

# Enhancing LFA Effectiveness

## Key Principles and Best Practices

**Objective:** This guide clarifies the Global Fund's expectations for effective LFA performance and shares best practices for effective LFA service delivery.

LFAs are encouraged to use this slide deck for internal training and onboarding new LFA experts.

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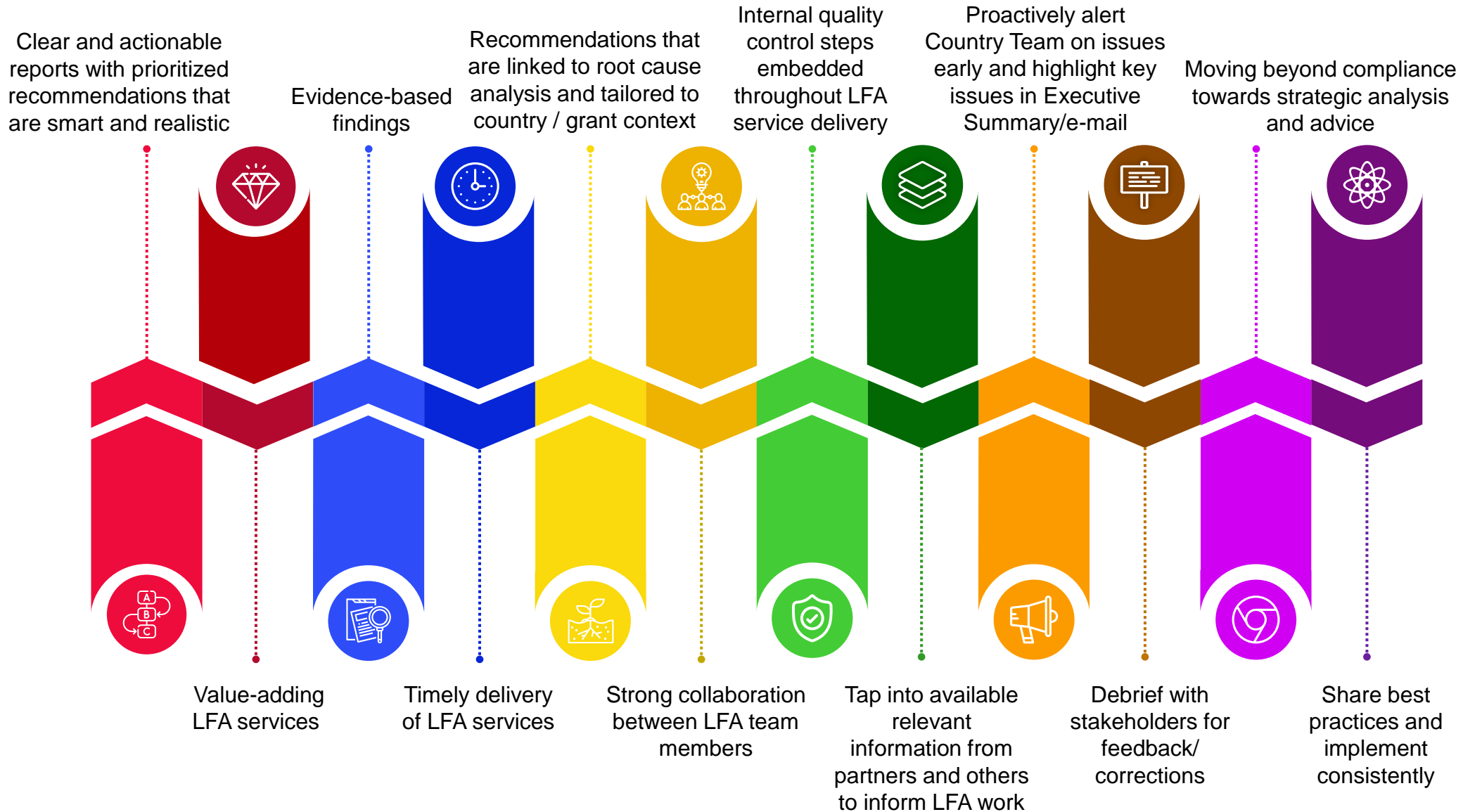
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# What's an effective LFA performance?

The Global Fund needs LFAs to deliver value-adding and high-quality services to drive impactful grant implementation.



# Examples of LFA value-adding service provision cited by Country Teams








My LFA helps the Country Team manage risks **before** they affect grant implementation. So, while the LFA team provides insights on how implementation is progressing and what the program has achieved, they also provide **forward-looking analysis** of key risks and opportunities/game changers that can impact the effectiveness of grant implementation. This is really useful!! With this we are aware of key risks and can take the required actions before implementation is massively impacted.

For us as Country Team it is important that the LFA provides strategic advice on how the **effectiveness of implementation** can be enhanced to achieve maximum impact. We (the Country Team) agree with the LFA team on some key reviews each year to clearly identify the main drivers for the program to achieve impact but also the main obstacles. This includes, for example, regular analysis of the PR's grant activity design, planning and execution for key interventions, program governance, political and contextual developments, budget absorption and how this could be improved. With this, the LFA reviews help us to identify opportunities to move the grants to the next level. This is exactly what we need!









The LFA team of our portfolio is instrumental in **identifying the root causes for delayed/ineffective implementation**. Oftentimes, sub-optimal implementation arrangements, including weak implementers, create bottlenecks. The LFA's insights in this and the practical corrective actions the team recommends to us (the Country Team) are invaluable.

# **Common LFA performance issues & How to address them**











# a) LFA findings and recommendations: clear, implementable and country/grant-specific (1 of 3)

Performance Issue	How to address them
 LFA only lists and describes the issues without analysis or explanation of the underlying causes and implications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Provide root cause analysis based on facts and findings</li><li> Provide CT with professional judgment when interpreting facts/findings from reviews/verifications</li><li> Explain the relevance of the findings so that CTs can clearly understand LFA's reasoning and basis for the recommendations</li><li> Adequately probe the PR and validate PR's statements instead of re-stating the facts reported by the PR<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Example: presenting PR-reported figures on bed net distribution from the central store is not sufficient to understand if the nets have reached their intended destination. The LFA needs to request from the PR the relevant information from service delivery points (district, community level) to be able to provide this additional context.</i></li></ul></li></ul>
 LFA findings/recommendations do not reflect understanding of grant/country context	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li> Consider all relevant facts based on grant/country context and systems when reporting findings/recommendations<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>➤ <i>Example: the LFA reported a stock-out of ARVs in a health facility without checking that shortly before this check all relevant patients were issued their medications and the next replenishment of drugs was expected in the following four days. This is the standard practice of drug management in the country which the LFA PSM expert should have known.</i></li></ul></li></ul>








## a) LFA findings and recommendations: clear, implementable and country/grant-specific (2 of 3)

Performance Issue	How to address them
 All LFA findings and recommendations have the same weight and urgency	 Prioritize findings/recommendations based on risk, program context  Clearly articulate which findings/recommendations are critical and require immediate attention and why, and which are less critical
 Inconsistencies between LFA facts/findings and recommendations undermine reliability of LFA report	 Ensure attention to accuracy and consistency of reported findings throughout LFA reports  Demonstrate a clear and logical train of thought on how the recommendations are derived from the findings
 Stating issues without proposing solutions	 Clearly propose feasible actions to overcome the program's weakness and/or to mitigate the identified risks <i>➤ Always remember to state WHAT is the issue and HOW it could be addressed.</i>

## a) LFA findings and recommendations: clear, implementable and country/grant-specific (3 of 3)

Performance Issue	How to address them
 LFA recommendations are vague or not implementable. ➤ <i>Example: “A civil registration service needs to be put in place.”</i>	 Propose recommendations that are SMART: <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• <b>S</b>pecific about what should be implemented</li><li>• <b>M</b>easurable so that its status can be tracked</li><li>• <b>A</b>ttainable for the PR under the country/program context</li><li>• <b>R</b>elevant to the identified issue/risk</li><li>• <b>T</b>ime-bound</li></ul>  Ensure that Country Team can act on the recommendations and PR can implement them. Specify actor(s) responsible to implement recommendation(s).  Recommendations need to reflect a good understanding of the country/grant context
 LFAs use unclear or inconclusive language when presenting findings/recommendations	 Ensure clear/unambiguous language to avoid misinterpretation or need for further clarifications/iterations.  In case of limitations clearly state / explain them in the report.
 There are errors in the LFA reports	 Double check accuracy of data in LFA reports to avoid factual or calculation errors  Detect errors in the PR reports/budgets as part of LFA reviews

## b) Global Fund guidelines and requirements: LFAs need to be familiar with them

Performance Issue	How to address them
 LFA not familiar with the latest Global Fund guidelines or service requirements	 Do not rely on Country Team to explain the guidelines in detail, unless there are specific points requiring Country Team clarification
	 Ensure to use the latest definitions of indicators available on <a href="#">The Global Fund website</a>
	 Ensure the LFA reports address all the questions in the tools/checklists provided for the review and as agreed with the Country Team
 LFA does not follow Country Team requirements and expectations	 Clarify LFA service expectations and requirements with Country Team prior to starting the work and ensure to follow them
	 Ensure the LFA reports meet the purpose/scope of the required tasks and Statement of Work (SoW)










## c) LFA communication: proactive and regular

Performance Issue	How to address them
✗ LFA do not inform Country Team of the delays in time	✓ As soon as become aware of any potential delays in PR's activities/reports, or LFA's own delays, inform the Country Team
✗ LFA waits for Country Team to request follow-up on issues related to grant implementation/PR delays	✓ Proactively follow up with key implementers and timely inform Country Team of relevant issues and developments, including suggesting relevant LFA assurance services to address identified risks.
✗ LFA highlights too late lack of requested PR documentation/information relevant for LFA review	✓ Ensure to bring to Country Team's attention any issues related to delays or PR not submitting requested information <b><i>immediately before/during the LFA review</i></b>
✗ LFAs do not de-brief the PR	✓ De-brief the PR on the key findings as per the LFA Communication Protocol in order to confirm accuracy / completeness of findings before submitting the report to the Country Team























## d) LFA Experts: are adequately qualified and their services quality-controlled by the Team Leader

Performance Issue	How to address them
✗ LFA uses experts not approved by Global Fund	✓ Follow the <u><a href="#">Procedures for the Engagement and Approval of LFA Experts</a></u> to submit LFA expert approval request before an expert starts working on a portfolio.
✗ LFA junior experts are not supervised by senior experts	✓ Ensure that Junior Experts are adequately supervised by the Senior Experts and are familiar with the Global Fund guidelines and expectations.
✗ Inadequate/insufficient quality control of deliverables by LFA Team Leaders	✓ Team Leaders are ultimately responsible and accountable for the work performed by the LFA team. They need to understand the requirements/expectations of the Global and ensure they are reflected in the LFA deliverables.
✗ Some LFA Experts (e.g. Programmatic/M&E, PSM) are overstretched and cover too many countries at the same time	✓ Ensure reasonable and realistic LFA resource allocation ✓ Early and regular planning of services and LFA resources with the Country Team is key

## e) LFA reports: clear, succinct and well-substantiated

Performance Issue	How to address them
 LFAs use subjective or conversational language ➤ <i>Example: “I feel...; In the view of the LFA...”</i>	 Use factual and impersonal writing style in the LFA reports.  Avoid referring to ‘the LFA’. This helps the Country Team to transmit key statements/findings from the LFA report to grant stakeholders when communicating Global Fund messages (e.g. management actions).
 LFA reports are overly descriptive, poorly structured and inconsistent.	 Use clear language, be succinct and ensure the statements are adequately substantiated.
 The verification approach is missing in the LFA report.	 Describe the verification approach in the LFA reports.
 Link between terms of reference (ToRs) and LFA report not clear	 Ensure that all aspects of the ToRs agreed with the Country Team are addressed in the LFA report

# Cheat sheet to addressing LFA challenges

Common challenges	Possible Solutions
 Expectations vary across Country Teams	 Proactively clarify expectations related to ways of working, deliverables and deadlines. Agree on TORs prior to commencing services
 Country context – politics, security, etc.	 Open & continuous dialogue between CCM & Country Team & partners with LFA being informed
 Expectations/scope of service vs LoE	 Agree with the Country Team on TORs & LoE prior to commencing services
 Scope creep	 Agree on clear TORs and notify Country Team as soon as its apparent that additional work may be needed
 Tight timelines	 Proactive planning and coordination between all relevant parties, timely communication on expectations and feasibility of meeting timeline
 Availability and quality of data	 Flag issues early to Country Team
 Checklist & tools too broad in scope/not always relevant to specific context	 Tailor tools, where possible and relevant
 Focused portfolios - limited interactions with stakeholders leads to limited country context	 Country Team to include LFAs in communications. Clarify realistic expectations with Country Teams. Potentially agree on some LoE to allow LFA staying up-to-date
 Conflict of interest	 Proactively engage with LFA Coordination team and Country Team to explore what is possible and what is not; refer to <a href="#">LFA Conflict of Interest Procedures</a>
 Additional expertise needed to address specific technical issues, e.g. laboratory equipment, sustainability and transition	 Discuss with Country Team potential gaps in expertise and how to address them. Keep an eye on Global Fund available resources on this topic
 Need for more training on Global Fund requirements	 Use guidelines and documents available on <a href="#">LFA website</a> , <a href="#">LFA SharePoint site</a> , in-person trainings, peer-to-peer coaching, create forums to exchange best practices & lessons learnt

# **Best practices:**

## **Country Team - LFA communication, LFA service planning & LFA review of the PUDR**

# 1. Best Practices – Country Team / LFA Communication

## Country Team Actions



1. Clearly communicate expectations to LFA for each deliverable, including in-country missions – refer to slide 7.
2. Provide timely and constructive feedback to LFAs on quality of deliverables.
3. Copy/include LFA consistently in relevant communications with in-country stakeholders so that the LFA can add maximum value when providing recommendations to the Country Team.
4. Share with LFA mission reports with key action points and responsible actors, and relevant info that the Country Team might have from other sources which might not be known to the LFA.
5. Participate in LFA-PR de-briefs for critical LFA services to have timely information on key issues.

## LFA Actions



1. Proactively provide timely updates to Country Team when important issues are uncovered and/or agreed timelines shift.
2. LFA reports: provide executive summary and prioritize findings drawing the Country Team's attention to the most critical ones.
3. Ensure open lines of communication between LFA experts and Country Team technical specialists.
4. Ensure all LFA experts are up-to-date and kept in the loop on key discussions, e.g. service planning and scoping and Country Team requirements.

## Country Team & LFA Actions



1. Agree ahead of time on preferred communication methods and styles.
2. Schedule regular calls between full LFA team and Country Team to ensure everyone is on the same page.
3. Facilitate direct communication between LFA experts and Country Team Specialists.
4. Facilitate communication by making use of available tools/social media (e.g., Whatsapp, Webex, MS Teams etc.)

## 2. Best Practices – LFA Service Planning



### Country Team Actions

1. Involve LFA early and in all stages of planning of critical activities/processes, such as funding request / grant making.
2. Inform LFA of changes to service schedule with adequate notice to ensure LFA expert availability.
3. Timely planning of Country Team missions and sharing of agenda in advance with all key actors, including clarify expected role of LFA during mission.



### LFA ACTIONS

1. Proactively input and make suggestions on annual LFA service scheduling.
2. Include the relevant LFA experts in discussion with Country Team on planning and scoping LFA services.
3. Ensure LFA expert availability coincides with the deliverables' timelines.
4. Proactively plan and track timeliness of submission of LFA deliverables and alert Country Team of any potential delays before they occur.
5. Country Team mission planning: proactively suggest agenda items and highlight pertinent matters for Country Team to address/be aware of during missions (provide briefing note if necessary)



### Country Team & LFA Actions

1. Collaborate on creating a yearly work-plan and re-visit implementation/required changes to the plan regularly.
2. Collaborate and agree on clear and relevant TORs/ scope of work before each deliverable/mission.
3. For missions: discuss talking points and key issues to address ahead of time

### 3. Best practice example: LFA review of a PUDR

