



## Proposal Review Committee

### Terms of Reference

(Adopted by the Executive Board on 12 December 2013)

# Proposal Review Committee

## 1. Terms of reference

The Proposal Review Committee (PRC) is an independent, impartial team of experts who provide scientific, public health, and economics expertise to UNITAID on Proposals and related projects (hereinafter collectively referred to as "Proposals") submitted to UNITAID for funding.

### 1.1 Specifically, the PRC:

1.1.1 Reviews Proposals according to criteria established by the UNITAID Executive Board; and

1.1.2 Provides recommendations to the Board based on the review of the Proposals;

1.2 The PRC is an advisory body that does not have decision-making authority.

## 2. Membership

The PRC is broadly constituted and is comprised of Members with:

- Expertise in public health, health systems and market dynamics as each pertain to UNITAID's mandate and programs;
- Complementary and cross-cutting expertise in HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis, and malaria, international aid and policy, health commodity development, and implementation issues; and
- A firm commitment to UNITAID and the requirements of PRC membership, including (i) an ability to conduct independent and robust Proposal review, (ii) availability to attend two PRC meetings per year (up to five days each), and (iii) availability to conduct pre-meeting Proposal review (approximately six days over a three-week period ahead of each PRC meeting).

### 2.1. Types of Members

PRC Members have been selected from a pool of applicants based on their training, skills, and ability to advise on specific topics related to UNITAID Proposals (see Section 2.6). Members are appointed as individuals in a personal capacity without respect to professional or institutional affiliation and do not represent the interests of governments, organizations, or other institutions.

### 2.2 Size of the PRC

The PRC will be comprised of 12 Members, in addition to the Chair. The PRC Chair will review the working of the Committee after one year in consultation with the Secretariat and request PSC approval of recommend adjustments to the PRC size and composition.

### 2.3 PRC Chair and Vice-Chair

The UNITAID Board selects the PRC Chair. The Vice Chair is nominated by the Chair in consultation with the other PRC Members.

In the absence of the Chair, or in any other circumstance where the Chair cannot effectively perform his/her duties, the Vice Chair will lead the PRC.

The PRC Chair and/or the PRC Vice Chair will attend Board meetings and represent the PRC as observers and shall take the floor upon request from the Board Chair.

### 2.4 Selection of Members

The members of the PRC are proposed by the Secretariat to the PSC which recommend a list of experts to be endorsed by the Board.

The composition of the PRC reflects an appropriate geographical region and gender balance, assuring representation from those resident in or with experience of working in low and lower-middle income countries.

### 2.5 Expertise of PRC Members

Members of the PRC are high-level experts with advanced academic or organizational experience in their fields of work. Members have significant, demonstrated expertise and leadership in the skill sets described below.

#### Areas of expertise

1	<b>HIV/AIDS</b>	Expertise in HIV, including prevention, diagnosis and treatment. This may include expertise in the current 'state of the art' in relation to HIV, with a perspective on future trends, and expertise in HIV-related global health policy and public health.
2	<b>Tuberculosis</b>	Expertise in TB, including prevention, diagnosis and treatment. This may include expertise in the current 'state of the art' in relation to TB, with a perspective on future trends, and expertise in TB-related global health policy and public health.
3	<b>Malaria</b>	Expertise in malaria, including prevention, diagnosis and treatment. This may include expertise in the current 'state of the art' in relation to malaria, with a perspective on future trends, and expertise in malaria-related global health policy and public health.
4	<b>Market Dynamics</b>	Expertise in the market dynamics of health commodities, including price reduction strategies and market analysis.
5	<b>Product Development</b>	Expertise in product development issues in relation to the pharmaceutical and health commodities industries, including process and product development, commercialization and product launch.

6	<b>Health Systems</b>	Expertise in health systems, including health policy, health systems strengthening, public and private sector healthcare and human resource development.
7	<b>Diagnostics</b>	Expertise in diagnostic technologies for HIV/AIDS, TB, and malaria, particularly point-of-care, rapid tests and technologies currently in the development pipeline.
8	<b>Intellectual Property</b>	Expertise in intellectual property issues, including international legal and policy frameworks (such as the TRIPS Agreement) and their implications for access to health commodities for HIV/AIDS, TB and malaria.
9	<b>Supply Chain</b>	Expertise in supply chain management, pharmaceutical supply, procurement of pharmaceutical products and medical devices and related health commodities, in particular in developing countries.
10	<b>Regulation</b>	Expertise in the regulation of health products, including work with Stringent Regulatory Authorities (SRAs) or the WHO pre-qualification process.

#### **Ad Hoc Supplemental Technical Input**

PRC Members' expertise in the 10 skill areas defined above will ensure the committee's capacity to review the entirety of most Proposals developed for Board consideration. However, in a minority of cases - particularly where Proposals involve new products or novel intervention types - there will be a need for *ad hoc* supplemental technical input to the PRC review process.

Any need for such *ad hoc* supplemental technical input will be identified following LOI review, i.e. at the stage where a subset of LOIs are selected for development into full Proposals and their focus and technical features become clear. At this time, the Secretariat will meet with the Chair of the PRC to orient the Chair to the Proposals under development and determine the need, if any, for engaging specific supplemental technical input. Selection and appointment of providers of such supplemental technical input (hereinafter referred to as "Technical Consultants" will be done by the Secretariat, in consultation with the Chair of the PRC. All Technical Consultants will be appointed in accordance with WHO's financial rules and regulations and their appointment will be notified to the Chair of the PRC and their names included in the final PRC report.

The focus and parameters for any supplemental technical input will be elaborated in proposal-specific TOR. The reviewer's input will be provided to the PRC in the form of a written report designed to inform the PRC's wider review and deliberation.

The PRC itself remains ultimately responsible for all recommendations it makes to the Board. Technical Consultants will not participate in PRC meetings during which final recommendations are formulated by PRC Members. Technical Consultants will be held to the same standards governing conflict of interest as PRC Members themselves.

UNITAID will engage Technical Consultants via three distinct pools or channels:

- Former PRC and AGFP members, who may have specific skills not represented among the new members of the PRC and have deep familiarity with UNITAID and its business model.
- Current UNITAID technical consultants, who also often have deep familiarity with UNITAID and its business model and, in many cases, expert background related to UNITAID Strategic Objectives and current areas of interest.
- New external parties, who may be engaged where required expertise is not available in either of the above pools.

The Board can provide at any moment to the PRC Chair and Secretariat names of experts, that it deems relevant, in order to complement the global list of potential experts to be considered as Technical Consultants.

## 2.6 Term of Office

PRC Members will normally be appointed for an initial term of office of three years that is renewable.

## 2.7 Remuneration and Reimbursement of Expenses

PRC Members will receive an annual honorarium for their services. The travel and per diem of PRC Members will be paid in accordance with established WHO rules and procedures.

## 2.8 Resignation or Withdrawal from the PRC

A PRC Member may withdraw from the PRC at any time upon written notification to the UNITAID Executive Director. Membership may be terminated at any time upon written notification by the UNITAID Executive Director in consultation with the Board Chair.

## 3. Working procedures

3.1 PRC Members review Proposals and related information made available to them by the Secretariat and provide advice on specific issues raised by the UNITAID Board through the Secretariat. Members may be asked, in relation to Proposals, to identify key issues, conduct further investigation, or to seek counsel from others as required, with due regard for the confidentiality of the information. From time to time, Members may be asked to review draft Proposals and to provide preliminary assessment according to the mandate of the PRC.

## 3.2 PRC Meetings

The PRC will meet on an as-needed basis, but not more than twice annually in person. The PRC may meet face-to-face, or by telephone conference, as is most appropriate for the work of the PRC at that time. Where meetings are held by conference call, PRC Members should make every effort to ensure that a secure line is used and that persons not approved by the PRC

Chair do not listen to the proceedings.

Questions and issues for PRC discussion as related to specific Proposals are framed by the UNITAID Secretariat in conjunction with the PRC Chair and may be based on requests from the Board. The agenda for PRC meetings is developed by the Secretariat in collaboration with the PRC Chair.

### 3.3 Minutes

Minutes of the PRC meetings will be compiled and maintained by the UNITAID Secretariat.

## 4. Transparency and Confidentiality

- 4.1 The membership, terms of reference and operating procedures of PRC are published on the UNITAID website.
- 4.2 Upon appointment, PRC Members will sign a confidentiality statement prepared by the UNITAID Secretariat.
- 4.3 PRC meetings are closed to the public. Members of the Secretariat attend the meetings as observers and are available to provide further information as needed. Secretariat staff may be asked to recuse themselves from any part of the discussion by the PRC Chair.
- 4.4 Subject to the approval of the PRC Chair and the UNITAID Secretariat, the PRC may invite proponents or interested parties to make representations to the PRC in writing or in person. The Chair may grant observer status, for all or part of the PRC deliberations, to select individuals, including Secretariat staff whose attendance would benefit UNITAID or the deliberations of the PRC.
- 4.5 The PRC Members and Ad Hoc supplemental experts will be subject to WHO's Conflict of Interest Policy.

## 5. PRC Proposal Review Processes

### 5.1 Scope and Call for Proposals:

The UNITAID Proposal process utilises two steps:

#### **Letter of Intent:**

An LOI is a synopsis of a project which could later form the foundation for a fully developed Project Proposal. It is developed using the UNITAID Proponent Guidelines for Submission of Letters of Intent.

## Project Proposal:

A Project Proposal is developed using the UNITAID Proposal Development and Submission Guidelines, designed to facilitate the applicant's Proposal preparation, expedite the Secretariat's review, and harmonize Proposal preparation with the final grant agreement between UNITAID and the partner.

UNITAID may solicit Proposals for projects in a number of ways, including, but not limited to:

### 5.1.1 Call for LOIs

Letters of intent allow the UNITAID Secretariat to review proponents' concepts for new interventions at a level of detail sufficient to make a judgment in principle of a potential intervention's suitability for UNITAID support. Calls solicit LOIs that are aligned with UNITAID's Strategic Objectives. Calls may also focus on a subset of specific Strategic Objectives or areas of interest that are priorities for UNITAID at the time of a given Call for LOIs. LOIs are screened by the UNITAID Secretariat. Successful proponents are then invited to submit full Proposals and receive guidance and support in this task from the UNITAID Secretariat. Once submitted, full Proposals undergo a robust technical evaluation by the PRC, which reviews Proposals against a standard set of criteria approved by the UNITAID Board, including sustainable public health and market effects, value for money, innovation, leverage, added value, equity, and ability to transition and sustainability. Proposals deemed suitable, technically sound, and feasible by the PRC are recommended to the Board, which makes final funding decisions taking into account available resources and each proposal's contribution to a balanced UNITAID project portfolio.

### 5.1.2 Direct Requests for Proposals:

Under certain circumstances (e.g., if time-sensitive or novel opportunities emerge between Call cycles or if a proposed intervention requires significant Secretariat effort to operationalize), UNITAID may make direct requests outside the standard Call process for LOIs focusing on specific interventions or implementers. In these cases, the Secretariat will first seek Board endorsement in principle of the intervention concept. If endorsed by the Board, the process for Proposal development and PRC review is otherwise identical to that described in 5.1.1.

## 5.2 Submission of Proposals

The two-phase submission process (i.e., LOI and full project Proposal) assists both applicants and the Secretariat to ensure the most efficient review of submissions. The Secretariat provides a standardized template for LOIs and Project Proposals to be completed by proponents. Clear timelines for the necessary steps in the submission and review process are established by the PRC and the Secretariat to ensure that sufficient time is provided for each step, i.e., from approval of an LOI to submission of a full proposal, and on to PRC review and Board funding decision. These timelines are available to applicants and the Board.

### 5.3 Proposal Review Process

Proposal review is conducted according to the following process:

- 5.3.1 Following LOI screening, and based on the anticipated technical content of expected full proposals, the PRC and Secretariat consider the need for additional ad hoc subject matter experts.
- 5.3.2 The UNITAID Secretariat undertakes an initial screening of proposals for completeness of the required financial and technical information, and reports this on standardised forms.
- 5.3.3 The PRC Chair allocates Proposals for review by PRC Members and, as appropriate, *ad hoc* subject matter experts.
- 5.3.4 Each Proposal is reviewed by at least three PRC Members, with a spread of expertise to encompass review of all aspects of the Proposal. Reviewers' comprehensive assessment is conducted using a standardised evaluation template.
- 5.3.5 A summary score card is completed by reviewers representing findings in key areas of review, including reviewers' assessment of Proposals fit with UNITAID's mission, the capacity of the proponent to undertake the project, and the project's likely contribute to UNITAID's market impact goals.
- 5.3.6 The PRC meets, in person or by conference call, to discuss the Proposals. Each reviewer presents their comments, and other PRC Members contribute to the discussion to reach consensus on the Proposal outcome.
- 5.3.7 The PRC ranks their recommendations according to an established scale and agrees on a consensus statement justifying/ presenting the principal rationale for the recommendation.
- 5.3.8 The PRC may request clarifications from proponents either before the PRC meeting, as representations to the meeting, or as a condition of further approval before presentation to the Board.
- 5.3.9 The PRC recommendations are presented to the UNITAID Board for final decision on the financial and policy strengths and weaknesses of the Proposal.