Reference Group for ACT-Accelerator Evaluation
Terms of Reference

Background and Objective

The Access to Covid-19 Tools Accelerator (ACT-A) was launched in April 2020, three months after the Director-General of the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared Covid-19 as a Public Health Emergency of International Concern. It was launched by the Director-General of the WHO, Dr Tedros Ghebreyesus, alongside the United Nations Secretary-General, Antonio Guterres, President Macron of France, Chancellor Merkel of Germany, Prime Minister Sanchez of Spain, President von der Leyen of the European Commission, Prime Minister Conte of Italy, President Kagame of Rwanda, Bill Gates, as well as the President of South Africa, Ramaphosa.

Subsequently, its governance structure, the ACT-Accelerator Facilitation Council was launched on 10 September 2020. The co-hosts of ACT-A are the WHO and the European Commission, and the co-chairs of the Facilitation Council are Norway and South Africa. The full Facilitation Council is comprised of 33 countries and Civil Society Organisations, which serve a governance role.

ACT-A's aimed to accelerate development, production, and equitable access to Covid-19 tests, treatments, vaccines, and personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensure health systems are ready to enable the implementation of countermeasures. It brought together governments, academia, industry, civil society, philanthropic and global health organisations to end the pandemic.

The ACT-A was the first main global initiative, first structure of its kind, requiring unprecedented global collaboration and resource mobilization, to mitigate the Covid-19 pandemic and is a response for the accelerated development, production and equitable access to new Covid-19 tools.

After its 18 months of operation, the ACT-A mid-term review was conducted and the results showed among others, the need to expand its governance structure to involve more member states and partners mainly from low and lower middle–income countries.

As the pandemic transitions into an endemic state, there is an urgent need to reflect on the necessary mechanisms to ensure a strong global pandemic response in the future, including when it comes to access to countermeasures. This requires a thorough and objective evaluation of ACT-A and its activities, identifying lessons that can be learned in establishing a global pandemic preparedness response architecture to ensure global health security.

The evaluation will be conducted by an independent Evaluation Service Provider and overseen by the co-chairs (Norway and South Africa) and six Member States who have been approached / invited by the co-chairs as well as civil society (the Reference Group). These Member States are Brazil, Canada, Germany, India, Nigeria, and Sweden.

The external evaluation of ACT-A will include the review of its activities, (set-up, structure, strategies, governance, financing), focusing on lessons learnt and way forward, with respect to

(a) Strengths and weaknesses of its mandate as a rapidly established global structure to coordinate the global response
(b) Whether the ACT-A set-up and structure (e.g. Council, composition, mandates of bodies and forums, procedures, decision-making, governance mechanisms, including the role of decentralized governance through partner boards) were the optimal model for both internal

and external coordination and cooperation (including equal representation across different constituencies and alignment with national strategies and priorities),

(c) Whether ACT-A ensured achievement of its objectives and commitments, especially providing equitable access to public health tools, including vaccines, diagnostics, therapeutics, PPE and health systems connector
(d) Resource mobilisation and financing, including timelines from budgeting to use of funds, finance allocation, and push and pull finance coordination.
(e) Gaps and missed opportunities

Mandate of Reference Group

The Reference Group has been established to advise, help steer and oversee the evaluation, in particular:

- Assess the evaluation's Terms of Reference (ToR) and Request for Proposals (RfP) in terms of clarity, feasibility, cohesion and completeness and, where needed, formulate improvements)
- Approve the evaluation's ToR and RfP
- Consider criteria for the selection of an Evaluation Service Provider and endorse the selected provider.
- Participate in a "Kick-off" meeting with the Evaluation Service Provider to clarify any issues, timeframe and next steps
- Provide suggestions to the Evaluation Service Provider on key stakeholders to be consulted/interviewed in the process
- Receive regular updates from the Evaluation Service Provider and, where needed, provide feedback, as well as oversee timelines
- Review and discuss draft inception report(s), provide feedback on where and how aspects need to be improved
- Receive and discuss draft evaluation report(s), provide feedback on where and how aspects need to be improved
- Sign off the final version of the evaluation report

Members assume their roles on the Reference Group as representatives of their governments or organisations.

Mandate and role of the Co-Chairs (with the support of HERA):

- Overall coordination and day to day management of the evaluation, including contracting the Evaluation Service Provider
- Liaising and organizing Reference Group meetings
- Collating and reporting feedback on reports between Reference Group and Evaluation Service Provider
- Documenting Reference Group work (e.g. meeting notes)
- Providing the Evaluation Service Provider with administrative and logistic support
- Keeping records and documentation of the evaluation process for external audiences
- Disseminate the evaluation report to WHO and its member states as well as the ACT-A agencies, the G7 and G20 presidencies.
- Develop a communication strategy aimed at informing a wide stakeholder and partner audience on the evaluation