

Oxfam Management Response to the final evaluation of the ‘Fair Financial Flows’ program by ODS, April–July 2019

Prepared by:	Petra Hamers
Contributors:	Irene de Goede, Ilse Balstra, Gine Zwart
Signed off by:	Hilde Eugelink, Catherine Essoyan
Date: 28 August 2019	Country/Region/Campaign: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nine Fair Finance Guide International (FFGI) countries (Brazil, Belgium, France, Germany, Indonesia, Japan, Netherlands, Norway, Sweden) • Four of Oxfam’s F.A.I.R. countries (Bolivia, Zambia, Kenya, Myanmar) • Four of Oxfam’s FTM countries (Nigeria, Uganda, Senegal and Tunisia)

This document presents Oxfam’s response to the findings of the external evaluation report of the Fair Financial Flows program, conducted by ODS in the first semester of 2019. This document reflects Oxfam’s opinion on the process, as well as the validity and relevance of the findings, conclusions and recommendations.

First of all, we want to thank all contributors (from partner organisations, beneficiary groups, influencing targets, Oxfam offices, donor agency, etc.) who contributed to the evaluation by sharing their honest opinions. We also want to thank ODS for the constructive, interactive process, where despite the very tight deadlines, all was realized within the given timeframe. Timely delivery of the report allowed us to incorporate useful recommendations in our new proposal development processes.

A. Summary of evaluation quality assessment

On the process, we are very satisfied regarding the way ODS has handled this evaluation process, interacted with all stakeholders involved and delivered all products in due time.

- a) We appreciate the effort of the evaluation team in getting the work done in a timely and systematic manner, despite challenges in getting in touch with relevant people and the need to work towards tight deadlines.
- b) Strong points of this evaluation besides the timely delivery, were the multi-disciplinary evaluation team, the quick and constructive exchanges with the evaluation team and the active involvement of partners and influencing targets. A weak point was the limited number of case studies and country visits that could be included (due to budget and time constraints). The diversity in the country projects that needed to be evaluated led to a bit of a patchwork of findings. The limited time combined with the broad scope of the FFF project led to some lack of in-depth analysis and consequently limited suggestions on a more strategic level.
- c) We are confident that the level of participation of partners and beneficiaries in the different stages of the evaluation process was appropriate and that those interviewed were informed of the purposes of the evaluation and how their input would be used. Sense-making webinars were conducted as part of the validation exercises, where

partners could provide further input after reviewing the preliminary findings of the evaluation team.

- d) Observations of partners, Steering Committee and Project Management Unit (PMU) staff were seriously taken into account by the evaluation team, while maintaining their independence.
- e) Staff in the PMU has invested a lot of time in providing feedback on the preliminary findings and draft reports, which were generally considered and taken into account. We would have appreciated a response to our last revisions, on which we never received a clear answer on why certain remarks were not taken into account.

On the content of the report we conclude that the quality of the report is sufficient to good, recognizing the short time span for the evaluation and the strict planning. The report provides an answer to all evaluation questions raised in our Terms of Reference, but has added relatively little to the ongoing analysis, thinking and corrective measures already being taken on PMU and/or country level.

- f) The report is written in clear, accessible language and targeted to the primary and secondary users. Although the report itself is quite a long read, the executive summary clearly highlights all the key findings.
- g) The evaluation report provides the information needed to (1) improve the quality of the program, (2) meet accountability demands, and (3) promote broader learning
- h) Although the first draft report did not meet our expectations, we appreciate the work that has been done to come to an improved report in the final weeks.
- i) The overall evaluation would have benefitted from a more in-depth analysis as the current recommendations mainly stay at an operational rather than a strategic level; many of the recommendations were already being addressed by the PMU, COs and/or partners or were in the pipeline of being addressed.
- j) In some instances, we feel a lack of clear linkages between problems observed and the subsequent conclusion, recommendation (i.e. why not one of the other plausible conclusions/recommendations). Sometimes we do not understand what problem will be solved by the recommendation proposed.
- k) The paragraph on network analysis is of good added value; but corresponding recommendations were of less added value.

B. Specific remarks

- a) The evaluation questions the relevance and efficiency of implementing FFF as one project, rather than a separate FFGI project and a separate F.A.I.R./FTM project. Its conclusion is that bringing work on public finance and private finance under one funding mechanism while there is no overlap in countries of implementation, nor specific influencing objectives and influencing targets does not add significant value to either of the project pillars. Though we agree with this finding, it reads as if lack of synergies is a shortcoming of the project. We would like to emphasize that creating synergies across the two project pillars was never the purpose for combining FFGI and F.A.I.R./FTM and as such is not to be strongly criticised. It has to be noted though that the dual project set-up did not harm project delivery either. We will follow the recommendation that it is more logical to keep future funding for the two projects separate.
- b) We miss a translation of the case studies into the main report; there are very few references to the case studies. There is no analysis of what the observations in the case studies mean for the overall pillars and/or for FFF as a whole. We also miss the input from the Brazilian banks (interviewed during the country visit) in the charts in the main document.
- c) Sometimes an observation in one of the FFF countries is over-emphasized, while it is clear that in all other countries this is not an issue. For instance, the failed recruiting of a consultant in Nigeria or the French coalition get quite some attention. This is somewhat out of proportion, especially if we consider that both countries performed well and delivered on the project objectives.
- d) We miss more elaborate references to the FFGI Stories of Change; their added value as part of our MEAL approach. The same applies for the work on the pilot on the Fair Finance Guide on Pension Funds.
- e) Progress of the FAIR/FTM pillar of the project is sometimes more negatively framed than needed if you look at the bigger picture. Emphasis is on delays in the first year while for the second and third year the FAIR/FTM work is on track.
- f) We do not recognize the fact that competition for funding within the FTM network would have resulted in overly ambitious planning. Although with delay, the results have almost all been achieved.

Additional reflections have emerged from the evaluation process.

- g) Next time we would steer towards more focus and similarity (in terms of geography, approaches, state of network membership) among the countries in the same project pillar.
- h) Next time we will have to be more realistic in our first explorations with the evaluators about the complexity of evaluating a global program with this large number of countries and stakeholders in 4 different continents, working with different focus areas and in different phases of program development.
- i) Process tracing to the full would need many more resources than were available for this evaluation process; it involves an almost academic exercise that may lead to interesting conclusions, but which demands a lot of resources, that can also be used in other, more productive ways. Therefore, in the years to come, we will further develop our methodologies on outcome harvesting and stories of change instead of process tracing.
- j) When looking into sustainability issues, it became clear that for the 2 different pillars, this is an issue to further elaborate on, where distinctions need to be made between the different levels of sustainability: of the product (reports, assessments, people trained)? Of the outcomes (policy changes, divestments, increased budgets for social services)? Of the

coalitions formed at national level? Of the international networks? Of the brands (Oxfam FTM, FFGI)?

C. Main Oxfam follow-up actions

The Project Management Unit, together with the Steering Committee, will ensure the recommendations and areas for improvement pointed out by the evaluators are shared with relevant Oxfam staff, partners, donors and across the Oxfam confederation, especially the F.A.I.R.-Even it Up! program and its Knowledge & Learning processes, as well as among the FFGI coalitions. Where relevant, we will also share the evaluation and its main findings and recommendations in encounters with other external stakeholders, e.g. potential donors, allies and research platforms. Relevant observations by ODS are taken into account in the further development of the Fair Tax Monitor as such, the F.A.I.R.-Even it Up! Program as a whole, as well as the Fair Finance Guide International network.

All short-term and long-term recommendations are being realized or will be realized, as indicated below. Only regarding LL7 we see no reason for specific follow-up, as the case mentioned by ODS actually shows that CO/partners know how to deal with these kinds of issues.

D. Follow-up on key recommendations

Recommendations Short-term Action (ODS)		Lead actor (ODS)	Rationale (ODS)	Comments Oxfam	What is Oxfam going to do and by when?
FTM (4 countries)					
ST1.	Focus on finalising the report where it has not yet been finished and organise a media launch. [Already in work planning.]	CO	Where the report has not yet been finalised, it is unlikely that the country coalition will have sufficient time for extensive engagement. A media launch is a good alternative for outreach where time and resources are limited.	Extensive engagement was not part of this project. The insights of the research will feed into the ongoing FAIR work. Media launches are already in planning.	Currently (as of Sept 2019) both report finalization and media launch are being implemented in Senegal and Tunisia. (Launch already done in Nigeria and Uganda.)
ST2.	Plan short-term advocacy around the budget process (Uganda, Senegal) to test out the applicability of the approach, including meetings with policymakers. [Already in work planning.]	CO, guidance from Oxfam Novib	Where possible, advocacy should feed into the budget planning process. In countries where the report has been finalised or almost finalised, in-person meetings with policymakers allow for advocacy, even where the time and resources are lacking for larger-scale engagement before the end of the funding. These will allow the coalitions to learn from the reception of the assessment and share the learning further within the FTM network.	We always try to link the launch and advocacy of the FTM reports to key moments in the budget process; if this is not possible, we choose another good media and policy moment.	In both countries, advocacy is being linked to the budget process or other key advocacy moments. For the Senegal launch we are discussing the exact date (in 2019). Uganda's report was released in early 2019 in connection with the announcement of new tax plans.
ST3.	Reflection/consolidation workshop with partners. [Already in the planning of some COs.]	CO	A reflection workshop will allow partners to consolidate their understanding of the methodology and identify and structure messages that they can use in their own advocacy, even where resources will not continue.	We will encourage COs to organize reflection sessions with their partners. In some countries this is already in planning of some COs.	The PMU will encourage COs to organize reflection sessions. In addition, learning will take place for COs (and partners where relevant) in regional FTM workshops in Asia (Nov 2019) or Africa (2020).

ST4.	Develop brief outputs in local languages (blog/op-ed, infographic).	CO, coordinated by Oxfam Novib	Where the time and resources are not sufficient for a sustained campaign, the CO and partners can contribute to visibility through short outputs in the local languages. Oxfam Novib can help provide examples from across FTM countries as guidance.	In all countries there has been or will be a launch and additional external communications.	Currently implemented; however, COs and partners individually choose the relevant languages to be used, considering financial means and assessed relevance for the advocacy.
ST5.	Assess usefulness, capacity and needs for continuing the FTM work.	CO, coordinated by Oxfam Novib, supported by Knowledge Hub	Before the end of the funding period, decisions need to be made about the continuation of the FTM work, how the objectives and deliverables will be funded and managed under other work streams if applicable, and which capacities and resources the COs need to effectively continue the advocacy around the assessments.	The FTM project is co-created with COs and partners and has continuously adapted to fit the needs and capacities of the COs and partners.	A strategic plan for the coming years will be co-created with the participating countries. The Asia (Nov 2019) and Africa (2020) meetings will be essential in discussing the current strengths and weaknesses and needs of the COs and partners in this process.
ST6.	Develop advocacy plan and MoU with key partners (TJNA).	CO, Oxfam Novib for international partnership	Define the division of tasks and responsibilities for ensuring the sustainability of the outcomes of the FTM.	Already in the planning.	Oxfam and TJNA are currently in a process where we look at our respective roles and responsibilities. In the coming months (second semester 2019) we will develop a strategic plan for the coming years which will outline our thinking on advocacy, division of tasks and responsibilities and sustainability.
FAIR (4 countries)					
ST7.	Follow up on what has been done so far – follow up with	COs	In order to ensure that the outcomes of capacity building and engagement take root in the engaged communities,	Engagement and follow-up with	The PMU will coordinate with COs and encourage follow-up with the engaged

	key communities who were engaged so far. [Already planned in some of the 4 countries.]		COs and partners should follow up with the participants in these activities.	communities are ongoing	communities in the second semester of 2019.
ST8.	Make sure that partners can use learning from the follow-up. [Already planned in some countries.]	COs	COs should assess and implement the best way to share learning from the activities so far. This can take the form of a workshop, individual meetings to discuss insights, or the development of internal resources.	Already planned.	Countries choose individually the best way to do this either in workshops, or smaller meetings. The PMU will coordinate with COs and encourage knowledge sharing from the project in the second semester of 2019.
ST9.	Map out the research and reflection needs related to public finances, for structuring the work going forward [underway to some extent].	COs, supported by Oxfam Novib	All COs should make sure that they have a medium-term plan for the work going forward, including an assessment of whether the scope of FAIR research and advocacy should be adjusted on the basis of the experience so far; the needs of the country office (capacities and resources); and an assessment of the alliances and coalitions that are currently supporting the work. Oxfam Novib could act as a reflection partner in supporting this review and capturing the outcomes of the review. One specific issue that emerged from the conversations in the evaluation was that of informal sector taxation, which is a key aspect to be covered in future public finances work.	Within FAIR, learning is high on the agenda. The Knowledge Hub on Governance and Citizenship is in the lead on this and is actively engaging with countries.	Following the March 2019 FAIR meeting in Peru, the Oxfam Knowledge Hub (KH) on Governance and Citizenship started a new learning cycle for all countries in the FAIR program. Currently (Aug/Sept 2019) a survey is underway where countries are asked to share their priority learning areas. The PMU will engage with the KH and encourage the participating FAIR and FTM countries to feed into the survey. Second semester 2019.
FFGI (9 countries)					

ST10.	Focus on case studies to add qualitative angle to assessments, i.e. following up with FIs in the implementation of policies [already planned]. Develop an advocacy strategy for international fora based on the case studies.	Country coalitions, coordinated by Oxfam Novib	Several case studies are planned already – these should be accompanied by strategies to look at practice changes in FIs within each coalition and identify opportunities for advocacy in international fora.	It needs thorough analysis if practice scores can be added into the policy scores. FFG NL is working on this, will be further explored. Influencing in international fora is part of the agenda of various FFG members, including Oxfam.	Focus shift towards more case studies and quick intervention cases in more established coalitions already on the way for some years now. Will continue. In coming years (see FFGI Strategic Plan and new funding proposal 2020–2023) increased attention for supporting advocacy in international fora. FFGI will focus on feeding into and supporting advocacy already done by allies.
ST11.	Assess coalitions' needs and capabilities for gender analysis and advocacy.	Country coalitions, coordinated by Oxfam Novib	Oxfam Novib to assess and develop appropriate support methodologies for gender analysis based on the needs identified together with the country coalitions. Identify opportunities for using knowledge in the coalitions to strengthen this.	Although quite some progress has been made (confirmed by ODS) on attention to gender within the FFGI work, we recognize that gender aspects of FFGI can be further strengthened. However, it is not clear to us what problem has been identified by the evaluators that would be solved by this recommendation.	Gender auditing session at the General Assembly (GA) in December 2019, to assess especially the gender issues on the different levels and within the different activities within our network.

ST12.	Offer dedicated space at GA for planning collaboration on FIs/companies [already planned].	Country coalitions, coordinated by Oxfam Novib	Identify opportunities for coordinated advocacy between country coalitions relative to banks or individual companies. Oxfam Novib can play an instrumental role in this due to oversight of country programs. The sensemaking session identified the GA as a good possible venue for these conversations.	Already done during previous GAs and monthly Skype meetings. And planned for years to come.	Part of agenda/site meetings during upcoming GA in Berlin (December 2019). In the coming years (2020–2023) FFGI Executive team will keep facilitating coordination amongst coalitions on joint research/advocacy. Process of sharing and peer reviewing each other's ToRs for case studies will be improved.
ST13.	Offer a participative learning session at GA on the differences in market maturity, cultural contexts and how these affect the work of coalitions.	Country coalitions, coordinated by Oxfam Novib	The sensemaking session identified the GA as an ideal venue for opening up the discussion about cultural and market characteristics and how these can affect the work of the coalitions.	Good idea	To be planned in the GA, December 2019.
ST14.	Implement methodology review process that explicitly sets decision points for persistent questions about adapting the scoring system and capturing outcomes in practices [already planned].	Methodology Review Group and GA	Prepare an overview of the main questions around the review of the methodology (e.g. the shift to covering bank practices, capturing impact, scaling the network and adapting the assessment scales). The sensemaking session identified these issues as important to address and discuss at the GA.	A two-step methodology review is being realized now. See also above (ST10); on FFG NL ideas.	A maintenance methodology review is being prepared for the end of 2019; during the GA (Dec 2019) a working plan will be made for a major methodology review by 2021. An overview of all structural issues to be considered has been conducted over the past 2 months.

All FFF					
ST15.	Get insight into other cross-country projects within the Oxfam confederation, and align the immediate future fundraising for cross-country projects, including those within wider FAIR.	Oxfam Novib/Oxfam affiliates	Cross-country projects add value and could be leveraged with other donors, based on a clear overview and planning. This is already part of FAIR administration but is important to keep as focus to support the financial sustainability of the work.	It is not clear to which problem this is a solution to. Most Oxfam programs are cross-country. And Oxfam always strives to have this overview and align fundraising (by IFDR in ON and similar departments in other Oxfams) and work of different parts of the organization.	See remark on sustainability under C – Main Oxfam Follow-up Actions, mentioned above. Where relevant we will further align our work on an ongoing basis.
ST16.	Reflect on the implementation of Outcome Harvesting and Impact Stories in the wrap-up of the funding.	PMU, CO/Coalition leads	Outcome Harvesting is a key element of the Oxfam MEAL framework, but its implementation has been somewhat challenging. Individual follow-up, as well as structured reflection and resources to communicate the concept to partners, have been suggested in the sensemaking sessions as possible ways forward. In addition, the added value of the OH to those that perform it could be further highlighted, and results/insights from the OH fed back to the source organisation.	OH is a key tool for sharing learning between colleagues. Structural capacity building on the concept and tool and individual follow up are part of the FFF implementation. Reflecting on and sharing of results is already done and will be done in the wrap-up. The OH proved to be a very valuable base for the Stories of Change and this will continue to be used that way.	After the mid-term OH, we had a number of online sessions where countries shared their outcomes. In the wrap-up of the FFF we will make sure that countries receive appropriate feedback on their OH statements and that they are shared via Skype or otherwise with the other FFF participants (2 nd semester 2019, reporting period early 2020).

Recommendations Long-term Action (ODS)	Lead actor (ODS)	Rationale (ODS)	Comments Oxfam	What is Oxfam going to do?	
FTM (4 countries)					
LT1.	Develop a training manual for COs to train partners on the methodology. Then together with partners, finalise the country-specific approach.	Oxfam Novib, supported by COs	Ensuring an in-depth understanding of the methodology across all partners will enable partners to advocate better, and to take the methodology forward. This could add to the Guidance Manual for researchers which is already available for FTM.	In May 2019 we finalized the revision of the FTM methodology. A new part of the methodology is the “Guidance Manual”. This document can be used in training COs and partners and serves as a reference doc for the staff engaging in research and advocacy.	During the learning workshops, planned for the FTM countries in November 2019 in Asia and 2020 in Africa, we will include feedback sessions on the experiences with the newly developed Guidance Manual. Based on this we will decide on the actual need for adding a training manual.
LT2.	Learning from implementation of FTM so far – structure reflection workshops with partners into the planning, with clear decision points and structured follow up. [Already underway to some extent.]	COs, with Oxfam Novib, FAIR reference group and others bringing expertise and ensuring follow-up	FTM countries have implemented a range of approaches towards adapting, applying and advocating on the basis of the FTM methodology. This learning should continue to be shared across FTM countries and with CSOs within countries. This is especially relevant in the forward planning for FTM research and advocacy. The meetings should have a clear “itinerary” aligned with the mid-to-long-term vision for the FTM.	Already planned	Learning workshops are planned for the FTM countries in November 2019 in Asia and 2020 in Africa. The agenda will focus both on learning between countries and working on the mid-to-long term vision for the FTM.

LT3.	In advocacy planning, implement engagement and advocacy actions before the reports are published.	COs	Finalising reporting has often been highly time-consuming. This should not prevent COs from starting to engage with actors. This could be part of the advocacy plan template which was being developed at the time of the evaluation.	Within the framework of this specific funding the focus was on the implementation of the research, so that the evidence can be included in the advocacy and campaigning in the broader FAIR programs. Nevertheless, the PMU has always encouraged COs to host validation meetings with the relevant actors even before the final launch. So far this has been done in Uganda, Tunisia and Nigeria.	We are currently finalizing (Sept 2019) the advocacy plan template which the COs and partners can use to strategize on their advocacy planning. We have provided additional support on advocacy planning to the Uganda team and this resulted in stronger advocacy work. We will seek to replicate this in other relevant countries during the last months of 2019 and beyond.
FAIR (4 countries)					
LT4.	Strengthen Oxfam approach to Gender Responsive Budgeting (GRB) and what it takes to advocate on it – learning from experience and informing planning for the future. Also	Oxfam Novib, supported by Oxfam Knowledge Hub on Governance and Citizenship	There is strong interest in GRB, and the FAIR program can benefit from a more strategic reflection on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how to tell when GRB is the right topic to focus on in advocacy. ■ what skills and resources should be present in the CO/alliance before engaging on it. 	With GRB being a relatively new topic for a number of country teams, the experience from the FFF project will feed into the overall FAIR program.	The Oxfam Novib team will share the insights from the evaluation in the course of the second semester of 2019 with the broader FAIR framework and will also promote further learning from the GRB work within FFF (either in online FAIR

	applicable to other emerging networks within FAIR.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ how current advocacy skills, partnerships and resources need to be adapted. <p>The Oxfam Knowledge Hub on Governance and Citizenship and the Women’s Budget Group are well placed to develop resources for this reflection.</p>		Forum meetings, or offline learning events).
LT5.	Define guidelines for selection of internally-managed funding rounds.	FAIR reference group/Oxfam Knowledge Hub on Governance and Citizenship	<p>The connections between FAIR projects in this application would have been strengthened by a closer overlap between the projects funded, e.g. by offering additional platforms for exchange and learning on specific issues/topics among the 4 FFF countries. This was also confirmed in the sensemaking sessions. Shareable resources for program design could facilitate the planning by the COs. The Knowledge Hub is well placed to act as a “critical friend” to countries applying for funding, thus helping them clarify the approaches and identify connection points at the design phase.</p>	<p>Geographic or thematic alignment between countries taking part in the same grant would be beneficial for increased coherence, shareable resources and sense of shared purpose. However, as all countries within the FFF project are part of the overall FAIR program, not all learning needs to take place among the 4 FFF countries alone. Countries benefit from the learning in the wider FAIR network.</p>	The Oxfam Novib team will share the insights from the evaluation with the broader FAIR framework so that it can feed into future project development.

FFGI (9 countries)					
LT6.	Plan case studies where a member of the coalition can own and lead advocacy on the medium- to long-term/connected: shared advocacy plans for collaborative case studies. [Already the case in some coalitions.]	Country coalitions coordinated by Oxfam Novib	Ensuring ownership of cases by coalition members can strengthen the long-term advocacy on the basis of case studies. This can be an enabler of the work, especially where non-lead partners can contribute through their specific focus (e.g. climate, environment or gender) by “carrying” the advocacy.	This is standard practice in some countries (Netherlands, Sweden, Germany). This has been tried in other coalitions where it proves to be quite challenging. We miss an analysis by ODS on what challenges this has brought in the past; and a comparison to what extent this is better than the way coalitions are working now; in other words, what would be the opportunity costs.	The PMU will promote comparison of pros and cons of this WoW with coalitions where this is not the case in the course of 2020. Where relevant put an effort to ensure this will develop
LT7.	Strategic review of FFGI approach	FFGI network as a whole	FFGI coalitions and Oxfam Novib would benefit from a broad review of the FFGI approach and Theory of Change. This could serve to validate/confirm the relevance of the overall ToC with the coalitions, and should also cover the assumptions around the advocacy model and the pathways to impact beyond banks at the level of companies, which are currently not reflected in detail.	Agree; given the diversity of contexts, coalition members and their focus areas, we consider this to be most fruitful, by starting at country level.	Ask esp. new FFGs (2020–2023) to come up with their country ToC in comparison to the overall FFGI ToC. Ask existing FFGs (2020–2021) to do a similar ToC comparison. Discuss these inputs in GAs of 2020 and 2021 to strengthen strategic positioning of FFGs in the countries and the global network as a whole.

LT7.	Review of FFGI strategies with a global network in mind	FFGI network as a whole	Discussions around the future coordination model of the FFGI have been taking place; however, no clear decisions have been taken at the time of the review. We recommend that a preferred model is defined, using the external reports and internal reflections, and put up for votes in the FFGI General Assemblée subsequently negotiated with Oxfam Novib.	Discussions have been done both among coalitions in GA 2018 and with Oxfam Novib. The preferred future model was not adopted by ON directors for the time being, while recognizing the need for solutions to the underlying problem.	Will re-open the debate in the next phase (2021/2022) and ensure proposed planning of steps to a preferred model by the end of the next phase (2023).
Recommendations – Lessons learned (ODS)		Lead actor (ODS)	Rationale (ODS)	Comments Oxfam	What is Oxfam going to do?
LL1.	When structuring funding around a subset of projects from a wider programme (FAIR), identify strategic priorities at the outset, and reflect these in the call for proposals as well as the goals and approaches of the funded programme.	FAIR reference group	Funding can be used to strategically strengthen a subset of country projects and/or a specific stream of work within the Confederation. Oxfam Novib has several points in the life cycle of a funding agreement where this can be operationalised.	As above: Geographic or thematic alignment between countries taking part in the same grant would be beneficial for increased coherence, shareable resources and sense of shared purpose. However, as all countries within the FFF project are part of the overall FAIR program, not all learning needs to take place among the 4 FFF countries alone.	The Oxfam Novib team will share the insights from the evaluation with the broader FAIR framework so that it can feed into future project development. Second semester 2019.

				Countries benefit from the learning in the wider FAIR network.	
LL2.	Make sure that the projects are resilient to staff changes.	Country Offices, Oxfam Novib	Where key elements of a project rely on the expertise and capacity of one individual, turnover often creates challenges for effective handover. This needs to be addressed at the level of programs, but also in individual organisations and the Oxfam confederation as a whole.	We recognize the setbacks that might occur when specialized staff leaves a project. Depending on the context, it may be hard to find new colleagues whose profile responds to our requirements, esp. if salary levels (as offered by Oxfam) are lower than those of other local institutions. Through capacity building (so more staff can work on the issue), and by proper archiving, Oxfam tries to minimize these setbacks. We would have welcomed more specific recommendations from ODS on what more we can do to increase resilience.	Keep investing in capacity building during the implementation of the new phase (2020–2023), so more staff can work on more specific issues.
LL3.	Develop exit strategies for cross-country programs	Oxfam Novib /FAIR	Exit strategies will enable COs, partners and Oxfam Novib to have a clear shared understanding of the	Even though the FAIR funding is part of broader FAIR	The PMU will share this recommendation with the FAIR Reference group

	well before the end of funding, including branding, outputs, outcomes and networks.	reference group	tasks and responsibilities related to the outcomes and resources created under a project.	programs in the countries, more explicit exit strategies could be beneficial.	(second semester 2019) and will encourage more explicit exit strategies to be part of future funding applications (beyond 2020).
LL4.	Assess the needs of COs for support throughout the planning and implementation cycle. Reflect on experience in implementing previous programs in structuring support.	COs/ Coalition leads, Oxfam Novib PMU	COs may need support with management of partnerships and consultants, finalisation of methodologies and other aspects of planning and delivery. Where the experience of providing support has been challenging, Oxfam Novib staff engaging with programs in similar ways could benefit from shared reflection and finding alternative ways to deliver support. Improving support, however, also depends on the willingness of COs and coalition members to self-assess and share challenges.	We are not very clear what the basis of this recommendation is. It suggests that countries did not deliver on the implementation cycle and/or the PMU did not deliver on support needed.	We will continue during the new phase (2020-2023) to - promote open sharing of challenges by CO/partners, - combine tailor-made support for COs / Partners with promoting exchange of experiences and lessons learned amongst the participating countries/partners Invest more in exchange of lessons learned during multi-country program management between various programs.
LL5.	Streamline monitoring and learning activities and articulate clearly how each of these add value to the work of the COs, as well as to the partners and beneficiaries.	Oxfam Novib PMU/ Wider Oxfam confederation	COs and coordinators often find the reporting burdensome. In addition, COs often manage a variety of M&E methodologies. The added value and resource needs of each of these could be further clarified, and the cumulative load on CO staff reduced where possible.	We recognize tensions between the requirements (of Oxfam affiliate, donor or local regulation) and different timelines of the various projects a CO/partner is implementing. This can only be solved to a certain extent.	In the coming years (2020–2023), make reporting as streamlined as possible; use specific project formats that are aligned with other requirements/formats; balance completeness of information with efficiency of measuring; invest in sharing results of good M&E.

LL6.	Define a strategy for hands-on guidance on strengthening environmental/ gender/conflict awareness approaches in cross-country and cross-regional programs.	Oxfam Novib	<p>The planning of a large-scale program could benefit from a comprehensive strategy for how to reflect gender and environmental issues, and how to implement Oxfam’s objectives in a conflict-aware manner. This should be part of the discussions with COs at the proposal stage and reflected in MEAL.</p> <p>The success of this work may also depend on overall capacity building on gender, the environment and conflict sensitivity. Improving the way in which programs tell their story under these aspects could help the outreach and fundraising of these programs.</p>	<p>We are not aware that the evaluators came across specific problems that were the result of not having a specific program-related strategy on gender, the environment and conflict awareness. Gender has been a major focus topic in all pillars. The environment more specifically in FFGI and conflict sensitivity is part of the Oxfam DNA. While we can imagine that such program-specific strategies might strengthen a program, in this case, with 3 program pillars, a specific strategy per topic for the whole FFF would not have worked. Instead, it would have implied more MEAL work, which the previous recommendation tries to avoid.</p>	<p>Rephrase the learning question in the ToR for the next evaluation (2022).</p>
------	--	-------------	---	---	--

LL7.	Increase individual follow-up on projects where consultants are tasked with delivering substantial pieces of work, ensuring that the CO/coalition lead is involved and has the expertise necessary for taking the work forward once the consultancy has ended.	Oxfam Novib and COs	Consultants are often key in ensuring that specialised research products are delivered on time. Making sure that the Oxfam CO/coalition lead is involved, owns the methodology or has sufficient insight to lead the research and advocacy planning is a strong enabler towards timely and high-quality delivery. Individual follow-up from the PMU/Secretariat can help the country-based colleagues in managing this process and associated risks.	In all countries under FFF, the CO/coalitions <i>do</i> lead on hiring the consultants. This recommendation seems to be based on one case where the consultant did not deliver; in that case the CO (Nigeria) took adequate measures. Although delays could not be prevented, the project results were realized.	Not applicable.
LL8.	At the beginning of a program cycle, structure meetings in line with the objectives of the program (in terms of content and management of delivery). Align follow-up and structured networking opportunities with these objectives.	Oxfam Novib PMU	Meetings are key moments of learning and taking decisions that take programs forward. They should be planned and structured in a way that reflects this key function throughout the program implementation, with key agendas and decision-making asks, action points and follow-up, and attention given to who attends from each CO/partner. The sensemaking sessions also highlighted the added value of structured follow-up after events: these ensure that the actions that the event has sparked are implemented and captured once participants are back at home.	We recognize the value of well prepared and structured meetings, clear decision taking, note taking and of well structured follow-up. We find it difficult to understand what challenge, noticed by the evaluators, was caused by the lack of such an approach by Oxfam Novib/PMU.	In the next phase of FFGI regular meetings (among coalitions, between coalitions and the executive team – mainly via Skype, annual Face-to-Face GA's) are foreseen to provide maximum alignment in content and project management.

© Oxfam Novib, August 2019

This paper was written by Petra Hamers, Irene de Goede, Ilse Balstra and Gine Zwart.

For further information on the issues raised in this paper please e-mail: Irene.deGoede@oxfamnovib.nl

This publication is copyright but the text may be used free of charge for the purposes of advocacy, campaigning, education, and research, provided that the source is acknowledged in full. The copyright holder requests that all such use be registered with them for impact assessment purposes. For copying in any other circumstances, or for re-use in other publications, or for translation or adaptation, permission must be secured and a fee may be charged.

Published by Oxfam Novib in August 2019.

Oxfam Novib
P.O. Box 30919
2500 GX The Hague
The Netherlands

T +31 (0) 70 3421621
info@oxfamnovib.nl

www.oxfamnovib.nl

