INDEPENDENT EVALUATION OF THE UNAIDS TECHNICAL SUPPORT MECHANISM

Acknowledgements

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Glossary of terms

Throughout this report the following terms are used as follows:

- **UNAIDS**—refers to the UNAIDS Secretariat
- **UNAIDS TSM or TSM**—refers to the joint TSM management and operations structure, including UNAIDS, Oxford Policy Management and Genesis colleagues
- **Oxford Policy Management**—unless we specify otherwise, we include Genesis when we refer to Oxford Policy Management
- **Thematic leads**—the UNAIDS technical focal points assigned to TSM assignments based on their area of expertise.
- **Focal points**—the Oxford Policy Management technical focal points assigned to TSM assignments based on their area of expertise.

Abbreviations

Global Fund	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
OPM	Oxford Policy Management
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
TSM	Technical Support Mechanism
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

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Executive summary

Evaluation purpose and scope

The new UNAIDS Technical Support Mechanism (TSM) model has been functioning since May 2018 and has delivered more than 300 technical support assignments in over 50 countries. This independent evaluation of the UNAIDS TSM sought to take stock of its performance in delivering rapid, high-quality technical support and to identify any operational streamlining and improvement options that could help the TSM to increase the amount of technical support it supports, without compromising quality and results, and strengthen its strategic learning component. The scope for this evaluation was limited to the three regions of Asia and the Pacific, eastern and southern Africa and western and central Africa. The evaluation focused on the UNAIDS-Oxford Policy Management (OPM) mechanism and not the entire UNAIDS TSM.

Evaluation methods

We explored the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned in how technical support and strategic learning has been delivered to date. We analysed internal UNAIDS and OPM organizational documents and tools and interviewed 43 key informants from seven stakeholder groups that interact with the TSM. We analysed 64 survey returns from an online survey carried out among UNAIDS staff members who interact with the TSM (29 respondents) and consultants who provide technical support (35 respondents). Evaluation questions were framed by the five key criteria of efficiency, relevance, coherence, effectiveness and collaboration.

Evaluation objectives and high-level findings

This evaluation concludes that the TSM is providing a valued service and represents value for money—having delivered over 300 assignments across over 50 countries in the past 20 months. However, many opportunities exist that could improve value for money further ahead of new and additional volumes of funding.

UNAIDS and OPM see themselves in a partnership and are keen to stress the flexibility and responsiveness this has enabled. There is a clear opportunity for extending the OPM contract (rather than retendering) to ensure that institutional knowledge, experience and relationships are not lost.

Evaluation objective	High-level findings	Where detailed information can be found
1. Analyse in depth the organizational practices of the UNAIDS TSM and OPM business model of collaboration—to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and lessons learned	We have reviewed each tool and document and have concluded that they need to be revised to ensure they are fit for purpose to take the TSM confidently through the next stage of funding.	Table 4, page 32
2. Assess the extent to which this model of collaboration is currently delivering added value to the AIDS response through its high-impact and high-quality technical support provision, knowledge management and strategic learning role	The TSM is delivering high-quality technical support and is broadly on track to reaching the results framework 2019 targets. It is widely regarded as necessary, useful and filling important technical support needs. Although strong conceptually, the partnership model needs more clarity and definition to achieve the added value anticipated. There is a great level of engagement and investment among everyone working with the TSM and a deep desire to do things better.	3.4 Evaluation question on effectiveness, page 24

3. Establish and clarify the extent to which the TSM-OPM collaboration's knowledge management and strategic learning outputs and function provide added value to UNAIDS (to facilitate UNAIDS' position as a strategic convener)	Although some useful strategic learning products have been developed in recent months, no satisfactory systematic knowledge management and strategic learning process is in place with buy-in from both UNAIDS and OPM. This has led to frustration and limited value obtained from both routine monitoring outputs and strategic learning efforts to date.	3.4 Evaluation question on effectiveness, page 24
4. Identify any region-specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and lessons learned around how the TSM technical support is being operationalized	The regions appear to have different strengths and all appear to be functioning well overall. Asia and the Pacific functions the most independently of the regions. They greatly appreciate the value that the TSM brings overall but question the added value of the OPM focal point function. They call for the consultant pool to be strengthened in Asia and the Pacific. Western and central Africa functions effectively with and appreciates the TSM. They feel strongly that process improvements and information system tweaks must be made to make their workload feasible. They call for the consultant pool to be strengthened in western and central Africa. Eastern and southern Africa: appears operationally very strong and responsive. They call for more high-quality consultants and improvements in communication around TSM functions and process steps.	3.7 Regional observations, page 36
5. Provide evidence-informed, practical recommendations and options for improving the TSM business model	A wealth of reflection around key strengths and challenges was readily available in governance meeting minutes and documents made available. Key informant interviews and the online surveys served to triangulate and largely validated observations that had already been made in documentation.	Section 4 recommendations, page 38
6. Provide specific recommendations to inform improvements for collaboration between UNAIDS and OPM	Although some collaboration and communication mechanisms are in place currently (such as governance meetings and monthly management meetings), these could be expanded and strengthened significantly to ensure maximum clarity. There remains some confusion among those who work with the TSM. Greater clarity (among all those interacting with the TSM and not just between UNAIDS and OPM) will significantly affect efficiency.	3.5 Evaluation question on Collaboration, page 27

Recommendations leveraging existing learning within the TSM

The TSM has achieved a great deal in the past 20 months, despite the challenge of developing a new centralized technical support model involving a partnership with a new provider (OPM). Those working with the TSM are now in a strong position to know what does and does not work well. We propose recommendations that take these foundations and learning into account. We present practical recommendations that will both leverage existing systems and resources and require additional investment in certain areas. The six main recommendations and sub recommendations include the following:

Main recommendation		Sub recommendations	Who will lead the recommendation	Resource implication
1. Review and define the Partnership approach and governance framework	1.1	In addition to the contractual agreement in place between UNAIDS and OPM there is a need to develop and agree on some foundational principles and articulate (1) what benefit the partnership represents to both UNAIDS and OPM, (2) what they each bring to the partnership and (3) how they will work together	UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	1.2	Finalize the TSM results framework, ensuring that all parties are happy that the new framework provides them with what they need	UNAIDS with United States Agency for International Development (USAID)	Time
	1.3	Develop and agree on contract management key performance indicators between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM	USAID and UNAIDS UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	1.4	We recommend that clear TSM governance, strategic management and operational mechanisms should be established. These should articulate (1) what the main bodies are, (2) their purpose and functions, (3) how often they communicate and meet, (4) how they communicate, such as by what means (face to face, phone etc.) and (5) topics of discussion.	UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	1.5	Consider including an agreed set of value for money metrics in routine reporting to USAID. See page 17 for examples.	UNAIDS and OPM	Time and monitoring system
2. Review and reconfigure the TSM management structure	2.1	Reconfigure the UNAIDS TSM management team	UNAIDS	Time and potential human resources cost implication
	2.2	Reconfigure the OPM TSM management team	OPM	Time and potential human resources cost implication
	2.3	Clarify and agree on a final TSM[1] organigram, including an explanation of each role within the TSM model	Both UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	2.4	Review the decision-making points at headquarters, regional support team and country levels	UNAIDS	Time

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[1] TSM means the joint TSM management and operations structure, including UNAIDS and OPM colleagues.

	2.5	Communicate an agreed management structure and organigram for TSM with all relevant parties (UNAIDS, OPM, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria and United States Government partners) that includes clarity on the decision-making points in subsection 2.4, including decision-making structure	UNAIDS	Time
3. Develop and agree on a collaboration and communication framework	3.1 and 3.2	Develop a TSM stakeholder engagement plan for both internal and external[2] stakeholder groups that outlines which roles need to collaborate, how they should communicate, for what purpose, how often and using what means.	OPM with input from UNAIDS	Time and human resources cost implication
4. Set up a management information system	4.1	Develop a user-friendly, accessible TSM information system, dashboard or website to house operational and learning materials. This will have resource implications, which will need scoping carefully, as recommended on page 49 A specific task force should be set up to take this work forward	OPM with input from UNAIDS	One-off cost to develop system and then maintenance cost
	4.2			
5. Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan	5.1	Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan. The plan will need to articulate how its outputs are directly linked to achieving project objectives. See page 50. Take stock and scope knowledge management and strategic learning needs	UNAIDS with input from OPM	Time and human resources cost implication
	5.2	Convene UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points to agree on the knowledge management and strategic learning plan		
	5.3			
6. Improve the pool of consultants	6.1	Develop a proactive strategy to refresh the pool of consultants and strengthen and develop new ways of recruiting talent and building loyalty	OPM with support from UNAIDS colleagues (UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads, regional support teams)	Time and cost to have proactive strategy, including travel to key countries and regions

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[2] See page 48 for details.

6.2	Carry out a scoping exercise to identify skills and thematic expertise gaps		
6.3	Deliberately build francophone and other language capacity.	OPM with support from UNAIDS colleagues (UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads, regional support teams)	Time and cost to have proactive strategy, including travel to key countries and regions

Limitations

As with all evaluations, there were limitations in terms of the number of documents and key informant interviews to consider within a short timescale. The UNAIDS TSM monitoring and evaluation system was not reviewed as part of this evaluation. We recommend that this be reviewed as a standalone piece of work in parallel with ongoing work to revise the results framework. Strengthening the monitoring, evaluation and learning system as a whole will ensure that the TSM provides more meaningful data to fulfil United States Government, UNAIDS and OPM expectations and learning to benefit the wider HIV response sector.

Looking ahead

There is wide recognition that the UNAIDS TSM has been learning by doing and that processes and collaboration mechanisms have evolved somewhat organically over the past 20 months. However, there is a definite sense among stakeholder groups that the constant change cannot continue without detracting from TSM effectiveness. There is an urgent consistent call for clarity and stability.

It will be crucial for the TSM management team (both within UNAIDS and OPM) to quickly agree (1) how they want to take these evaluation findings forward and (2) how they will communicate with those who have contributed to it, to avoid demotivating key stakeholder groups that have contributed thinking and ideas to this evaluation and to maintain the respect and goodwill established for the TSM to date.

1.   Introduction and background

1.1   Introduction

This report presents findings and recommendations from an independent evaluation of the UNAIDS Technical Support Mechanism (TSM). UNAIDS set up the new TSM model[3] in May 2018 to provide technical support and strategic learning to strengthen the AIDS response to achieve the UNAIDS Fast-Track strategy goal of ending AIDS as a public health threat by 2030. The TSM is funded by multiple funding streams. A USAID agreement funds a major component of work within the TSM technical support portfolio. These United States Government funds are primarily intended to support enhanced effectiveness of funds form the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria in HIV responses at the country level.

Since May 2018, more than 300 technical support assignments have been commissioned in more than 50 countries to strengthen the AIDS response. The level of funding to be channelled through the TSM is likely to increase during 2020 because United States Government funding for the next phase of the grant has increased. This will put existing structures and processes under more pressure and strain.

Purpose

At this juncture, UNAIDS seeks to take stock of its performance and identify any operational streamlining and improvement options that will enable the TSM to increase technical support without compromising quality and results. At a minimum, it seeks to maintain and enhance current levels of operational efficiency, effectiveness, relevance and coherence of the technical support provided.

Objectives

This evaluation explores the strengths, weaknesses and lessons learned in how technical support and strategic learning has been delivered to date. The objective of this evaluation is not to evaluate the results of technical support provided at the country level but to examine the operating procedures and practices between UNAIDS and OPM. Specific objectives include:

- To analyse in depth the organizational practices of the UNAIDS TSM and OPM business model of collaboration—to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and lessons learned.

- To assess the extent to which this model of collaboration is currently delivering added value to the AIDS response through its high-impact and high-quality technical support provision, knowledge management and strategic learning role.

- To establish and clarify the extent to which the TSM-OPM collaboration's knowledge management and strategic learning outputs and function provide added value to UNAIDS (to facilitate UNAIDS position as a strategic convener).

- To identify any region-specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and lessons learned around how the TSM technical support is being operationalized.

- To provide evidence-informed practical recommendations and options for improving the TSM business model.

- To provide specific recommendations to inform improvements for collaboration between UNAIDS and OPM.

Scope

This evaluation focuses on technical support being delivered in the regions of eastern and southern Africa, western and central Africa and Asia and the Pacific between May 2018 and December 2019.

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[3] The original technical support facility model was set up in 2005.

2.   Evaluation framework, approach and methods

2.1   Evaluation framework

The evaluation is framed by five key criteria that include four of the six OECD Development Co-operation Directorate criteria: efficiency, relevance, coherence and effectiveness—plus the criterion of collaboration. We were keen to include this criterion, since the TMS model requires significant collaboration and partnership working between multiple stakeholder groups, operating at multiple levels of different organizations and cultures. Further, the terms of reference also asked that we provide specific recommendations to inform improvements for collaboration between OPM and UNAIDS.

The five key evaluation questions are:

- Efficiency: to what extent are TSM processes efficient?

- Relevance: is the TSM-OPM collaboration organizational and business model appropriate for achieving the TSM core functions?

- Coherence: do the organizational practices of the TSM-OPM model currently align with and meet the expectations and needs of beneficiaries, the Global Fund, USAID and the Fast-Track targets?

- Effectiveness: to what extent is the current TSM model able to meet the organizational key performance indicators and expectations of UNAIDS and USAID with effect on progress towards the Fast-Track targets and making the Global Fund money work?

- Collaboration: is a clear and functioning structure in place for collaboration between the stakeholders of the TSM (USAID, UNAIDS headquarters, UNAIDS country offices and country directors, the Global Fund, UNAIDS regional support teams, thematic leads, OPM focal points etc.)?

2.2   Approach, methods and data sources

The evaluation approach included:

- A comprehensive and critical assessment of the current organizational model, tools, standard operating procedures to inform the five key evaluation questions (efficiency, coherence, effectiveness, relevance and collaboration).

- Primary data collection through key interviews and online surveys.

- Triangulation of information and seeking additional information for major issues (such as when both sources did not provide enough clarity).

- Assessment and recommendations.

The methods included a desk review of key documentation available in TSM strategic, operational and governance documentation, complemented by gathering primary source data (quantitative and qualitative) through key informant interviews and two online surveys. Primary source data were used to complement the desk review. A total of 43 key informants were interviewed from the following key stakeholder groups:

- UNAIDS: UNAIDS country offices and country directors, thematic leads, regional support teams, headquarters thematic leads and senior leadership team of the TSM (interviewed seven UNAIDS country office staff members, eight thematic leads, all three regional support teams, four UNAIDS headquarters (two of which are also thematic leads and not counted in the eight) and received survey returns from 29 UNAIDS staff members, including UNAIDS country offices, regional support teams and thematic leads.

- OPM: TSM Board members, OPM operational and technical team and focal points (interviewed seven, including two from Genesis).

- National and international consultants engaged to provide technical support (interviewed three).

- Global Fund at the headquarters and regional and country levels (interviewed three: one at headquarters, one regional and one at the country level).

- USAID: interviewed two.

- Recipients within the health ministry national HIV and AIDS programmes, Global Fund portfolio managers at the country level (interviewed two recipients from one country—two from health ministries).

Recipients of the first online survey included UNAIDS country offices, country directors, regional support teams and thematic leads within the geographical scope of this evaluation. A total of 29 UNAIDS staff members responded of 78 to whom the survey was sent, giving a 37% response rate. The second online survey was sent separately to 81, which included a purposeful sample of national, regional and international consultants who had provided technical support through the TSM mechanism; 35 consultants responded,

giving a 43% response rate. These positive response rates suggest strong engagement and investment in the TSM model within these stakeholder groups.

2.3   Limitations

As with all evaluations, there were limitations.

More than 40 documents were reviewed in a short time period. We are confident we drew out the major relevant themes, but there is always the risk that we missed something or misunderstood. If this is the case, we remain happy to be corrected.

Although we spoke to more than 40 key informants at various levels and interactions with the TSM, one group was difficult to access. We did not get to talk to as many country recipients as we wanted to get a rounded view of how they experience technical support.

Although we researched as much as possible in the short time scale and triangulated common themes before making the recommendations, note that the recommendations are based on our relatively limited knowledge of UNAIDS and OPM systems and information technology infrastructure.

Areas recommended for further exploration or review

The consultants did not specifically review the TSM monitoring and evaluation system through this independent evaluation. We recommend that this be reviewed as a standalone piece of work, and the following points need to be considered.

- A monitoring and evaluation plan should be developed in parallel to work ongoing to revise the results framework.
- The quality and relevance of consultant outputs to the results framework targets need to be recognized and tied into the monitoring and evaluation system.
- The review of the TSM monitoring and evaluation system would include comprehensively reviewing the TSM theory of change, the new results framework and situating these with an monitoring and evaluation and strategic learning framework or system and plan.

Although we identify current efforts and ideas for strengthening the capturing of value for money, it was not possible for us to compare the value for money proposition between the earlier technical support facilities and current TSM model.

3.   Evaluation findings

We present the evaluation findings under the five key evaluation criteria: effectiveness, efficiency, relevance, coherence and collaboration. This is followed by a section presenting our in-depth analysis of the organizational practices of the UNAIDS TSM and OPM business model, a section including region-specific observations and finally some positive practice examples that the TSM team can celebrate and learn from.

We provide a high-level overview to conclusions to the six evaluation objectives below along with signposting to the relevant sections for more detailed information (Table 1).

Table 1. High-level overview

Evaluation objective	High-level findings	Where detailed information can be found
1. Analyse in depth the organizational practices of the UNAIDS TSM and OPM business model of collaboration—to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and lessons learned	We have reviewed each tool or document and have concluded that they require revision to ensure they are fit for purpose to take the TSM confidently through the next stage of funding.	Table 4, page 32
2. Assess the extent to which this model of collaboration is currently delivering added value to the AIDS response through its high-impact and high-quality technical support provision, knowledge management and strategic learning role	The TSM is delivering high-quality technical support and is broadly on track to reaching the results framework targets for 2019. It is widely regarded as necessary, useful and filling important technical support needs. Although strong conceptually, the partnership model needs more clarity and definition to achieve the added value anticipated. There is a great level of engagement and investment among everyone working with the TSM and a deep desire to do things better.	3.4 Evaluation question on effectiveness, page 24
3. Establish and clarify the extent to which the TSM-OPM collaboration's knowledge management and strategic learning outputs and function provide added value to UNAIDS (to facilitate UNAIDS' position as a strategic convener)	Although some useful strategic learning products have been developed in recent months, no satisfactory systematic knowledge management and strategic learning process is in place with buy-in from both UNAIDS and OPM. This has led to frustration and limited value obtained from both routine monitoring outputs and strategic learning efforts to date.	3.4 Evaluation question on effectiveness, page 24
4. Identify any region-specific strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and lessons learned around how the TSM technical support is being operationalized	The regions appear to have different strengths, and all appear to be functioning well overall. Asia and the Pacific functions the most independently of the regions. They greatly appreciate the value that the TSM brings overall, but they question the added value of the OPM focal point function. They call for the consultant pool to be strengthened in Asia and the Pacific. Western and central Africa functions effectively with and appreciates the TSM. They feel strongly that process improvements and information system tweaks must be made to make their workload feasible. They call for the consultant pool to be strengthened in western and central Africa. Eastern and southern Africa appears operationally very strong and responsive. They call for more high-quality consultants as well as	3.7 Regional observations, page 36

	improvements in communication around TSM functions and process steps.	
5. Provide evidence-informed, practical recommendations and options for improving the TSM business model	A wealth of reflection around key strengths and challenges was readily available in governance meeting minutes and documents made available. key informant interviews and the online surveys served to triangulate and largely validated observations that had already been made in documentation.	Section 4 recommendations, page 38
6. Provide specific recommendations to inform improvements for collaboration between UNAIDS and OPM	Although some collaboration and communication mechanisms are in place currently (such as governance meetings and monthly management meetings), these could be expanded and strengthened significantly to ensure maximum clarity. There remains some confusion among those who work with the TSM. Greater clarity (among everyone interacting with the TSM and not just between UNAIDS and OPM) will significantly affect efficiency.	3.5 Evaluation question on collaboration, page 27

Although technical support is not the focus of this evaluation, this evaluation concludes that the TSM overall is providing timely and high-quality technical support. The TSM appears to be on track to meet the 2019 results framework targets in areas 1 (aligned national plans and effective decision-making to achieve the goals of the 2016 Political Declaration on Ending AIDS) and 2 (making the Global Fund grant work for people emphasizing populations left behind). Progress is less advanced in area 3 (charting the path for sustainable programmes and effective transition), and UNAIDS is working on this area currently, in agreement with the Global Fund and the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), to develop a more coordinated approach to sustainability and transitions, reflecting both that understanding of good practices and demand for technical support are at an early stage.

A wealth of reflection around key strengths and challenges was readily available in governance meeting minutes and documents made available. The key informant interviews and the online surveys served to triangulate and largely validated the observations that had already been made in documentation. We believe that this evaluation has added value in assessing these pieces of evidence objectively, synthesizing key thoughts and learning and taking this thinking a step further to consider specific options for improving efficiency and effectiveness.

3.1 Evaluation question 1: efficiency

This section structure aligns with the request in the terms of reference to identify strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned and opportunities through a process lens. Key areas of enquiry included the extent to which TSM processes are efficient; strengths; weaknesses and bottlenecks to efficiency; opportunities for streamlining and improving that will not compromise high-quality nimble and flexible technical support provision; and the extent to which the TSM maximizes the value for money and efficiency per assignment.

Strengths and how these are contributing to efficiency

- OPM is highly regarded for being professional, responsive and helpful in its communication and logistics—consultants and UNAIDS country offices feel supported and able to perform their roles well.

- UNAIDS country offices welcome and congratulate support they receive via the TSM from regional support teams and headquarters thematic leads. UNAIDS country offices said they value the quality assurance and technical input from regional focal points and thematic leads and headquarters thematic leads.

- Most UNAIDS country offices find virtual technical support plan tools helpful to identify and organize technical support (the virtual technical support plan step was rated most positively among all the steps in the online survey). This tool has supported better collaboration with other technical assistance funders and implementers at the country level.

- Processes and tools are in place—these have meant the TSM has been able to provide rapid and nimble technical support since the day it started. The TSM is believed to be better in this regard than the technical support facilities, with some exceptions.

Weaknesses and bottlenecks and how these are reducing efficiency

- Bottlenecks in the review and approval of technical assistance funds and quality assurance of deliverables are a major source of frustration among UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads and focal points.

- Bottlenecks are perceived to be mostly in Geneva, because of excessively centralized task assignment and decision-making. Insufficient capacity within UNAIDS headquarters to manage the TSM includes both skills (project management) and time.

- UNAIDS thematic leads do not always have time to provide a thorough technical backstopping and quality assurance role—there is a clear opportunity to leverage more of OPM focal point's technical expertise to improve quality.

- Clarity of roles and responsibilities – despite recognition that roles have evolved and become clearer over time, there remains some confusion and frustration around the definition of roles (especially thematic leads and focal points but also within the operational team and consultants), purpose and means of collaboration. See the section on effectiveness for specific discussion on thematic lead and focal point twinning.

- Communication—the TSM mechanism is complex, requiring communication between multiple members on multiple processes and themes. The internal and external communication needs should be considered. Who needs to be communicated with, on what and when is not currently clear. There is a definite sense of disconnect between the various roles within the TSM (among UNAIDS and OPM as well as partners such as the Global Fund). Addressing these and making communication channels transparent should improve efficiency significantly.

- Some processes are excessively complicated, being applied inconsistently and systems are lacking to underpin them. There is work to be done. A central accessible repository and information system is needed to house standard tools and forms that explain process steps. This lack leads to confusion, excessive emails and time wasted responding to ad hoc queries and questions. Existing forms, although helpful, require streamlining, standardizing and joining up in a central repository with targeted access according to job roles. Knowledge management and strategic learning processes are not well understood or appreciated, and it is unclear how strategic learning products are being shared (see the effectiveness section for more on knowledge management and strategic learning). See Table 2 for in-depth analysis on this.

- The quality and range of consultants in the pool and frustrations around availability mean that confidence in the TSM model is being curtailed. Despite recent improvements, this area needs more work—the pool does not cover all high-priority areas at the quality required in all regions. Western and central Africa still struggles to find enough francophone consultants. Asia and the Pacific also desires more and better-quality consultants. UNAIDS and OPM need a systematic approach to identifying new consultants with emerging thematic expertise, French-language skills, ensuring the consultant pool is up to date on best practices in the HIV response and able to work in western and central Africa, where the catch-up needs are greatest. This can build on the efforts already made by UNAIDS thematic leads, UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams to share contacts and ideas.

- Lack of clarity among TSM consultants around roles within the TSM reduces its effectiveness (such as a team of consultants working on an assignment not necessarily being clear on who is doing or leading what. They are not always clear who their ultimate client is (UNAIDS country office or UNAIDS thematic lead or OPM focal point) and how the communication and review of reports are coordinated within the assignment and who within the review process has the final say.

- Reflection on value for money measures and activity to monitor these is currently minimal—for example, when key informants were asked for ideas on examples of how the TSM provides value for money, they had to really think about it, as if they had not thought of this question before. This could indicate that different people understand what value for money means in different ways. Progress reports to USAID include comments on value for money, but explicit value for money metrics are not routinely reported on. This is a clear opportunity for strengthening in the next phase of grant funding.

Lessons learned and opportunities

- UNAIDS country offices and thematic leads in particular are spending a lot of time on TSM work. It is crucial that processes and decision-making protocols be streamlined and clarified.

- Processes and tools could be simplified and streamlined to make them easier to access, easier and quicker to complete, to reduce frustration among those completing them. The processes are housed in the operations manual, which sits within OPM, and forms 1-16 aim to operationalise key processes. These have been developed in collaboration with (such as during UNAIDS regional management meetings) and shared with regional support teams and UNAIDS country offices by email. However, this evaluation found that, as a collective, these forms and how they are shared, are insufficient to support effective operationalization of the TSM. Key informants requested that email not be used as the main information sharing tool since (1) they can be missed and (2) reading long emails and digesting forms alone requires motivation. Having an opportunity to review processes and new forms (such as through additional online static resources (webinars or very brief video clips that explain them) could be more effective or accessible for busy colleagues. Processes need to be drawn out of the operations manual and reframed as clear checklists (for example: see Annex 3). OPM may benefit from looking at software specifically designed for companies to map out common repeatable processes. The tools were developed by UNAIDS and OPM included them in the operations manual of the operational delivery unit. The manual is not visible to UNAIDS at any level, which means that UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams do not understand where they fit into the processes of the TSM. We recommend having checklists that affect UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams in a central location, within the information system that is accessed by both OPM and UNAIDS.

- Regular face-to-face meetings in addition to calls and emails between the OPM operations team and the UNAIDS Fast-Track implementation team have greatly improved working relations and facilitated decision-making.

- Good twinning practices have emerged—recent efforts to clarify how twins work together was welcomed by thematic leads. However, key informant interviews revealed that not all twins appear clear on what and how they are intended to work together. Before recent (October 2019) clarification on twinning arrangements, some thematic leads and focal points created their own system of working and are producing useful strategic learning.

- Virtual technical support plans could be leveraged further within countries—for example, they could be used proactively to support technical support integration at the national strategic plan level.

- Regional support teams provide technical and significant coordination value to technical support delivery—in guiding the development of terms of reference, ensuring linkages with national priorities and global Fast-Track goals etc. Where expertise is not available at the country level within the UNAIDS country office, regional support teams and global thematic leads are crucial.

- One specific comment related to the application form for technical assistance funds at the country level was the learning that several requests can be combined within one technical assistance fund application to save time and effort if countries have limited capacity.

To what extent does the TSM provide a value-for-money service?

As outlined in the inception report, we were asked to look at two value-for-money questions. The first is to compare the ratio of budget used for delivering technical support versus TSM overheads in the TSM versus the earlier technical support facility structures. However, we realized that a straightforward comparison of technical support facility and TSM budgets would not be possible and agreed with UNAIDS that we would no longer explore this question. The second area of inquiry was to gather examples of ways in which the current TSM is proactively seeking value for money in the way it operates. This evaluation concludes that the TSM is providing value for money—having delivered over 300 assignments across over 50 countries in the last 20 months. However, many opportunities exist that could improve value for money further ahead of new and additional volumes of funding.

Table 2. Current ways the TSM promotes value for money and opportunities for strengthening

Value for money dimension	Current way this is promoted	Opportunities for strengthening
Economy efforts	Lean management operations Developing standard tools and templates	Although risk that there is not enough capacity—see recommendations above Room for improvement in accordance with the recommendation above
Efficiency	Ensuring that consultants are fit for purpose through vetting and quality assurance Negotiating fee rates for consultants who propose more than US$ 500	Including systematic feedback from UNAIDS country offices could improve the quality of consultants used in subsequent assignments Reassessing fee rates caps compared with other donors paying higher rates Could use Skype and virtual meetings where possible
Effectiveness	UNAIDS country directors and UNAIDS country office staff are providing invaluable political economy insight to identify appropriate technical support and induct consultant teams UNAIDS is proactively seeking collaboration with technical and funding partners for the HIV response	The induction and preparation for consultants' process could be strengthened by sharing good practice and efforts from stronger UNAIDS country offices (such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria) to those with lower levels of capacity We believe developing a concrete collaboration and communication framework will improve the focus and outcomes of collaborative efforts
Equity	By targeting the hardest-to-reach and marginalized groups in countries with lagging performance on Fast-Track targets	Not applicable

Several concrete opportunities for promoting value for money in the years ahead include:

1. Extending the OPM contract (rather than retendering) to ensure that institutional knowledge, experience and relationships are not lost.

2. Strengthening the monitoring, evaluation and learning system to ensure that it provides more meaningful data to fulfil the expectations of the United States Government, UNAIDS and OPM and learning to benefit the wider HIV response sector.

3. Setting a limited number of specific, measurable, achievable, relevant and time-bound organizational key performance indicators to clarify expectations around management behaviour and processes between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM.

4. Including value-for-money metrics in routine reporting. Table 3 shows examples.

Table 3. Examples of value-for-money measures

Value-for-money measure	Example indicator	Suggested frequency of measurement
Economy metrics	Proportion of reimbursable costs of the total technical support budget expenditure per region	Every six months
	Number of times videoconferencing or phone calls used versus face-to-face meetings requiring travel	Every six months
Efficiency metrics	**Fee rate**	
	Average fee rate for technical support provided per day overall and per region	Every six months
	Type of consultants working on TSM	
	Number and % of days completed by local (national) consultants	Every six months
	Fee rate range for national consultants	Every six months
	Number and % of days completed by regional consultants	Every six months
	Fee rate range for regional consultants	Every six months
	Number and % of days completed by international consultants	Every six months
	Fee rate range for international consultants	Every six months
	Average number of days for the same type of consultancy per region	Every six months
Effectiveness metric	% achievement of results anticipated in the TSM results framework	Every six months
Equity metric	% of technical support assignments completed that include focus on reaching vulnerable and underserved populations	Every six months

[a]Logistics costs for each assignment, including travel and communication.
[b]Total budget expenditure means including fees and reimbursable expenses.
[c]Such as developing a national strategic plan or developing a transition and sustainability plan.
[d]These results frameworks differ, and therefore we are not comparing like with like in terms of ambition, impact sought etc.

In addition to these recommendations, Table 4 maps out specific opportunities and options for improvement and how these will improve efficiency and value for money.

3.2   Evaluation question 2: relevance

This section aligns with the request in the terms of reference to identify strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned and opportunities through a process lens. For relevance we asked whether the TSM model is appropriate for achieving the TSM core functions of (1) identifying and commissioning strategic technical support by (2) ensuring the timely provision of technical support and (3) promoting strategic learning with technical support outputs.

Strengths and how these are contributing to relevance

▪ **Attaining the UNAIDS Fast-Track targets**

 − The extent to which the TSM has contributed to achieving the Fast-Track targets in countries cannot be assessed, since the results framework does not measure impact-level indicators, and many other stakeholders contribute to this. However, at the outcome and output level, progress against the 2019 results framework in area 1[4] is especially strong: In accordance with the latest TSM progress report available for this evaluation (September 2019), seven (versus a target of 10 by 15 May 2020)

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[4] Aligned national plans and effective decision-making to achieve the goals of the 2016 Political Declaration on Ending AIDS.

countries now have national strategic plans in place; seven (target of 12) have completed or ongoing updates to investment cases at the national and subnational levels; eight (target of six) have conducted national AIDS expenditure analysis; five (target of eight) have work ongoing or completed to endorse the results of programme assessments for key populations. Further, in area 2,[5] the strongest progress has been made in supporting countries' strategic analysis of implementation gaps, including inequities, barriers and bottlenecks; 36 countries have worked or are working on this (16 complete and 20 in process) versus the target of 28. This analysis will help countries in producing better targeted concept notes for future Global Fund grants.

- A good example of how the TSM is responding to changing priorities to meet the Fast-Track targets is identifying the increased need for technically skilled technical support in such areas as community response to enable the TSM to respond to community responses being included in Global Fund grants. The related technical support requested has dramatically increased in the most recent reporting period, at least in part because of TSM's demand management[6] approach.

- **The virtual technical support plans help to identify the right technical support,** enabling UNAIDS country offices to convene discussion with national programmes around technical support priorities. There are also examples of virtual technical support plans being used to support country-level or national integration of technical support needs. The use of these could be improved as noted below.

- Overall the **TSM is valued and recognized as being able to respond rapidly and flexibly to technical support requests** and is congratulated (especially by consultants) for its professionalism and communication skills during the commissioning process.

- **The recently produced thematic-based terms of reference and practice notes are appreciated**. There is great appetite for strategic learning efforts to do more cross-country learning.

- **Efforts to strengthen the technical partnership or twinning** between UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points is also welcomed—in support of strategic learning—and there are good practice examples from certain thematic twins from which the TSM can learn.

- **The development of Global Fund concept notes provides clarity on programmatic bottlenecks—** this offers a learning opportunity and could help to target Global Fund grant implementation-related technical support and feed into skills development and capacity development efforts for TSM consultants around political economy thinking, programmatic barriers, funding gaps and costed critical barriers.

- **Beneficiaries (UNAIDS country offices and national AIDS programmes) value the TSM.**

  - **Health ministries and broader government beneficiaries we heard from expressed great appreciation for the TSM's technical support and more broadly UNAIDS' longstanding partnership**, accountability and friendly challenge function. They felt that UNAIDS plays a crucial role in convening key partners in country around the HIV response. They had several ideas for improvement that are captured below and in the recommendations section.

  - **UNAIDS country offices also value the strategic input they receive from regional support team and headquarters UNAIDS colleagues**, especially around developing terms of reference for the Technical Assistance Fund and quality assurance steps throughout assignments.

Weaknesses and bottlenecks and how these are reducing relevance

- **Appropriateness of the model for identifying and commissioning the right technical support**

  - UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points need to be involved at an earlier stage of developing a virtual technical support plan to be able to challenge priorities and help to align the technical support included with global thinking and best practices. They should have space to provide a robust, friendly challenge function.

  - There was also a call for OPM focal points to be involved in earlier stages of applying for technical assistance funds.

  - There is a desire for Global Fund colleagues to be involved at an earlier stage of identification of technical support needs. For example, this could include Global Fund colleagues in the checklist for virtual technical support plan development.

  - Need to clarify with UNAIDS country directors and regional support teams the acceptability of off-plan technical support being supported to avoid UNAIDS country offices hesitating to ask because of the negative connotation of being off plan. A question could potentially be added to the Technical Assistance Fund form asking whether the technical support is in or off plan, with an explanation of the approval process for both.

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[5] Making the Global Fund grant work for people, emphasizing the populations left behind.

[6] For example, actively promoting community technical support needs by UNAIDS headquarters technical leadership and giving priority to technical support to strategic areas of the community response (People Living with HIV Stigma Index; community-led monitoring; and advocacy for funding) took place after discussions at the March 2019 TSM governance meeting.

- Clarity is required on how often the virtual technical support plan is updated. Key informants were not clear as to why they have only done it once and how often it should be updated.

- **It is unclear what can be funded through the Technical Assistance Fund.** Some UNAIDS country directors and regional support teams are confused and frustrated over whether meetings and workshops can be funded or not and call for greater transparency on how these decisions are made. Not all countries are aware of the drawdown facility outlined in the operational delivery manual for these types of costs. Although the possibility of co-funding with other funders at the country level exists (such as the Global Fund funding meetings, since the Technical Assistance Fund cannot as a rule), needing to coordinate this detailed level of cost-sharing has led to delays in technical support delivery.

- **Appropriateness of the model for delivering timely and high-quality technical support**. Bottlenecks in the review and approval of technical assistance funds and quality assurance of deliverables are a major source of frustration among UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads and focal points. Bottlenecks are mostly in Geneva, because of excessively centralized task assignment and decision-making. Insufficient capacity within UNAIDS headquarters to manage the TSM includes both skills (project management) and time. UNAIDS thematic leads do not always have time to provide a thorough technical backstopping and quality assurance role—there is a clear opportunity to leverage more of the OPM focal point's technical expertise to improve quality.

- **Appropriateness of model for promoting strategic learning**. Few key informants (apart from thematic leads) knew anything about strategic learning. The knowledge management and strategic learning system needs to be strategic and have a specific purpose and to clarify: the types of products needed; the target audiences; the system to disseminate; and branding. See evaluation question 4 for more information.

Lessons learned and opportunities

- **The development of Global Fund concept notes provides clarity on programmatic bottlenecks—** this offers a learning opportunity and could help to target Global Fund grant implementation-related technical support and feed into skills development and capacity development efforts for TSM consultants around political economy thinking, programmatic barriers, funding gaps and costed critical barriers.

- **Appropriateness of the model for promoting strategic learning**
  - The consultant effect tracker and feedback contains a wealth of potential learning. It would be helpful if more could be done with this routinely and rapidly to inform technical support delivery in real time.
  - There is great potential technical expertise and fresh thinking within OPM consultants and focal points, currently underleveraged. Working on partnership principles and developing an agreed knowledge management and strategic learning approach would help to realize this potential.
  - Several key informants mentioned a World Health Organization (WHO) learning platform as a useful learning platform.[7] Using this to house TSM learning could be explored.
  - Consider longer-term hand-holding technical support to avoid losing knowledge specific to individual consultants. Consider building in flexible up-to draw-down days after the main assignment.

- **Appropriateness of the model for timely and quality technical support**
  - To improve the quality of technical support, there is scope to leverage OPM's technical value further (as mentioned above) by agreeing on partnership principles and exploring what proactive approaches OPM and UNAIDS could take to ensure that consultants are up to date in thinking and changing ideas in the HIV response sector.
  - There is an opportunity to further explore and develop guidance for consultants delivering technical support in conflict zones, including strategies to make progress despite logistical constraints.

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[7] https://openwho.org/ and https://www.who.int/ehealth/resources/en/

3.3   Evaluation question 3: coherence

This section aligns with the request in the terms of reference to identify strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned and opportunities through a process lens. Under coherence we investigated the extent to which the organizational practices of the TSM model currently support alignment with and meet the expectations of beneficiaries, Global Fund partners and USAID institutional targets.

Strengths and how these contribute to coherence

Global Fund

- There is some positive practice in engaging Global Fund colleagues at country levels—such as engaging them in identifying technical support to ensure that it targets the right things and effectively supports the development of concept notes. This could be improved or built upon by extending support to implementation and close-out, as mentioned below.

- The TSM is generally well regarded by the Global Fund key informants we heard from—for delivering rapid and quality technical support and for collaboration at the country level.

- Where countries identify technical support and the Global Fund validates it, technical support priorities are aligned. But this is uneven across countries. We spoke to a limited sample of Global Fund key informants and therefore cannot generalize this statement to all countries and regions within this evaluation. As noted below, there are clear opportunities for improving engagement with the Global Fund.

- Good cost-sharing opportunities with the Global Fund on technical support (such as for workshops and meetings). This enables closer working and collaboration and is an example of complementarity.

- There is a desire for Global Fund colleagues to be involved at an earlier stage—which could include Global Fund colleagues in the checklist for virtual technical support plan development.

USAID

- USAID recognizes the important role that TSM is filling in the providing HIV Global Fund technical assistance but states that TSM still has work to do, specifically in expanding the consultant pool with the necessary skill sets, improving the quality of technical support, accelerating its responsiveness and communication structure, and validating TSM's value for money. TSM has been recognized for having completed a steep learning curve with lean capacity, with USAID expecting that the increase in new staffing will help address the challenges to date.

Beneficiaries (UNAIDS country offices and national AIDS programmes)

- The health ministries and broader government beneficiaries we heard from expressed great appreciation for the TSM's technical support and, more broadly, UNAIDS' longstanding partnership, accountability and friendly challenge function. They felt that UNAIDS plays a crucial role in convening key partners in the country around the HIV response. They had several ideas for improvement that are captured below and in the recommendations section.

- UNAIDS country offices also value the strategic input they receive from regional support teams and headquarters UNAIDS colleagues, especially around developing terms of reference for technical assistance funds and quality assurance steps throughout assignments.

Weaknesses and bottlenecks and how these are reducing coherence

- Global Fund headquarters is unclear on the TSM aims and way of working. They have requested clear communication on this from the Fast-Track implementation team. The evaluation also found collaboration at the country level to be inconsistent and largely dependent on personalities.

- There is a need to systematize the coordination between United Nations joint teams on AIDS, the Global Fund, PEPFAR and other partners and the TSM at the country levels to ensure that technical support is consistently coordinated and appropriate to the country needs and evolving context.

- United States Government funding is a very high priority for UNAIDS, and yet USAID is not satisfied with the quality and timeliness of reporting to allow access to real time and granular data on the impact of the TSM. UNAIDS headquarters should improve responsiveness to USAID.

- UNAIDS capacity varies from country to country. UNAIDS country offices have a broad set of priorities that often do not match country office capacity. This creates challenges in identifying technical support needs from a strategic perspective.

Beneficiaries (includes UNAIDS country offices and recipients within the health ministry and the Global Fund)

- There is scope to better leverage country partnerships with civil society organizations. For example, during assignments, funding restrictions mean that civil society organizations cannot be invited to join assignment workshops (such as needing reimbursement for expenses and accommodation if they need to travel from regions or the field). Some key informants (consultants and UNAIDS country offices) perceive this to limit the effectiveness of technical support. Further, there is a call for UNAIDS to more proactively reach out to civil society organizations to encourage greater uptake of technical support within these groups to support community responses to HIV.

Lessons learned and opportunities

- There is an opportunity to communicate lessons learned from the situation room:[8] specifically around the coordination of large complex technical support funded by multiple partners. To ensure a coherent approach and that lessons are not lost from this context, this should form part of the communication plan noted in the recommendations (Annex 5, recommendation 3.2).

- The coupling of knowledge and expertise of UNAIDS country offices and independent consultants is a strong concept, since independent consultants need to be able to first understand the local environment before they can challenge political obstacles. They are needed to provide this challenge function if UNAIDS country offices are unable to do this because of their embedded nature and relationship with national programmes and Global Fund country coordinating mechanisms. Consultants can get caught in the middle and would benefit from clear guidelines on how this balance can best be approached.

- Demonstrating the impact of the TSM mechanism to bring different strands together.

- There is an impressive list of collaboration efforts of UNAIDS headquarters to engage more with the Global Fund and PEPFAR. This appears to be bearing fruit, since the Global Fund and PEPFAR have agreed to work more closely on their planning. There is a real opportunity to ensure that planning at the country and global levels takes place systematically by using the virtual technical support plans.

- A workshop held in Dakar, Senegal (a joint initiative of UNAIDS and the Global Fund but not specific to TSM) in 2019 to bring UNAIDS country offices and fund portfolio managers together specifically aimed to improve the understanding around job roles and the TSM and how concretely UNAIDS country offices and fund portfolio managers could work more collaboratively and closely. This is seen as a positive step that could support better collaboration with the TSM.

- **One suggestion from a senior stakeholder was that increasing TSM's value to Global Fund grants could be enhanced through TSM support for Global Fund grants in four phases:** (1) concept note development, (2) negotiation, (3) implementation and (4) close-out, including transition and sustainability planning. The stakeholder suggested that, if TSM technical support could accompany Global Fund grant recipients at these specific junctures within the Global Fund grant life cycle, this could provide a more holistic approach to lesson learning around gaps and grant recipient needs at each phase. For example, by specifically supporting close-out, technical support could identify critical activity and funds that need to be rolled over or repurposed in the next grant to support better implementation in the next grant. Technical support during close-out may identify that the grant could benefit from better strategy development, data collection and analysis skills and address transition and sustainability planning needs. A question on repurposing funds could be systematically included in the Technical Assistance Fund package to ensure that the question always gets addressed when designing technical support.

3.4   Evaluation question 4: effectiveness

This section shares findings around how well the TSM model is currently effectively supporting progress towards the Fast-Track targets and making the Global Fund money work. Key questions we explored include the extent to which the model helps UNAIDS country offices to identify the right kinds of technical support; how well the TSM supports countries in accessing Global Fund money and implement Global Fund grants; how the TSM (and OPM) satisfies or addresses the accountability criteria of UNAIDS and the donor; the value of UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points during the various stages of technical support delivery; how well the model supports knowledge management and strategic learning; and how well learning is being used to inform the strategic directions and organizational model of TSM-OPM.

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[8] The Global Fund situation room in Geneva, which involves key partners in Global Fund grant support, including the Global Fund, USAID, WHO, GIZ Backup and French 5%.

Strengths and how these contribute to effectiveness

- The tripartite approach within UNAIDS provides a strong conceptual model for ensuring that the right technical support is being identified. The **UNAIDS country-level** value to the TSM includes its convening power among technical and funding partners for the HIV response (well positioned to identify technical support needs); the UNAIDS country office contribution to technical support quality is acknowledged through bringing knowledge and local understanding (political economy lens) to inducting consultants and invaluable logistics and consultant team oversight during fieldwork. **At the regional level**, longstanding solid relations with UNAIDS country offices facilitate collaboration on technical support; technical backstopping (through regional focal points and thematic leads) and strategic inputs to virtual technical support plans and technical assistance funds means that technical support is more strategic and responds well to the needs of Global Fund recipients. **At the headquarters level**, integrity is ensured through its independence (through a third level of scrutiny and quality assurance); strategic inputs to virtual technical support plans and technical assistance funds via global thematic leads also makes technical support more strategic and able to reflect global-level learning and political economy.

- Key informants noted good uptake of technical support from Global Fund fund portfolio managers, and 62% of the technical support requested between 1 April and 30 September 2019 was to support Global Fund grant effectiveness and reaching those left behind (as a direct response to the feedback from the technical review group and the Global Fund Office of the Inspector General that this area needs improvement).

- Collaboration with Global Fund fund portfolio managers is strong in some cases, and they highly regard TSM. This tends to depend on country ownership and individual relationships.9 Consultant training has also been well received recently based on new Global Fund rules.

- A relationship of mutual respect between UNAIDS and OPM has made flexibility on both sides easier. Examples given include the ability to discuss openly and frankly about changing budget needs transparently; and agreement on learning by doing and being flexible in the changing processes and templates over the past 20 months.

- Complementarity of conceptual partnership model design—coupling UNAIDS' HIV expertise and unique position to influence policy and practice at multiple levels (global, regional and country) with OPM's broader social development and independent expertise in the HIV response.

Weaknesses and bottlenecks and how these are reducing effectiveness

Related to the TSM model design

- Centralized decision-making and current management capacity detract from overall effectiveness since delays in reviewing technical assistance funds, reviewing quality assurance and approval delay technical support and damage the reputation of TSM. The current management structure (both UNAIDS and OPM) is not quite right—not enough capacity at UNAIDS headquarters to cope with the volume of work required and not enough capacity with the OPM programme director (75%) and programme manager (25%) combined10 to oversee and ensure delivery of OPM's technical added value through the input of TSM focal points.

- Twinning arrangements between UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points have been introduced through regional management meetings and follow-up emails. Some strong twins do exist. However, some thematic leads and focal points remain unclear about how it is intended that they work together and why. The concept needs clarifying and agreeing and training needs to be provided for both groups together to ensure consistency of messaging and space to clarify questions.

- Working with the Global Fund fund portfolio managers could be strengthened—opportunity to look to western and central Africa work ongoing to strengthen working relationships between UNAIDS country offices and Global Fund fund portfolio managers. The regional meeting held in Dakar, Senegal (November 2019) to promote better understanding of the roles of UNAIDS country directors and Global Fund fund portfolio managers was well received, for example, and clear areas for joint working were agreed between country stakeholders (UNAIDS country directors and Global Fund fund portfolio managers). It has been recognized that TSM support is crucial for developing concept notes. Support for implementing grants is also being provided, but there is room for more work around the close-out phase of grants to draw out lessons on programmatic bottlenecks, ensure that opportunities to roll over unused funds are seized and feed in any new strategic thinking that could inform the next grant design and especially the transition and

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[9] These examples could be leveraged for learning and role modelling to ensure that the TSM model systematically includes Global Fund counterparts at the central as well as country levels. Opportunity for TSM to support more Global Fund grant implementation and close out work—see below in lessons learned and opportunities.

[10] We understand that the programme manager role is to become 100%.

sustainability implications. There is an opportunity to share the TSM model with the Global Fund headquarters level.

- The lack of a satisfactory systematic knowledge management and strategic learning process—with buy-in from both UNAIDS and OPM—has led to frustration and limited value obtained from routine monitoring output and strategic learning efforts and products to date. The vision for agreed approach and resourcing needs to be clarified. The approach should outline who needs what type of information, for what purpose, how it will be gathered and how it will be accessed and disseminated. Strategic learning could also feed into the consultant pool for professional development.

- The monitoring and evaluation framework for TSM is not currently clear. We understand work is ongoing to clarify this between UNAIDS and OPM (developing the new multi-year results framework). This is a crucial area of work to clarify what results are important to monitor, for whom and how.

- Beneficiaries note that consultants are often technically sound but not up to scratch in political economy skills—which limits their ability to provide deliverables that fit the national context, cognizant of key players and incentives. They could be strengthened by having systematic induction and better synergy and teamwork with UNAIDS country office staff members who know and understand the environment—as noted in the recommendations section.

- Several countries and regional support teams were disappointed that funding is restricted around meetings. The reality of this means that TSM money cannot be used to pay for community groups to attend, which greatly reduces the impact in these areas.

Related to contract management

- Partnership working: there is a degree of misunderstanding, miscommunication and lack of transparency between UNAIDS and OPM around how each organization makes decisions and acts on them. Even though there is a contract in place that outlines some elements, there need to be clearer principles in place and shared understanding of what partnership means within the TSM. There is potential for much greater partnership working and leveraging of mutual strengths, including complementary expertise outside HIV (strengthening health systems, social development etc.). Clarifying roles and terms of reference, having joint training opportunities and shared information systems (noted in the recommendations in the efficiency section) will also support better partnership working.

- In accordance with the documents made available to consultants, no clear contract management indicators are in place between USAID and UNAIDS or between UNAIDS and OPM outlining what each client expects from its provider (for example, reports are submitted on time and to quality standard agreed; all periodic recommendations that are directed to the supplier during governance meetings are adequately addressed by the agreed deadlines; and budget limits are respected). This means that performance management parameters are unclear, leading to frustration on all sides. Accountability mechanisms are in place and included in UNAIDS terms and conditions and the TSM operational delivery manual. However, routine reporting formats do not ask for updates on contract management issues, such as confirmation that actions from previous reports have been completed, any conflicts of interest or risks having arisen, and how these have been dealt with. This means that identifying strong lines of accountability is currently difficult. The recent audit report is evidence of contractual accountability between OPM and UNAIDS. See Recommendation 1. Reporting quality and format also need improving, since they have not met USAID needs to date (specifically the timeliness of reporting, the ability to report real-time data and the reporting of impact).

Lessons learned and opportunities:

- Tripartite model within UNAIDS could be strengthened to add more value. At the country level, by: UNAIDS country offices being more involved in preparation before consultants arrive in the country to gather key documentation, organize interviews etc. At the regional level, by: ensuring that regional focal points and thematic leads are engaged in developing virtual technical support plans and obtaining technical assistance funds as early as possible. At the central level, by: ensuring that global thematic leads are engaged in developing virtual technical support plans as early as possible and reducing approval bottlenecks by changing the TSM UNAIDS management structure.

- There is a trade-off between the centralized TSM model versus the regional level. The centralized model may reduce country ownership and add process layers, but it also increases independence and the ability to advocate for and get traction on political issues. The decentralized model affords more control at the country level to mobilize technical support rapidly, but with potential for less independence and transparency around technical support and consultant selection and potentially less traction on sensitive political issues. The evaluation findings support the value of the centralized model over the decentralized

model, with the caveat that the weaknesses[11] within the centralized model must be addressed to leverage more of the intended value from this centralized model. The recommendations address these weaknesses.

- The complementarity of the UNAIDS and OPM partnership in a conceptual sense is widely supported—a real opportunity for achieving more with greater clarity and agreement on partnership principles, definition of roles and more joint work.

- Leveraging of technical expertise to the full potential—this is not currently realized, since although a protocol is in place defining how thematic leads and focal points are to work together, this is not well understood by all twins. Informant interviews showed that there had been no formal joint meeting to bring together UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points in the same room to discuss as a group and clarify expectations. If this was well defined and had strong leadership, both thematic leads and focal points promise significant value in accordance with the partnership model envisaged.

- Recent work on quality assurance, strategic learning and capacity development in various thematic areas (standard operating procedures) has been well received by UNAIDS country offices especially (who are not necessarily thematic experts).

- Linked to the absence of high-quality consultants in all thematic areas and with requisite French-language skills, there is a clear opportunity to implement concrete capacity development efforts systematically in each are of technical support, as outlined and envisaged in the OPM operational delivery model.

- Competition for the best consultants was highlighted as a challenge since some funders pay their consultants higher rates. To counteract this, OPM could invest in developing a package of incentives designed to attract consultants to TSM technical support, over and above their fee rates.

3.5   Evaluation question 5: collaboration

This section aligns with the request in the terms of reference to identify strengths, weaknesses, lessons learned and opportunities through a process lens. We explore whether a functioning collaboration mechanism is in place between the various stakeholders of the TSM; whether the UNAIDS-OPM collaboration model is appropriate for the TSM core functions; whether stakeholders have a shared understanding of the collaboration aims of the TSM; whether stakeholders feel appropriately engaged and consulted in delivering TSM technical support; how the performance of OPM is managed and what standard operating procedures are in place to enable tracking of progress and adjustments; and whether the TSM model enables sharing the lessons learned and pursuing an effective communication strategy within UNAIDS and with external audiences. We have included specific examples of collaboration efforts identified during the evaluation.

Strengths and how these are contributing to collaboration

- **Smooth working between UNAIDS and OPM**
    - Some UNAIDS assignment teams value having OPM focal points on board. These teams report a highly functional relationship: a collaborative experience and ability to harness lessons learned to improve future assignments. These teams have appreciated how organized the TSM has been.
    - Some UNAIDS staff members and consultants perceive the OPM dynamics within the TSM to be very good. Staff members experience close collaboration, demonstrate understanding and work well together within the TSM. UNAIDS and OPM see themselves in a partnership and are keen to stress the flexibility and responsiveness this has enabled. Even though there is a mix of OPM and Genesis, the team has worked hard to eliminate borders and ensure that processes feel seamless. Communication around changes in process is seen as effective and working well.

- Coordination among funders for technical support at the country level is functioning well, although this is uneven. There is some support for the virtual technical support plan as a coordination mechanism for use as a national tool in integrating all HIV technical support needs.

Weaknesses and bottlenecks and how these are reducing collaboration efforts

Organizational and management

- **Clarity of roles between UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points—**despite recognition that roles have evolved and become clearer over time, there is significant confusion and frustration around the focal

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[11] Which include slow mobilization of technical support because of three layers of approval within UNAIDS and lack of technical value from OPM.

point role and how focal points interact with UNAIDS country offices and thematic leads. Many feel the TSM has not yet worked out an effective solution. The following challenges were found.

- Some key informants do not value the focal point role. They have had poor experiences because of language issues and feel that the choice was not theirs to have a focal point. Others felt focal point comments on the terms of reference were not helpful and that the focal point interfered with the technical support.
- What OPM thinks focal points are for and what UNAIDS thinks they are for appear to be disconnected. OPM views the focal point role as a technical backstop role, essentially reactive to UNAIDS thematic leads. However, UNAIDS want focal points to bring new insights, new thinking, new elements, added value and global expertise at the strategic level. This is much more of a proactive, "here's what I can bring" role. OPM focal points feel they have no power to step into the proactive role. There is recognition of the need for more clarity at the senior level in OPM on the depth of contribution they could bring.
- Finally, it is unclear how the focal point and the consultants are to relate to each other. Consultants noted frequent requests for defined roles and clear lines of authority.

- What is expected of consultants in terms of collaboration during assignments is not systematically communicated. This often depends on personality and the individuals driving an interaction during a specific assignment. The evaluators did not find systematic guidance around expectations of lead consultant or consultant team members around what their roles are and what is expected within the team context. Key informants mentioned that they were not clear about what their consultant team members' roles were compared with their own.

- There is no clear and functioning structure for collaboration. This includes lack of a newsletter as an information source to keep all internal stakeholders informed and no formal mechanism for thematic lead and focal points to work together. No one is tasked with driving the collaboration forward. If it happens, it is because personalities drive it forward in specific thematic areas. But this is inconsistent. From OPM, this needs to be someone to galvanize the focal points and form a focal point team. From UNAIDS, this needs to be someone who is in an operational role and is not distracted by their core technical thematic areas.

- Communication—the TSM mechanism requires communication between multiple members on multiple processes and themes. Who needs to be communicated with, on what and when and how is not currently clear. The intentional virtual walls set up between the OPM team and UNAIDS regions and countries reduce transparency and clarity and often prevent collaboration. Several stakeholders interviewed reported a need to improve clarity on who is who, who needs to be included in which communication and more info on TSM work in general. There is a sense of disconnect between the various roles within the TSM (among all organizations involved: UNAIDS and OPM as well as partners such as the Global Fund). Addressing these should improve collaboration. There is a need to review how information is shared—such as around roles and who does what in the TSM.

- There is concern around centralization of decision-making, which leads to delays. There is a sense that change in processes is communicated clearly within OPM but not so comprehensively within UNAIDS. And vice versa. Respondents report finding out about the TSM as a bitty experience. The documents and processes are not all in the same place and are not updated, and if changes occur these are not well communicated.

- Information requests are a source of tension and delay. There is a strong feeling that regional support teams are not getting the information they need to properly coordinate and manage technical support within their regions when they want it. This causes extra emails, prevents good teamwork and causes frustration. Frustration at a system not working is then expressed at people. The Tracker is mentioned frequently as the information source. However, not everyone has access to the Tracker or Dataviz, and it is not appropriate as a general information-sharing mechanism.

- There is no stakeholder engagement plan—articulating which levels of TSM management communicate with whom (for example, does the Deputy Executive Director or TSM manager communicate with stakeholders such as the Global Fund or other funding agencies) and how. This makes it difficult to understand who has been engaged with and at what level with what result. There are suggestions that the TSM needs more engagement between the UNAIDS TSM headquarters level and external stakeholders at their corresponding headquarters levels to be led by the UNAIDS headquarters TSM team.

- Our assessment from what we heard from the key informant interviews and read in key documents is that the correct mix of management skills to manage the TSM is not in place. The appropriate skill set has not been harnessed to its full potential. Project management and operational skills at the senior level (with authority to make decisions) are needed in addition to the strong current technical focus.

- Based on a review of governance meeting minutes, governance meetings include operational discussions—consider separating operations aspects from governance meetings. See recommendation 1.4.

Partnership

- Although the collaboration between OPM and UNAIDS is described as a partnership model, OPM and UNAIDS have not agreed on partnership principles and key performance indicators. A lack of partnership principles may be responsible for some of the confusion around expectations on ways of working such as transparency and flexibility.

- Stakeholder groups have little understanding of each other's roles. There is an assumed level of knowledge about what each role does, which is often inaccurate.

- A weakness of the centralized model versus the regionally based model is that it seems that there has not been as much coordination with regional and country partners. Some key informant interviews make unclear whether there is a strong or closer alignment at the Geneva level with USAID.

Knowledge management

- There is concern that the current model is not supporting lesson learning or a strategic learning function. Various assessments about why this is range from a capacity issue to UNAIDS not getting what they need from OPM in terms of knowledge management.

- Processes around knowledge management need to be looked at—how lessons are being learned and what is happening with that learning. Currently—based on our understanding from key informant interviews—products and learning messages are shared by email from country to headquarters and regional support teams. This is increasing the volume of email. A more effective way of disseminating knowledge materials could be through a central online repository.

- All sides recognize that a suitable approach to knowledge management and lesson learning has not been reached. There is agreement that it is a huge need. The missing information is around defining the user: the target audience. From the UNAIDS perspective, this is not just about the guidelines and the norms. This is much more about consolidating new thinking and learning. This is a more proactive approach that needs to be considered. This aligns with UNAIDS' intended roles of the focal points.

- OPM is involved too late at step 3. It could be involved earlier at step 1 at the virtual technical support plan stage and have a better sense of pipeline technical support.

- There is desire for greater collaboration between TSM and the Global Fund, PEPFAR and other funders at the country level. There is a desire for the TSM to improve country collaboration with the Global Fund in particular—but this is perceived to not have happened, and it is unclear to the evaluators what is preventing this.

Lessons learned and opportunities

- Opportunities for coordination between GIZ and the French 5% initiative in addition to PEPFAR and the Global Fund need to be explored further.

- Strong desire to have a knowledge management and learning system—there were many suggestions for a systematic, structured approach to knowledge management. People are keen to have a platform to share and highlight "all the information we get from this work".

- Good twinning practice has emerged. Some thematic leads and focal points have created their own system of working and are producing useful strategic learning. We have used this to inform options for improvement in subsection 3.7.

- Although OPM already informed the UNAIDS country director in an initial email about the role of the focal point and the services they provide, not all UNAIDS country offices are clear on this. A refresher during meetings with UNAIDS country offices or via a webinar or video explaining the roles could help clarify this.

- A finalized Technical Assistance Fund package could include slides on the roles of focal points and thematic leads—recommend that these be housed somewhere accessible and not in an email.

- Regional support teams are eager to be part of the governance meeting—or at least receive the minutes. Decide on how to involve them.

- Some would like another opportunity for internal TSM planning. Calls for a gathering of all the focal points and thematic leads so the common strategy can be agreed.

3.6   Assessment of TSM forms and operational delivery unit operations manual

In the current TSM model, the main tools and documents used are forms 1–17 and the operational delivery unit operations manual. The overarching framework for the TSM process is currently called form 9. The evaluators used this to frame this assessment.

Our assessment is based on documents received in January and February 2020. We have assessed the purpose, usefulness and usability of the documents below and made recommendations for improvements.

Forms 1–17

The forms cover a wide variety of documents. They are a mixture of information documents, memos, contractual documents, policy documents and process documents.

The following recommendations apply to all documents.

1.   Each document requires a front page. This page (see Annex 4) details the purpose of the document, who is responsible for it, when it was last updated and the document location.

2.   Each document should be included under the correct process step (1–6 where applicable) on the information management system. See recommendation 4.

3.   Each document needs to have a file name that is the same as the title of the document: for example, Form 1: Technical Assistance Fund application pack.

Rating: Each document has been given a score from 1 to 5 and a U if there was not enough information.

5: no amendments required
4: a few minor amendments required
3: substantial amendments required
2: suggest a complete review of the document
1: document not fit for purpose—recommend a new document
U: not enough information available to make a recommendation

Table 4. Assessment of TSM forms and operational delivery unit operations manual

	Title of file	Title on the document	Recommendations	Rating	Process step
	Manual UNAIDS Operational Delivery Unit V5 EXT	Operational delivery unit—manual, UNAIDS Technical Support Mechanism	Consider drawing out specific processes that may benefit from being in a checklist format—these should be shared on the online information system. See recommendation 4.1. For example, processes that can be put into a checklist format include: 1.1.2 Receiving a New technical assistance request 3.1.6 Allocating a TSM focal point 3.2.1 Vetting of individual consultants 3.3.4 Contacting suitable consultants 3.2.5 Update CV and negotiate fees This list is not exhaustive, but it illustrates where checklists may make processes clearer when they are separated from background information. The point of making each process into a checklist ensures that it is streamlined and clearly articulated. It means that, if the team needs to be expanded quickly because of a rise in demand in technical support, the process is extremely clear and easily learned, and systems can withstand scaling up.	3	All
Forms 1–17	Title of form in file name	Title of form on the document			
1	TAF Package	UNAIDS Technical Assistance Fund package	There are two versions, one which includes the Technical Assistance Fund instructions page but no form. A full version of form 1 should be attached to process step 2.	4	2,3
2	Guidelines for contracting processes	Guidelines for contracting processes	This needs to be cross-checked with the UNAIDS procurement process to ensure alignment. Investigating the UNAIDS procurement system was outside the scope of this evaluation.	4	5

3	Q&A for UNAIDS staff	Q&A on the UNAIDS Technical Support Mechanism	This is an information memo that describes the TSM to internal staff of UNAIDS. This could be an internal operations manual of the TSM for UNAIDS staff, but it is not comprehensive. It needs updating since some things have now changed and there are gaps. 1. The pages and sections should be numbered for ease of reference. 2. The section on how UNAIDS country offices can request access deserves its own section together with the step process that is linked to the six-step TSM process. 3. This document should be renamed—*UNAIDS staff guide to the TSM.* 4. It should be kept on the online system or website so that any updating can be done quickly and easily and changes do not add to email traffic. 5. Who to contact? Include a section on the best way for internal UNAIDS staff to get their questions answered. 6. Update section on what activities and costs can be funded through the Technical Assistance Fund and include an explanation of the drawdown facility for exceptional costs (according to the evaluation, many countries are unclear—this text needs to be clearer) 7. Processes need to be much clearer for UNAIDS country offices on several steps: consultant feedback and deliverables are not of a satisfactory quality. Noted inconsistencies within the document: • UNAIDS TSM is not an independent company. • Useful organigram—check whether it is consistent with the TSM organigram.	1	All
4	Consultant Information Package	UNAIDS Technical Support Mechanism info sheet	This is an excellent comprehensive guide for consultants working under the UNAIDS TSM. 1. Ensure that the title of the document matches the saved file name on the information system (or wherever it is stored) for consistency. 2. Ensure that this guide is updated regularly. This is part of the OPM operations manager's role.	4	4
5	Expression of Interest Companies	Expression of interest	This document is for companies to express interest in a specific assignment for the TSM. Page 47 of the operations manual has supporting information on this document. We believe it is presented to companies on a SurveyMonkey page. 1. May need aligning with the UNAIDS procurement process.	4	3

			2. Needs to be included on the information management system to reduce emails.		
6	UCO Final Payment Authorization Form	Final payment authorization form and evaluation	This is the final payment authorization and evaluation form. It is clear from the process that payment to a consultant will not be processed without this form confirming that the deliverables were of sufficient quality. If the deliverables are not satisfactory, page 89 of the operations manual describes what happens next. This information is currently only available to OPM. 1. Needs to be included on the information management system to reduce emails. 2. An assessment of what the consultant was like to work with would be helpful here. It is unclear whether a clear process and form exists for this. This would be a useful tool for the UNAIDS country directors to screen out consultants who were unsatisfactory to work with, even if the deliverable they produced was satisfactory. This should not affect payment but should affect the consultant being selected for further work (note the example from Asia and the Pacific).	2	6
7	UCO Payment Authorization Form—Other	Payment authorization form	This is a payment authorization form to be filled in by UNAIDS country offices. It is unclear how this differs from form 6. The main difference is the evaluation reference. Recommend that the use of this form be clarified. Either it is absorbed into form 6 — or it is modified so it is substantially different to merit a new form.	1	6
8	Cover Note for Contract	No title	This appears to be part of form 2: *Guidelines for contracting*, a cover letter for contracts. It is unclear why it has its own form. Recommend that this be merged with form 2.	1	5
9	TSM Process Diagram	The TSM process	This is the process diagram that outlines the TSM process. All documents and processes should hook into this process. It is recommended that it be taken out of the forms and be at a higher level so that anyone interacting with the TSM can understand the process flow.	3	All
10	Results Framework 2019		This is the results framework for the TSM. Detailed analysis of the results framework has not been part of this evaluation, but it has been recommended that organizational key performance indicators be developed between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM. The intention is that these would accompany the results framework. We did not spend time on the results framework, since we understand that this is currently a work in progress. We do understand, however, that the results framework was an area of dissatisfaction for all parties involved in the TSM (USAID, UNAIDS and OPM) and that efforts being made to strengthen this are moving in the right direction.	U	All

11	Overview TLs & FPs—UNAIDS & OPM		This document gives an overview of the thematic areas, the UNAIDS thematic leads and the TSM focal points. 1. This is information that could be included within the shared information system as a "who's who" page. 2. It could be easily updated as changes are made. 3. Contact details could be added to make it more useful.	4	All
12	Duty of Care Letter for UNAIDS staff		This is a contractual document that sets out the agreement between OPM and UNAIDS regarding duty of care for UNAIDS staff while under assignment with OPM. 1. This should be included in the information management system under the agreements and contracts section. 2. Any specific points that relate to processes need to be pulled out and added to a relevant checklist for TSM staff.	4	All
13	Template for meeting notes	[Meeting title] minutes	This is a template for meeting notes. It is not clear where this is located or whether this needs to be part of the information system. As it stands, it is a simple effective form for recording minutes and next steps. There are no recommendations to amend the form, but consideration should be given to where the form is located. Recommend that this may form part of the tools required for the organizational key performance indicators to demonstrate good recordkeeping and an audit trail of decision-making.	5	All
14	Template for Agenda & Logistics	Ad-hoc client meeting Geneva agenda	This is an ad hoc meeting agenda format with prefilled items. Same comments for form 13 above. 1. Adding participants as well as apologies would be useful. 2. This form should be part of the suite of tools required to deliver on management key performance indicators recommended in section 3, recommendation 4.1.	4	
Form 15	TSM Peer Review Framework Template	UNAIDS Technical Support Mechanism—external peer review guidance	This is a form detailing clear guidance for an external peer reviewer. It fits in and aligns with the process described in the operations manual on pages 88–90. No further recommendations.	5	6
Form 16	Gantt Chart for UC	TSM mobilization time frame	This is the Gantt chart for UNAIDS country directors or the TSM mobilization time frame. It details the process from step 3 to step 6 so that UNAIDS country directors are aware of the process and the time frame. This document could be replaced by an online dashboard for each assignment that would be located within the	1	2–6

			management information system or website. Then UNAIDS country directors (and other stakeholders) can see where an assignment is in the steps 1–6 process. Although the recommendation is that this form be absorbed into the dashboard, it is important that the steps be consistent with form 9, the TSM process. This needs to be clarified.		
Form 17	Consultant Evaluation Form and Effect Tracker	Effected change tracker and consultant feedback questionnaire	This is a comprehensive questionnaire for consultants that is located on SurveyMonkey. The process is very clear around expectations from the consultant. No recommendations.	5	6

We have reviewed each tool or document and have concluded that they require revision to ensure they are fit for purpose to take the TSM confidently through the next stage of funding.

3.7   Regional-level learning and observations

General observations on the engagement of regional support teams in TSM across regions

- Implications of the shift from technical support facility to TSM: regional support teams have harboured much of the change moving from the technical support facility to the TSM. They are no longer the locus of control. This happened at the same time as the UNAIDS internal change involving staff reductions, so the context was not positive for many.

- Confusion about when regional support teams need to be engaged: there is confusion among OPM about when or at what stage they should involve a regional support team focal point, if at all. Involvement often depends on personality rather than the system or process, even if the processes outline involvement of the regional support team.

- Too many emails: currently, TSM copies regional support teams on all assignment communications. This can lead to regional support teams getting up to 100 emails a day, which is unsustainable. Despite ongoing conversations and briefings and UNAIDS trying to clarify and fine tune the system, there is still confusion among the regional support teams, UNAIDS country offices and the TSM interaction and role.

- Regional support team involvement in governance meetings: regional support teams are systematically not involved in the governance meetings, but consider it necessary that they be included. The best thing would be to be included in the meeting—getting minutes would be good. They feel ill informed since they did not get previous minutes. Regional support teams appreciated the October meeting held in Geneva by headquarters with regional support teams and thematic leads and felt good progress was made on agreeing on how to improve TSM functioning. However, teams are disappointed that the agreed follow-up has not yet taken place.

- Collaboration between regions: there is no formal mechanism for collaboration at the regional level and no formal collaboration mechanism in place between regions to share lessons.

Differences between regions

- Asia and the Pacific functions the most independently of the regions. They greatly appreciate the value that the TSM brings but question the added value of the OPM focal point function. They think that the consultant pool needs strengthening in Asia and the Pacific, especially in terms of language ability.

- Western and central Africa functions effectively with and appreciates TSM. Regional support team focal points and thematic leads are very engaged and struggle to cope with the volume of technical assistance fund requests in busy periods. Western and central Africa thinks that process improvements and information systems must be made to make their workload feasible.

- Eastern and southern Africa appears operationally very strong and responsive. They call for more high-quality consultants as well as improvements in communication around TSM functions and process steps. They have worked hard to streamline processes and ensure that they encourage the centralized functionality rather than the direct contact regional model of the old technical support facility.

The main recommendation from regional observations is to validate the roles of regional support teams. UNAIDS country offices highly appreciate and respect regional support teams, which have solid working relationships in place. Concrete suggestions to validate their roles are: (1) making the roles of regional support teams explicit within the process tools, (2) making their role explicit in an updated organigram and (3) involving them in governance meetings and operations meetings. The points raised in this section have been reflected in the main recommendations section.

3.8 Positive practice examples

Collaboration and cost-sharing of capacity development opportunities for TSM consultants with partners is a good example of value for money and coherence

Capacity development efforts noted in the September 2019 progress report – including developing and disseminating tools and guidelines where warranted and leveraging opportunities with other key partners – ae a good example of how the TSM is seeking opportunities to collaborate and provide value for money.

Consultants and UNAIDS country offices welcome and encourage capacity development initiatives.

Virtual technical support plans as a collaboration tool

The development of virtual technical support plans in countries has been used as an opportunity to invite and engage other funders to discuss and identify national technical support priorities.

Note: this process step scored the highest in the online survey (29 UNAIDS colleagues responded)

OPM has developed a strong reputation for delivering technical support professionally with strong communication

Feedback from consultants is overwhelmingly positive across the regions. The operations team is congratulated time and again for the operations and logistics support provided to TSM consultants.

Productive, proactive partnerships established between UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points

In some areas, personalities rather than systems have ensured that solid relationships and ways of working were established quickly. Systems established include standard terms of reference and checklists, especially for the UNAIDS country directors. This was not something that was centrally driven at the time but came out of a necessity to ensure that their thematic area was working well.

The tools they used were: a monthly call, a shared Dropbox folder and a Microsoft Teams space, which have helped in sharing ideas and clearing bottlenecks. This particular team (and they do see themselves as a team) has been very proactive in their interactions with the TSM. They have also met in person and are in regular email contact.

Identifying cross-cutting themes that need to be strengthened: when TSM began, the team was concerned that not many requests were coming through for their area. To address this, they searched through all assignments to identify potential cross-cutting themes in which they may be able to offer their help.

Recognizing a lack of knowledge, they organized a training workshop for TSM consultants on their cross-cutting area. They also developed two practice notes to help consultants and UNAIDS country directors understand their thematic area.

As a result of this strong twin team this article was published in the Kenya media in January 2020.

4   Recommendations

The TSM has achieved a great deal in the past 20 months despite the challenge of developing a new technical support model involving a partnership with a new provider (OPM). Those working with the TSM are now in a strong position to know what does and does not work well. We propose recommendations that take these foundations and learning into account. We present practical recommendations that will both leverage existing systems and resources and require additional investment in certain areas (Table 5).

Table 5. Recommendations

Main recommendation		Sub recommendations	Who is to lead the recommendation	Resource implication
1. Review and define the partnership approach and governance framework	1.1	In addition to the contractual agreement in place between UNAIDS and OPM, there is a need to develop and agree on some foundational principles and articulate (1) what benefit the partnership represents to both UNAIDS and OPM, (2) what they each bring to the partnership and (3) how they will work together	UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	1.2	Finalize the TSM results framework ensuring that all parties are happy that the new framework provides them with what they need	UNAIDS with USAID	Time
	1.3	Develop and agree on contract management key performance indicators between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM	USAID and UNAIDs UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	1.4	Clear TSM governance, strategic management and operational mechanisms should be established. These should articulate (1) what the main bodies are, (2) their purpose and functions, (3) how often they communicate and meet, (4) how they communicate, such as by what means (face to face, phone etc.) and (5) topics of discussion	UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	1.5	Consider including an agreed set of value for money metrics in routine reporting to USAID. See page 17 for examples.	UNAIDS and OPM	Time and monitoring system
2. Review and reconfigure the TSM management structure	2.1	Reconfigure the UNAIDS TSM management team	UNAIDS	Time and potential human resources cost implication
	2.2	Reconfigure the OPM TSM management team	OPM	Time and potential human resources cost implication

	2.3	Clarify and agree on a final TSM[12] organigram, including explanation of each role within the TSM model	Both UNAIDS and OPM	Time
	2.4	Review the decision-making points at the headquarters, regional support team and country levels	UNAIDS	Time
	2.5	Communicate an agreed management structure and organigram for TSM with all relevant parties (UNAIDS, OPM, Global Fund and United States Government partners) that includes clarity on the decision-making points in 2.4, including decision-making structure	UNAIDS	Time
3. Develop and agree on a collaboration and communication framework	3.1 and 3.2	Develop a TSM stakeholder engagement plan for both internal and external[13] stakeholder groups that outlines which roles need to collaborate, how they should communicate for what purpose and when	OPM with input from UNAIDS	Time and human resources cost implication
4. Set up a management information system	4.1	Develop a user-friendly accessible TSM information system, dashboard or website to house operational and learning materials. This will have resource implications that need careful scoping, as recommended on page 49 A specific task force should be set up to take this work forward	OPM with input from UNAIDS	One-off cost to develop system then maintenance cost
	4.2			
5. Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan	5.1	Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan. The plan will need to articulate how its outputs are directly linked to the achievement of project objectives See page 50	UNAIDS with input from OPM	Time and human resources cost implication
	5.2	Carry out a stocktaking and scoping of knowledge management and strategic learning needs		
	5.3	Convene UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points to agree on the knowledge		

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[12] TSM means the joint TSM management and operations structure, including UNAIDS and OPM and Genesis colleagues.
[13] See page 48 for details.

		management and strategic learning plan		
6. Improve the pool of consultants	6.1	Develop a proactive strategy to refresh the pool of consultants and strengthen and develop new ways of recruiting talent and building loyalty	OPM with support from UNAIDS colleagues (UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads and regional support teams)	Time and cost to have proactive strategy, including travel to key countries and regions
	6.2	Carry out a scoping exercise to identify skills and thematic expertise gaps		
	6.3	Deliberately build francophone and other language capacity	OPM with support from UNAIDS colleagues (UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads and regional support teams)	Time and cost to have proactive strategy, including travel to key countries and regions

Below we provide the rationale for the main recommendations and suggested next steps. Following this narrative, we include a table that presents opportunities and options directly linked to the TSM process steps.

Recommendation 1. Review and define the partnership approach and governance framework

1.1   In addition to the contractual agreement in place between UNAIDS and OPM there is a need to develop and agree on some foundational principles and articulate (1) what benefit the partnership represents to both UNAIDS and OPM, (2) what they each bring to the partnership and (3) how they will work together.

We understand that partnership principles are in the process of being developed and agreed. The documentation reviewed refers to the TSM being set up as a partnership approach, in which UNAIDS and OPM would pool complementary technical and operational skills and experience. Informants interviewed within UNAIDS and OPM use language that suggests that a positive partnership has been successfully forged over the past 20 months. The evaluators observed a strong sense of mutual respect and significant effort to overcome obstacles to deliver high-quality, timely technical support. However, the evaluators did not find any partnership principles or agreed way of working written down by either UNAIDS or OPM. We found significant disconnect and uncertainty—both in documentation and verbal accounts—about what the partnership means in practice. We did not find any concrete expectations of either partner within the TSM model. One function of partnership principles is to guide the partners in ways of working with each other to prevent and resolve conflict, and the principles are optimally agreed on when the partnership begins.

Within this reflection on the partnership approach, the evaluators strongly recommend that UNAIDS consider carefully what level of management and control it is willing to entrust to OPM. A degree of UNAIDS control and oversight is necessary to ensure that key stakeholder groups are accountable and performing well. However, too much control over micro-level questions and decisions can slow down and paralyse systems unnecessarily. Related to this point, the centralized TSM model is a relatively new concept for UNAIDS, requiring new sets of project management and operational skills and competencies compared with its traditional core skills and competencies (technical expertise for HIV coupled with its unique convening power to get traction on political and strategic issues). The TSM centralized model therefore represents both a new challenge and opportunity for UNAIDS. The evaluators recommend that UNAIDS invest in these skills and competencies required (see recommendation 2).

Next recommended steps

▪ UNAIDS reflects about its vision and key wants from the partnership approach and what levels of control it is willing to entrust to OPM.

- Discussion and face-to-face meeting between OPM and UNAIDS to agree on partnership principles and key performance indicators, with a clear role for the OPM operational director and manager to drive this agenda forwards.

1.2 Finalize the TSM results framework, ensuring that all parties are happy that the new framework provides them with what they need

There was recognition throughout this evaluation that the current results framework (2019 version) requires work to meet the needs of UNAIDS and USAID. Work is ongoing between UNAIDS and OPM to establish a new TSM results framework. We recommend that this be finalized and embedded within a wider monitoring and evaluation system as a priority. The consultants did not specifically review the TSM monitoring and evaluation system through this independent evaluation. We recommend that this be reviewed as a standalone piece of work, and the following points need to be considered:

- A monitoring and evaluation plan would be helpfully developed around the revised results framework, once it has been completed.

- The quality and relevance of consultant outputs to the results framework targets need to be recognized and tied into the monitoring and evaluation system.

- The review of the TSM monitoring and evaluation system would include comprehensively reviewing the TSM theory of change, the new results framework and situating these with an monitoring and evaluation framework, system and plan.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and OPM should agree on the final results framework as soon as possible.

- UNAIDS should decide what level of review of the monitoring and evaluation system is necessary and follow up on organizing this.

1.3 Develop and agree on contract management key performance indicators between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM

The only framework we found that provides clarity around TSM targets is the overarching results framework 2019. This results framework provides a technical framework[14] and targets against which the model—a joint responsibility between UNAIDS and OPM—is measured. However, the evaluators did not find any contract management performance framework or key performance indicators in place to track how the TSM model is expected to be delivered nor what is expected from each partner in the model. We recommend that a limited number of contract management key performance indicators be put in place between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM. These could include timeliness and quality of reporting, percentage completion of actions agreed to in governance and operational meetings, budget expenditure etc. It may also be helpful to include one value for money effectiveness metric within the contract management key performance indicators such as the percentage achievement of the results anticipated in TSM's results framework.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and USAID should agree on some key performance indicators and value for money metrics

- UNAIDS and OPM should agree on some key performance indicators and value for money metrics

- USAID and UNAIDS should agree on a reporting format that meets its needs

- OPM and UNAIDS should agree on a deadline for agreeing on these key performance indicators and value for money metrics

1.4 Clear TSM governance, strategic management and operational mechanisms should be established. These should articulate (1) what the main bodies are, (2) their purpose and functions, (3) how often they communicate and meet, (4) how they communicate and (5) topics of discussion

This evaluation found that current governance meetings tend to cover a mix of governance and operational issues.

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[14] UNAIDS Fast-Track targets.

We recommend that the TSM governance structure be articulated at three levels. The table below outlines a suggested structure.

Table 6. Recommended governance structure

Level	Title of mechanism	What are mechanism meetings called	Who's involved	When does it meet	Agenda items and topics
Level 1	Governance Board	Governance Board meeting	Senior principals from UNAIDS and OPM with decision-making ability	Every six months	Contract key performance indicators, partnership issues; high-level performance of the results framework
Level 2	Strategic Management Team	Strategic Management Team meeting	Senior management team from UNAIDS and OPM, with regional support teams; focal points and thematic leads also invited	Quarterly	Discussions around the delivery of the results framework: technical content. What is stopping us from delivering on the results framework? What is working well that needs sharing? Strategic learning updates and discussion. Clearly articulated topics for discussion
Level 3	Operations	Operations team meeting	Operations teams from UNAIDs and OPM. OPM: project manager; assistant project managers, technical director and operations manager. UNAIDS: operations director, operations manager, administrator, strategic director, strategic learning lead	Monthly	Process; systems; troubleshooting; anything to do with operations and the smooth operating of the TSM

We have suggested inviting focal points and thematic leads to the Strategic Management Team meetings along with regional support team colleagues. This could also double as a strategic learning gathering and would focus on the technical aspects of technical support. It would enable regional support teams to feel more consulted and engaged and better able to perform their linked roles.

Collaborative work processes should be defined as part of this structure as well as expectations before and after the meeting in terms of agendas, documents, minutes and action points.

Next recommended steps

- OPM and UNAIDS should discuss and agree on the TSM governance structure at an independently facilitated session.

1.5 Consider including an agreed set of value for money metrics in routine reporting to USAID

Including value for money metrics in the routine performance reporting template would encourage systematic attention to value for money. Example metrics could include average fee rates per day, range of fee rates, cost savings made in the reporting period (such as by switching travel agent, flying less and meeting more virtually etc). Value for money did not appear to be at the forefront of the thoughts of stakeholder groups. Having some systematic metrics measured and reported on should help all partners focus on efficiency that can improve the value for money of the model.

Next recommended steps

- Discuss and agree on a set of value for money metrics to be included in routine reporting to USAID

Recommendation 2. Review and reconfigure the TSM management structure

The second major theme for improvement is the TSM management structure. Key informant responses show that management capacity for the TSM within USAID, UNAIDS and OPM has been overstretched and is not yet configured for optimal performance. The evaluation findings fall at an opportune time, since both UNAIDS and OPM are taking on new staff to boost capacity.

Figure 1 depicts the evaluators' recommended team management structure. Further text that explains the key features of the main roles is included underneath the figure.

Figure 1. Proposed TSM organigram
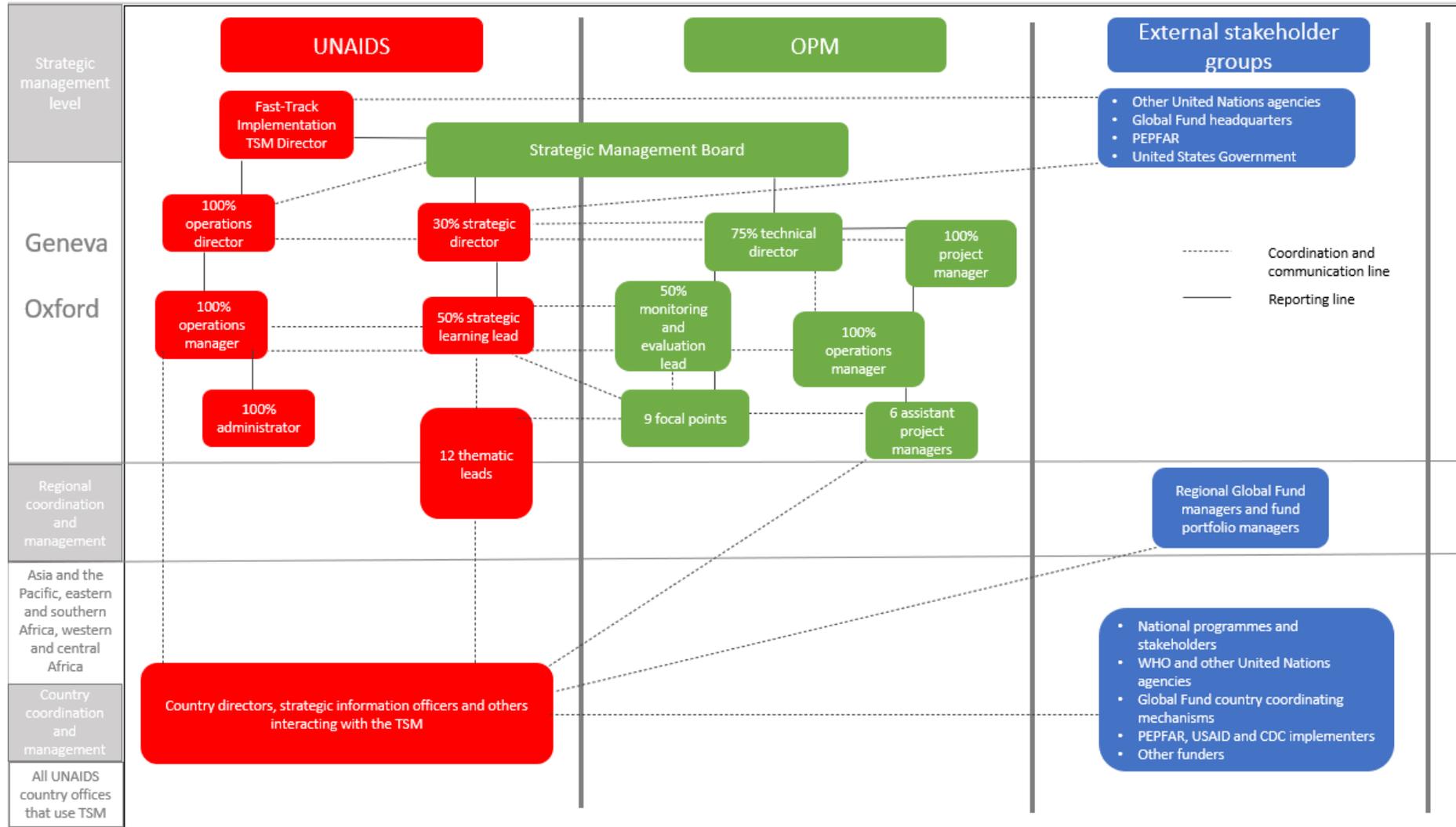
2.1 Reconfigure the UNAIDS TSM management team

- 30% strategic director to (1) provide overall strategic direction to the technical content of TSM work, ensuring that emerging practice is incorporated in TSM training and capacity development agendas, (2) co-chair governance meetings and (3) Troubleshoot any disagreements on the technical quality of individual technical support.

- Full-time operations director to (1) manage internal (USAID and OPM) and external (Global Fund, PEPFAR, WHO etc.) relations and communication, (2) be the first point of contact within UNAIDS for questions and feedback on TSM functioning, (3) be the focal point for UNAIDS TSM decentralized members (regions and UNAIDS country offices), (4) co-chair TSM governance meetings with the strategic director and (5) lead on contract management relations, partnerships and key performance indicators between USAID and UNAIDs and UNAIDS and OPM.

- Full-time operations manager to (1) be the main point of contact for the OPM operations manager, (2) own and be ultimately accountable for all TSM operational forms and templates and liaise with the OPM team on the revisions needed, (3) be responsible for timely, high-quality reporting to USAID and (4) provide a knowledge management oversight function, such as reviewing analysis and synthesized learning from UNAIDS staff and consultant feedback produced by OPM's monitoring and evaluation lead.

- Full-time strategic learning lead who manages the twinning relationship between UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points and is their focal contact point. This strategic learning lead will own the development of and implementation of a knowledge management and strategic learning plan in collaboration with UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points. This is a pivotal role to coordinate and ensure cross-pollination of ideas and products across thematic areas. This role will be key in creating spaces and driving the processes for collaboration on knowledge management and strategic learning work. It aims to build trust between teams, which leads to more efficient and dynamic working. We suggest that the strategic learning lead role be the convener of learning in collaboration with the UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points. We anticipate the strategic learning lead role as the key driver of the knowledge management and strategic learning plan (see recommendation 5). We suggest that this role be based in the UNAIDS team to allow the strategic learning lead and strategic director easier access to discuss emerging issues and opportunities and for UNAIDS to have more direct input into the thematic strategic learning agenda.

- Full-time administrator to support UNAIDS TSM team coordination, organize meetings, minutes, travel etc.

The operations director and operations manager roles may only be required as full-time roles for a time-limited period to support this next phase of development of the TSM. They may be needed for the next 6–9 months to support the sprint to get the TSM running as efficiently and as smoothly as possible.[15] This will allow the TSM to absorb potentially higher levels of funding, including the possibility of receiving additional funds from different (non-United States Government) funders. As processes and systems become more streamlined and automated, the workload of the operations director and operations manager should decline.

The evaluators recommend that key TSM members currently in post remain within the TSM. This will ensure that the valuable institutional knowledge and learning developed over the past two years is retained.

For the two key operations posts, securing candidates with combined robust project management and organizational skills will be crucial. Ideally, they will have managed technical assistance facilities previously and will have deep understanding of UNAIDS and USAID systems and culture. The operations director will also require in-depth understanding of key stakeholder relations and excellent networking and collaboration skills.

Quantifying the levels of effort required for thematic leads is more challenging, since areas of work change in response to need and demand from countries and regions. However, strengthening the twinning partnership between thematic leads and OPM focal points, should provide greater clarity and ability to draw on OPM focal point backstopping capacity, especially at particularly busy times, such as when developing Global Fund concept notes.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and OPM should discuss the proposed configurations and agree on the next steps with timings and responsibilities.

- Agree on a deadline to have the structure approved.

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[15] However, the evaluators understand that short-term roles may not be feasible or practical within the United Nations System.

2.2 Reconfigure the OPM TSM management team

- 40% combined strategic management board to (1) provide strategic direction to OPM's role within the TSM partnership model; (2) provide a focal point for UNAIDS outside the TSM team and (3) provide a challenge function to the OPM TSM management team through, for example, biannual reflection sessions checking in on the added value of OPM to the partnership and opportunities to strengthen this or correct course as the HIV response evolves.

- 75% technical director to (1) be the main counterpart for the UNAIDS operations director and strategic director, (2) provide technical oversight and quality control for consultant recruitment, vetting and assignment delivery, reporting to UNAIDS, (3) be the main representative of OPM during governance meetings and (4) bringing thought leadership on the HIV response on behalf of OPM.

- 100% project manager to (1) support the UNAIDS technical team leader in coordinating thematic lead and focal point work related to assignments, knowledge management and strategic learning, (2) be responsible for ensuring that contract management key performance indicators are met, (3) work closely with the operations manager and UNAIDS operations director to ensure that the TSM runs smoothly and (4) work with the UNAIDS operations director on developing a collaboration and communication plan for the TSM.

- 100% operations manager to (1) be the main counterpart to the UNAIDS operations manager and lead on managing TSM operations (managing the Genesis contract and operational delivery unit) as currently done.

- We strongly recommend that all new recruits to the TSM operations team be francophone. Some stakeholders are frustrated that OPM is not able to fully operate in francophone settings—including consultants, operational delivery unit team members and OPM focal points.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and OPM should discuss and agree on the proposed configurations. We suggest that this be an independently facilitated session.

- Agree on a timeline to have the structure approved and implemented.

2.3 Clarify and agree on a final TSM organigram, including an explanation of each role within the TSM model

Not all stakeholder groups know who does what within UNAIDS and OPM. A detailed organigram including the roles and names of all people assigned will help to bring clarity. The twinning of UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points is a key current source of confusion and missed opportunity. We recommend reconsidering how thematic leads and focal points work together and revising the terms of reference that outline this arrangement. Key informants recognized that twinning is moving in the right direction, with some very positive practices emerging. We believe that these practices could be learned from and leveraged by considering the following.

1. Recruit a strategic learning lead within UNAIDS to be the focal point for all UNAIDs thematic leads and OPM focal points.

Then consider one of two potential options.

1a. For each assignment: assign ownership to a UNAIDS thematic lead. This thematic lead will be responsible for chairing a kick-off call with the UNAIDS country office, OPM focal point and OPM operational lead (assistant project manager). During the call, the following should be agreed: (1) who is most appropriate to provide quality assurance and technical oversight for this assignment, (2) whether any other thematic leads or focal points need to contribute to the assignment if it cross-cuts more than one thematic area, (3) who will do what and when in terms of reviewing Technical Assistance Fund terms of reference, (4) discuss and agree on the desired profile for consultants and share any recommendations and (5) the UNAIDS country office focal point for the assignment and the OPM assistant project manager agree who will lead on gathering documentation, setting organization stakeholder appointments for the assignment and by when. This will contribute to better use of consultant time and promote value for money.

1b. For each assignment: assign ownership to an OPM focal point. The focal point would then lead the kick-off call and coordinate all input for the assignment, with technical input and backstopping from thematic lead as required.

An important point about clarifying this twinning arrangement is that everyone involved in the assignment is clear who has the ultimate authority (who is the client).

Beyond assignments, the twinning approach promises to deliver significant added value from the UNAIDS and OPM partnership. Providing a thematic space in which ideas and knowledge can be explored without the project management limitations of timing and deliverables is also important. This is why we recommend having allocated roles to drive and coordinate the strategic learning agenda.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and OPM should discuss and agree on these options and consult thematic leads and focal points.
- Agree how it will be communicated formally to UNAIDS and OPM TSM colleagues.
- Agree on a deadline to have the organigram agreed as above in 2.2 at an independently facilitated meeting.

2.4 Review the decision-making points and decision-makers at the headquarters, regional support team and country levels

A recurring bottleneck expressed through key informant interviews was having technical assistance funds and deliverables stuck with UNAIDS headquarters. Sometimes thematic leads were mentioned as the specific bottleneck and sometimes key informants were not clear which role within headquarters was the bottleneck for review and approval. Decision-making is a key bottleneck. Various key informant interview groups expressed significant frustration that technical support delivery was being delayed and thus its relevance and quality reduced. Key decision-makers must be able to make decisions promptly, and arrangements need to be in place for when decision-makers are on leave or saturated with other work. Decision points need to include a no-objection basis linked to a defined time period for review and comment. Reconfiguring the TSM management structure as recommended above should support quicker and smoother decision-making. However, thinking through each decision point and agreeing who will review and how long they have for review are also needed. Adding extra capacity at the right level will help to get technical support delivered on time and will contribute to the smooth operation of the TSM.

Next recommended steps

- Within discussions on the TSM management structure, UNAIDS should reflect on and decide on the key decision-makers and decision-making points, both at headquarters and at the regional support team level.
- Agree on a deadline for agreeing on the decision-making points and decision-makers.

2.5 Communicate an agreed management structure and organigram for TSM with all relevant parties (UNAIDS, OPM, the Global Fund and United States Government partners), including decision-making structure

All parties have recognized that the TSM has been learning by doing, and processes and collaboration mechanisms have evolved organically over the past 20 months. However, there is a definite sense among stakeholder groups that the constant change cannot continue without detracting from TSM effectiveness. There is an urgent call for a clear organigram and explanation of the agreed TSM structure and standard processes. This needs to make explicit all the roles within the TSM, including within UNAIDS and OPM. Each role, its function and how it collaborates with others needs to be defined and clearly communicated with all TSM members and stakeholder groups that interact with it.

Next recommended steps

- Once the management structure has been discussed and agreed, OPM should develop a detailed organigram, making explicit each role and function.
- OPM should develop charts for each process step that clarify who is responsible, consulted and informed (see example in Annex 3).
- Gather the whole TSM team in Geneva (including thematic leads and focal points) to go over the organigram, management structure, decision-making points etc. to ensure that the approach is understood and that members have an opportunity to ask questions and clarify any issues. You could ask strong twins to share lessons learned on how they have set up productive twin teams.

Recommendation 3. Develop and agree on a collaboration and communication framework

3.1 Develop an TSM internal stakeholder engagement plan that outlines which roles need to collaborate, how they should communicate, for what purpose, how often and using what means

This plan should address internal (USAID, UNAIDS, OPM and consultants) stakeholder groups. Internally. there is a degree of confusion among most stakeholder groups about who is who, who needs to be copied into certain emails and who should respond to certain email addresses. This confusion leads to more emails being generated than need to be, reducing efficiency.

3.2 Develop a TSM external stakeholder engagement plan that outlines which roles need to collaborate, how they should communicate, for what purpose, how often and using what means

Externally, not all stakeholders interviewed are clear about the TSM structure and how they can optimally interact with it. Tailored collaboration briefs could be drafted and shared with the following stakeholder groups, clarifying how they can access TSM technical support:

- Other United Nations agencies: WHO, United Nations joint teams and UNICEF.
- Global Fund headquarters-level colleagues.
- Global Fund fund portfolio managers and fund managers.
- United States Government.
- Other key donors including the French 5% initiative, GIZ Backup and French Development Agency.

Ensure that these stakeholder groups are consulted on collaboration mechanisms, since they may see opportunities and clarify timelines (such as for the processes of developing country operational plans and Global Fund concept notes) the TSM team is not aware of. This will empower various groups to be more proactive and feel that they are part of the TSM. For example, one key informant with Global Fund headquarters suggested that thinking about technical support for grants in four phases could be helpful: (1) concept note development, (2) negotiation, (3) implementation and (4) close-out, including transition and sustainability planning. To promote a more holistic approach to lesson learning around gaps and grant recipient needs at each phase, such as by having technical support specifically support the close-out phase, critical activity and funds that need to be rolled over or repurposed in the next grant to support better implementation could be identified**.**

Within the communication framework, the evaluators recommend options such as online short how-to videos to explain process steps and key forms, such as how to complete an application for technical assistance funds; best practices for quality assuring a deliverable; and how to draft terms of reference. This could also be used for sharing technical instruction on best practices, such as top tips on investment cases and national strategic plans. See the multi-donor fund AmplifyChange's user guide series for inspiration here. In addition, hosting and recording webinars and/or podcasts so those interacting with the TSM can access them whenever they need within a central repository would greatly improve efficiency. See recommendation 4.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and OPM should work together on developing an internal and external stakeholder engagement plan for the TSM. We suggest that OPM lead on this and have UNAIDS provide input on content and validate.
- Develop tailored collaboration briefs for external stakeholders clarifying how they can access TSM technical support.
- Agree on a deadline for completing the plan.

Recommendation 4. Set up a management information system

4.1 Develop a user-friendly, accessible TSM information system, dashboard or website to house operational and learning materials

This includes the following pages and areas:

- TSM organigram, process steps, tools, templates and checklists needed by TSM members.

- Real-time Tracker information[16] on a dashboard to enable the TSM team to know what stage each assignment is at, at a glance, without the need to ask someone else for an update.
- Monitoring data and results against the results framework.
- Knowledge and strategic learning products.

Lack of insight into what is going on within the TSM in terms of assignment status and bottlenecks within specific assignments was a recurring concern. It is crucial that everyone working on the TSM have access to an up-to-date dashboard or information system that shows them what stage assignments are at, the next required actions and who they are sitting with. This will promote much greater clarity and accountability, reducing email traffic requesting updates on micro-level issues. Since non-UNAIDS staff members cannot access the UNAIDS intranet, this central repository could be situated within OPM's existing website, as noted in its original proposal in July 2017.

Setting up an online information system will be key to a well-functioning, responsive TSM. It will save time and therefore money on the number of emails sent to check the status of an assignment, to ask for a form or to send a form.

4.2   A specific task force should be set up to take this work forward

The terms of reference could be based on the next recommended steps.

Next recommended steps

- Explore what systems exist within OPM (and UNAIDS if externally accessible tools are used by other parts of the organization).
- Map the needs for various colleagues within TSM: UNAIDS thematic lead will have different information needs to OPM's project manager.
- Develop a scope of desired features for the system,17 ensuring that this considers data protection and UNAIDS and OPM system requirements.
- Establish resourcing requirements, including maintenance and operating the system and the one-off cost to develop the system.
- Map the potential information technology issues within UNAIDS and OPM to ensure that a workable specification is produced (discussion held around the limitations of UNAIDS hosting an accessible system and the need to avoid setting up multiple parallel systems within UNAIDS. Could consider OPM hosting the system).
- Agree on a deadline for completing the scope and a target completion date for the information system.
- OPM should develop a suite of user-friendly checklists for process steps within each overarching TSM process step (see Annex 3 for example).

Recommendation 5. Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan

5.1   Develop and agree on a knowledge management[18] and strategic learning[19] plan

A significant anticipated value of the TSM is leveraging the partnership and the concept of a complementary wide range of different strands of thematic expertise within UNAIDS and OPM. This is not currently being realized to any great extent. Capturing and sharing new thinking and innovation emerging from technical support around new ways of doing things, leading to the achievement of the 2030 mission, is the overarching purpose of learning within the TSM. Our recommendation is a system for knowledge management and strategic learning to ensure that lessons and good practice are captured and fed back into technical support. This will increase technical support effectiveness. The conceptualization of the plan needs to be clarified and simple.

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[16] Currently, the Tracker is updated weekly.

[17] Such as using OPM's initial list developed in response to the recommendations validation session as a starting-point. See Annex 5.

[18] We understand this to be the first step and an information management exercise—including capturing, storing and pulling out knowledge generated by the TSM.

[19] We understand this to be a second step and an information analysis exercise—including analysing knowledge generated by the TSM, coupling this with external knowledge and insight from UNAIDS and OPM colleagues as well as wider practice within the HIV response globally.

The knowledge management and strategic learning plan should leverage the largely unrealized partnership strength to date and be designed around using thematic leads and focal points to best effect. This is instead of having one person leading on knowledge management and strategic learning alone, centrally, retrospectively reviewing feedback and mission reports. This is why we recommend having one strategic learning lead in post within UNAIDS headquarters. This needs to be a proactive role that requires real leadership ability to synthesize learning and ensure that ideas are cross-pollinated between thematic areas. This is not simply a coordination role.

Next recommended steps

- Articulate processes for collecting, analysing, developing and sharing various knowledge and learning products.

- Discuss and agree on (1) the purpose of knowledge management and strategic learning within the TSM; (2) who will find information useful (considering both internal and external stakeholders of TSM) and what for purpose; (3) how information should be collected; (4) in what format it should be presented (such as effected change tracker summaries, practice notes, conference presentations etc.); (5) how it should be shared; and (6) by whom.

5.2 Take stock and scope knowledge management and strategic learning needs

Since the knowledge management and strategic learning plan requires careful thought, we recommend taking stock of:

- 1. Why earlier efforts did not work.

- 2. Articulating priorities for knowledge management and strategic learning and the process to be followed for setting priorities (completed through 5.1).

- 3. Define what OPM and UNAIDS understand by knowledge management and strategic learning.

- 4. Recognize that short-term grant and knowledge management and strategic learning efforts need to be dynamic enough to influence the achievement of results framework targets.

This work would ideally be led by the strategic learning lead. However, if this post is not able to be filled rapidly, it could be carried out by an existing twin (UNAIDS thematic lead and OPM focal point working together). If the workload does not allow a twin, then a short-term strategic learning lead could be appointed on a consultancy basis.

Next recommended steps

- UNAIDS and OPM should agree on a stock-taking scope and deadline for completion.

5.3 Convene UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points to agree on the knowledge management and strategic learning plan

Once the plan has been drafted based on the above steps, we recommend a meeting of all the thematic leads and focal points to agree on and adopt the plan. Ideally this would be led by the strategic learning lead, but we suggest that if this role has not been appointed, this recommendation should not be delayed and the work should be led by either an independent facilitator or consultant.

Next recommended steps

- Once the plan has been drafted based on the above steps, we recommend a meeting of all the thematic leads and focal points to agree on and adopt the plan.

Recommendation 6. Improve the pool of consultants

6.1 Develop a proactive strategy to refresh the pool of consultants and strengthen and develop new ways of recruiting talent and building loyalty

The evaluators recommend that OPM invest in more systematic efforts to identify new consultants in the three key regions to respond to recurring critique from UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams about the quality and suitability of available consultants being inconsistent. Investment could include recruitment drives in countries, structured capacity development and mentoring between more experienced and less experienced consultants. There appears to be a much greater need to begin strengthening the pool in western and central Africa and Asia and the Pacific. Efforts should build on work completed to date to weed

out ineffective consultants and could include improving the effectiveness of the existing pool through skills-building workshops and technical updates as well as identifying new consultants.

OPM's mandate and the resources required to deliver this recommendation need to be redefined, since proactive recruitment and capacity development takes both human and financial resources to do well. At present they are not well defined.

Key informants also welcome ensuring that a systematic feedback system is in place from UNAIDS country directors and recipients of technical support. To ensure that feedback systems are effective, however, the TSM will need to ensure those providing feedback that their comments (verbal or written) will be stored safely and confidentially.

Competition for the best consultants was highlighted as a challenge since some funders pay their consultants higher rates. To counteract this, OPM could invest in developing a package of incentives designed to attract consultants to TSM technical support over and above their fee rates. This package could include automating registration of CV and bank details and access to their contract online (if this does not already exist). See the World Bank eConsultant system for inspiration. It could also include upskilling and capacity development opportunities—as is already happening within the TSM—around positive practice and state-of-the-art HIV response initiatives. In addition, OPM could strive to pay consultants before the time specified by the contract terms and conditions if that flexibility exists within their financial management software. A further incentive could also be to make explicit the support that the TSM will provide systematically, such as political economy induction from UNAIDS country office, administrative support to source key documents and set up interviews before missions and technical and operational backstopping from the UNAIDS country office, thematic lead and focal point team assigned to their project.

6.2   Carry out a scoping exercise to identify skills and thematic expertise gaps

We recommend that each thematic twin (led by UNAIDS thematic leads with support from OPM focal points) carry out a scoping exercise to identify skills gaps and thematic expertise gaps within the consultant pool. This exercise could also include twins developing a list of keywords for both skills and thematic expertise that OPM staff could use to identify appropriate consultants when shortlisting CVs.

Regarding managing routine assignments: consider who is best placed within OPM to lead on this. For example, health economics comprises different types of expertise that a non-health economist would struggle to identify while reviewing CVs. It requires a technical level of skill and may be something that assistant project managers could be trained on.

Next recommended steps

- OPM should design a systematic, proactive approach to improving the pool of consultants, recognizing that clarity is required around the inputs and resources necessary for this.

- Agree on a deadline for completion and discussion with UNAIDS.

- Agree on the OPM mandate and resource requirements for this work.

6.3   Deliberately build francophone capacity and other language capacity

There should be a targeted effort to identify francophone consultants able to work in western and central Africa, since there is consensus among all stakeholder groups around the clear lack of senior and high-quality consultants able to work in French. This programme could therefore include capacity-building efforts, including twinning senior and more junior consultants on strategic assignments in which we know that capacity and expertise are currently limited.

Next recommended steps

- Within the development of the approach described above, include tailored attention to francophone consultants: for example, carry out a mini-survey among recipients of technical support in western and central Africa and the pool of francophone consultants, universities, academic institutions and other consulting firms covering western and central Africa.

Table 7. Opportunities and options for improvement in each process step

TSM process steps	Lead unit	Strengths	Weaknesses	Opportunities and options for improvement	How improvement will contribute to better efficiency and value for money
1. Assignments included in the country virtual technical support plan **Identification of technical support and a virtual technical support plan**	UNAIDS country office	A virtual technical support plan is considered a useful tool for convening stakeholders at the country level	Thematic leads and Global Fund fund portfolio managers do not always get to see them early enough, which can limit strategic input and quality	UNAIDS country office could invite Global Fund fund portfolio managers and the local PEPFAR representative (and other relevant funders) to participate in an initial physical meeting with national programmes and the country coordinating mechanism when technical support needs are identified	Ensures that the United Nations Joint Team on AIDS, the Global Fund and the United states Government (the main HIV funders in most countries) coordinate their thinking from the outset Technical support is more likely to fulfil strategic needs and complement ongoing work
				To be determined	Keeping Global Fund fund portfolio managers and other funders informed increases the likelihood of synergy and alignment
			Virtual technical support plans are sometimes considered yet another tool or document to fill in with no utility	Allow UNAIDS country offices to decide whether they need a separate virtual technical support plan. This may not be needed in countries that already have a national technical support plan	Reduces potential frustration and unnecessary activity, freeing up time for other UNAIDS work
				UNAIDS country offices could offer the virtual technical support plan template for countries that do not yet have national technical support plans to use as their national technical	Promotes country ownership and coordination by national programmes or councils of all technical support needs—reducing

				assistance plan to accompany their national strategic plan	duplication and fragmentation of various funders of technical assistance
			Lack of clarity around how often virtual technical support plans need to be updated, how they can take too much time to complete and, by the time they are approved, the needs have changed	Clarifying the frequency of updates and how to accommodate technical support off-plan will reassure UNAIDS country offices further. Could develop a communication note on how to deal with off-virtual technical support plan technical support explaining that this is acceptable and has a specific process for approval	Improved clarity leads to better efficiency and motivation to support relevant and important technical support
2. Development of a Technical Assistance Fund **package by the** UNAIDS country office	UNAIDS country office	Technical Assistance Fund templates are widely welcomed and said to be straightforward to complete	Some UNAIDS country offices find them too heavy and cumbersome to complete	Consider including a proportionate response for Technical Assistance Fund forms and process. When a smaller unit of technical support is being requested, less background etc. is acceptable (such as a rapid-response five-day consultancy)	Reduces potential frustration and unnecessary activity, freeing up time for other UNAIDS work and likely increases technical support demand for small pieces of rapid-response work
			Some UNAIDS country offices would benefit from support around estimating level of effort (days) needed for technical support assignments	UNAIDS country office to share first draft of Technical Assistance Fund terms of reference with OPM focal point and at the same time sending it to the UNAIDS thematic lead	Improves integration of the focal point within the assignment and brings external insight and new thinking. Focal points will bring experience on the level of effort required for assignments
			Lack of clarity around how acceptable off-virtual technical support plan technical support is, can lead to confusion and UNAIDS country offices hesitating to ask for worthwhile technical	Consider tagging additional days in concept note development contracts for consultants to support Global Fund grant recipients during grant negotiation and early implementation	Will reduce gaps in understanding the content of concept notes written by external consultants when countries have not been able to fully engage in the design

			support if they feel the request will be frowned upon		
			Systematic attention to Global Fund grant support is not always achieved at the country level	The four stages of Global Fund grant support could potentially be added to the Technical Assistance Fund form (1: concept note; 2: negotiation; 3: implementation; 4: close-out)	Will ensure that each stage of Global Fund grant progress is being reflected on during scoping of the technical support, ultimately improving the ability of TSM to support area 2 in the results framework
3. Finalization of Technical Assistance Fund **package, budget and workplan**	OPM		Lack of clarity around which costs for technical support are eligible among some UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams	Provide clear guidance to thematic leads, regional support teams and UNAIDS country offices on eligible costs for technical support budgets and the potential to access drawdown funds	Reduces tension and frustration that some offices are accessing costs for meetings and other types of technical support and some are not
			Lack of flexibility of Technical Assistance Fund funding to cover community-related technical support	Provide clarity that TSM can also be used to support other national needs not limited to Global Fund grants	
4. Shortlisting of consultants	OPM and UNAIDS country office	OPM recognized for its strong roster of consultants OPM efforts to revitalize this recently are recognized and welcomed	UNAIDS staff do not get to see the full roster available	Have a roster of consultant profiles available for UNAIDS staff to browse—does not need to include names, but being able to see thematic expertise, skills and years would help	UNAIDS staff members being able to see profiles ahead of time will help them be more proactive and feed into strategic learning opportunities and realistic terms of reference for technical support assignments
			Technical support recipients do not always get to see the full shortlist of consultants	Ensure that technical support recipients are consulted from day 1 in the shortlisting process and get to review CVs as well as names and profiles	Recipients will feel better engaged and more likely to own and support technical support if they are part of the selection process

			Need for flexibility in selection process during extreme peaks, such as Global Fund concept note development	Clarify process for when, for example, three national CVs are not available to choose between—provide guidance for exceptional cases during urgently required work	Will reduce delays in waiting for consultants to become available; improved clarity will reduce frustration and the need for multiple emails to troubleshoot
			The consultants put forward and selected are often not available—causing frustration	Consider only sharing the CVs of consultants who are available; provide an incentive for consultants to respond quickly: for example, the email could state that they must respond within 48 hours to be included in the consideration pool	Reduce frustration of UNAIDS country offices and improve the reputation of OPM as a provider of high-quality consultants
			Consultants are not clear about the selection process and what is required of them at the different steps	Ensure that the consultants information pack (form 4) is shared systematically with consultants	More clarity improves the relationship with consultants and secures loyalty in the future
			When consultants are being shortlisted UNAIDS country offices would benefit from fee rate information.	A table of rates for the national consultants especially could be sent to UNAIDS country offices along with profiles and CVs so that they can ensure the rates being suggested are aligned with other funder rates in country.	Promotes the harmonization of rates at the country level and potentially reduces competition—enables the TSM to know its position compared with other funders
5. Approval of technical assistance fu**nds and assignment begins**	OPM and UNAIDS headquarters	Standardized templates and forms appreciated by UNAIDS country offices and UNAIDS thematic leads and regional support teams	Consultants not always clear who their ultimate client is—who has the final say on their report, who do they need to listen to etc.	Ensure assistant project managers in the operational delivery units have clear assigned responsibility for ensuring that consultants have all they need to make the most of the time in the country, which means having a direct communication line between assistant project managers and UNAIDS country offices to collaborate on gathering documentation and identifying stakeholders in country for interview etc.	Supporting consultants so they can arrive and begin working immediately provides better value for money

				or	
				Ensure that the UNAIDS country director has clear assigned responsibility for ensuring that consultants have all they need to make the most of the time in the country (documents received and appointments set up ahead of time)	
			Consultant teams not always clear who is doing what; they do not get to see one another's terms of reference; team leaders do not always provide clear and proactive leadership	Clarify the expectations of team leaders when working with consultant teams. Write in space at the start and the end of the assignment for clarifying who does what and how they want to work together; at the end, promote feedback on how the assignment went and lessons to improve future assignments	Reduces confusion between consultants working in teams and improves teamwork and the quality of deliverables
		The involvement of UNAIDS country offices at this stage is recognized as being crucial—bringing the political economy lens and crucial induction for consultants	Consultants sometimes lack understanding of the country context, political economy insights that can reduce effectiveness of their input	Opportunity to develop a standard induction checklist that UNAIDS country offices could use with all consultants arriving in a country, to ensure that they take a systematic approach to understanding the local political economy and any potential barriers, obstacles and enablers for the success of the assignment; this should include attention to any sensitive issues consultants need to be aware of	Better political economy induction for consultants unfamiliar with the country or region will improve their technical support deliverables and outcomes, increasing the likelihood of impact on Fast-Track targets
6. Quality assurance of deliverables, finalization and payment	OPM and UNAIDS headquarters	Deliverables felt to be well reviewed with quality assurers adding value on the whole	The peer-review process is unclear and can lead to delays in payment; the time available for review is considered too short for some thematic leads	Clarify the peer-review process and determine how it will happen during the kick-off call to avoid confusion or surprise Clarify the process to consultants before they begin the assignment	Clarifying these processes will reduce frustration on all sides, especially for the consultant; ensuring that they have a smooth experience will encourage them to want to consult for TSM in the future

			and set expectations around the length of time to complete the review	
		Unclear who is the ultimate client with sign-off power for deliverables (UNAIDS country office, regional support team thematic leads, global thematic leads or peer reviewer).	Clarify who is the ultimate client: has ultimate authority to consider the deliverable complete and release payment	Clarifying the processes will reduce tension between UNAIDS country offices, thematic leads and peer reviewers
		Consultants unclear about payment policy for per diem and have experienced delays in per diem payment especially (national consultants)	Clarify payment terms and ensure that payments are made in good time to cover expenses in the country in accordance with agreements	Better relationships with national consultants, smoother logistics in the country and promotes loyalty to TSM for future work
		Security briefing not always provided	Clarify the need for security briefings with consultants; if no specific risk assessment process is required, explain why this is the case	Reassures consultants that they are being taken care of and promotes loyalty to TSM for future work
7. Feedback and knowledge compilation **We propose adopting a** step **7—this could be completed by the OPM** operations manager **with**	A wealth of rich information is being systematically gathered via consultants completing the SurveyMonkey and feeding into the effect tracker	UNAIDS country directors and recipients of technical support do not necessarily have a systematic system for feeding back on consultants and the technical support process	Implement a systematic feedback mechanism with UNAIDS country directors and recipients of technical support There could be an exit feedback form: the country signs off that they are happy with the deliverable and the consultant is recommended for future assignments etc.	Having country perspectives will improve the quality of technical support since it will allow for inefficiency and issues to be raised systematically

oversight from the **UNAIDS** operations manager	Information is being analysed and included in six-monthly reports and governance meetings	Sense that routine feedback is not being adequately analysed and presented for "quick and dirty" learning pieces—either of technical content or operationally focused	Within knowledge management and strategic learning plan, consider developing a template to house regular pieces of "quick and dirty" learning that can be used immediately for course correction, sharing between countries etc.	Improving learning on both technical content and operational issues will improve the quality and impact of technical support

5   Conclusions

The evaluation concludes that the TSM has achieved a remarkable amount over the past 20 months. This is despite internal organizational changes within UNAIDS and OPM, changing scope as the new centralized TSM model has been learning by doing and setting up processes organically.

There is wide recognition that the TSM has been learning by doing and that processes and collaboration mechanisms have evolved somewhat organically over the past 20 months. However, there is a definite sense among stakeholder groups that the constant change cannot continue without detracting from TSM effectiveness. There is an urgent and consistent call for clarity and stability.

The key areas in need of strengthening imply reflection and joint working between UNAIDS and OPM around:

- The premise for its partnership design.
- Some clear governance and performance management arrangements that make the expectations of clients (USAID and UNAIDS) explicit.
- TSM staffing and management systems that can fulfil the challenging project management tasks that come with managing a technical support mechanism.
- Knowledge management and strategic learning processes and systems, to allow the mechanism, and UNAIDS, to adjust to the dynamic HIV response landscape.
- Some fine tuning of operational processes that will support everyone involved in the TSM to have the greatest impact possible at country levels, with the recognition that these will need to have some flexibility with regard to regional and assignment differences.

Strengthening these areas promises to add significant value to both how the TSM provides technical support and its ultimate impact. It will be crucial for the TSM management team (both within UNAIDS and OPM) to quickly agree how they want to take these evaluation findings forward and how they will communicate with those who have contributed to its development, to avoid demotivating key stakeholder groups and to maintain the respect and goodwill established for the TSM to date.

To reach consensus rapidly, we recommend that ideally the UNAIDS TSM management team, the TSM Strategic Board and OPM's management team spend a day together—for focused reflection and discussion around the recommendations for improvement in this report.

Annex 1. Documents reviewed

Number	Title, authors, year
From UNAIDS	
1	UNAIDs technical support facility MTR Report, Leitch D, Mendoza A, Chan-kam C, 2016
2	Fast-Track: ending the AIDS epidemic by 2030, UNAIDS, 2014
3	Management of the Technical Support Facility: Taurus, OPM, 2017
4	UNAIDS technical support 2018, funding proposal, UNAIDS, 2019
5	LOA with OPM, 8 May 2018
6	Notes from governance meeting, 24 January 2019
7	Notes from 3rd governance meeting, 15 March 2019
8	Notes from 4th TSM governance meeting, 17–18 September 2019
9	TSM governance meeting, 17–18 September 2019, presentations
10	Form 3 Q&A for UNAIDS staff, 5 September 2019
11	Results framework 2019
12	TSM organigram old (slide)
13	TSM process (slide)
14	TSM priorities, UNAIDS technical support
15	Semi-annual progress report for directed activities under USAID-UNAIDS grant agreement, UNAIDS technical support, 2018
16	Semi-annual progress report for directed activities under USAID-UNAIDS grant agreement, UNAIDS technical support, 2019
17	Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria technical assistance report: reporting period: April–September 2019, November 2019
18	Malawi National HIV Prevention Strategy 2015–2020
19	Peer review process for external peer reviewers, 2019
20	Assignment summaries 30-037 (includes 29 documents)
21	TSM functional organigram—new
22	Technical Support Facility assessment short, slides
23	UNAIDS TSM inception report final, 2018
24	Making the money work: UNAIDS technical support to countries, UNAIDS, 2007
25	UNAIDS technical support: optimizing Global Fund grants in Asia and the Pacific 2017—2018, UNAIDS, 2019
From OPM	
26	Consultant feedback form
27	Consultant feedback questionnaire
28	Consultant feedback tracker
29	Flowcharts operations and strategic
30	Forms 1–17
31	TSM human rights practice note draft 2, 28 August
32	TSM peer review template
33	UNAIDS tracker
34	UNAIDS TSM consultant feedback tracker
35	Terms of reference template selection (includes 21 sample terms of reference)
36	Progress reports submitted from OPM to UNAIDS
37	Annexes referred to in the Letter of Agreement between UNAIDS and OPM—such as requests for proposals, UNAIDS general conditions, budget, workplan
38	Operational delivery unit manual, TSM, January 2020, OPM
39	UNAIDS OPM audit report, December 2019

Annex 2. Analysis of UNAIDS country office and consultant online survey feedback on TSM

The analysis in this section is reflected in the findings and recommendations of the main report. Two separate surveys were administered: the first to UNAIDS colleagues and the second to TSM consultants. Overall, UNAIDS colleagues and consultants responded positively about their engagement with TSM.

The purpose of including these online surveys in the evaluation method was to add quantitative data insight into the key evaluation questions for triangulation purposes and to enable us to reach a larger sample of informants within a relatively short time frame. Inviting perspectives via online survey also enabled those particularly keen to share views not to be overlooked.

For the SurveyMonkey graphs, see separate pdf file: Graphs for Annex 3.

Analysis from survey targeting UNAIDS staff members

A total of 29 UNAIDS staff members responded out of 78 potential to whom the survey was sent, giving a 37% response rate. The survey aimed to understand how UNAIDS country offices, UNAIDS country directors, thematic leads and focal points are feeling about the TSM process steps and about how well they believe the TSM to be fulfilling its strategic aims.

Within questions related to the process steps, the highest levels of satisfaction were recorded in step 1: identifying technical support in the virtual technical support plans. Of the 29 people that answered the question, 2 said they were very satisfied, 26 satisfied and 1 somewhat satisfied. UNAIDS country offices have appreciated regional support team and headquarters quality assurance input during this process and think that the virtual technical support plan is a beneficial tool for ensuring alignment among UNAIDS colleagues around priority technical support. Weaknesses identified include the lack of clarity around how to deal with technical support that does not fit within the agreed virtual technical support plan.

Developing the Technical Assistance Fund package (step 2) is another area that appears well regarded: 6 respondents said they were very satisfied, 19 satisfied, 2 somewhat satisfied and 2 somewhat dissatisfied. People like the structure of the Technical Assistance Fund guidance overall and appreciate the input from regional support teams and headquarters thematic leads. However, some find the application form a bit cumbersome and heavy.

For the completion of the Technical Assistance Fund package (terms of reference, work plan and budget) (step 3), 10 people were very satisfied, 12 satisfied, 5 somewhat dissatisfied, 1 very dissatisfied and 1 person did not comment. Points that limit satisfaction include the fact that UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams do not get to see the final budget for the assignment and the time it takes to complete (bottleneck) can be too long.

For the selection and recruitment of consultants (step 4), 9 people were very satisfied, 14 satisfied, 3 somewhat satisfied, 2 very dissatisfied and 1 did not answer. Comments for improvement included the need to improve the pool of consultants and to keep the OPM database up to date; frustration around consultants not being available once they have been selected and the fact that regions are often better placed than OPM to find consultants.

Step 5 records high levels of satisfaction, with 10 people very satisfied, 17 satisfied and 2 somewhat satisfied. Comments for improvement include the need to reduce bottlenecks in final approval, the need to provide clear guidance to countries on the complete contracting process for consultants and the fact that it is a cumbersome process.

Finally, for step 6 (quality assurance and approval of deliverable), the picture is more negative: 5 people are very satisfied, 14 satisfied, 9 somewhat dissatisfied and 1 very dissatisfied. Comments in this area relate to a lack of clarity around how OPM focal points support quality assurance, comments from those carrying out quality assurance being inappropriate since they "are not fully aware of the context, the nature of the issues, and the methodologies used...", the fact that reviewing takes significant staff time and not being kept informed or receiving any feedback on the deliverable at all.

In terms of how well UNAIDS colleagues perceive the TSM to be fulfilling its strategic values:[20] results orientation (rated 7/10 by 26 people and 8/10 by 3), how well it supports countries to access and/or implement Global Fund and PEPFAR funds (rated 7/10 by 26 people and 8/10 by 3) and catalytic (rated 6.5/10 by 26 and 8/10 by 3) were rated the highest overall. The extent to which the TSM provides them with strategic learning was rated lowest, at 5/10 by 26 people and 7/10 by 3 who completed the francophone survey.

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[20] The values rated include strategic, catalytic, results oriented, harmonized with other UNAIDS technical support, providing them with strategic learning and helping countries implement Global Fund and PEPFAR funds better.

It is also interesting that the three francophone respondents rated all the questions 1 or 2 points higher (on a scale of 10) then those who completed the anglophone survey.

Analysis from the survey targeting TSM consultants

Consultants were asked to rate their satisfaction with the standard processes they go through when approached and eventually contracted by the TSM to deliver technical support. On the whole, consultants responded positively about their engagement with TSM: 35 consultants of 81 responded to the survey, giving a 43% response rate.

A very high level of satisfaction was recorded for the communication process with OPM around their selection process: 19 consultants were very satisfied, 13 satisfied, 3 somewhat dissatisfied and 1 very dissatisfied. Comments for improvement include a request for the TSM to lay out what the entire selection process is (there is a form for this, but it might not be applied systematically) and ensuring confirmation is given when consultants are not shortlisted.

Similarly, high levels of satisfaction were reported around communication with the TSM team: 19 said they were very satisfied with communication, 12 satisfied. 2 somewhat dissatisfied and 1 very dissatisfied. 1 did not answer.

The highest levels of dissatisfaction with processes were around finance processes and finalization of deliverables: 1 very dissatisfied and 6 dissatisfied with the financing of technical support and 3 very dissatisfied and 4 dissatisfied with the process around finalization of deliverables. The main areas for improvement in financing are to ensure that national consultants receive per diem payments for field work in good time to avoid logistical complications during assignments. The main concerns expressed related to finalization of deliverables included the consultants not knowing who would ultimately sign-off on the report, delays in receiving review comments, comments being shared in a way that offends and comments from different reviewers being inconsistent.

Other observations include the fact that not all consultants have received security briefings or, if not required, an explanation as to why this is, and high levels of satisfaction around the effected change tracker completion (9 very satisfied and 13 satisfied), with comments on this including a desire to receive feedback on their performance.

In terms of whether assignments provide capacity-building opportunities, most consultants were not aware whether this was an explicit aim, although they expressed appreciation at the learning gained through completing the technical support.

Annex 3. Process step action and responsibility chart

The sketch below outlines a potential information system structure for housing TSM forms within the online information system recommended.

Level 1 in hierarchy	**Level 2 in hierarchy**	**Level 3 in hierarchy**
STEP 1	In here there would be a macro action and responsibility chart for step 1	In here there would be all the relevant task-oriented checklists attached to each macro-action in step 1 – see overleaf example page
STEP 2	In here there would be a macro action and responsibility chart for step 2	In here there would be all the relevant task-oriented checklists attached to each macro-action in step 2
STEP 3	In here there would be a macro action and responsibility chart for step 3	In here there would be all the relevant task-oriented checklists attached to each macro-action in step 3
STEP 4	Etc.	Etc.
STEP 5		
STEP 6		

Example macro-action and responsibility chart

For example, for process step 4: identifying and shortlisting consultants

- Background information related to this step: the purpose of this step is to X Y Z
- **Who is this chart intended for?** all TSM members who have a role in process step 4, including X, Y, Z.
- **Who is responsible for updating this chart?** XXX. Please email XXX with any feedback or requests to update the form. Please do not make changes to it directly.
- **Where is this chart stored?** XXX

Macro-actions within this process step	Responsible for action	Consulted during action	Informed (through being copied if action is by email or being informed about call if call involved) **of action**	Tools available for each step *(potential examples)*
1. Review CV database for suitable consultants who match the skills sets outlined in Technical Assistance Fund application				
2. Contact suitable consultants				
3. Update CV matrix				
4. Negotiate fees				
Etc.				

Example checklist

The OPM operational delivery unit operations manual contains excellent background information as well as processes and standard operating procedures. One of the recommendations (4.1) includes lifting the processes out of the operations manual that can be turned into a series of task-oriented checklists. This will bring clarity and precision to the process. This contributes to the systems building required to enable the TSM to deal with an increase in future funding streams.

For this example, we have chosen:

For example, for process step 4: identifying and shortlisting consultants

- **Who is this checklist intended for?** XXX
- **Who is responsible for updating this chart?** XXX. Please email XXX with any feedback or requests to update the form. Please do not make changes to it directly.
- **Where is this chart stored?** XXX

Completed (tick)	Task
	Apply filters accordingly in CV database
	Record name and source of consultant in database and date approached
	Ensure the format of the CV folders, saved in Dropbox (OPML)\UNAIDS databases\Consultants & Organisations, as well as the CV document itself, is [first name last name] in the exact same way as you add them to the database, so that we can always find the CVs we are looking for easily.

Annex 4. Front cover example

This is a sample of what a front cover should look like for each form needed by the TSM.

Form 4: Consultants information pack

General information

Created: **19/06/2019**

Updated: 08/02/2020

Process owner

OPM operations director

Purpose

The consultants information pack is a guidance document on how consultants are expected to interact with the TSM. It includes guidance on processes from start to finish including who is who, information on logistics, security as well as deliverables and quality assurance.

Issue status

- The issue status is indicated by the version number in the footer of this document.

- When any part of this procedure is amended, a record is made in the amendment log shown below.

- The procedure can be fully revised and reissued at the discretion of the TSM management team.

Issue	Amendment and date	Initials
1	Issue 1—19/06/2019	NvG
2	Update—08/08/2019	NvG
3	Update—08/02/2020	NvG
4		

Annex 5. All recommendations and opportunities for consideration

The purpose of this table is to pull together in one document:

1. The main recommendations and accompanying subrecommendations.
2. Process step recommendations.
3. Opportunities for consideration mentioned throughout the report.

The key difference between the main and accompanying subrecommendations and the process step recommendations is how we analysed the data gathered.

For the main recommendations, we analysed the data gathered (document review, key informant interviews and online survey) first using the five evaluation criteria as a framework in MAXQDA, and then second, we analysed data seeking emerging themes across the criteria. These emerging themes became the six main recommendation areas.

For the process step recommendations, we zoomed in on the data gathered specific to each of the six process steps, using the six steps as a framework. We chose to do this to ensure that recommendations would have maximum practical application for OPM and UNAIDS.

Opportunities for consideration are ideas we heard from limited numbers of key informant interviews or ideas we had in response to what we heard—we include them here and map them onto either the main or process step recommendations, to avoid them getting lost in the main report.

In addition, we analysed forms 1–17 in depth, the main tools the TSM uses to operationalize its processes. The table does not include specific recommendations related to each specific form. These detailed micro-level recommendations are included in Table 4 in the main report on page 32.

All recommendations and opportunities for consideration

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
1. Review and define the partnership approach and governance framework	1.1 In addition to the contractual agreement in place between UNAIDS and OPM, there is a need to develop and agree on some foundational principles and articulate (1) what benefit the partnership represents to both UNAIDS and OPM, (2) what they each bring to the partnership and (3) how they will work together	**There is great potential technical expertise and fresh thinking within OPM consultants and focal points**, currently underleveraged. Working on partnership principles and developing an agreed knowledge management and strategic learning approach would help to realize this potential	UNAIDS and OPM	Time	▪ Reflection within UNAIDS about its vision and key wants from the partnership approach and what levels of control it is willing to entrust to OPM ▪ Discussion and face-to-face meeting between OPM and UNAIDS to agree on partnership principles, with a clear role for the OPM operations director and manager to drive this agenda forward
	1.2 Finalize the TSM results framework, ensuring that all parties are happy that the new framework provides them with what they need		UNAIDS with input from OPM	Time	▪ UNAIDS with input from OPM to agree on the final results framework as soon as possible ▪ UNAIDS to decide what level of monitoring and evaluation system review is necessary and follow up on organizing it

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
	1.3 Develop and agree on contract management key performance indicators between USAID and UNAIDS and between UNAIDS and OPM	**United States Government funding is a very high priority for UNAIDS,** and USAID merits higher-level engagement and greater responsiveness from UNAIDS headquarters. Routine reporting formats could include updates on contract management issues, such as confirmation that actions from previous reports have been completed, any conflicts of interest or risks having arisen, and how these have been dealt with **Potential contract management key performance indicators could include:** ▪ Reports are submitted on time. ▪ Reports submitted to quality standard agreed.[21] ▪ Periodic recommendations directed to supplier during governance meetings are adequately addressed by agreed deadlines. ▪ Budget limits are respected. Value for money metrics could also be included routine reporting—examples include (page 18, main report):	USAID and UNAIDs UNAIDS and OPM	Time	▪ UNAIDS and USAID to agree on some key performance indicators and value for money metrics ▪ UNAIDS and OPM to agree on some key performance indicators and value for money metrics ▪ USAID and UNAIDS to agree on a reporting format that meets its needs ▪ A deadline is agreed between OPM and UNAIDS for agreeing on these key performance indicators and value for money metrics

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[21] They follow the agreed format and include the information requested.

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		<table><tr><th>VFM measure</th><th>Example indicator</th></tr><tr><td>Economy metrics</td><td>Proportion of reimbursable costs[1] out of total TS budget expend[2] per region</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>No. times Skype / calls used versus face to face meetings requiring travel</td></tr><tr><td>Efficiency metrics</td><td>**Fee rate:** Average fee rate of TS provided per day overall and per region</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>**Type of consultants working on TSM:** Number and % of days completed by local (national) consultants</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Fee rate range national</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Number and % of days completed by regional consultants</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Fee rate range regional</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Number and % of days completed by international consultants</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Fee rate range international</td></tr><tr><td></td><td>Average number of days/ same type[3] of consultancy per region</td></tr><tr><td>Effectiveness metric</td><td>% achievement of results anticipated in model's results framework[4]</td></tr><tr><td>Equity metric</td><td>% of TS assignments completed that include focus on reaching vulnerable and underserved populations</td></tr></table>			
	1.4 We recommend that clear TSM governance, strategic management and operational mechanisms be established. These should articulate (1) what the main bodies are, (2) their purpose and functions, (3) how often they communicate and meet, (4) how they communicate, such as through what means (face to face, phone etc.) and (5) topics of discussion	Suggestion to articulate the governance structure and meetings at three levels: **Level 1: governance.** Could rename the Strategic Management Board as the Governance Board. This small group of senior principals (both OPM and UNAIDS) deals with partnership issues and contract management key performance indicators. Hold governance meetings quarterly. **Level 2: strategic management.** Could establish a strategic management team including senior managers from OPM and UNAIDS. Meetings could be called strategic management meetings and cover topics currently covered in governance meetings—including strategic direction, learning and management issues.	OPM to draft governance mechanism and UNAIDS to agree	Time	The TSM Governance Structure should be discussed and agreed at an independently facilitated session with OPM and UNAIDS taking into consideration the discussions at the evaluation Recommendation Validation session on March 12, 2020.

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		Include thematic leads and focal points in these meetings. Meetings quarterly.			
		Level 3: operations management. This is the operations team that currently meets monthly in Geneva. Could call this the operations team. Focus topics on processes and systems issues.			
		We suggest inviting focal points and thematic leads to the strategic management meetings along with regional support team colleagues. This could also double as a strategic learning gathering and would focus on technical aspects of the technical support. It would allow regional support teams to feel more consulted and engaged and better able to perform their link roles.			
		It is important that collaborative work processes be defined as part of this structure as well as expectations before and after the meeting in terms of agendas, documents, minutes and action points.			
2. Review and reconfigure the TSM management structure	2.1 Reconfigure the UNAIDS TSM management team	▪ **UNAIDS needs to have someone tasked with driving collaboration forward**. This needs to be someone who is in an operational role and is not distracted by their core technical thematic areas. ▪ **Recommend validating the roles of regional support teams**. Regional support teams are highly appreciated and respected by UNAIDS country offices and have solid working relationships in place. Concrete suggestions to validate their roles are: (1) making regional support team roles explicit within process tools, (2) making their role explicit in an updated organigram and (3) involving them in	UNAIDS—in collaboration with OPM	Time and human resources investment	▪ UNAIDS and OPM to discuss the proposed configurations and agree on the next steps with timing and responsibilities ▪ Agree on a deadline to have the structure approved

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		governance meetings and operations meetings.			
		▪ **The operations director and operations manager roles may only be required as full-time roles for a time limited period** to support this next phase of development of the TSM. It may be they are needed for the next 6–9 months to support the sprint to get TSM running as efficiently and as smoothly as possible.[22]			
		▪ **Recommend that key TSM members currently in post remain within the TSM.** This will ensure the valuable institutional knowledge and learning developed over the past two years is retained.			
	2.2 Reconfigure the OPM TSM management team	**From OPM, there needs to be someone tasked with driving collaboration forward** to galvanize the focal points and form a focal point team.	OPM—in collaboration with UNAIDS	Time and human resources investment	
	2.3 Clarify and agree a final TSM[23] organigram, including explanation of each role within the TSM model	Regarding twinning between UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points, consider one of two potential options: **1. For each assignment:** assign ownership to a UNAIDS thematic lead. This thematic lead will be responsible for chairing a kick-off call with the UNAIDS country office, OPM focal point and OPM operational lead (assistant project manager). During the call, the following should be agreed: (1) who is most appropriate to provide quality assurance and technical oversight for this assignment, (2) whether any other thematic leads or focal points need to contribute to the assignment if it crosscuts more	UNAIDS and OPM together with external facilitation	Time and external facilitation	▪ UNAIDS and OPM to discuss and agree on these options and consult thematic leads and focal points ▪ Agree on how it will be communicated formally to UNAIDS and OPM TSM colleagues ▪ Agree on a deadline to have the organigram agreed

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[22] However, the evaluators understand that short-term roles may not be feasible or practical within the United Nations System.

[23] By TSM we mean the joint TSM management and operations structure including UNAIDS and OPM colleagues.

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		than one thematic area, (3) who will do what and when in terms of reviewing Technical Assistance Fund terms of reference, (4) discuss and agree on the desired profile of consultants and share any recommendations, (5) the UNAIDS country office focal point for the assignment and the OPM assistant project manager agree on who will lead on gathering documentation, setting organization stakeholder appointments for the assignment and by when. This will contribute to better use of consultant time and promote value for money. **or** **2. For each assignment:** assign ownership to an OPM focal point. The focal point would then lead the kick-off call and coordinate all input for the assignment, with technical input and backstopping from the thematic lead as required. An important point about clarifying this twinning arrangement is that everyone involved in the assignment is clear who has the ultimate authority (who is the client).			as above in 2.2 at an independently facilitated meeting
	2.4 Review the decision-making points at the headquarters, regional support team and country levels				▪ Within discussions on the TSM management structure, UNAIDS to reflect on and decide key decision-makers and decision-making points at both headquarters and the regional support team level

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
					▪ Continue the discussion points raised at the 12 March meeting on the recommendations of the evaluation to inform the next steps on processes to clarify decision-making ▪ Agree a deadline to have the decision-making points and decision-makers agreed
	2.5 Communicate an agreed management structure and organigram for TSM with all relevant parties (UNAIDS, OPM, Global Fund and United States Government partners), that includes clarity on the decision-making points in 2.4, including decision-making structure.	**Some stakeholders interviewed would like another opportunity for internal TSM planning.** Calls for a gathering of all the focal points and thematic leads so that the common strategy can be agreed, shared and clarified.			▪ Once the management structure has been discussed and agreed, OPM to develop a detailed organigram, making explicit each role and function ▪ OPM to develop charts for each process step that clarify who is responsible, consulted and informed (see example in Annex 3) ▪ Gather the whole TSM team in Geneva (including

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
					thematic leads and focal points) to go over the organigram, management structure, decision-making points etc. to ensure that the approach is understood and members have an opportunity to ask questions and clarify any issues. You could ask strong twins to share lessons learned on how they have set up productive twin teams
3. Develop and agree a collaboration and communication framework	3.1 Develop a **TSM internal stakeholder engagement plan** that outlines which roles need to collaborate, how they should communicate, for what purpose and when.	▪ **An internal stakeholder engagement plan would be usefully developed**—articulating which levels of TSM management communicate with whom (UNAIDS and OPM) within the TSM structure. ▪ A refresher on the role of focal points provided during meetings with UNAIDS country offices or via a webinar or video explaining roles could help clarify the focal point role—since it is not yet clear to all UNAIDS country offices. ▪ **There is scope to better leverage country partnerships with civil society organizations:** for example, (1) during assignments, funding restrictions mean that civil society organizations cannot be invited to join assignment workshops and (2) there is a call to have more proactive reaching out to civil	**OPM with input from UNAIDS**		▪ UNAIDS and OPM to work together on developing an internal and external stakeholder engagement plan for the TSM. We suggest that OPM lead on this and have UNAIDS input on content and validate. ▪ Develop tailored collaboration briefs for external stakeholders clarifying how

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations		Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
			society organizations on the part of UNAIDS to encourage greater uptake of technical support within these groups to support community responses to HIV.			different groups can access TSM technical support ▪ Agree on a deadline for completion of the plan
	3.2	Develop a **TSM external stakeholder engagement plan** that outlines which roles need to collaborate, how they should communicate, for what purpose and when	▪ **An external stakeholder engagement plan would be usefully developed**—articulating which levels of TSM management communicate with whom (for example, does the deputy executive director or TSM manager communicate with stakeholders such as the Global Fund and PEPFAR or other funding agencies) and how. ▪ **Opportunities for coordination between GIZ and the French 5% initiative in addition to PEPFAR and the Global Fund** need to be explored further. ▪ **There is an opportunity to communicate lessons learned from the situation room.**[24] Specifically, around the coordination of large complex technical support funded by multiple partners. To ensure that there is a coherent approach and lessons are not lost from this context, this should form part of the stakeholder engagement plan noted in the recommendations.			
4. Set up a management information system	4.1	Develop a user-friendly, accessible, TSM information system, dashboard or website to house operational and learning materials	▪ **Processes could be drawn out of the operations manual and reframed as clear checklists** (see Annex 3 for example).[25] Recommend having these checklists (that are needed by UNAIDS country offices and regional support teams, in addition to OPM staff) in a central location, within the	OPM, with input from UNAIDS	▪ Time and capital cost for repository ▪ Additional human resources cost within	▪ Explore what systems exist within OPM (and UNAIDS if externally accessible tools are used by other parts of the organization)

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[24] The Global Fund situation room in Geneva, which involves key partners in Global Fund grant support including the Global Fund, USAID, WHO, GIZ Backup and the French 5% initiative.

[25] OPM may benefit from looking at software specifically designed for companies to map out common repeatable processes.

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		information system that is accessed by both OPM and UNAIDS. ■ **A more effective way of disseminating knowledge materials could be through a central online repository.** The repository or system should contain at least: all proposed checklists; clear overviews of stakeholder roles and responsibilities; guidance on how to engage with TSM; Gantt charts to indicate timelines; all Dataviz graphs; guidance on how to exact the status of each assignment (customized as needed and frequently updated, as discussed); trackers with specific information on some thematic areas as required; financial reporting for headquarters only; finalized Technical Assistance Fund packages; and final reports where allowed.		OPM to set up and maintain the system	■ Carry out mapping of needs for different colleagues within TSM (UNAIDS thematic lead will have different information needs to OPM's project manager). ■ Develop a scope of desired features for the system,26 ensuring this takes data protection issues, UNAIDS and OPM system requirements into account. ■ Establish resourcing requirements including maintenance and running of the system as well as one-off cost to develop the system27 ■ Carry out mapping of potential information technology issues within UNAIDS and OPM to ensure that

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26 Such as using OPM's initial list developed in response to the recommendations validation session as a starting-point. See Annex 5.

27 This should include carrying out analysis to compare the investment costs of the system itself plus an additional staff member, with the benefits of more streamlined information sharing, extra staff capacity and a reduction in email traffic and confusion.

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations		Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
						a workable specification is produced (discussion held around limitations of UNAIDS hosting accessible system, need to avoid setting up multiple parallel systems within UNAIDS. Could consider OPM hosting the system.)
						▪ Agree on a deadline for completion of scope and target completion date of the information system
						▪ OPM to develop a suite of user-friendly checklists for process steps within each overarching TSM process step (see Annex 3 for example)
5. Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan	5.1	Develop and agree on a knowledge management and strategic learning plan	▪ Global Fund concept note development provides learning opportunity around, for example, programmatic bottlenecks**—pulling out learning on bottlenecks could help to target Global Fund grant implementation-related technical support** and feed into skills development and capacity development efforts for TSM consultants around political economy	UNAIDS strategic learning lead with inputs from OPM	Time and human resources to drive this	▪ Articulate processes for the collection, analysis, product development and sharing of different knowledge/learning products.

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		thinking, programmatic barriers; funding gaps; and costed critical barriers.			▪ Discuss and agree a) what is the purpose of knowledge management and strategic learning within the TSM; b) who will find information useful (considering both internal and external stakeholders of TSM) and what for purpose; c) how should information be collected; d) in what format should it be presented (e.g. effected change tracker summaries/ practice notes/ conference presentations etc); how should it be shared; e) by whom
		▪ Two key informants mentioned the WHO learning platform as a useful learning platform. Using this to house TSM learning could be explored.			
		▪ **Consider longer-term hand-holding technical support** to avoid losing knowledge that sits with individual consultants developed during writing of concept notes. Consider building in flexible up to drawdown days after the main assignment.			
		▪ **Consider a help desk function**, such as short 3- to 4-day pieces. See Knowledge for Development: a development finance institution project run by the Institute of Development Studies			
		▪ **The strategic learning lead could be the convener of learning** (in collaboration with UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points) and drive the development of the plan			
		▪ **Need to find a way to update consultants based on immediate lessons being learned**—zoom room idea, webinar every quarter so it is immediate learning or how-to videos.			
	5.2 **Take stock and scope knowledge management and strategic learning needs**	Stocktaking to include: 1. Exploration of why earlier efforts did not work. 2. Articulation of priorities for knowledge management and strategic learning and what is the process to be followed for setting priorities 3. Define what OPM and UNAIDS understand by knowledge management and strategic learning	UNAIDS with input from OPM Ideally this work would be led by the strategic learning lead. However, if this post is not able to	Time and human resources to carry out analysis	▪ Stocktaking scope and deadline for completion to be agreed between UNAIDS and OPM

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		4. Recognition that short-term grant and knowledge management and strategic learning efforts need to be dynamic enough to influence the achievement of results framework targets	be filled rapidly, it could either be carried out by an existing twin (UNAIDS thematic lead and OPM focal point working together). Or, if the workload does not allow a twin to do this, then a short-term strategic learning lead could be appointed on a consultancy basis.		
	5.3 **Convene UNAIDS thematic leads and OPM focal points to agree on the knowledge management and strategic learning plan**		UNAIDS Ideally this would be led by the strategic learning lead, but we suggest that if this role has not been appointed, this recommendation should not be delayed and the work should be led by either an independent facilitator or consultant.	Time and human resources to organize the meeting	▪ Once the plan has been drafted based on the above steps, we recommend a meeting of all the thematic leads and focal points to agree and adopt the plan.

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6. Improve the pool of consultants	6.1 Develop a proactive strategy to refresh the pool of consultants; strengthen and develop new ways of recruiting talent.	**This is a high priority for USAID.** **Investment in this area could include:** ▪ **Recruitment drives** in countries, more proactive use of LinkedIn and headhunting efforts ▪ **Including structured capacity development** and mentoring between more experienced and less experienced consultants ▪ **Developing a package of incentives** designed to attract consultants to TSM technical support, over and above their fee rates ▪ **Bringing in community-level consultants**: those working in communities representing marginalized groups (such as people living with HIV and men who have sex with men)		Time and finance	▪ OPM to design a systematic, proactive approach to improving the pool of consultants with recognition that clarity is required around the input and resources necessary for this ▪ Agree on a deadline for completion and discussion with UNAIDS ▪ Agree on the OPM mandate and resource requirements for this work
	6.2 Carry out a scoping exercise to identify skills and thematic expertise gaps	We recommend that each thematic twin (led by UNAIDS thematic leads with support from OPM focal points) carry out a scoping exercise to identify skills gaps and thematic expertise gaps within the pool of consultants. This exercise could also include twins developing a list of keywords for both skills and thematic expertise that could be used by OPM staff to identify appropriate consultants when shortlisting CVs. Regarding routine assignment management: consider who is best placed within OPM to lead on this. For example, health economics comprises different types of expertise that a non-health economist would struggle to identify while reviewing CVs. It requires a technical level of skill and may be something that assistant project managers could be trained on.	OPM to lead with targeted input from UNAIDS thematic leads	Time to carry out scoping	

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	6.3 Deliberately build francophone and other language capacity	We strongly recommend that all new recruits to the TSM operations team be francophone.	Efforts to boost the francophone pool of consultants could include carrying out a mini-survey among recipients of technical support in western and central Africa and the pool of francophone consultants, other consulting firms, universities etc. covering western and central Africa		▪ Within the development of this approach, include tailored attention to francophone consultants, such as carrying out a mini-survey among recipients of technical support in western and central Africa and the pool of francophone consultants, universities, academic institutions and other consulting firms covering western and central Africa
Process step recommendations					
Process step 1: Assignments included in the country virtual technical support plan and identification of technical support and virtual technical support plan	▪ UNAIDS country office to invite Global Fund fund portfolio managers and local PEPFAR representative (and other relevant funders) to take part in an initial physical meeting with national programmes and the country coordinating mechanism when		UNAIDS to consider with input from OPM	Time	For all process step recommendations, we recommend that UNAIDS and OPM both review these ideas separately and then come together to discuss (1) which are useful, feasible and actionable, (2) who will lead on making relevant changes and (3) by when

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
	technical support needs are identified				
	▪ Allow UNAIDS country offices to decide whether they need a separate virtual technical support plan: for example, may not be needed in countries that already have a national technical support plan				
	▪ UNAIDS country offices could offer the virtual technical support plan template for countries that do not yet have national technical support plans to use as their national technical assistance plan to accompany their national strategic plan				
	▪ Clarify the frequency of updates and how to accommodate technical support off plan. Could develop a communication note on how to deal with off-virtual technical support plan technical support that explains that this is acceptable and has a specific process for approval	▪ A question could potentially be added to the Technical Assistance Fund form asking whether the technical support is in or off plan,			

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
		with an explanation of the approval process for both			
Process step 2: Development of Technical Assistance Fund package by the UNAIDS country office	▪ Consider including a proportionate response for Technical Assistance Fund forms and process—when a smaller unit technical support is being requested, less background etc. is acceptable (such as a rapid-response five-day consultancy) ▪ The UNAIDS country office could share the first draft Technical Assistance Fund terms of reference with the OPM focal point at the same time as sending it to the UNAIDS thematic lead to enable focal point advice on the level of effort required. ▪ Consider tagging additional days in concept note development contracts for consultants to support Global Fund grant recipients during grant negotiation and early implementation—to help improve country ownership		UNAIDS to consider with input from OPM	Time	

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
	when external consultants write concept notes. ▪ The four stages of Global Fund grant support could potentially be added to the Technical Assistance Fund form (1: concept note; 2: negotiation; 3: implementation; 4: close-out)				
Process step 3: Finalization of Technical Assistance Fund package, budget and work plan	▪ Provide clear guidance to thematic leads, regional support teams and UNAIDS country offices on eligible costs for technical support budgets and the potential to access drawdown funds ▪ Provide clarity that TSM can also be used to support other national needs not limited to Global Fund grants	▪ To ensure that the Global Fund grants' close-out phase is appropriately supported, a question on repurposing of funds could be systematically included in the Technical Assistance Fund package to ensure that the question always gets addressed when designing technical support to support Global Fund grant design and implementation. ▪ Consider longer-term hand-holding technical support to avoid losing knowledge that sits with individual consultants developed during the writing of concept notes. Consider building in flexible up-to draw-down days after the main assignment. ▪ There is an opportunity to further explore and develop guidance for consultants delivering technical support in conflict zones, including strategies to make progress despite logistical constraints. ▪ The coupling of knowledge and expertise of UNAIDS country offices and independent consultants is a strong concept—since independent consultants need to be able to	UNAIDS to consider with inputs from OPM	Time	

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		first understand the local environment before they can challenge political obstacles. They are needed to provide this challenge function when UNAIDS country offices are unable to do so because of their embedded nature and relationship with national programmes and country coordinating mechanisms. Consultants can get caught in the middle and would benefit from clear guidelines on how this balance can best be approached. ▪ The finalized Technical Assistance Fund package could include slides on the roles of focal points and thematic leads. ▪ Ensure that the Technical Assistance Fund package is not signed off and sent to operations until fully complete (including the level of effort and deliverables)			
Process step 4: Shortlisting of consultants	▪ Have a roster of consultant profiles available for UNAIDS staff members to browse—need not include names but being able to see thematic expertise, skills and years would help. ▪ Ensure that technical support recipients are consulted from day 1 in the shortlisting process and get to review CVs as well as names and profiles. ▪ Clarify the process for when, for example,	OPM could invest in developing a package of incentives designed to attract consultants to TSM technical support, over and above their fee rates—to counteract competition and higher fee rates paid by other funders.	OPM to consider	Time and potentially finance to develop incentives	

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
	three national CVs are not available to choose between—provide guidance for exceptional cases during urgently required work.				
	▪ Consider only sharing the CVs of consultants who are available. Provide an incentive for consultants to respond quickly, such as stating in the email that they must respond within 48 hours to be included in the consideration pool.				
	▪ Ensure that the consultants information pack (form 4) is shared systematically with consultants.				
	▪ A table of rates for the national consultants especially could be sent to UNAIDS country offices along with profiles and CVs so that they can ensure that the rates being suggested are aligned with other funder rates in the country.				

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
Process step 5: Approval of technical assistance funds and assignment begins	▪ Ensure that assistant project managers in the operational delivery units have clear assigned responsibility for ensuring that consultants have all they need to make the most of the time in the country. This will mean having a direct communication line between assistant project managers and UNAIDS country offices to collaborate on gathering documentation and identifying stakeholders in the country for interviews etc. ▪ or ▪ Ensure that the UNAIDS country director has clear assigned responsibility for ensuring that consultants have all they need to make the most of the time in the country (documents received and appointments set up ahead of time)	The process of induction and preparation for consultants could be strengthened by sharing good practices and efforts from stronger UNAIDS country offices (such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Nigeria) to those with lower levels of capacity	UNAIDS to consider with input from OPM	Time	

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
	▪ Clarify the expectations of team leaders when working with consultant teams. Write in space at the start and the end of the assignment for clarifying who does what and how they want to work together. At the end, promote feedback on how the assignment went and lessons to improve future assignments. ▪ Opportunity to develop a standard induction checklist that UNAIDS country offices could use with all consultants arriving in the country—to ensure that a systematic approach is taken to understanding the local political economy and any potential barriers, obstacles and enablers for the success of the assignment. This should include attention to any sensitive issues consultants need to be aware of.				

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Process step 6: Quality assurance of deliverable, finalization and payment	▪ Clarify the peer-review process and determine how it will happen during the kick-off call to avoid confusion and surprise within the TSM team. ▪ Clarify the process to consultants before they begin the assignment and set expectations around the length of time to complete review. ▪ Clarify with consultants who is the ultimate client and has ultimate authority to consider the deliverable complete and release payment. ▪ Clarify payment terms and ensure that payments to consultants are made in good time to cover expenses in country in accordance with agreements. ▪ Clarify the need for security briefings with consultants and, if no specific risk assessment process is required, explain why this is the case.		UNAIDS to consider with input from OPM	Time	

Main recommendation	Subrecommendations and process step recommendations	Additional related ideas and opportunities for consideration	Recommended lead organization	Resource implications	Next recommended steps
Recommend setting up Step 7 to cover feedback and knowledge compilation– to ensure that it is given prominence	▪ Implement a systematic feedback mechanism with UNAIDS country directors and recipients of technical support. ▪ There could be an exit feedback form that the country signs off that they are happy with deliverable and the consultant is recommended for future assignments etc. ▪ Within knowledge management and strategic learning plan, consider developing a template to house regular pieces of "quick and dirty" learning that can be used immediately for course correction and sharing between countries etc.		UNAIDS strategic learning lead to lead (within remit of knowledge management and strategic learning plan development) with input from OPM	Time and human resources	