

Evaluation Report Title: Mid Term Evaluation of SARRAH, December 2013

Response to Evaluation Report (overarching narrative)

One of the key strengths of the SARRAH programme is its flexibility, but this also makes monitoring and evaluation complex. The mid-term evaluation of the SARRAH programme, led by Coffey International and HSRC was only finally approved by DFID in December 2013. DFID's independent quality assurance process for evaluation, 'SEQAS' twice rated the draft evaluation report red and required significant revisions both in terms of presentation and organisation of data, methodology and approach. This SARRAH evaluation Steering Committee then also considered the draft report and requested a number of factual corrections and changes in the description and approach to the methodology. The findings of the mid-term evaluation were largely accepted barring factual errors. The final mid-term evaluation was only signed off in May 2014, 7 months before the close of the project.

The delays in the finalisation of the mid-term evaluation meant that many of its recommendations were either no longer relevant or had already been implemented – however, in some cases the draft findings did inform annual review recommendations and processes and were taken forward as a result. Specific responses to each of the recommendations made are listed below.

The planned dissemination workshop was also eventually cancelled as many stakeholders were not engaged or interested enough to attend. This reflected very poorly on the mid-term evaluation team and product. Overall, although the mid-term evaluation was eventually approved, the product was not high quality and presented questionable value for money.

Key issues include a bottom-up methodological approach with insufficient attention to coherence and overall assessment, lack of stakeholder engagement, and substitutions within the evaluation team.

The challenges experienced by the evaluation team will inform the planning and design of the final evaluation.. DFID has reviewed arrangements with the service provider for the mid-term and final evaluation, Coffey International. Coffey were asked to find an entirely new team, approach and proposal to deliver the final evaluation, which was presented to DFID in May 2014. DFID has also reviewed the governance and management arrangements for the final evaluation in order to provide close management and technical oversight and ensure an effective final evaluation.

Management Response & Recommendations Action Plan

Evaluation Report Title: Mid-term Evaluation – ‘Strengthening South Africa’s Revitalised response to HIV AIDS and Health’ (SSARRAH) programme

Recommendations	Accepted or Rejected	If “Accepted”, Action plan for Implementation or if “Rejected”, Reason for Rejection
<p>Maintain support to initiatives which have already absorbed a significant amount of SARRAH resources, provided that the political economy environment surrounding these initiatives is conducive to a positive contribution from SARRAH.</p>	Accepted	<p>DFID accepts the overall recommendation that the SARRAH programme should continue to support areas where significant investment has already been made. In relation to SAHPRA, significant resources have been invested and despite challenges, there have been significant achievements made. DFID continues to support the work of the National Department of Health Technical Task Team responsible for the establishment of SAHPRA.</p>
<p>Enforce a much higher level of oversight from DFID and HLSP of activities commissioned and funded under SARRAH.</p>	Accepted	<p>DFID accepts that the evaluation team had difficulties in accessing some of the data they required. DFID would point out that this recommendation is phrased in a way that implies a general lack of oversight – however, it is clear in the evaluation report that the concern was about the evaluation team’s difficulty in accessing partner data required for the purposes of evaluation. This is an important distinction to make. During the final evaluation DFID will work closely with HLSP, the National Department of Health and the Department of Performance, Monitoring and Evaluation at the Presidency to ensure timely access to data for monitoring and evaluation purposes. We have also requested and endorsed the selection of a new evaluation team well plugged into South Africa health and evaluation networks and with good stakeholder management experience.</p>

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<p>Use SARRAH-funded M&E initiatives to monitor progress and evaluate outcomes of work-streams which have not yet produced observable impacts but which might do in the future.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>TAC has now developed and is using a new M&E framework and investment in supporting SANAC in developing its M&E capacity is starting to show results. The National Health Information Repository Database (NHIRD) is now operational. The final evaluation will be able to draw on these sources to access a richer dataset than was available during the Mid-term evaluation.</p>
<p>Ensure that data collection for the final evaluation of SARRAH takes into account the lessons learned from the mid-term evaluation in order to fully capture its effectiveness and impacts.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>There were a number of delays in relation to the publication of the mid-term evaluation due to issues with quality, as described above. The lessons from the mid-term evaluation have been uppermost in DFID's thinking and planning for the final evaluation, leading to a complete review of the approach, configuration and design of the final evaluation. This is currently underway and the inception report is due to be reviewed by the Steering Committee mid-Aug 2014.</p>
<p>Effectively monitor and manage emerging needs and demand for SARRAH to address gaps through its current work-streams.</p>	<p>Accepted</p>	<p>DFID has maintained focus and invested resources into areas with significant momentum in the context of South Africa's ongoing programme of health sector reform. Whilst there have been new work streams added, for example, support to GP contracting or mHealth , these have been sustained engagements that contribute to the overall goals of SARRAH, the 10 point plan of the NDOH and preparations for National Health Insurance in South Africa. SARRAH support is flexible, but must and has corresponded to the overall goals of the SARRAH programme.</p>

Management Response & Recommendations Action Plan