



ADAPTATION FUND

AFB/EFC.27/9  
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Adaptation Fund Board  
Ethics and Finance Committee  
Twenty-seventh Meeting  
Bonn, Germany (Virtually held), 24-25 March 2021

Agenda Item: 5 d)

**BOARD'S PARTICIPATION IN ADVISORY GROUPS,  
TECHNICAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP  
OF THE ADAPTATION FUND (AF-TERG)**

## Background

1. During the Board's 35th meeting, the Board requested the Adaptation Fund Technical Evaluation Reference Group (AF-TERG) to provide more information about the proposed AF-TERG Project Working Groups (PWGs)<sup>1</sup> and the potential participation of Board members, as presented in the Decision B.35.b/17:

*(a) Take note of the information contained in paragraph 15 of document AFB/EFC.26.b/Inf.1 on the establishment and use of project working groups (PWGs) during the implementation of evaluative work elements; and*

*(b) Request the Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) to submit to the Ethics and Finance Committee, at its twenty-seventh meeting, the necessary information on: the objectives, composition and membership of the PWGs, the roles and responsibilities of their members, the timeframe and time commitment, and present options for the possible participation of members of the Board in the work of the PWGs.*

(Decision B.35.b/17)

## Recommendation to the EFC

2. The Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC) may want to consider and recommend that the Board decides to:

(a) Authorize its members to participate in Advisory Groups (AGs) to which they are invited to join by the AF-TERG.

(b) Encourage any member wishing to participate in AGs to consider the requirements of time commitment, interest in the topic and perceived or real conflict of interest, on a case-by-case basis in the decision to participate.

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<sup>1</sup> The AF-TERG has decided to change the name of the Project Working Groups to Advisory Groups to reflect better the nature of the group.

## Introduction

3. The main body of the current document presents issues for the Board to consider in deciding on if and how members would like to participate in the AGs. The document also includes the AF-TERG recommendation to the EFC to request to the Board that its members participate in the AG, as relevant and appropriate. The AF-TERG views the establishment of AGs as important in supporting its work program that was approved by the Board. The AF-TERG recognises that while the formation of the AGs fall within the AF-TERG mandate, the decision for Board member participation in this forum rests entirely with the Board. Annex 1 contains the terms of reference for the AGs, for information, as developed by the AF-TERG.

### *Short presentation of the concept of AF-TERG Advisory Groups*

4. As explained at the 26th EFC meeting and 35th Board meeting, the AF-TERG proposes to establish AGs on a **need basis**, topic/assignment-based and limited to 2-3 per fiscal year. The AGs are expected to enrich the AF-TERG's approach to the Fund's evaluation priorities. Although the AF-TERG will equally consider stakeholder perspectives and informed advice from the AG, the final decision on how to incorporate the advice will be made **independently by the AF-TERG**.

5. The proactive participation of key Fund stakeholders<sup>2</sup> in the work of the AF-TERG is encouraged through common practices such as interviews, focus groups, and online surveys to collect data, receive feedback on experiences and lessons and sharing the results of the work. These proactive approaches are intended to increase the responsiveness and value addition of the AF-TERG to the Fund stakeholders. The AGs will be an additional approach of participation by: (i) making engagements more dialogical in a shared space, (ii) sharing different points of view on a specific topic to gain richer insights, (iii) enabling more systematic participation throughout the evaluation process from design to recommendations, and (iv) enabling sharing of evaluation learnings to the different stakeholder groups, as feasible.

6. Key Fund stakeholders will be invited by the AF-TERG to participate in relevant AGs. Participants are not intended as official representatives of any particular stakeholder group; rather, individuals would be expected to bring points of view and ideas that are associated with their stakeholder group. In addition, based on the topic under discussion, the AF-TERG may also invite external subject-experts to complement the expertise from the AF-TERG and any consultants contracted for the assignment.

7. Participants to the AG will be expected to commit up to 2-4 hours per month for the period of designing and implementing the evaluation in a fiscal year. Participants will use this time to gather relevant information about the subject, identify lessons and experiences on the subject that will be shared during the meetings or online discussions, review documents and provide comments, participate in meetings and/or discussions through emails, and provide inputs and advice on results and recommendations of the evaluation.

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<sup>2</sup> Key Fund stakeholders are considered as: the AF Board, including its Ethics and Finance Committee and the Project and Programme Review Committee, Implementing Entities, the NGO Network, the AFB Secretariat, and the AF-TERG.

### **Participation of Board members or alternates in the AF-TERG AGs**

8. The Board, working through the EFC, has two roles in relationship to the AF-TERG and its products: (i) supervises and oversees the work of the AF-TERG, and (ii) decides on all of the recommendations put forward by the AF-TERG. As such, the AG will benefit from the Board participant's informed view on the particular subject and would be able to draw on their insights from Board discussions and decisions as well as any relevant guidance from the CMA/CMP. In return, participation in the AG will help to deepen Board's members knowledge, appreciation and insights into the evaluative work of the Fund.

9. The envisaged process is that the AF-TERG Chair would send an invitation to the Board Chair, through the EFC Chair, requesting participation of Board member(s) and/or alternate(s) during the formation of a particular AG.

10. In determining their participation in the AGs, the Board may want to consider some factors including: interest in the topic and value add, expected time commitment, and perceived or real conflict of interest at the levels of the Board, alternate and/or individual member.

11. This potential conflict of interest could be managed in the following ways:

(a) At Board level, the EFC<sup>3</sup> would provide advice on whether there is a conflict of interest for the Board to join an AG to which they are invited.

(b) At the individual Board member and alternate level, the individual concerned, if nominated by the Board and/or the Chair of the Board, would be responsible to declare his/her conflict of interest in participating in an AG. For example, the participation of the Board member or alternate will be in conflict if it compromises his/her independence and impartiality as stated in the written oath of service they make when they assume AF services<sup>4</sup>.

(c) When discussing conflict of interest, the Board should also consider that the AF-TERG takes ultimate responsibility on whether and how the advice given by the AG may be utilised.

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<sup>3</sup> Refer to EFC's Terms of Reference

<sup>4</sup> Refer to Rules of Procedure of the Adaptation Fund Board and the Terms of Reference for the Adaptation Fund Board Accreditation Panel

## Annex 1: Advisory Groups Terms of Reference

### *Background on the AF-TERG*

1. The Technical Evaluation Reference Group of the Adaptation Fund (AF-TERG) is an independent evaluation advisory group, accountable to the Board via the Ethics and Finance Committee (EFC), established to ensure the independent implementation of the Fund's Evaluation Framework. The Adaptation Fund Board (the Board) endorsed the Evaluation Framework at its thirteenth meeting (March 2011 - Decision B.13/20.a), and approved a revised version AFB/EFC.6/4 at its fifteenth meeting.<sup>5</sup> Implementation of the Evaluation Framework is intended to add value and contribute towards the achievement of the Fund's intended impact.

2. The Board decided to establish the AF-TERG to implement the long-term evaluation function during its thirtieth meeting held in October 2017 and approved AF-TERG's Terms of Reference in March 2018 during its thirty-first meeting. Specifically, the TERG was established to serve three functions on (a) evaluation, (b) advisory, and (c) oversight in the context of the implementation of the Evaluation Framework. The AF-TERG, which is headed by a Chair, is comprised of an independent group of experts in evaluation, called the AF-TERG members. A small AF-TERG secretariat, which is led by a coordinator, provides support for the implementation of evaluations and studies as part of the evaluative work program.

3. The AF-TERG started operating in July 2019. In May 2020, the Board approved the TERG's draft multi-year strategy and work programme (Decision B.35.a-35.b/29) and proposed two-year budget (Decision B.35.a-35.b/27).

### *Rationale for establishing Advisory Groups*

4. The AF-TERG has decided to establish Advisory Groups (AGs) on a **need basis**, topic/assignment-based and limited to 2-3 per fiscal year to support the Board approved AF-TERG work program. The AF-TERG believes that for its work to be relevant, useful and of increased utility, the design, implementation and recommendations should seek the participation of as many stakeholders as relevant and feasible.

5. The proactive participation of key Fund stakeholders<sup>6</sup> in the work of the AF-TERG is already encouraged through common practices such as interviews, focus groups, and online surveys to collect data, receive feedback on experiences and lessons and sharing the results of the work. These proactive approaches are intended to increase the responsiveness and value addition of the AF-TERG to the Fund stakeholders. Each activity supported by the AF-TERG specifies how relevant stakeholders will participate and how they will be consulted.

6. The AGs will be an additional approach of participation by: (i) making engagements more dialogical in a shared space, (ii) sharing different points of view on a specific topic, (iii) enabling more systematic participation throughout the evaluation process from design to

<sup>5</sup> AF. 2012. Evaluation Framework. June 2012. Available at: <https://www.adaptation-fund.org/document/evaluation-framework-4/>

<sup>6</sup> Key Fund stakeholders are considered as: the AF Board, including its Ethics and Finance Committee and the Project and Programme Review Committee, Implementing Entities, Designated Authorities, the NGO Network, the AFB Secretariat, and the AF-TERG.

recommendations, and (iv) sharing of evaluation learnings to the different stakeholder groups, as feasible.

*Purpose and objectives of the AF-TERG Advisory Groups*

7. The AGs are expected to deepen AF-TERG's responsiveness to the Fund's evaluation priorities at different levels. The purpose of the AGs shall be to provide advice to the AF-TERG team working on AF-TERG's managed activity. The stakeholder-perspective informed advice from the AG will be considered and reviewed by the AF-TERG but the final decision on how to incorporate the advice will be made **independently** by the AF-TERG.

8. The objectives of AF-TERG advisory groups are to:

- To provide a common space where different points of view, experiences and lessons are shared and discussed.
- To ensure that views are taken into account from key Fund stakeholders throughout the process of the AF-TERG evaluation, particularly at the beginning to set up the context and at the end when recommendations are developed.
- To bring the needs, expectations and perspectives of key Fund stakeholders on the assignment.
- To make suggestions on the most effective ways of engaging the different stakeholder groups to ensure their meaningful participation in the assignment.
- To provide written and oral feedback, to be shared and discussed within the AG, on the quality and relevance of the evaluative products at key stages of the process.

*Composition and membership of the AF-TERG Advisory Groups*

9. Key Fund stakeholders will be invited by the AF-TERG to participate in relevant AGs. The individuals will be requested to bring to the discussion of the AG the points of views, experiences, lessons and ideas that are associated with their stakeholder group. There is no expectation that the participants will be officially representing any particular stakeholder group. The actual composition and groups will be determined by the AF-TERG team working on the assignment.

10. Although each AG will be established to respond to the particular AF-TERG activity the AG are not expected to have more than 5 or 6 members.

11. The external consultants contracted, if applicable, for the assignment will be part of the AG as resource persons and will support the AF-TERG member(s).

12. In addition, the AF-TERG may also invite external experts on the subject matter of the AG to participate at particular points during the AG implementation. These external experts will complement the expertise from the AF-TERG and any consultants contracted for the assignment.

13. Before agreeing to participate, participants should consider their interest in the topic, expected time commitments and perceived or real conflict of interest with the subject of the AG.

14. Membership to an AG ends when the assignment is concluded.

*Roles and responsibilities*

15. The AG, as the name indicates, will be advisory in nature. Responsibility for designing, implementing and completing the AF-TERG activity, for which the AG was established, will be assumed by the AF-TERG. The **responsibilities** of the AG participants will be as follows:

- Support and demonstrate the work principles of the AF-TERG.
- Provide inputs and advice on results and recommendations of the evaluation.
- Catalyze and facilitate consultations with other Fund stakeholders.
- Provide input and advice during the meetings or online discussions, reviewing documents and providing comments, participate in the meetings and/or discussions through emails.
- Participants **do not** have the responsibility to officially represent their stakeholder group

16. The **roles** and ways of working of the AG participants will be as follows:

- Attend meetings or online discussions to share expectations, points of view, experiences and lessons relevant to the assignment.
- Gather and share information about the subject, identify lessons and experiences on the subject,
- An AF-TERG member or AF-TERG Chair will chair the AG, its meetings and will ensure that all participants' points of views are shared.
- The AF-TERG team comprising of AF-TERG members and external consultants working on the assignment, will take the advice from the AG but ultimately decide, independently, how they will incorporate it into the assignment. The AF-TERG team is fully responsible for completing any outputs from the assignment, and reports to the AF-TERG.
- External consultants contracted for the assignment will support the AF-TERG in the implementation of the AG.

17. An AG will complement other AF-TERG consultation approaches with Fund stakeholders.

*Benefits that stakeholders get from participating in AGs*

18. Participants in AGs should derive benefits for themselves as individuals and for the respective stakeholders they come from. As individuals, they will learn with and from others in terms of different stakeholder perspectives, deepen their knowledge of the Fund and of the evaluation function of the Fund. The stakeholder groups benefit from ensuring that their respective perspectives are shared with others in this common space; and also learn about relevant

evaluation experiences gathered during the evaluation process, from design, implementation to recommendations. In other words, AGs are another important site for collective capacity development on evaluation and evaluative evidence.

*Timeframe and time commitments*

19. Participants to the AG will be expected to commit 2-4 hours per month for the period of designing and implementing the evaluation in a fiscal year.
20. The exact number of meetings, online interactions and activities will vary and will be decided on by each AG.
21. Participants from internal Adaptation Fund stakeholders will not be compensated monetarily for their participation since they will participate in their roles in relationship to the Fund.