

FIVE-YEAR EVALUATION OF UNAIDS

Evaluation Supervisory Panel (ESP)

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PROGRAMME COORDINATING BOARD (PCB) MEETING 30 May - 1 June 2001

Progress Report from the Evaluation Supervisory Panel (ESP) Chair (23 April 2001)

1. At the extraordinary meeting of the PCB on 27 October 2000, the mandate for the Five-Year Evaluation of UNAIDS was endorsed as well as the process for selecting the ESP Chair and Members. A small Search Committee, chaired by the Chair of the Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (MERG) presented lists of potential members, based on agreed criteria, to the PCB Chair. The PCB Chair, in consultation with his immediate predecessor and current Vice-Chair took the final decision, with inputs from the MERG Chair.
2. The PCB also encouraged the ESP to take necessary actions to ensure that appropriate mechanisms for managing the evaluation are established, drawing upon the expertise and experience available within evaluation agencies, offices and departments around the world; to draw upon evaluation expertise in guiding and managing a variety of independent evaluations of international organizations and programmes, that is available within beneficiary and donor government evaluation departments and Cosponsor evaluation offices; and to solicit the inputs of stakeholders at key stages during the evaluation.
3. At its 10th meeting in Rio de Janeiro on 14-15 December 2000, the PCB took note of the composition of the ESP as follows:

Euclides Castilho, Brazil (Chair)
Andrew Ananie Arkutu, Ghana
Anita Hardon, The Netherlands
Princeton Lyman, USA
V. Ramalingaswami, India
Torild Skard, Norway
Konglai Zhang, China.

The ESP met on 30-31 January 2001. Ms Torild Skard was selected as Vice-Chair. In accordance with the Mandate document (UNAIDS/PCB(10)/00.4), the ESP reviewed its terms of reference, further defined the roles, responsibilities and membership of the Management Support Team (MST), and set criteria for the Evaluation Team (ET).

4. At the January meeting the ESP discussed the evaluation mandate, in order to focus on the main issues and questions of the evaluation, and clarify methodological challenges and approaches. The Mandate document provides for a very comprehensive and complex evaluation, including factors to take into account in conducting it. The ESP believes the evaluation should focus on the added value of UNAIDS for Cosponsors and national HIV/AIDS programmes. The intention is not to evaluate country or cosponsor programmes as such. At the global level questions related to governance and resource mobilisation are essential. Evaluation of the effectiveness of UNAIDS at country level presents special methodological challenges. The country studies are very important, and the ESP noted the need for sufficient resources and preparation to ensure in-depth and meaningful analysis. The ESP also strongly endorsed the nature of the evaluation as transparent and constructive, strategic, forward-looking and participatory.
5. The ESP discussion was recorded in the ESP document “Evaluation Mandate: Summary of Discussion of Issues”, which was circulated as a note to Annex III of the Mandate document in the Request for Proposal (RFP) to prospective bidders. A copy of the document is available and the ESP would welcome stakeholder comments at any time. Further discussions on the scope and emphasis of the evaluation will be held during stakeholder consultations in connection with the Inception report.
6. At the January meeting, the ESP agreed that the scope and complexity of the evaluation with meaningful stakeholder participation was too ambitious for the timeframe envisaged in the Mandate document. It examined three possibilities for adjustment – reduce the scope of the evaluation, adjust the methodology, or extend the timeframe. The first two options would impact most on country studies, leading to imbalance and superficiality in the evaluation. The ESP agreed that the preferred approach is to fully implement the evaluation as set out in the Mandate document, and extend the timeframe by some months. This would mean an Interim rather than a Final report for the May/June 2002 PCB meeting, with the Final report available for the thematic PCB meeting in December 2002.
7. The ESP Chair wrote to the PCB Chair immediately following the ESP meeting to report on results, and to seek his concurrence for extending the timeframe of the evaluation, noting that this may have some impact on the budget of the evaluation. The revised schedule has the evaluation firm contracted by early May 2001, the draft Inception report ready for circulation to stakeholders in late June, a possible stakeholders’ workshop in mid-July, and finalization of the Inception Report by ESP in late July. The study phase would be from August 2001 to May 2002, with an Interim Report to the May-June 2002 PCB meeting. Consultations with stakeholders on a draft Synthesis Report will take place in July 2002. The Final Report will be submitted to the PCB Chair in November and discussion at the thematic PCB in December 2002.

8. The ESP Chair also wrote to Heads of Cosponsoring Agencies to report on results of the first ESP meeting, and committed the ESP to a constructive and frank examination of issues with cosponsors to ensure an effective process that provides common understanding of the issues, and commitment to the way forward.
9. The ESP Vice-Chair (Ms Skard), as part of her special responsibilities to ensure close liaison with Evaluation Units of Cosponsors, met with them on 4 April in Geneva. The meeting was the first opportunity for the ESP to engage in dialogue with Evaluation Units. The meeting discussed evaluation issues and methodology, in part on the basis of the ESP “Summary of Discussion of Issues” document. The meeting also discussed how the evaluation could best benefit from insights and experience of the cosponsors. It also agreed on specific points of cooperation. The Cosponsor Heads of Evaluation Units will comment further on the ESP Document “Evaluation Mandate: Summary of Discussion of Issues”, prior to the ESP briefing of the ET. A summary of the ESP meeting with the Cosponsors is available on the Five-Year Evaluation of UNAIDS website as the ESP Chair’s Bulletin No. 2.
10. At the PCB meeting in Rio de Janeiro in December 2000, the PCB Chair invited delegations to indicate interest in supporting the evaluation process, in particular the MST. The Governments of Canada and the UK responded with initial resources to assist the ESP Chair in preparations for the first meeting, and proposed candidates for the MST. The MST is composed of an MST Leader, funded by Canada, and initially, two part time experts in health and evaluation funded by the UK. The UK evaluation expert was replaced by an evaluation expert from the Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs on a short-term basis to assist in the tender assessment process. The recruitment of a new evaluation expert for the remaining period to the MST is under discussion. The Government of Brazil has provided an assistant to the ESP Chair in São Paulo. Finally, UNAIDS Secretariat has provided a full time administrative assistant, as well as office space and equipment and other administrative support.
11. A new site for Five-Year Evaluation has been created on the UNAIDS website. It has key documents relating to the Evaluation, as well as progress reports from the ESP Chair. The ESP has also used UNAIDS key stakeholder mailing lists to distribute information on the evaluation. The use of websites, email, discussion groups and interactive electronic workspace will be discussed with the evaluation team during the inception stage to find meaningful ways for consultation and participation from as broad a base of stakeholders as possible.
12. The ET is being selected by international competitive tender. United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) has been contracted by UNAIDS on behalf of the ESP/MST to ensure transparency, independence and objectivity to the selection process. They provide advice and services on the legal and administrative aspects of international competitive tender procedures, and will administer the evaluation team contract to ensure no conflict of interest with the.

UNAIDS Secretariat. The ESP/MST will continue to assume full responsibility for management of the technical aspects of the evaluation

13. On 7 February the ESP Chair issued a Request for Expression of Interest (REOI) to identify qualified bidders for the evaluation. To provide for wide stakeholder geographic and sector coverage, the letter was distributed through UNAIDS key stakeholder mailing lists. These included some 1100 names (albeit with some repetitions). Recipients were asked to forward the letter to potential bidders. Given the complex and multidimensional nature of the evaluation, the letter noted that consortia would be welcome as well as individual firms. Initially, a shortlist of 8-10 bidders was anticipated, but as 14 qualified potential bidders responded to the REOI, the RFPs were sent to all. The qualified bidders represented 28 firms/institutions from 12 countries from every continent except Africa. However, in line with the qualification criteria, the potential bidders indicated the ability to draw on resources in resource-poor countries with HIV/AIDS programs, including Africa.
14. The RFPs were distributed on 6 March with closing date on 2 April. Nine RFPs were received by the deadline and all were eligible for consideration on “formal criteria”, i.e. received on time, properly sealed envelopes for the technical and financial proposal, no conflict of interest in personnel proposed. A Panel consisting of a UNOPS procurement and Contracting specialist (Chair), the MST team leader and MST health specialist, and an evaluation specialist on loan from the Government of Norway has completed the initial process of assessing the bids. The selection process is based on detailed evaluation criteria drawn from the Mandate document, including annexes, the RFP, and the REOI. The ESP will meet in Geneva, including through teleconferencing, on 24-25 April to review the report of the assessment panel and make a recommendation on the preferred bidder. The UNOPS Procurement Review and Appraisal Committee (PRAC) will meet in New York at the same time to verify that procedures were in conformity to UN standards of competitive bidding. Following these discussions, the ESP Chair will confirm the preferred bidder. The contract negotiations and the announcement of the winning tender is expected in early May.
15. The ESP plans to brief the ET in mid-May. A draft Inception Report is expected from the team by late June for consultations with stakeholders. Several options for meaningful stakeholder consultations are being considered and will be discussed with the ET. These include interactive web sites, briefings, and a possible stakeholder workshop in Geneva in mid-July.
16. An oral report will be presented to this PCB in May/June 2001, updating information contained in this note and providing further details regarding the date and the schedule for the Inception Report and stakeholder consultations.

