



The global fund for education in emergencies

Executive Committee Teleconference - Minutes

Wednesday, 22 January 2020, 2020 9:00-10:30am EST

Participants

Executive Committee Members: Nancy Smyth (Canada - EXCOM Chair), Yasmine Sherif (ECW Director), Astrid de Vries (the Netherlands), Emma Wagner (SCF), Dean Brooks (INEE), Pdraig Power (GPE), Anna Rosendahl (Sweden/SIDA), Camilla Helgø Fossberg (Norway/NORAD), Kerstin Holst (UNESCO), Annina Mattsson (Dubai Cares), Rudolf Huber (BMZ/Germany), Line Baagø-Rasmussen (Denmark), Maria Agnese Giordano (Global Education Cluster), Carol Hannon (Ireland), Aida Liha Matejicek (European Union), Nina Papadopoulos USAID), Rebecca Telford (UNHCR, on behalf of Mamadou Dian Balde), Linda Johns (UNICEF, on behalf of Robert Jenkins), Peter Darvas (WB, on behalf of Jamie Saavedra), Emma Gremley (DFID/UK, on behalf of Alicia Herbert)

ECW Secretariat: Nagi Messiha, Michael Corlin, Zeinab Adam, Graham Lang, Maarten Barends, Malin Ljunggren Elisson, Kent Page, Robert Edward Dutton, James Thomas Vargas, Li Peng, Manan Kotak, Michelle May and Maurits Wilko Spoelder

Welcome and Roll Call

The Chair opened the meeting, welcomed participants and announced the agenda before giving the floor to the Director.

1. Approval of ECW Operating Manual

- The Chair opened the meeting with the following key messages:
 - The objective of the meeting was to approve the Operating Manual subject to the incorporation of agreed responses, allowing to move forward with updating the appendices.
 - Broad-based consultations had taken place and ExCom had been invited to take part in extensive consultations and comment on the process.
 - The final draft was shared with the ExCom on 13 December, setting the deadline for comments to 15 January. The Chair of the ExCom team compiled the 68 responses, to which the Secretariat responded in detail.
 - Given the significant work that lay ahead to complete the appendices, it was important to find some consensus in terms of way forward.
- The Director:
 - Thanked everyone for their engagement and support throughout the process.
 - Urged to be mindful of time constraints, deadlines and workplan commitments. The Operating Manual had originally been scheduled for HLSG approval in September last year. Upon request by ECW stakeholders, the Secretariat extended the deadline once more.
 - Explained the three criteria guiding the approach for handling comments: 1) consistency with HLSG and ExCom approved documents and the foundational principles of the ECW fund; 2) rules and regulations of the host entity and the regulatory legal framework on human resources; 3) organisational logic.
 - Highlighted that over 50% of comments were accepted, and amendments were made accordingly. Others had been placed for consideration or clarification. Only four comments appeared to contradict

the regulatory framework and official documents. The ECW Secretariat had overwhelmingly accepted or provided clarification to most of the comments. This indicated a heightened trust built over the past years and a shared vision.

- Advised that the revision was conducted as the first manual was not fully fit for purpose or appropriate for a global fund mandated to address the humanitarian-development coherence. The Director also stressed that ECW's core mission was to achieve the strategic objectives approved by the HLSG and the role of the Operating Manual was to support the achievement of the strategic objectives of the ECW fund.
 - Advised that the role of the HLSG was established four years ago, when the HLSG approved its governance structure, including the HLSG, the ExCom, the Director, the Secretariat and the division of labour. Over the years, realignment had taken place and it was today working well between the different governance entities. Both trust and a shared vision had been built. We should avoid revisiting decisions made four years ago and which had proven to work well.
 - While recognizing that most comments were helpful to achieve the objective of this exercise, the USAID comment (#25) calling for a better-balanced approach to the humanitarian-development nexus was a poignant one, as this was one of the main reasons the operating manual was being revised. The Director suggested zooming in on this comment with a focused strategy group addressing the core issue of humanitarian-development coherence across the document. This would enable ECW to have a final revised draft ready for approval at the ExCom meeting in Dubai, and thus to be approved by the HLSG in April.
- Christopher Peter Talbot, Cambridge Education (CE) then briefed the ExCom on the process and next steps:
 - CE carried out its work in three phases.
 - The preparation and research phase consisted in: 17 interviews being conducted with 28 key informants; analysing the results from the INEE survey with 144 responses; analysing of relevant ECW documents, including the Boston Consulting Group's original 222-page manual, and the Tarrytown meeting outcome report.
 - During the second phase, a 50-page integrated main text for the Operating Manual was then drafted with a focus on policies and principles. Details of processes and procedures were included in 57 appendices. Following the submission of this draft, near to 600 individual comments were received. Overall, suggestions were accepted, and adjustments were made accordingly. Where comments were partially accepted or rejected, clear explanations were subsequently provided.
 - In the final phase, CE prepared recommendations on all appendices. The recommendations covered various issues- including appendices -to be harmonized with the main text in the manual, which will become the primary source of guidance for all ECW stakeholders. Recommendations were also made on how the Operating Manual and its appendices should be updated in the future.
 - On finalising the Operating Manual, EC will address the 68 comments received, save for #25 (as discussed during the meeting). The final draft is to be sent out by the 1st week of February ahead of the Dubai ExCom meeting.



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ExCom Members thanked the Secretariat and Cambridge Education for their work throughout what had been a lengthy process of reviews and extended consultations and welcomed the opportunity to feed into it. The following points were raised:

- Sweden stated that the comments were provided on behalf of Sweden, Denmark, European Union and Norway. Sweden stated the need to further address the following points: 1) the relationship and balance between the HLSG and the ExCom. The role of HLSG members was to provide strategic guidance and political advocacy for the overall goals of ECW and decisions related to operational matters should be made by the ExCom; 2) HLSG and ExCom membership, including tenure for the Chair of the HLSG and the UN Secretary-General's selection of Special Envoys, required review; 3) incorporating the remaining comments and the ExCom reviewing the full text before approval at the Dubai in-person meeting in late February.
- USAID stated the need to further discuss some appendices, the likelihood of revision, risk involved if the Manual became a living document and how to make changes when it was necessary.
- Germany aligned with SIDA and USAID.
- The Netherlands shared the point from SIDA on clarity of roles between the HLSG and the ExCom, and expressed concern at the frequency of HLSG meetings, while also querying about the inclusion of their comments in the consolidated document.

- In response to this first set comments/interventions, the Director advised that:
 - The Secretariat appreciated the coordinated approach and thanked the Chair and her team for consolidating inputs from the ExCom. Going forward, it was suggested that everything went through the Chair, rather than regional groupings, before sharing with the Secretariat.
 - The letter from Rt Hon. Gordon Brown, the Chair of the HLSG, to all HLSG members, dated March 2019, clarified the role of the HLSG, the ExCom and the Director, based on ECW's founding principles and official documentation. Efforts would be made to ensure it was fully reflected in the distribution of labour of the HLSG and the ExCom. In line with the organisational chain of command, neither the Secretariat nor the ExCom was in a position to redraft their mandate and decision-making power without first discussing with the HLSG Chair and the HLSG.
 - In terms of frequency of HLSG meetings and decision-making, many HLSG members had in fact requested that more time be allocated to HLSG meetings (1h30 instead of 1h00) to further focus on strategic discussions. Many ExCom members had stressed the importance of decision-making at HLSG meetings, or else it would be difficult to ensure their principals' attendance. HLSG members, including ministers, heads of agencies, civil society representatives are offering enormous support to ECW and steered important matters for ECW, such as the humanitarian-development nexus and the Grand Bargain.
 - The HLSG Chair, Rt Hon. Gordon Brown was immensely appreciated by the HLSG. He was the driving force, together with the CSOs and many of the founding strategic donors behind the establishment of ECW. The linkage to his role as the UN Secretary-General's Special Envoy for Global Education was a strategic one for ECW and its role in the multilateral system.
 - The Secretariat fully supported USAID's comment that the framework itself could not be a living document, while appendices could be updated if necessary. Therefore, the wording "living document" would need to be removed.

- On the membership of the ExCom and the HLSG, the procedural decision made four years ago, established that ExCom members represented their HLSG members on the ExCom. As such, it was envisaged back then, according to the first manual (developed by Boston Global Consulting) that ExCom should be held at senior level with a 24 hours access to their respective HLSG representative. In alignment with strengthened coordination and collaboration with GPE, the Secretariat, therefore, proposed that members who represent their governments or agencies in the GPE board be the same as on the ExCom.
- Written comments from the Netherlands were embedded in the consolidated comments and reflected in the responses document.
- The Chair noted that several comments were raised around governance and stressed the need to ensure the alignment between what was in the manual and what was in the Terms of Reference for the HLSG and the ExCom. To ensure a more inclusive approach, the Chair then opened the floor to comments on elaboration of appendices at a high and strategic level:
 - Save the Children stressed that implementing partners were very interested in the appendices and wished to play a strong role in further developing them. They also wished to input into this process to ensure that implementation on the ground was as effective as possible and to avoid confusion. Civil Society partners stood ready to provide inputs and requested sufficient time for reviewing.
 - Norway raised four points: 1) as funds mature/evolve, making changes to governance in the founding documents and guiding principles might become necessary- these decisions would ultimately fall to the HLSG; 2) the rotation of the HLSG Chair; 3) GPE and ExCom board may have similar senior representation, but it was up to the individual organisation to decide who represented them; 4) suggested that a small group lead on the final adjustments to ensure the Operating Manual was satisfactory to all parties involved.
 - DFID voiced its support to the initial proposal made by the Director and expressed readiness to participate in the Strategic Group in the role of Vice-chair. DFID supported the setting up of the Strategic Group to address the humanitarian development coherence.
 - Ireland followed up on the completion time for the appendices, and whether all would be completed before the manual's approval by the HLSG in April.
- The Chair reiterated that:
 - The Operating Manual was about policy and principles that would guide the development of those outstanding appendices.
 - 38 out of 57 appendices were completed.
 - Although some outstanding ones were critical and important (such as whistle-blower policies and child safeguarding guidance), they did not need to hinder the approval process for now.
- UNICEF and the World Bank expressed willingness to help review the appendices and provide support throughout the approval process. UNICEF suggested this could be done through the Education Task team.
- USAID sought further clarification on membership by ECW ExCom members and GPE board members.
- Canada seconded Norway's point on allowing organisations to determine their participation at the ExCom and the GPE Board. Participation may depend on the funding sources (humanitarian or development). The rationale being that the Secretariat relied on ExCom members to ensure closer coordination with GPE and

ECW within their own organisations, either through the same membership, or by keeping the dialogue active between two representatives.

- In response, the Director provided the further clarification:
 - In terms of sequencing, the Operating Manual was the broad framework, and the appendices would have to be developed and/or aligned with this broader framework. As such, the approval of the Operating Manual would need to precede the completion of the more detailed appendices.
 - On the 57 appendices, a plan could be delivered within weeks of approving the Operating Manual, and key appendices could be completed in time for the HLSG meeting in April. However, not all appendices would be required to be ready for April. The same approach had been used for the HLSG approval of the Strategic Plan, whereby the annexes had been completed after the Strategic Plan had been approved.
- The Secretariat provided the ExCom with an update on the processes and timeframe for the appendices. The following points were highlighted:
 - Approximately 40 of the 57 appendices were completed. The Secretariat had also sent written responses to the additional ExCom comments on 21 January.
 - Within three weeks after the approval of the Operating Manual, the Secretariat would submit a plan for appendices, which would include the status, the sequencing of updating, ExCom's involvement and timelines. The updating of the appendices would be a strenuous task for ECW, who were also working on the development of several Multi-Year Resilience Programmes in 2020. Therefore, timing and aligning with the 2020 Workplan would be key.

Chair's summary and actions

- Echoed the Director's point on this process indicating the need to continue with a strengthened shared vision and trust.
- Some aspects touching on governance and membership required further consideration, but overall the manual was close to completion.
- Committed to finalising the discussions on the Operating Manual, including the HLSG & ExCom references, in Dubai, hence submitting to the HLSG for approval in April.
- The Secretariat would prioritise the development of MYRP guidance, taking onboard comments from CSOs and others.
- With no objections raised, the Chair concluded that a core strategic group would be formed to take forward the outstanding recommendations. The Chair would discuss the composition with the Vice Chair and the Director.

2. AoB

- The next ExCom in-person meeting to be held on 26-27 February 2020 in Dubai.
- An ExCom donor meeting was scheduled on the morning of the 26th and would be followed by the ExCom meeting in the afternoon. The ExCom meeting would last one day and a half.
- ExCom members were kindly requested to RSVP to the Secretariat ASAP.