

Seventh External Review of TDR, the UNICEF/UNDP/World Bank/WHO Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases

DRAFT Terms of Reference of the planned external review

Agenda item:	8.3
Action / Information:	JCB is invited to review and approve the terms of reference
Purpose:	This document presents the draft Terms of Reference for TDR's Seventh External Review of the Programme. It also includes the proposed timeline and a list of potential bidders recommended by the Standing Committee, contributors and the WHO Evaluation Office.

Introduction

The 7th external review is commissioned by TDR's Joint Coordinating Board (JCB) as a mid-term evaluation of TDR's 2018-2023 Strategy. The objective is to assess how the work programme is progressing in the current strategy and to inform TDR's future direction and focus for 2024-2029. The report will be reviewed by the Standing Committee in April 2022 and the JCB in June 2022. The findings of the review will inform the development of the next strategy 2024-2029. This new strategy will be reviewed by the Scientific and Technical Review Committee (STAC) in March 2023 and submitted for approval to the JCB in June 2023.

TDR's unique value is supported by its integration of three strategic priority areas: research for implementation, research capacity strengthening and global engagement. TDR's current strategy focuses on research for implementation and improving policies, practices and access to health interventions in disease endemic countries, in line with TDR's vision: "The power of research and innovation will improve the health and well-being of those burdened by infectious diseases of poverty."

Purpose of the review

External reviews are commissioned by the JCB every five to seven years for both accountability and continuous performance improvement purposes. These reviews are conducted to provide an independent and in-depth understanding of the Programme's relevance and performance and to set future strategic directions. They provide an objective measure for funders to inform their future investment decisions. Formative, they identify opportunities for continuous performance improvement, through analysis of lessons learnt and identification of necessary readjustments in order to improve the Programme's effectiveness and efficiency in implementing the current strategy.

Scope and focus

The 7th External Review will focus on the five main evaluation criteria¹ i.e. relevance, effectiveness, efficiency, impact and sustainability; and on the quality of science. In addition, it will inform TDR's strategic directions for 2024 to 2029.

The scope of this review encompasses TDR's strategic priority areas and the Programme structure designed to implement TDR's 2018-2023 strategy and future directions, including the following areas:

- Focus on research for implementation
- Research capacity strengthening
- Global engagement
- TDR's revised structure at the end of the WHO transformation process
- Future direction 2024-2029

The proposed broad questions to be addressed by the review are formulated to cover five key evaluation criteria, together with scientific quality:

¹ As per the United Nations Evaluation Group norms and standards for evaluation (rev 2016)

Relevance

To what extent is TDR's added value in convening, consensus building, establishing priorities and promoting/supporting intervention and implementation research and research capacity for infectious diseases of poverty still needed in its current form?

- To what extent does TDR still address important challenges, needs and gaps?
- Are there any unnecessary duplications and how complementary are TDR's efforts to the efforts of others working in the field of global health research and infectious diseases of poverty?
- How effectively does TDR work with others in the field and its stakeholders? To what extent do partners benefit from TDR interaction?
- How is the global health architecture changing considering the COVID-19 pandemic, and how will the change affect areas of research and the role that TDR should play in the new environment?
- Is TDR sufficiently flexible to retain relevance and respond to changes in the environment?
- Is TDR fit to adapt to the changing and evolving values of partners (including the co-sponsors)?
- How should TDR support implementation research and capacity to help in preparedness and rollout of public health interventions resulting from pandemics and other major outbreaks?
- Have the new TDR Programme organizational structure and strategic directions, set in 2018, made the organization more fit for purpose?
- To which extent have the recommendations of the 6th external review been addressed?
- How does TDR make future plans? How transparent, inclusive and consultative is the process followed?

Effectiveness

How effective has TDR been in addressing the technical and policy recommendations of its scientific working groups, STAC, the Standing Committee and JCB?

- Has TDR been effective in leading and supporting implementation research?
- Is TDR on track for achieving its proposed objectives and planned outputs in line with the 2018-2023 strategy and the Performance Framework targets?
- If achieved, how likely is it that TDR objectives will deliver TDR's goals and that the activities will deliver their objectives?
- How does TDR's work at global, regional and country level contribute to reducing the burden of infectious diseases of poverty, and to building capacity in low- and middle-income countries?
- In what ways has TDR been particularly effective and particularly ineffective in the field and why?
- What are the specific limitations of TDR that should be addressed in the short, medium and long term?
- Are advisory committees and working groups sufficiently independent with mechanisms in place to ensure that 'interest groups' cannot influence funding decisions? Are the current inter-relationship and membership of the committees best structured to ensure TDR can deliver on its objectives?
- What key internal and external factors have been the most pivotal in influencing the TDR's relevance, effectiveness and efficiency?

Efficiency

Are the three strategic priority areas and the revised Programme structure and portfolio appropriate and cost-efficient to deliver on the strategy?

- Is TDR expenditure optimally balanced between the different activities?
- How fit for purpose are the internal systems for achieving the TDR goals?
- How fit for purpose is the internal structure for achieving the TDR goals?
- How fit for purpose are risk management strategies for achieving the TDR goals?

Impact

What major outcomes and impact has TDR contributed to in relation to the health research landscape for infectious diseases of poverty?

- What are TDR's main achievements – including tangible, perceived, intended, expected and unexpected?
- What are some of the benefits where TDR has worked in partnership with others, including organizations that are members of the Standing Committee or the JCB?
- How can TDR further improve its partnerships with other WHO research entities for increased joint impact?

Sustainability

To what extent are TDR outcomes sustainable?

- Are the governance and the funding pattern adequately supporting TDR's future sustainability (level and type of funding)?
- What are the opportunities for TDR's further collaboration with WHO's Science Division and regional offices?
- What are the elements that would enhance the sustainability of TDR's achievements?
- Do partnerships contribute to sustainability? If yes how, and if not, why not?
- What role could the co-sponsors and Board members play in the sustainability of TDR?

Quality of science

- Is scientific decision-making independent and rigorous?
- Is TDR's research of the highest quality? If not, what can be done to improve this?
- How effectively does TDR survey the wider research environment to ensure there is minimal duplication of effort?
- What steps are in place to ensure that all TDR commissioned/funded work is of the highest quality and is completed in time and within budget?
- Are project portfolios managed effectively in each operational unit and within TDR overall?
- How are issues around intellectual property and open access being handled?
- To what extent is TDR's funded work published in peer-reviewed publications and in open access? Which suitable measures should TDR use to assess the impact of peer-reviewed publications from its funded work? What are some suitable actions to achieve 100% publications in open access?

Future strategic directions 2024-2029

- What should TDR's unique contribution be to the Sustainable Development Goals in this timeframe, in the run-up to 2030?
- What would TDR's unique value be in 2024-2029 to play a critical role in the 2030 global health research agenda?
- What would be the ultimate role and approach of TDR? What should be the optimal focus and organizational arrangement of TDR to achieve its goals as will be outlined in the future directions?
- Are specific shifts needed to make a bigger impact on preventing infectious diseases of poverty?

Stakeholder participation

The review should involve a range of TDR's stakeholder representatives to better review expectations, achievements and perceptions of the Programme. It is recommended that interviewees include members of the TDR Secretariat, members of TDR's governing bodies and scientific advisory committee/groups, co-sponsors, beneficiaries in disease endemic and developed countries, partners in the public and private sectors, product development partnerships (PDPs) and donors.

TDR 7th External review methodology

The review methodology will be refined by the reviewers. The evaluation firm/consultant engaged in the review must have a good understanding of TDR and how it functions and be able to propose methodologies that would lead to recommendations specific to TDR, beyond the standard model used in this field of work. Methodologies may include, although is not limited to, the following:

- Analysis of existing documents such as: the TDR Performance Framework, plans, portfolio of projects, annual reports, mapping of grants awarded in the context of the 2018-2023 strategy and project evaluation reports.
- Interviews with stakeholders on TDR's
- Interviews with TDR and WHO staff.

Deliverables and timelines

A detailed timeline is presented in Annex 1 (this row to be removed when communicated to the bidders).

- Proposals received from bidders (early September 2021)
- An external review plan drafted by the selected team and agreed by the Standing Committee (including objectives, approach, main elements to be examined, evaluation questions, methodology, timeline and milestones, etc.). (November 2021)
- Review of high-level draft findings and conclusions to ensure factual validity. (mid-March 2022)
- A draft external review report to be presented and discussed with the Standing Committee, including an analysis, conclusions and recommendations. (mid-April 2022)
- The final report to be submitted to TDR. (early May 2022)

Seventh External Review team

Standing Committee members will provide oversight of the review on behalf of the JCB. The review will be undertaken by a team of selected experts experienced in programme evaluation, including public health and United Nations organizations, and with a broad knowledge of health research, related capacity strengthening and knowledge management. The review team will be selected from a list of potential bidders in consultation with the Standing Committee.

Selection criteria

Applications will be reviewed by the Standing Committee and scored based on the following criteria:

<i>Criterion</i>	<i>Rating</i>
Overall track record and suitability of the external review team (expertise, experience, availability)	30
Proposed methodology, including approach, engagement with stakeholders, focus on specific objectives as per terms of reference	30
Overall planning and timelines	10
Cost	30
Total	100

ANNEX 1: Timeline of events from the 7th External Review (2022) to implementation of the 2024-2029 Strategy

SC review of process and input into TORs	13-14 Apr 2021	SC
Compilation of input / draft TORs for comments	27 Apr 2021	TDR Secretariat
SC feedback on draft TORs	10 May 2021	SC
Final draft TORs for JCB review available	21 May 2021	TDR Secretariat
JCB review of TORs	17 June 2021	JCB
Revision of TORs as per JCB comments	25 June 2021	TDR Secretariat
Final check by SC	9 Jul 2021	SC
Send TORs to proposed bidders	12 Jul 2021	TDR Secretariat
Proposals received from bidders (deadline)	3 Sep 2021	
Compilation of proposals / assessment table	20 Sep 2021	TDR Secretariat
Review of proposals and recommendations for selection of external evaluators	20-21 Oct 2021	SC (meeting)
Review / Selection of proposal by JCB (email)	8 Nov 2021	JCB
Contract signed	8 Dec 2021	TDR Secretariat
TDR 7th External Review	Dec 2021 – Mar 2022	External evaluators
Draft report presented at SC	Apr 2022	Ext evaluators
Final report available	Early May 2022	
STAC review (email)	May 2022	STAC (email)
Final report and STAC comments available for JCB review	16 May 2022	
JCB review of TDR External Review report	June 2022	JCB
Strategy 2024-2029 development	Jul 2022- Jan 2023	TDR through consultation
Review of TDR Strategy 2024-2029 and Programme Budget and Workplan 2024-2025		
STAC	Mar 2023	STAC
Standing Committee	Apr 2023	SC
Joint Coordinating Board	June 2023	JCB
Initiation of TDR Strategy 2024-2029 implementation	1 Jan 2024	TDR Secretariat

ANNEX 2: Preliminary list of potential bidders considered

Based on the list provided by the Standing Committee for the 6th external review and revised with newly recommended entities.

Institutions	Recommended by
hera	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - UK FCDO - UNDP/UNFPA/UNICEF/WHO/World Bank Special Programme of Research, Development and Research Training in Human Reproduction
Avenir Analytics	WHO Evaluation Office
pwc	
TDV Global	
IOD/PARC	WHO Evaluation Office & contacted for the 6 th TDR External Review
Cathexis	Canada IDRC
Mottmac (ex HLSP)	Applied for the 6 th TDR External Review
Oxford Policy Management (OPM)	
RAND Europe	
Consultant Phyllis Freeman	Contact for the 6 th TDR External Review
Consultant Roger Drew	
Delta Partnerships	
FSG	
ITAD	
The Governance/Social Development Resource Centre	
Technopolis	European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership
Centre for Capacity Research, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine	Wellcome Trust
Centre of Excellence for Development Impact and Learning - CEDIL	
DAI	
MM Global Health Consulting	