The Global Fund

Guidance Note

LFA Spot check Terms of Reference – Guidance Note for LFAs

August 2016

01 Background

The LFA spot check Terms of Reference (ToR) outline the work to be undertaken by the LFA across several programmatic areas. They constitute an important component of the menu of options for program quality assessment, as per the Global Fund Strategy for Program and Data Quality.

The ToR for all the LFA programmatic spot checks can be found on the Global Fund LFA website: http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/lfa/documents/

02 Initiating LFA spot checks

The Global Fund Country Teams request spot checks based on the country/grant context and need. However, the LFA should be proactive in recommending to the Country Team programmatic spot checks, as relevant, based on evidence of need.

The ToR provided on the Global Fund LFA website can be used in their entirety or be customized to the particular country/grant needs. The Country Team should agree with the LFA the scope of work to be undertaken and the required level of Effort (LoE) *before* any work commences.

Where the current ToRs do not capture an aspect deemed critical by the Country Team, the Country Team and LFA can agree to use the "Customizable Section" within each ToR to include additional questions.

03 Sampling

The Global Fund Country Team will guide and assist the LFA regarding the sampling for each spot check. The sampling frame and the sampling strategy and criteria should be discussed with the Country Team and agreement obtained before the sites are selected. The sampling strategy and the number of sites selected will have implications for the LFA LoE and transport and other costs.

04 LFA experts

Various LFA experts should contribute to the spot checks. The LFA experts recommended to undertake the spot checks are noted in each ToR. The LFA Programmatic/M&E Expert should conduct the majority of the work with inputs from the Procurement and Supply Management Expert, the Finance Expert and the Team Leader. The final list of LFA experts should be discussed and agreed with the Country Team *before* the commencement of the spot check.

05 Level of Effort

Some indicative guidance for the LoE per site required is provided in each ToR. The LoE for each spot check, including for report writing, depends on which elements of the ToR and the number and location of sites included in the review. Based on the agreed scope of work, the LoE should be agreed between the Country Team and the LFA before starting the spot check.

06 Background reading

Background reading materials for each spot check are suggested in each ToR. It is recommended that the LFA review relevant materials and grant-specific documents before the spot check so that the spot check is adequately contextualized.

07 Conducting the spot check

Each spot check contains several areas with specific questions for the LFA to address and comment on as well as a section for main findings and recommendations, people interviewed/consulted and documents consulted.

Planning: After the final scope of work is agreed with the Global Fund Country Team, the LFA is advised to review the ToR to determine the order in which the sections will be assessed and to make meeting and travel arrangements accordingly. Some assessment areas focus on the national level while others require work at the regional level (where relevant), district level, health facility or community level. Some sections can be answered based on a document review while others require both document reviews and interviews with key informants.

The LFA should contact the entities that are required for the spot check well before the assessment to ensure that the relevant counterparts are available during the spot check. The relevant authorities should be contacted and informed about the spot check a minimum of 7 working days before the assessment.

Conducting the spot check: Each question that has been selected by the Country Team as part of the ToR should be answered concisely based on the LFA's document review and/or interviews. The LFA should review supporting documents/evidence of the responses provided and should note such evidence in their responses in the space provided at the end of each section.

Where providing additional information is considered appropriate and relevant to the Country Team, the LFA should include further details in the space at the bottom of each section.

In instances where several data points are included in the spot check (interviews with several people or checks at several facilities), the LFA should duplicate the relevant sections so that there is one per entity assessed. The LFA is required to summarize results across all entities (see **Analysis** below) but should submit the raw data across all entities assessed as an annex to the final report.

Reliability of supporting documentation: Good practice of verification includes checking the reliability of supporting/underlying documents for any evidence of fraud. While performing spot checks, including verification of supporting documents the LFA should pay attention to signs which could be an indication of fraud, e.g. the use of the same handwriting, same ink, fake names (e.g. celebrity names) etc. If the LFA identifies any evidence of falsified documents/fraud it should immediately alert the Global Fund Country Team and provide details of its findings in its report.

Main findings and recommendations: The LFA should classify its findings and recommendations into major and minor issues and list them in descending priority (i.e. start list of major issues with those of highest priority).

Definitions of major and minor issues:
Major Issues: There are significant gaps in capacities/processes/systems that pose major risks to a successful implementation of the reviewed/assessed activity.
Minor Issues: Required capacity/processes/systems are generally in place. The identified gaps pose minor risks that can be managed and/or strengthening measures can be implemented within a short timeframe.

The LFA's recommendations should be **specific, relevant** and **realistically achievable** in the implementation context. The LFA should provide an **appropriate timeframe** for the implementation of each recommendation.

People and documents consulted: Details should be provided regarding the people interviewed/consulted and the documents referred to for the spot check. The LFA should provide full details so that the Country Team can judge the comprehensiveness of the review.

08 Analysis

The spot checks generate both qualitative and quantitative data. At the national level, for example, there is likely only one set of information. For the facility level or for sections that require interviewing several people, there is likely to be more than one set of information. In these cases the LFA is expected to analyze the data across all facilities and across all people interviewed. This applies to both qualitative and quantitative data.

With regard to qualitative data, the LFA is expected to conduct a thematic analysis and present synthesized findings across the individuals interviewed or the facilities assessed. A thematic analysis focuses on examining data and recording emerging patterns (or "themes") within this data. These themes will elucidate key issues and should provide the basis for the LFA's recommendations to the Global Fund. More information is provided in the **Data Analysis and Reporting Guide (Annex)**.

09 Reporting

A synthesis report should be compiled exploring main emerging themes per section. Each main theme should be described and findings explained. Pertinent or striking quotes should be included to illustrate powerful findings.
For further details on analysis and reporting, please consult the **Data Analysis and Reporting Guide (Annex)**.

10 Providing feedback on the ToRs

Feedback from LFAs on the each spot check ToR would be much appreciated. LFAs are invited to provide such feedback to the LFA Coordination Team and the Global Fund Country Teams. Such feedback will be taken into account and changes made as necessary going forward.

ANNEX:
Guidance for LFA on Data Analysis and Reporting for LFA Spot Checks

01 Background

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be required in the analysis for the LFA spot checks. Data analysis and reporting of results will follow the main headings set out in each ToR. These themes are defined by the main headings in each ToR. For example, in the case of the spot check for community case management of malaria, results will be presented under the following areas: health products management (HPM), availability of approved standards, quality of services, IEC, and verification of data at community site. As the ToRs are customizable by the Country Team and LFA based on mutual agreement, the assessment areas should serve as a guide rather than a set format.

02 Data Capture

The LFA may decide to use paper-based data collection tools or may collect the data directly onto the electronic ToR formats. If data collection is paper-based, the LFA will need to capture the data electronically to prepare for data analysis. The Global Fund will provide data capture templates in MS Excel for each ToR. These templates can and should be modified according to the final ToR as agreed by the Country Team and LFA. The LFA is to take special note of the “Customizable Section” as agreed with the Country Team. The data capture templates will have to be modified to reflect any open or close-ended questions included under the “customizable section” in the ToR.

Data will need to be captured for each administrative level at which the spot check is conducted – national, regional/provincial, district, health facility, community, individual. If multiple health facilities or individuals were included in the spot check, each entity’s information will need to be captured.

03 Data Analysis

A combination of qualitative and quantitative techniques will be required in the analysis for the LFA spot checks. For both qualitative and quantitative data, the LFA should provide a description of how data was managed: how data was collected and captured, data capture software used, and the software used for data analysis.

<u>Quantitative Analysis</u>
Analysis of categorical responses - yes, no, and partially - will be performed using basic frequency tabulations. The outputs will include frequency tables and basic charts. In the case where results are presented in percentages, the LFA should provide the counts (n), which represent the total number of health facilities, community sites or individuals interviewed. The LFA does not need to present the quantitative information for each question in the spot check; only the most pertinent aspects/findings should be presented in the report.

<u>Qualitative Analysis</u>
For open-ended questions, the LFA will conduct a thematic analysis. The following steps should be taken for qualitative data:

1.) The first stage in the analysis of qualitative data will be an initial pre-screening of the data to determine major emerging issues per main heading outlined in the ToR. Codes should be identified at this stage.

2.) All the data should be reviewed and allocated one of more codes. Coding can be done manually or using software. Each data point (each level visited during the spot check, each health facility visited and each individual interviewed) will be analyzed according to the codes identified earlier. If new codes emerge, these should be included in the coding table and all previously coded data should be reviewed in case the new code is pertinent for those data points. Multiple codes can be used as necessary. Visits with particularly striking findings should be earmarked for highlighting in the final report.
3.) Based on the coding, the LFA should establish major themes or patterns. Larger subject areas can be further refined into sub-areas where appropriate. Major areas and sub-areas will be mapped out to develop a "picture" of the main findings uncovered during the spot check. These thematic networks will be used throughout the analysis and refined as needed.
4.) During the analysis phase, any new themes emerging will be included in the mapping. Themes may also be removed or refined, as needed. The coding will be an iterative process so that the most relevant and salient aspects are captured.
5.) A summary coding table should be developed and annexed in the report. An example of a coding table is presented below. Several codes can contribute to one theme and one code can contribute to several themes.

Data extract	Code for	Theme

6.) Following the coding of all the data, the themes should be revisited to assure that they are accurate and reflective of the data in the spot check. Some themes may need to be combined or separated out, depending on the data.
7.) The qualitative data should be checked against the quantitative data gathered to ensure consistency and to inform/support the findings of the categorical questions, as appropriate.

04 Reporting (more details under "Suggested Reporting Template" below)

A synthesis report should be compiled exploring main emerging themes per section (see report outline below). Each main theme should be described and findings explained. Pertinent or striking quotes should be included to illustrate powerful findings.
At the discretion of the Country Team, the LFA may be requested to compile a stand-alone report documenting the qualitative data.