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23rd Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board
Geneva, Switzerland
15-17 December 2008

Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS

Document prepared by the Chair of the Oversight Committee

Additional documents for this item: *Annex – Financial Information*

Action required at this meeting - the Programme Coordinating Board is requested to:

none

Cost implications for decisions: *none*

I. Introduction

1. This progress report, requested by the Programme Coordinating Board for this 23rd meeting, provides information on measures taken by the Oversight Committee in fulfilling its mandate, and events documenting progress on the Second Independent Evaluation (SIE). It covers the period from our first meeting, 27-28 May 2008, until approval of the Inception Report, mid-October 2008. (An update on any significant events after that time can be provided in the oral presentation by the Chair.)

II. The Oversight Committee: Roles and Responsibilities

2. The Oversight Committee, created by and accountable to the Programme Coordinating Board, is mandated to oversee the Evaluation. As specified in the Programme Coordinating Board selection criteria, the ten-member independent committee, now comprised of five men and five women, represents a cross-section of UNAIDS stakeholders, drawn from Africa, Asia, the Caribbean, South America, and Eastern and Western Europe. Their combined expertise spans all areas of UNAIDS activities.
3. The Oversight Committee has endeavored to fulfill its mandate by respecting the spirit as well as the specific provisions of the Programme Coordinating Board decisions on the SIE. We are committed to a credible evaluation process and a quality report. We have identified a number of critical factors for success. Therefore our approach has been guided by the principles of independence, transparency, impartiality and stakeholder involvement. In addition, great attention has been paid to the professional selection of a qualified evaluation team; to monitoring adherence to Programme Coordinating Board approved timelines and budgetary limits; and to assessing the quality of evaluation outputs.

III. Guiding Principles for the Evaluation

4. The Oversight Committee has taken steps to ensure that its direct accountability to the Programme Coordinating Board is clear, and we seek your concurrence through this report that we are meeting the expectations of the independent oversight role you have assigned to us. We are aware of the need to meet expectations on both actual and perceived independence. Our deliberations are held in private, and while we seek the advice of the Secretariat and Cosponsors when required, our decisions are taken according to our understanding of the Programme Coordinating Board mandate. After every meeting I have written to the Programme Coordinating Board Chair to inform him of progress on the evaluation and raise any issues that we consider should be brought to Programme Coordinating Board attention. We are grateful to the UNAIDS Secretariat for providing us with dedicated secretariat support in an Executive and an Administrative Assistant, an important factor in ensuring not only our ability to operate efficiently, but also our independence.
5. The Oversight Committee has also endeavored to be very transparent in the way it works. We have put in place a number of mechanisms to provide information to

stakeholders on the Evaluation, and receive their views. There is a webpage on the UNAIDS website where all key documents for the Evaluation have been posted. These include the Programme Coordinating Board documents relating to the discussion and decisions on the Evaluation, the request for proposals to solicit bids for the evaluation contract (also posted on Cosponsor websites), basic information on the process and timelines, a regular "Chair Update Letter" that informs on our meetings and other evaluation events, key evaluation documents such as the Inception Report, reports on events such as the Stakeholder Workshop on the draft Inception Report. The Oversight Committee Secretariat has a dedicated email address and telephone and fax lines for dealing with requests, comments, and concerns on the Evaluation. We also use UNAIDS mailing lists to distribute information to stakeholders, and advise them of new materials posted on the webpage.

6. To ensure impartiality and conformity with UN standards for competitive bidding in the selection of the Evaluation Team, the services of UNOPS were engaged. A grid of some 46 assessment criteria was prepared by UNOPS together with the Oversight Committee, to evaluate the bids. The process was verified by the UNOPS Project Review Committee both for its process, and for the competitiveness of the financial package. A detailed report on the process and selection was prepared for the Programme Coordinating Board in seeking its endorsement of our recommendation on the winning bid. The report is available on the SIE webpage.
7. Stakeholder involvement in the evaluation process has been a priority consideration of the Oversight Committee, as a critical factor for a successful evaluation. We have looked to apply this principle through our own efforts for consultations and communications, and in reviewing the methodology and workplan of the Evaluation Team. Stakeholder participation is required in all aspects of the Evaluation -- contributions to the development of the Evaluation workplan as outlined in the Inception Report, provision of informed views and data to the Evaluation Team, verification of findings, and horizontal exchanges through the evaluation process of relevant experience, lessons learned and best practices. We believe that stakeholder involvement leads to common understanding of the objectives of the Evaluation, and is essential for ownership, and informed follow-up to its findings. The Evaluation can only be considered a success if it provides the impetus for a shared view of future directions for UNAIDS, and commitment to taking the necessary steps to strengthen its work. Thus, in addition to the communication measures undertaken, we have put in place specific measures such as stakeholder workshops, for broad consultation on key documents, namely the draft Inception and Final Reports.

IV. Evaluation Progress: Past and Future Events

8. At its first meeting on 27-28 May 2008, the Oversight Committee, agreed to the Terms of Reference for the Request for Proposal (RFP) for soliciting bids for the Evaluation Team. The RFP was posted on the UNOPS and UNAIDS websites on 7 June, and subsequently on Cosponsor websites, with the close of bids on 7 July. The UNOPS assessment panel was comprised of the UNOPS Project Manager

and two technical experts, the Oversight Committee Executive Assistant, and an independent specialist on institutional evaluations.

9. At its second meeting on 15-16 July 2008, the Oversight Committee reviewed the report of the assessment panel and held a substantive telephone interview with the prospective Team Leader. On the basis of the UNOPS report and the telephone interview, we made an unqualified, unanimous recommendation to the Programme Coordinating Board for selection of the ITAD/HLSP consortium, based in the UK, and its associated partners in India, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Honduras and Georgia. The Programme Coordinating Board approved the recommendation by its intersessional process on 29 July.
10. The Evaluation Team immediately began work on the draft Inception Report, outlining the design, methodology, evaluation framework, and workplan for the Evaluation, submitted on 8 September 2008. The Oversight Committee arranged for extensive consultations with stakeholders on the draft Inception Report, as a key event in launching the Evaluation on a sound basis. The Draft Inception Report was posted on the website, with notices through the UNAIDS mailing lists inviting written comments.
11. In conjunction with its third meeting, on 15-17 September 2008, the Oversight Committee organized a Stakeholder Workshop on the draft Inception Report. Members of the Oversight Committee and Evaluation Team discussed the Report with approximately 70 participants from a broad spectrum of stakeholders, including Member States, all 10 Cosponsors, civil society, other international organizations, and the UNAIDS Secretariat. In addition, some 45 written comments were received. Those received prior to the Workshop were made available to participants, and later comments, submitted before 26 September 2008, were taken into account for finalizing the Inception Report. Documentation from the Stakeholder Workshop is posted on the SIE webpage, and includes the agenda, list of participants, proceedings of the plenary and workshop discussions, and feedback from Workshop participants. The final Inception Report, approved by the Oversight Committee in mid-October, has also been posted on the webpage.
12. After consideration of criteria proposed in the draft Inception Report, discussions and comments during the consultations, and bringing to bear its own expertise in regional and country situations, the Oversight Committee decided to select 12 countries, the minimum in the range of 12–16 proposed by the Programme Coordinating Board. We considered that this would allow for more in depth analysis and longer visits per country whilst enabling sufficiently diverse settings and sources for data collection. Reflecting concerns expressed during the consultations on the Inception Report, we requested the Evaluation Team both to ensure that regional perspectives are well-covered, and to include all regions in their research.
13. Subject to approval from the countries themselves, the selected countries are:
(Africa): Ethiopia, Côte d'Ivoire, Swaziland, Democratic Republic of Congo;
(Eastern Europe and Central Asia): Kazakhstan, Ukraine; (Middle East and North Africa): Iran; (Asia): India, Indonesia, Vietnam; (Latin America & the Caribbean): Haiti, Chile.

14. The Evaluation Team started its initial country study in Ethiopia on 9 October. This first country visit, involving the core members of the Team, is key to fine-tuning their methodology, assumptions and tools. The results will be fed into the planning of the additional 11 country studies in the workplan. The Evaluation Team is expected to conclude five country visits by December 2008, and the other seven by mid-March 2009.
15. The Oversight Committee will report again on progress at the 24th meeting of the Programme Coordinating Board in June 2009. We intend to hold wide consultations on the draft Final Report prior to finalization and its submission to the Programme Coordinating Board in September 2009. Details of the timeline and provisions for consultations will be decided at our next meeting in February 2009, and communicated to stakeholders.

V. Milestones, Oversight Committee Meetings, Financial Matters

16. The timeline is on track with the Final Evaluation Report to be submitted to the Programme Coordinating Board and Oversight Committee in September 2009 for discussion at the 25th Programme Coordinating Board meeting in December 2009. There have been some adjustments to internal milestones, in particular the submission of the draft Final Report in August rather than May 2009. We will take this into account in scheduling the consultations on the draft Report.
17. The Evaluation Team will provide to the Oversight Committee four quarterly reports documenting factual progress on milestones, obstacles, and issues requiring attention; a report on the initial country study (Ethiopia) for comments on lessons learned; country reports; and two substantive progress reports on evaluation questions in January and April 2009.
18. The Oversight Committee has found there is considerably more work than anticipated in the four meetings provided for in the Programme Coordinating Board estimates. In order to fulfill its oversight role on progress, not only with regard to timelines and budgets, but also on emerging information relating to the substantive issues of the Evaluation questions, we will need more interaction with the Evaluation Team. Thus, we have scheduled our fourth meeting in February 2009, and will schedule two more to discuss preliminary findings in May 2009, and the draft final report (August/September 2009). For dealing with items between meetings, we have set up a system for electronic information exchange and decision-making, and if required, for teleconferencing.
19. The attached Annex provides financial information as of 15 October 2008. The Oversight Committee is monitoring expenditures according to the two approved blocks in the Programme Coordinating Board decision, "Oversight Committee" and "Evaluation Team". In order to allow for flexibility in planning and in funding activities not foreseen in the estimates, we have adjusted line items within each block. We have informed the Programme Coordinating Board Chair of these measures. The Evaluation is well within the approved estimates. We have identified funds within the Oversight Committee allocation for our two additional meetings, and the two stakeholder workshops. There are also sufficient funds in the Evaluation Team allocation to accommodate an increase in the Evaluation contract

due to additional scope of work and changes in country selection set out in the approved Inception Report.

VI. Conclusion

20. This report provides the Programme Coordinating Board with an overview of progress to date on the Evaluation. The Oversight Committee is committed to fulfilling its roles and responsibilities for a credible evaluation, based on the principles of independence, transparency, impartiality, and most importantly, the active involvement of stakeholders. We feel that the Evaluation has begun on a firm footing with the selection of a qualified and experienced Evaluation Team. The engagement and full cooperation of the Secretariat, Cosponsors and other stakeholders in the Evaluation, another key factor for success, is rewarding for the Oversight Committee, and we look forward to continued interaction.
21. The Oversight Committee is well aware of the responsibility placed in it and realizes that the issues at stake are of great importance to the future of UNAIDS and to the global response to the epidemic. I would like to thank the Programme Coordinating Board for the privilege of serving as the Chair of the Oversight Committee, a position that I find both interesting and challenging.

Annex

Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS

BUDGET OVERVIEW – October 2008 (in US\$)

I Oversight Committee			
Item	Indicative budget approved by PCB	Current expenditures September 2008	Balance September 2008
▪ Meeting costs	100 000	23 499	76 501
▪ Travel	120 000	109 228	10 772
▪ Per diem	48 000	35 143	12 857
▪ Support costs/ consultants	80 000	44 245	35 755
▪ Contingency	40 000		40 000
▪ Publication, translation and dissemination costs	100 000	60 572*	39 428
Total (OC)	488 000	272 687	215 313

*Expenditures incurred for the Stakeholder Workshop on Draft Inception Report.

II Evaluation Team						
Item	Agreed budget range		ITAD	Balance (B – C)	UNOPS**	Current Available balance (E – F)
	A	B				
▪ Salaries (ETL, Team and support staff), travel and per diem	up to 650 000	up to 650 000				
▪ Country visit	1 069 200	1 425 600				
Indicative Totals (ET)	1 719 200	2 075 600	1 656 539*	419 061	155 670	263 391

*Contract would likely increase following approval of IR due to revised costing and scope of work.

**Amount based on higher budget estimate. The exact UNOPS cost (@7.5%) to be determined based on ITAD's final budget. A separate item but within the range of Evaluation budget approved by PCB.