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Global Fund Board will strengthen selection processes for Board committees, for May 2019 decision

The Ethics and Governance Committee (EGC) is coordinating consultations on the processes to select the membership and leadership of Board committees.

This topic was not on the formal agenda of the Global Fund's 40th Board meeting just completed in Geneva (on 14-15 November) but the EGC held a presentation and discussion session called "Strengthening Committee Selection Processes" on the pre-Board meeting day, November 13.

According to a paper prepared for the Board meeting (GF/B40/09), recent external advisory reviews, assessments and lessons learned have revealed challenges associated with the processes to select committee members and leadership. These challenges include a perceived lack of transparency; representation that is not balanced; limited candidate pools; insufficient due diligence; and problems balancing continuity and membership renewal.

Making improvements in the selection of committee membership and leadership are priority activities in the Global Fund's Governance Action Plan (see related GFO articles on the [OIG's advisory report on governance](#), on [Board leadership welcoming the OIG review](#) on governance, and the [Secretariat's update on the Governance Action Plan](#)).

In May 2018, the Board instructed the EGC to undertake a review of the existing committee selection process and to make recommendations on (a) principles and concrete actions to underpin and guide the selection processes; (b) standards and processes for due diligence; and (c) the size and composition of the EGC. The EGC currently has six members, making it the smallest of the Board committees.

Among the principles established by the EGC to inform this review are the following:

- Balanced representation among constituencies;
- Rotation of constituencies from one term to the next;
- Preserving institutional memory;
- Gender equality;
- Competency and role requirements clearly spelled out;
- Complementarity of candidates for chair and vice-chair roles;
- Transparent processes; and
- Clear standards for due diligence.

Originally, the recommendations were slated to be presented at the Board meeting just completed but that turned out to be an unrealistic timeframe. The recommendations are now scheduled to be presented at the Board meeting in May 2019.

The EGC set up an informal working group, in June 2018, to assist in reviewing the observations of existing advisory reviews, inputs from Board constituencies and comparisons with partner organizations. The working group is composed of four members of the EGC as well as a Civil Society representative (recently elected Shaun Mellors). This is in line with the Board's instruction (in response to feedback from constituencies related to the 2017-2018 committee selection processes) that recommendations be developed through broad consultation, and should ensure the involvement of a civil society representative.

During the 13 November discussion session, EGC Chair Sandy Thurman emphasized that broad consultation with all Board constituencies is a key element in this process, and urged constituencies to participate in in-person consultations over the course of the Board meeting to ensure that the working group received their inputs. A survey questionnaire was prepared for the consultations in order to help structure input. The EGC also expects input via written comments received from members of Board constituencies. Constituency calls may also be used.

Due diligence process improvements

The Fund uses the term “due diligence” in several different contexts but does not explain in the Board papers exactly what is meant by it. Global Fund Ethics Officer Nick Jackson clarified for Aidspace that the Fund has a due diligence framework that it applies to “any party that we’re about to do business with,” including staff, Board and Committee members, suppliers and implementers, among others. Jackson defined “integrity due diligence” (IDD) as the “the process of gathering and analyzing information to evaluate the extent to which a counterparty might expose the Global Fund to integrity risk.” Integrity risk is the risk that an individual or an entity may – in various specified ways – expose the Fund to reputational risk.

The three-step process of IDD, for committee member selection and others, involves (1) deciding what questions to ask (e.g. what parts of integrity risk to focus on), (2) obtaining answers to those questions, via online searches, reference checks with trusted individuals, etc., and (3) making decisions based on those answers, as well as defining who is delegated to make those decisions (Board leadership, in the case of Committee member selection).

In the discussion session, Jackson also said that when constituencies put forward a candidate, they need to be confident that that person can comply with the [Global Fund's Code of Conduct for Governance Officials](#).

In addition, he said, strengthening the committee member selection process involves broadening the questions the Fund asks of candidates, examining whether the Fund is asking “the right set of questions about that person’s engagement and competence,” and exploring further how to engage with more and broader stakeholders in assessing candidates. The decision-making process for candidate selection also needs to be strengthened, he said.

“Right kind of representation”

At the end of the November 13 discussion session, EGC Chair Thurman highlighted the importance of nominating people “with the right sets of skills,” and noted an issue that continues to arise for some committees, which is receiving just a single nomination from some constituencies. In closing the session, Thurman said, “We have to make sure we have opportunity to use our slots to make sure we get the right kind of representation [and] in making sure we have the right ways to make sure that all voices are heard.”

The EGC has established the following timelines for its review:

Consultations	November 2018–February 2019
Draft paper with recommendations to the EGC	February or March 2019
EGC discussion and recommendations	March 2019 (at the 9th EGC meeting)
Board decisions	May 2019 (at the 41st Board meeting)

The 41st Board meeting is scheduled for 14–16 May 2019.

Editor’s notes:

- The GFO will also publish a follow-up article in early 2019 describing the more recent evolution of the Global Fund’s ethics-related policies.
- This article is dated 15 November, which is when this article was uploaded into our automated system. The article was not published until 16 November, the day following the Board meeting. This respects our agreement with the Global Fund concerning when we publish articles that are based on the content of the Board papers.

Board Document GF-B40-09, Strengthening Committee Selection Processes, should be available shortly at www.theglobalfund.org/en/board/meetings/40.

Further reading: GFO 304 (1 February 2017) article [“Implementation of Integrity Due Diligence Remains Fragmented”](#)

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