The Stop TB Partnership Secretariat is pleased to receive the external mid-term evaluation report conducted by CEPA.

The CEPA team has conducted a thorough evaluation of the initiative with multiple country visits and in depth interviews with many stakeholders. We feel that while it is impossible to detail all of the intricacies required to run such a large scale global initiative in one brief report, the evaluation provides a valuable overview of the progress and challenges of TB REACH.

In particular, the Secretariat is delighted to read that there was a strong sense that TB REACH is a valuable initiative helping to increase TB case detection, and providing much added value through innovation and fast track, flexible funding to partners. Individual TB REACH projects have been externally evaluated to show that the results from the first wave of grants improved TB case detection by over 25% in just over one year compared to previous year's data, while covering a population of over 100 million people. The report recognizes the good work done by HLSP/KIT as the external monitoring and evaluation partner for individual TB REACH projects.

TB REACH incubates new ideas that other funders may not initially fund. Those that work can then be sustained through other funding which the Secretariat helps to secure.

The Stop TB Partnership Secretariat is proud of the report's recognition that a very small team in the Secretariat is able to manage and provide support to many partners, keeping administrative costs low and providing impressive results quickly.

While these results are impressive and promising, we also are concerned that the number of quality applications is much higher than the current funding can support.

TB REACH has been supported by a 120 million CAD grant from the Government of Canada and recently leveraged an additional 30 million USD grant from UNITAID together with WHO, to support the rollout of Xpert MTB/RIF testing, a new rapid molecular test that has the potential to change the way TB is diagnosed. The Stop TB Partnership Secretariat would like to thank the Government of Canada and UNITAID, as well as all the Partners who have implemented and supported the TB REACH initiative.

There are a number of detailed recommendations for TB REACH which we have addressed in the management response to the full report, and are annexed.

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Annexed

- Management response to recommendations in the evaluation report.
- Summary of results of Wave 1 projects of TB REACH, externally evaluated by HLSP KIT. Web access link: http://www.stoptb.org/assets/documents/global/awards/tbreach/BrochureFinal08.10.12.pdf

Theme	Recommendation	Management Response
1.1 Strategic recommendations		
Funding waves and proposal process	TBR could adopt a two-stage proposal process. Applicants would submit a concept note and shortlisted applicants would then submit a full proposal.	Agree.
Sustainability and scalability of grants	Develop a framework that defines and identifies high and poor performing grants, to ensure that TBR focuses on the projects with the highest impact/ benefit	Agree. The TBR Secretariat will develop this framework for future waves of TBR funding.
	TBR should be more proactive in raising awareness of its projects and their results among key TB donors. At the global level, donors could agree to better harmonise their interventions and support to ensure sustainability/ scaling up of high-impact approaches.	Agree. We make an effort with the few human resources available at the TBR secretariat, but will involve the communications and advocacy team of the Partnership Secretariat more in this effort as well as other Partners who have country presence.
	The PRC/ Secretariat could engage with the NTP managers (and other key country partners) during the proposal process (also on an on-going basis) to solicit feedback on: alignment of proposals with the country priorities; what might work well in the country context; and whether similar interventions have been tested previously.	Partially agree. While TBR would like to engage NTPs on a more regular basis, TBR supports projects in over 40 countries and receives over 300 proposals during each Wave. It is not feasible to do this with the current staff (2 technical and 2 support staff). Our partners presenting proposals have this primary responsibility. TBR will collaborate with technical partners to provide support in proposal development.
	TBR could do more to clarify the roles and responsibilities of the NTP before, during and after the TBR grant.	Agree. This will be done considering the feedback that TBR has received from different types of partners, and focusing on the need for innovation and scale up of successful interventions.
	Towards the end of each grant, TBR may engage with the NTP and other country stakeholders to discuss options for project sustainability/ scalability – focussing on the high-performing grants	Partially agree. TBR Secretariat is constrained financially and in terms of HR to undertake this. This will be addressed in collaboration with in-country partners and also by earmarking a budget line in future TBR grants for such activities to be conducted by the TBR grantees with help from other stakeholders.
	It is important to document successful innovations and models that could be replicated elsewhere	Agree. TBR is developing a handbook describing a variety of case finding approaches in different settings and co-authoring numerous peer reviewed scientific publications.
	While the current proposal format includes a section on sustainability, additional evidence and specific	Agree. We will modify the application form starting with Wave 4 proposals. We will also modify the second year

	suggestions could be required, albeit recognising that the prospects for sustainability will evolve during grant implementation. Second year grants should propose an 'exit strategy'. Co-financing. While arranging co-financing is not possible for all applicants (particularly small NGOs), applications that include credible co-financing could be scored higher.	application form starting with the next round of proposals for an additional funding year.
	Key criteria in the PRC review. The PRC considers sustainability as one of its review criteria. However, it was accorded a maximum of only 5 out of 100 points for Wave 1 proposals, and the potential for scalability is not specifically included. These could be emphasised to a greater degree, including when reviewing proposals for providing a second year of funding.	Partially agree. While sustainability is clearly an important issue, we do not want to take the focus away from innovation and trying new approaches. There is an inherent tension between innovation and sustainability at the proposal stage. Therefore, TBR will strive to achieve a balance between innovation and sustainability.
Second year of funding	TBR might consider increasing the relative funding allocation for this follow-up support with a view to enhance the sustainability/ scalability of its proven and successful approaches, and particularly if it mobilises additional donor funding.	Partially agree. There are limits in terms of human capacity to discuss with the countries we support, and currently there is no budget to conduct these types of activities. Our in-country partners are responsible as well for these types of activities. We may consider suggesting that budgets be included for stakeholder discussions.
	Define and publish the selection/ performance criteria for the second year of support – which would be in line with what it classifies as a 'high performing' project	Agree. Currently the review is based around additional cases found, and the M&E feedback focuses on the quality of the data. We will develop these guidelines further and set clear criteria for the next call for proposals.
	Provide more information to grantees on the total funding available and number of projects expected to receive a second year of support.	Partially agree. In each grantee meeting the second year of funding is discussed with all grantees and how it is limited to a sub set of all projects. We generally do not know upfront exactly how much funding is available and therefore any communication on the funding available will be indicative with a number of assumptions.
	Request for and evaluate proposals for the second year of funding after the completion of at least three quarters of project implementation activities under year 1 funding, when more complete and stronger case finding data is available to assess the success of the project.	Partially agree. When three quarters of implementation data are available, almost a year has passed, making the collection of proposals, preparation and PRC review, second year grant preparation and signing difficult, without jeopardizing continuation of services. However, TBR will look for

		better ways of having more data to inform the Proposal Review Committee decisions on the proposals.
Results Framework	TBR should establish a results framework, clearly defining its overall goals and objectives and a 'logical framework' of outputs, outcomes and impacts to achieve these. The framework should also specify achievable targets along with milestones for key results parameters.	Agree. The TBR Secretariat will develop this framework for future waves of TBR funding.
1.2 Operational recommendations		
Governance roles	Both the Coordinating Board (or Executive Committee) and the PSG need to be encouraged to engage more with TBR and provide strategic guidance on various issues and TBR should have alternates for Board/ PSG members	Agree.
M&E	While measuring early case detection is difficult in a routine M&E approach, it is an important factor for TBR; efforts should be made to ensure that data is collected.	Agree. Recognizing that there are no available standard metrics for early case detection, TBR Secretariat and the M&E agency have had extensive consultations to come up with the best possible metrics and this will be applied to all Wave 3 projects.
	Despite difficulties in data collection and attributing changes to grantee performance, reporting treatment success rates is essential to measure the impact of TBR.	Agree. This is currently being implemented in the online reporting system.
	The M&E agency should assess the EQA of sputum smear microscopy where this lab test is used to diagnose TB. More generally, further attempts should be made to conduct quality checks on the data provided by the grantees in their quarterly M&E reports.	Partially agree. EQA systems for smear microscopy are monitored by national reference laboratories and the NTP. The M&E agency cannot duplicate this system but can include in their M&E visit a review of the EQA systems. In addition, an increasing number of TBR projects are now using the Xpert test which is far superior to microscopy. The M&E team visits and reviews data on a regular basis. Grantees are encouraged to discuss in their reports issues that affect data quality, and these are reviewed by the M&E agency.
	It is unlikely that metrics alone will adequately capture project-level performance and challenges encountered. It is therefore imperative that qualitative aspects such as what worked well and less well and the reasons thereof are	Agree. We will focus more on the narrative sections of this work in Wave 3 and 4 reporting.

	gathered from implementing agencies to learn lessons.	
Funding for local NGOs/ CSOs	Enabling technical assistance to smaller organisations with limited capacity for concept development and proposal writing, through the support of in-country partner organisations. The requirement of submitting an intent to apply would help identify potential applicants that might benefit from technical assistance.	Partially agree. Technical assistance would be useful but difficult given the staffing at the TBR Secretariat. The TBR Secretariat also must be careful not to promote specific organizations or projects and create conflicts of interest. However, creating linkages to other organizations in country for the purpose of technical support is something that could be promoted more.
	Encourage applicants whose financial/ technical capacity is low to engage in a partnering approach with others in the country (larger CSOs, research institutes or the NTP).	Agree. This was part of the Wave 3 call for proposals. This will be part of the Wave 4 application process and two stage review.
	Raising awareness of TBR's funding among these organisations by going beyond the current techniques of website and email based communication but keeping within TBR's resources.	Partially agree. While an important activity, current human resource constraint restricts our ability to engage organizations at a country/regional level. Collaboration with key Partners to undertake this for TBR may be a better way to address this recommendation.
1.3 Other Recommendations		
Inter-project exchanges.	Grantee workshops have been successful in sharing project experiences among. Encourage similar mechanisms for learning/ information exchange amongst implementers.	Agree. We have set up a Facebook page for this. Other activities were not foreseen in the original budget and plans, but could be included in future funding proposals.
Flexibility in revising proposed targets.	Applicants should be guided by TBR to include realistic targets in their proposal and during the clarification process after Board approval but prior to signing the GAL. In addition, an ability to update the targets once the project has commenced would provide a greater reality check in assessment of results against targets.	Partially agree. Because the targets and cost per case calculations are part of the application process, it is unfair to allow successful applicants to revise down ambitious targets because others may have had more realistic but less attractive goals. TBR will investigate how to focus more on the innovative approach during the application process.
Flexibility on overhead costs and payments.	TBR could be flexible on the proportion of overhead costs and milestone payment structure for selected projects (where there is a clear rationale for doing so).	Agree. When applicable, this is important to have flexibility.
Application guidelines	Consider collating all application material in a single document and translate in other languages such as French.	Agree. The TBR Secretariat will develop this guidance for future waves of TBR funding.