



MSF OCB FIELD OPPORTUNITY ENVELOPE REVIEW, 2017

JULY 2017

[SHORT VERSION]

This publication was produced at the request of MSF OCB Operations. It was prepared independently by H el ene JUILLARD and Cl ement CHARLOT.

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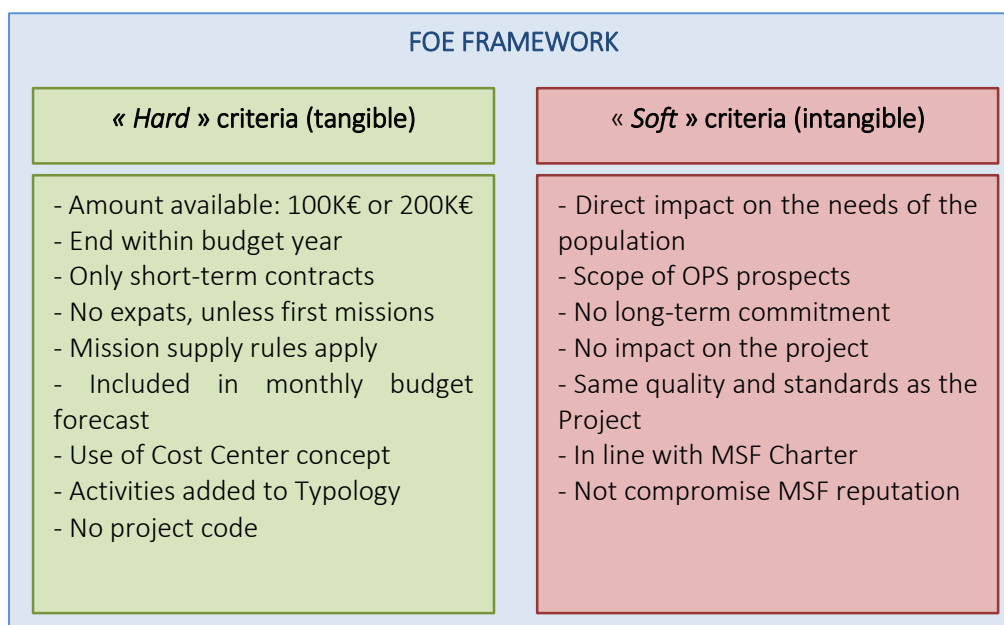
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ACRONYMS

ARO	Annual Review of Operations
CGM	Cours de Gestion de Mission
COPRO	Project Committee
CPP	Country Policy Paper
FC	Field Coordinator
FOE	Field Opportunity Envelope
HoM	Head of Mission
KII	Key Informant Interview
Medco	Medical Coordinator
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
OCB	Operational Centre Brussels
OPD	Out-Patient Department
PCC	Project Coordinator Course
PUC	Pool d'Urgence
VOT	Victims of Torture

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In November 2015, MSF-OCB launched a pilot initiative, the Field Opportunity Envelope (FOE), with the objective to give autonomy to field staffs to rapidly and without validation meet the needs of the communities in their intervention area. Each project could request either 100,000 or 200,000 euros, provided that their initiative met a set of criteria defined in the FOE Framework:



Over 18 months, FOEs were implemented ten times.

From the onset of the initiative, a **light** review was planned in order to assess *if and how it was used, if it had the expected outcome, and understand any concerns it encountered*. The review was undertaken from May to July 2017, over the course of 10 days. A workshop was conducted with 60 participants (heads of missions, medical coordinators and cell members) during the Coordinators' week, and 13 key informant interviews were conducted remotely. The objectives of the review were to:

1. Determine the track record of the Field Opportunity Envelope Initiative 18 months after its creation
2. Assess if and why the Field Opportunity Envelopes have been underused
3. Make recommendations on changes to the FOE framework that would increase its usage

The main findings of this review include:

- **Awareness is high:** The awareness of the existence of FOEs among field coordinators, heads of mission and medical coordinators is high, thanks to a regular communication, which could be further improved by sharing concrete FOE examples.
- **Many don't get started:** FOEs have been implemented 10 times, but during the course of this review the evaluators came across eight that have been thought of and then abandoned. This was due to:
 - Project's workload and turnover,
 - Misunderstandings of the FOE framework,
 - Informal validation mechanisms.
- **Difficulties with soft criteria:** While the *hard* criteria of the framework are well understood and followed, the *soft* criteria are interpreted differently among interviewees. This led to disagreements among missions and

cells as to whether or not FOEs are relevant and compliant to the framework. Specifically two *soft* criteria were debated upon: scope of OPS prospects & no long-term commitment.

- **FOEs exacerbated tensions** between the project and the coordination, because they do not require a validation process and were sometimes used to overturn decisions taken during the Annual Review of Operations.
- **Framework needs refined:** Although the FOE initiative was usually appreciated because of the autonomy and ownership it provides field staffs, interviewees thought that the framework could be refined to avoid misunderstandings and to be better adapted to field realities.

Based on these findings, the evaluators propose the recommendations below, in order to increase the usage of the FOE¹:

⇒ Recommendation 1: **Communicate on implemented FOEs to give examples of potential use**

⇒ Recommendation 2: **Adopt a one-year rolling criteria**

⇒ Recommendation 3: **Add a self-assessment section in the FOE template**

⇒ Recommendation 4: **Propose an informal technical consultation system**

¹ The recommendations are developed in the [full version](#) of the report

Stockholm Evaluation Unit

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