

Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group

Part one: History, MERG assessment, new MERG
UNAIDS Secretariat

Part two: First MERG meeting, initial priorities
Dr Amita Pathac, Director NAC, Prime Minister's Office, Mauritius

31st PCB Meeting
12 December 2012

MERG: history and independent external assessment

Major findings

- MERG established in 1998 to advise UNAIDS on evaluation framework and workplan
 - Successfully guided UNAIDS' M&E work, in particular development of indicators, UNGASS monitoring and M&E guidance
 - UNAIDS contracted *Ernst and Young* in 2011 to undertake an external assessment of the MERG. Major findings:
 - Focus on “measurement and tracking”: monitoring of indicators
 - Less focus on “understanding”: evaluation and operational research
 - Large group of experts, not well defined. Limited representation of constituencies and geographic distribution
 - Not a decision making body
 - Lack of independence (chaired by Secretariat)
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MERG assessment recommendations

New TOR and selection process

New MERG structure:

- Small and well defined decision making body
- Wider “MERG network” as resource for specific expertise and working groups
- Chair and Co-chair(s) from outside UN to ensure independence
- Institutional linkage to relevant evaluation bodies (GF-TERG, PEPFAR-SAB, Cosponsors)
- Provide independent advice and be an agenda-setting, empowered mechanism

MERG member selection, search and matching

- Transparent and wide search (internet, email lists, twitter, FaceBook)
- 43 CVs received, scoring and matching criteria:
 - ✓ National and Global M&E Expertise
 - ✓ Organizational Development
 - ✓ Program management
 - ✓ Economics and financing
 - ✓ AIDS Response – programmatic
 - ✓ Operations Research
 - ✓ Health Policy
 - ✓ Epidemiology

MERG Selection Review Panel

Fareed Abdullah (AIDS Commission South Africa, Independent)

George Ayala (Civil Society, PCB NGO)

Mickey Chopra (Chair Global Fund TERG)

Joanna Glazewska (PCB Bureau)

Priscilla Idele (Cosponsor Evaluation Working Group)

Nancy Padian (PEPFAR SAB)

Suwit Wibulpolprasert (Thai MOH, Independent)

Bernhard Schwartlander (Chair – non voting)

MERG Members

NAME	ORGANIZATION	COUNTRY
Paul Bouey	OGAC	USA
Lois Barbara Chingandu	SAfAIDS	Zimbabwe
Andrea Cook	DFID	UK
Marie Laga	Institute of Tropical Medicine	Belgium
France Lert	INSERM	France
Amita Pathack	Prime Minister's Office	Mauritius
Rajeev Sadanandan	Dept of Health & Family Welfare, Kerala	India
Horacio Salomon	National Reference Center for AIDS	Argentina
Werasit Sittitrai	Mechai Viravaidya Foundation	Thailand
Raymond Yekeye	National AIDS Council	Zimbabwe

Ex Officio

Director EIP, UNAIDS Secretariat

Chair, Cosponsor Evaluation Working Group (+2 alternates)

Chair, GFATM TERG

M&E Focal Point, PEPFAR Scientific Advisory Board (SAB)

The new MERG – a balanced group

Gender :

- 5 female, 5 male

Sectors

- Gov - Implementer: 3/10
- Gov – Donor: 2/10
- Civil Society: 2/10
- Academia/research: 3/10

Geographic distribution

- Africa, Asia, South America, North America, Western Europe
- Missing: Eastern Europe/Central Asia; middle East/North Africa

MERG Meeting November 2012

Vision and role

- First meeting on 19-21 November 2012
- Chair and Co-chairs elected for the first two years
- Confirmed key role of MERG as an independent advisory body to UNAIDS and partners
- Aimed to be agenda setting on M&E with emphasis on identifying and supporting evaluation priorities
- Macro vision and consensus building approach with implementation on a technical level through working groups

MERG Meeting November 2012

Priorities identified

- Guidance for needs-based, country-led evaluations contributing to achievement of HLM targets
- Review of HIV evaluation norms and standards-code of conduct
- Generate better evidence for investments in effective prevention efforts
- Attention to M&E of key population programmes, to ensure equity and access
- Promote capacities within civil society for evaluation of their programmes and interventions

MERG Meeting November 2012

Priorities identified

- Guidance for tracking progress towards HLM targets and review processes a top priority
- Guidance to independent assessment of UBRAF monitoring framework
- One working group, and two time-limited task teams to be established to address gaps and priorities
 - Indicator working group
 - Evaluation task team
 - Integration task team
- Prioritized work plan to be finalized in Feb 2013 meeting.