This publication was produced at the request of MSF OCB Operations. It was prepared independently by Hélène JUILLARD and Clément CHARLOT.

DISCLAIMER
The author’s views expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the views of Médecins sans Frontières or the Stockholm Evaluation Unit.
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:

**FOE FRAMEWORK**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>« Hard » criteria (tangible)</th>
<th>« Soft » criteria (intangible)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Amount available: 100K€ or 200K€</td>
<td>- Direct impact on the needs of the population</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- End within budget year</td>
<td>- Scope of OPS prospects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Only short-term contracts</td>
<td>- No long-term commitment</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No expats, unless first missions</td>
<td>- No impact on the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Mission supply rules apply</td>
<td>- Same quality and standards as the Project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Included in monthly budget forecast</td>
<td>- In line with MSF Charter</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Use of Cost Center concept</td>
<td>- Not compromise MSF reputation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Activities added to Typology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No project code</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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 FOE:

1. **Recommendation 1:** Communicate on implemented FOEs to give examples of potential use
2. **Recommendation 2:** Adopt a one-year rolling criteria
3. **Recommendation 3:** Add a self-assessment section in the FOE template
4. **Recommendation 4:** Propose an informal technical consultation system

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1 The recommendations are developed in the full version of the report