



# Improved Talent Development Fund (TDF) Claims & Reimbursement Process and Turnaround Time

Singapore Healthcare  
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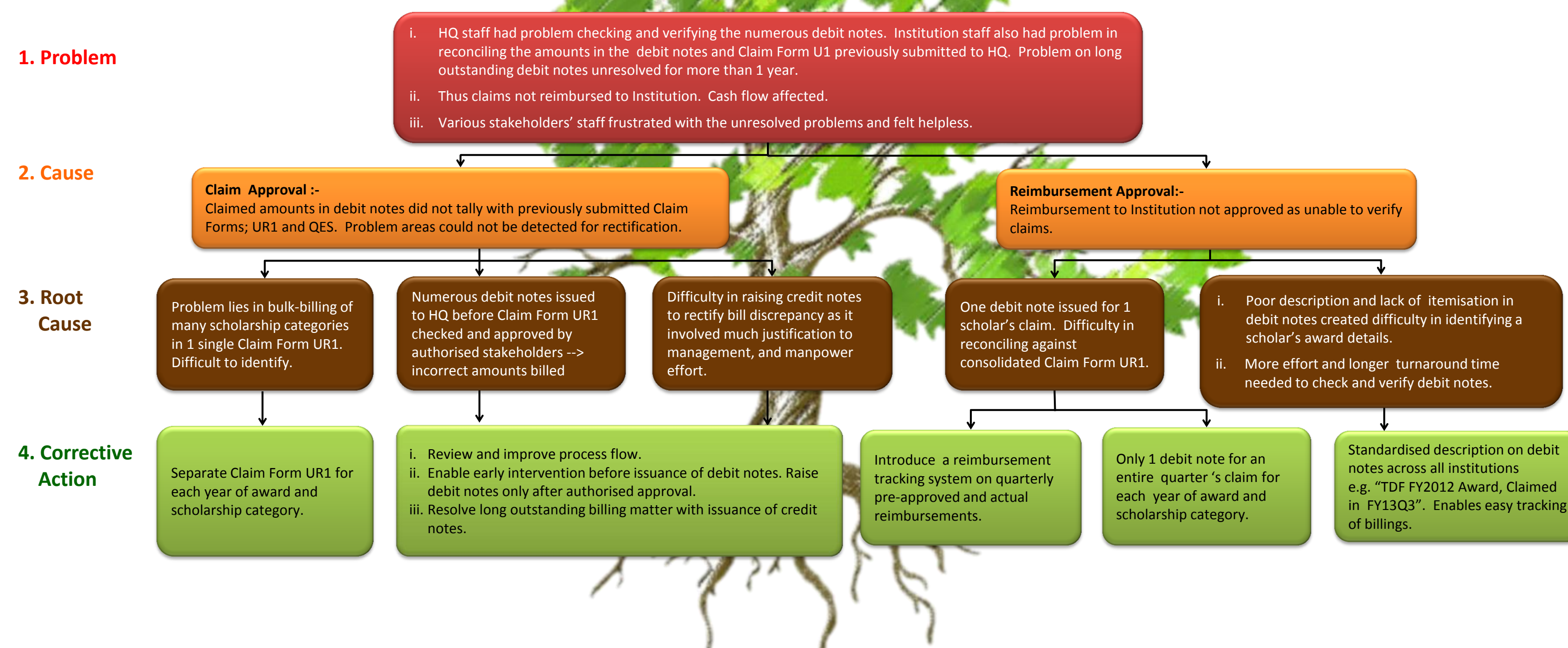
## BACKGROUND

Talent Development Fund (TDF) Formal Programme Scholarship is one of the schemes developed by SingHealth to build the capabilities of SingHealth's human capital to support its pursuit of Academic Medicine mission.

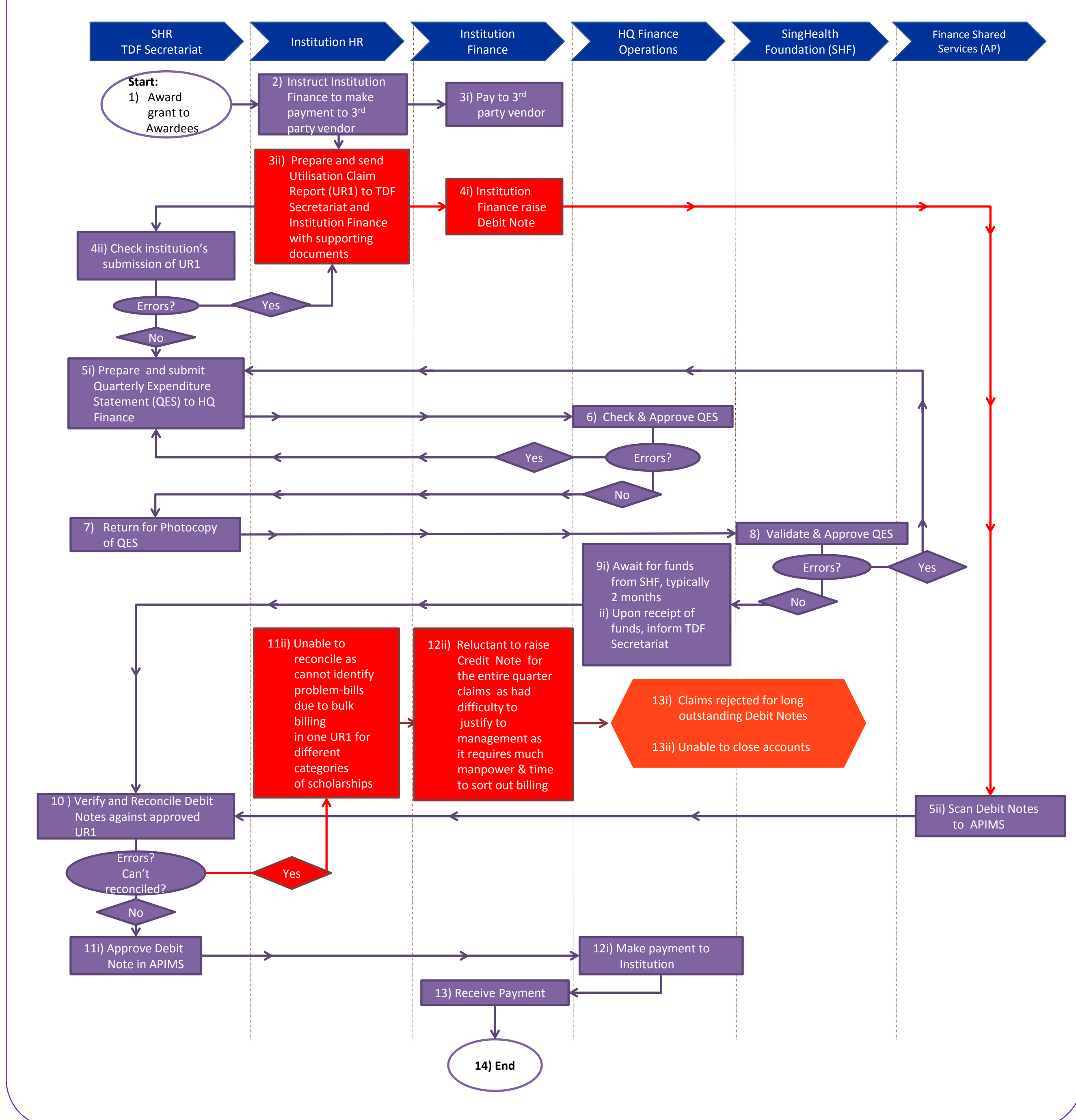
Turnaround time for claims and reimbursement process between Institutions and HQ took about 7 to 9 months for each quarter's claim. Each quarter's claim involves 4 financial years of multiple year-scholarships. In FY2012Q3, a claim problem surfaced - the various stakeholders in HQ, SingHealth Foundation and an Institution were not able to verify and reconcile the numerous debit notes amounting to \$0.5 million covering 4 FYs. The debit notes amounts did not tally with the consolidated amounts in the various claims reports (Utilisation Claims Reports UR1 from Institution and Quarterly Expenditure Statement QES from SHR's TDF Secretariat). Whilst the respective HR and Finance staff from HQ and the Institution were struggling to reconcile the figures, the debit notes problem remained outstanding and unresolved.

TDF Secretariat initiated the quality improvement project to improve the claims and reimbursement process and turnaround time.

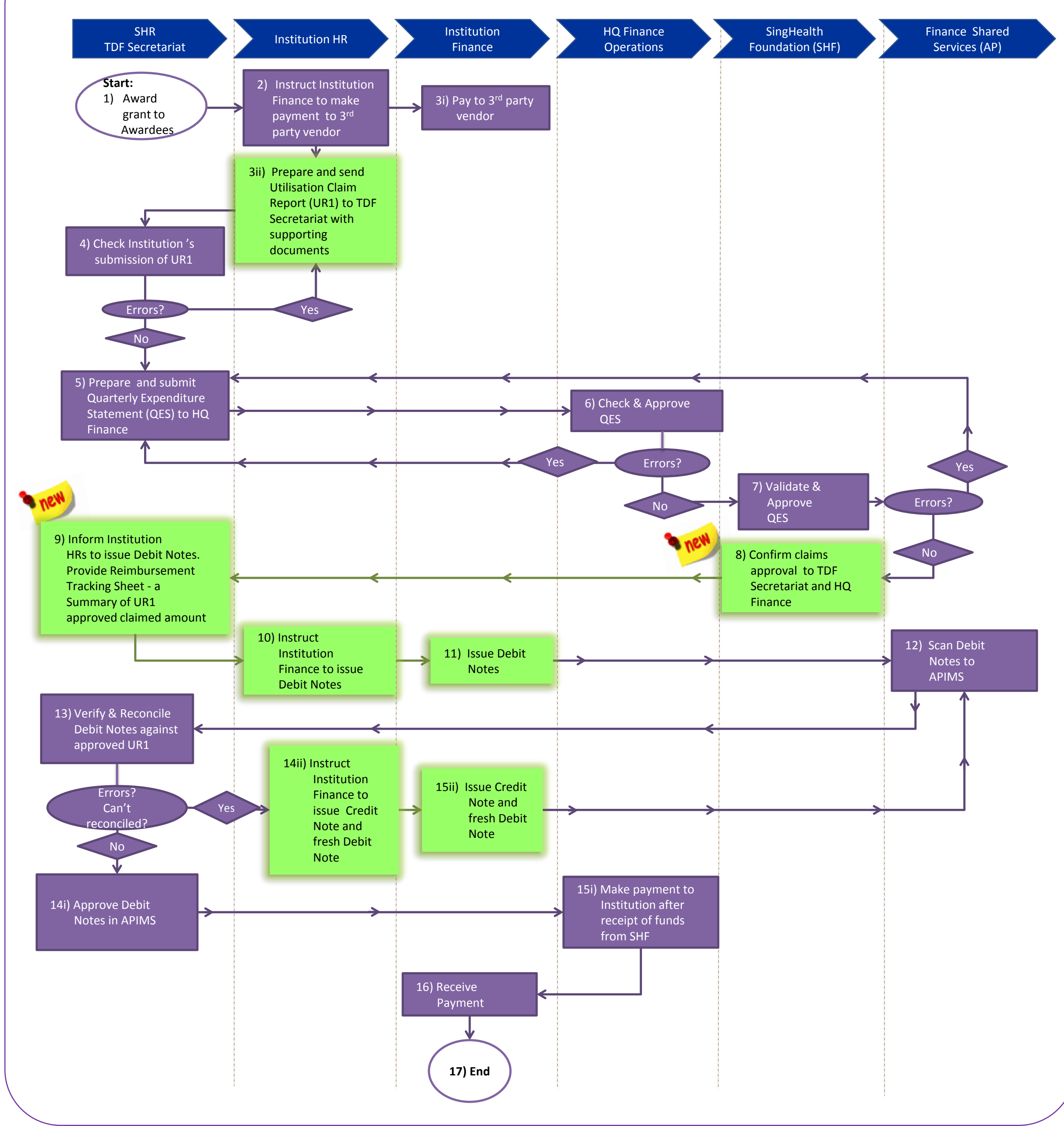
Diagram 1: Root Cause Analysis Tree



Flow Chart 1: Previous Process Flow



Flow Chart 2: Revised Process Flow



## METHODOLOGY

Adopting DMAIC, the TDF claims and reimbursement process improvement project delivers quantifiable and sustainable results.

D

- DEFINE**  
Strategic HR's TDF Secretariat engaged with other stakeholders – Finance and HR teams from HQ, Institution and SingHealth Foundation to **Define** problems and mapped out process (Flow Chart 1).

M

- MEASURE**  
Utilised data to establish and **Measure** the baselines as a basis to monitor improvement. (Charts 1 & 2).

A

- ANALYSE**  
Root Cause Analysis Tree (Diagram 1) used as a tool to **Analyse** and identify possible attributes contributing to the problematic and prolonged claims and reimbursement process.

I

- IMPROVE**  
Brain storming sessions to review and introduce **Improved** process (Flow Chart 2). Corrective actions developed to address respective root causes and resolve existing outstanding matters. Partnered with HQ Finance to re-engage with Institution's Finance colleagues to garner support for the new Improved process.

C

- CONTROL**  
Tested new process on 3 quarters of claims submitted in FY2013 Q2, Q3 and Q4. Monitored results using a **Control Chart** to assess the improvement within an established control range of 150 days to 250 days of processing lead time. Results supported a feasible and sustainable improvement by 44%, from ave 270 days to 150 days ave. The best improvement is 66%, from the longest turnaround time of 326 days down to the shortest 105 days as shown in Chart 1.



**Sustained improvement in the claims and reimbursement process and turnaround time:-**

- 1) Faster and 100% accuracy in claims verification and reconciliation.
- 2) Chart 1 shows improved claims turnaround by more than 66%.
- 3) Faster and hassle-free reimbursement, leading to better cash flow and helps to ease Finance accounts closing.
- 4) Chart 2 shows improved reimbursement turnaround per debit note by 65%, from average 151 days down to average 53 days.
- 5) Harmonised TDF claims and reimbursement process across all SingHealth institutions

Chart 1: TDF Claims Approval Turnaround Time (by day)

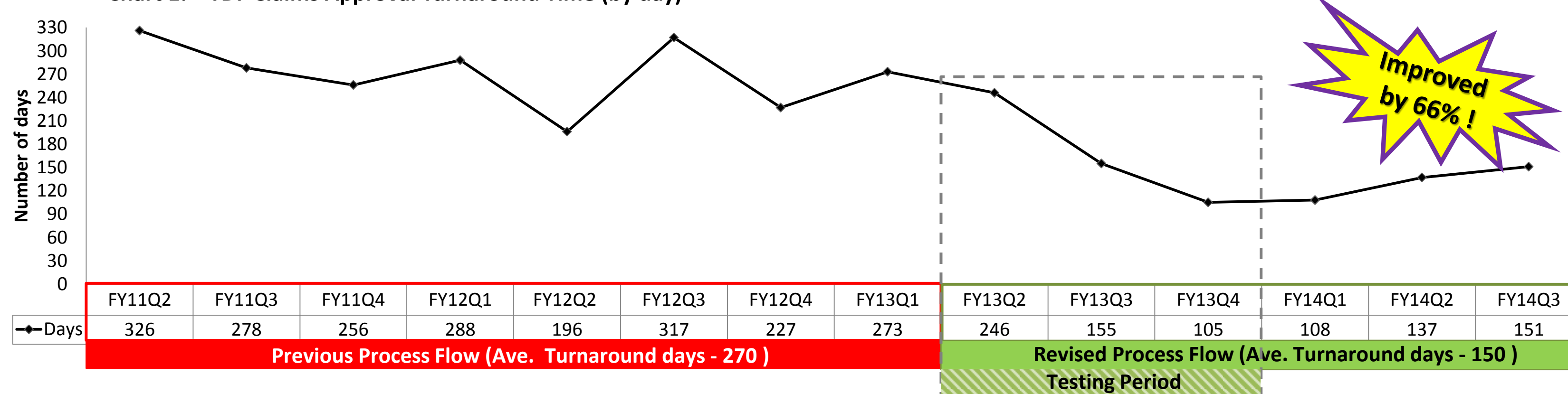
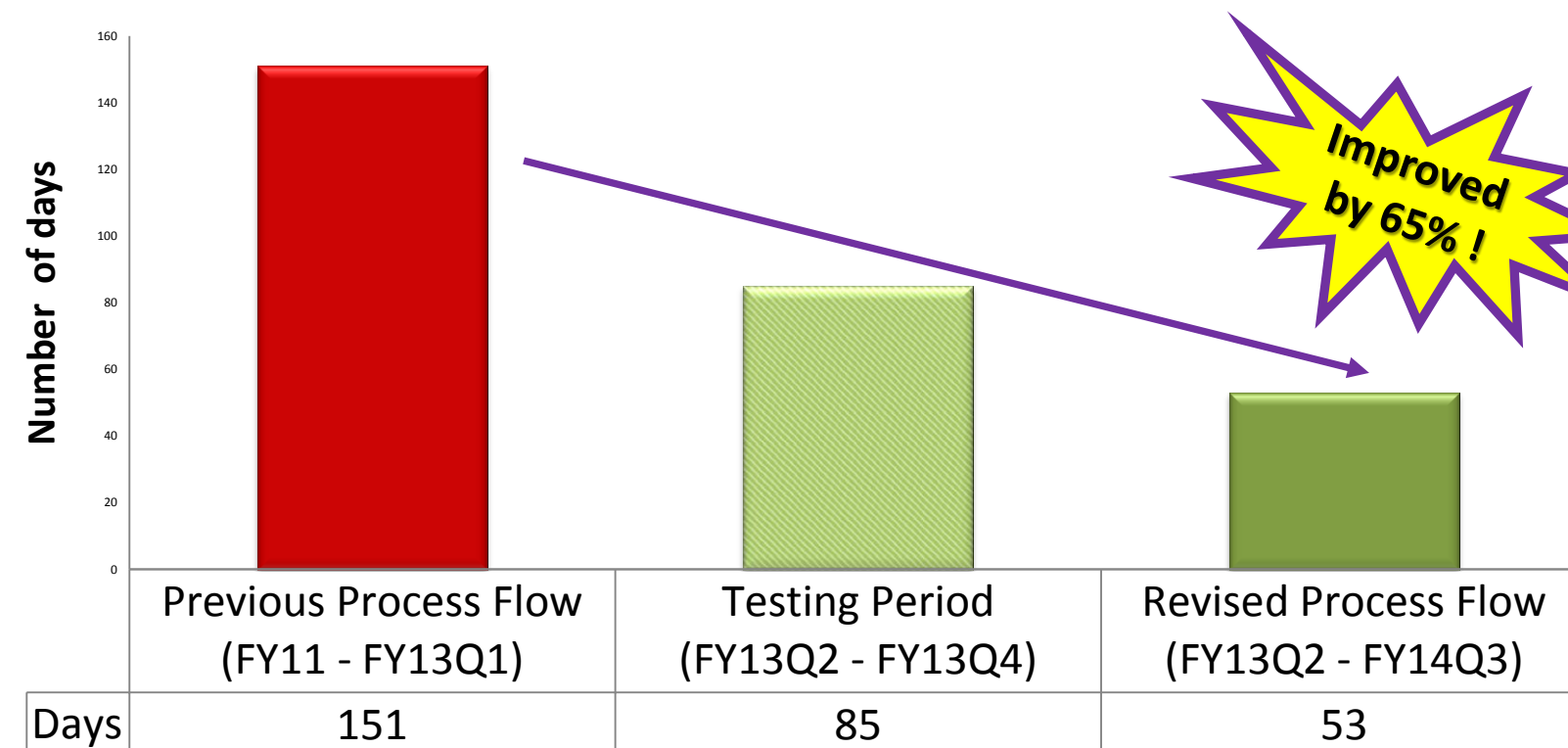


Chart 2: TDF Reimbursement Approval Average Turnaround Time Per Debit Note (by day)



## CONCLUSION

- 1) Simple and yet innovative refinement on the TDF Claims and Reimbursement process has proven to be effective and efficient, increasing productivity.
- 2) Has significant positive impact on both operational and financial outcomes.
- 3) Improves staff morale and also helps to forge and heighten collaboration, camaraderie and trust amongst staff & stakeholders.
- 4) Will continue to monitor process for further improvements.