en évaluation (TERG) du Fonds mondial, April 2018

- Prospective Country Evaluation Democratic Republic of the Congo 2019-2020 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT, Commissioned by the Global Fund's Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG), June 2020

- Prospective Country Evaluation Democratic Republic of the Congo, 2018 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT, Commissioned by the Global Fund's Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG), April 2018

- Évaluation prospective pays République Démocratique du Congo RAPPORT ANNUEL PAYS – 2019-2020 Mandaté par le Groupe technique de référence en évaluation (TERG) du Fonds Mondial, June 2020

- L'évaluation prospective pays République Démocratique du Congo RAPPORT ANNUEL PAYS - 2019 Mandaté par le Groupe technique de référence en évaluation (TERG) du Fonds Mondial, January 2019

- Prospective Country Evaluation Democratic Republic of the Congo 2018 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Global Fund's Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG), April 2018

- Prospective Country Evaluation Democratic Republic of the Congo 2019 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Global Fund's Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG), January 2019

- Prospective Country Evaluation Democratic Republic of the Congo 2019 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Global Fund's Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG), January 2019

- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for DRC Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE) Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, September 2017

GEP

- Carnhan et al (2008) Lessons Learned from Implementing Prospective, Multicounty Mixed-Methods Evaluations for Gavi and the Global Fund, 2008

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation 2020 Synthesis Report, February 2020

- IHME/PATH Consortium Memo re: Global Fund PCE Evolution, September 2020
- The Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE) Synthesis infographic

Guatemala

- Evaluación Prospectiva de País Guatemala, INFORME ANUAL 2018, Comisionado por el Grupo de Referencia de Evaluación Técnica del Fondo Mundial (TERG), March 2019

- Evaluación Prospectiva de País INFORME ANUAL DE PAÍS, Guatemala, 2019–2020 Comisionado por el Grupo de Referencia Técnico de Evaluación (TERG) del Fondo Mundial, 2020

- PCE Survey outcome presentation, 39th TERG Meeting, Guatemala, September 2019

- PROSPECTIVA EVALUACIÓN DE PAÍS, Informe Anual de País, Comisionada por el Grupo de Referencia de Evaluación Técnica (TERG) del Fondo Mundial Guatemala, June 2018

- Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala 2018 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, June 2018

- Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala 2018 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, March 2019

- Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala 2018 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, June 2018
- Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala 2019–2020 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, June 2020
- Prospective Country Evaluation Guatemala 2019–2020 ANNUAL COUNTRY REPORT Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, June 2020
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Guatemala Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE), Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, September 2017

TERG Meetings

- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 36th Meeting Report, September 2018
- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 37th Meeting Report, January 2019
- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 38th Meeting Report, April 2019
- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 39th Meeting Report, September 2019
- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 40th Meeting Report, February 2020
- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 41st Meeting Report, June 2020
- Global Fund, Technical Evaluation Reference Group 42nd Meeting Report, September 2020
- TERG Focal Point Teleconference 13 June 2018
- Principles to evolve the PCE, 2019
- Note from PCE call between two EHG team members and Helen Evans and Cindy Carlson,18 December 2018
- TERG focal points call- 11 July 2019- key points, July 2019

Mozambique

- Final Inception Report Prospective Country Evaluation for Mozambique and Senegal Johns Hopkins University Instituto Nacional de Saúde & Universidade Eduardo Mondlande & Université Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, February 2018
- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation Annual Report 2019 Mozambique, December 2019, Resubmitted final, March 2020
- Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation, Annual Report 2020, Republic of Mozambique, Revised report, Submitted 25 January 2021.
- Mozambique HIV Deep Dive Disparities in 12-month ART retention rate at the district level MOZAMBIQUE Resubmitted final, March 2020
- Mozambique HIV grant contribution analysis The contribution of the Global Fund to HIV outcomes in Mozambique 2018-2020, Republic of Mozambique, Submitted 07 December 2020
- Mozambique inception report annex 2017 – 2018
- Mozambique malaria grant contribution analysis, The contribution of the Global Fund to malaria outcomes in Mozambique 2018-2020, Republic of Mozambique, Revised report, Submitted 12 February 2021
- Prospective Country Evaluation Mozambique, Annual Report, March 2018
- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Mozambique Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE), Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, September 2018

Myanmar

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, Annual Report 2019, Myanmar
- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, Annual Report 2020, Myanmar, Submitted 07 December 2020
- Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE), Myanmar, IQC Contract No.: 20171717, Final Annual Report: 2017, March 2018
- Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE), Myanmar, Re-submitted February 2019, IQC Contract No. 20178323, Revised Annual Report: 2018, February 2019
- Standard Operating Procedures, PCE-Myanmar Team
- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE) – Myanmar, Summary of Impact Assessment Triangulation Stakeholder Workshops January 22-24, 2018
- December 2019, revised January 2020, Resubmitted final February 2020

Senegal

- Evaluation Prospective Pays Sénégal Rapport Annuel 2018 5 juin 2019
- Évaluation Prospective Pays Sénégal, Rapport annuel 2020- 2021, Mandaté par le Groupe technique de référence en évaluation (TERG) du Fonds Mondial, March 2021
- Final Inception Report Prospective Country Evaluation for Mozambique and Senegal, Johns Hopkins University Instituto Nacional de Saúde & Universidade Eduardo Mondlande & Université Cheikh Anta Diop of Dakar, February 2018.
- L'évaluation prospective pays Sénégal, RAPPORT ANNUEL PAYS 2020, Mandaté par le Groupe technique de référence en évaluation (TERG) du Fonds Mondial, March 2020
- Prospective Country Evaluation Senegal, Annual Report 2019 – 2020, Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, April 2020
- Prospective Country Evaluation Senegal, Annual Report 2019 – 2020 Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, April 2020
- Prospective Country Evaluation Senegal, Annual Report 2020-2021, Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, March 2021
- Prospective Country Evaluation Senegal, Annual Report: 2018, January 2019
- Senegal inception report annex, Country information landscape -
- Standard Operating Procedure for the Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation in Senegal, September 2018

Sudan

- Blue Nile National Institute for Communicable Diseases, Prospective Country Evolution (PCE) Project – Sudan, Standard Operating Procedures (SOP)
- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, Annual Report 2019, Sudan 2019
- Global Fund, Prospective Country Evaluation, Annual Report 2020 Sudan, Revised report submitted March 2021
- Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE) Sudan, IQC Contract No. 20171717 Annual Report: 2017, January 2018
- Prospective Country Evolution (PCE) Project - Sudan Submitted January 2019, IQC Contract No. 20178323, January 2019
- Sudan malaria contribution analysis, The contribution of the Global Fund to Malaria outcomes in Sudan, Republic of Sudan, Revised report submitted April 2021

Uganda

- Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda 2019-2020 Annual Country Report Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, March 2020

- Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda 2018 Annual Country Report Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, June 2018

- Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda 2018 Annual Country Report, Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, June 2018

- Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda, 2019 Annual Country Report, Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, April 2019

- Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda, 2019 Annual Country Report, Commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) of the Global Fund, April 2019

- Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for Uganda Prospective Country Evaluation (PCE) Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation, September 2019

- The Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation Uganda Report Partnership in the Global Fund application cycle: Evidence from Uganda's 2017 application process, August 2018

PCE Synthesis Reports

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation PCE Synthesis Report, 2018

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation PCE Synthesis Report, 2019

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation PCE Synthesis Report, 2020

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation PCE Synthesis Report Annex, 2020

- Global Fund Prospective Country Evaluation PCE 2020 - 2021 Synthesis Report, 2021

PCE TOR and Charter

- Request for Proposals (RFP) Invitation Notice No. TGF-16-144 Prospective Country Evaluation (The Project). November 2016

- The Global Fund, PCE Charter, Prospective Country Evaluations, May 2017

- The Global Fund, Request for Expression on Interest (REOI) Invitation Notice RFP No.TGF-16-144, Prospective Country Evaluations for 2017-2019 (the "Project"), November 2016

Strategic Context

- 3rd Strategy Committee meeting, Strategy Committee, The Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) GF/SC03/13 20-22 March 2017 Geneva, Switzerland, March 2017

- 8th Strategy Committee Meeting Strategy Committee Technical Evaluation Reference Group: Prospective Country Evaluations Geneva, Switzerland, October 2018

- 8th Strategy Committee Meeting, Strategy Committee, Technical Evaluation Reference Group: Prospective Country Evaluations, October 2018

- Kruse and Broekmans (2019) Independent Assessment of the TERG (Technical Evaluation Reference Group) Final Report, June 2019

- PCE Synthesis Report Findings and Recommendations, 15th Committee Meeting, March 2021

- Strategy Committee Catalytic Investments for the 2017-2019 Allocation Period GF/SC 02/13 13-14 October, Geneva, October 2016

- Strategy Committee, Chair and Vice-Chair's Summary Notes, GF/SC04/12 Geneva, Switzerland, 21-23, June 2017

- Strategy Committee, TERG Annual Work Plan 2018, GF/SC05/11 11-13 October 2017, Geneva, Switzerland, October 2017

- TERG – Prospective Country Evaluation, Strategy Committee, GF/SC12/09 12th Strategy Committee Meeting 19-20 March 2020, Geneva, Switzerland, March 2020

- The Global Fund Strategic Review 2020 Final Report Vol 1 Date: 31 August 2020, August 2020

- The Global Fund, Global Fund Secretariat Management Response to Strategic Review 2020 (SR2020), December 2020

- Update on M&E Matters, 15TH Strategy Committee Meeting, For Committee Input GF.SC15/07, March 2021

TERG Guidance

- TERG Feedback Guidance on PCE 2020, 41st TERG Meeting – June 2020

- TERG feedback/guidance to evaluation consortia on PCE (as provided at the 35th TERG meeting), May 2018

- TERG Guidance for PCE Synthesis Report Feedback and Guidance, February 2020

- TERG guidance on crosscutting areas of work - to be addressed in the inception report 33rd TERG meeting, September 2017

- TERG Guidance to PCE teams, April 2019

- TERG Guidance to PCE, September 2019

- TERG guidance to PCE, September 2020

- TERG Guidance to the PCE, 37th Meeting, January 2019

- TERG PCE "additional modeling" exercise – concept and next steps, May 2019

- TERG PCE Summary Feedback, February 2018

- TERG Summary Guidance to PCE Consortia and Next Steps 36th Meeting, September 2018

- The Global Fund, 32nd TERG Meeting: Summary Report, June 2017

Other

- The Global Fund Strategy 2017–2022 Investing to end epidemics

- Health Response Strategy Maintaining Health Security, Preserving Population Health & Saving Children and Women Lives A New Approach 2016 & Beyond, October 2016

Annex 5 Strength of Evidence Framework

The findings in this report were based on 3 sources of evidence

- Interviews with key stakeholders
- Document review
- Expert views of the evaluation team on best practices in evaluation functions in international organisations

Findings are classified as follows

Strength of evidence	Types of evidence (supplemented by expert judgement where appropriate)
Very strong	20 or more key informants[72] across a wide range of groups and/or 6 or more countries and/or multiple documentary sources[73]
Strong	10 or more key informants across a wide range of groups and/or 4 or more countries and/or 5 for more documentary sources
Moderate	5 or more key informants across 2 groups and/or 3 or more countries and/or 3 or more documentary sources
Narrow	3 or more interviews only

Specific recommendations are also informed by the expert knowledge views of the evaluation team on best practices in evaluation functions in international organisations based on

- UNEG peer reviews e.g., GEF, UNDP, WHO
- MOPAN assessments
- reviews conducted for international organisations by IOD PARC e.g., for GAVI, WFP, WHO
- work experience of leading and developing evaluation functions in DFID, World Bank Group etc.

---

[72] Only comments are included from those with sufficient knowledge to comment

[73] Documents are filtered for quality/relevance/reliability before referencing