

## **Global Fund financing through “National Strategy Applications” Basic information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”**

### **A new way of applying for Global Fund financing**

In recent years, many countries have made significant efforts to develop national disease and broader health strategies. However, to finance implementation of these strategies, they have usually had to prepare multiple, separate proposals to different donors. This involves high transaction costs and may not always be fully consistent with national planning and reporting.

As part of its commitment to aid effectiveness principles and in response to country requests for streamlined processes, the Global Fund has committed to introducing a new way to apply for Global Fund resources - known as “National Strategy Applications” (NSAs). This involves submitting a national strategy itself rather than a Global Fund-specific proposal form - as the *primary* basis of the application for Global Fund financing.

The anticipated benefits of NSAs are:

- Improved **alignment** of Global Fund financing with country priorities, national programmatic and budgetary timeframes.
- **Reduced transaction costs and paperwork for countries.**
- **Improved harmonization** with other donors that have agreed to use the same criteria for reviewing national strategies.
- A focus on **managing for results** and **accountability** within national strategies).
- In the longer term, **improved quality, consistency and credibility of national strategic frameworks.**

NSAs will be an alternative approach to access resources from the Global Fund and countries will still have the opportunity to apply through the regular round-based system if they so wish.

### **The First Learning Wave**

NSAs will be introduced through a phased roll-out, beginning in 2009 with a limited number of countries. The aim of this “First Learning Wave” of NSAs is to draw policy and operational lessons to guide the broader roll-out of the new application procedure beyond 2009.

The First Learning Wave will focus on national AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria strategies only. National health strategies may be included at a later stage. Countries are being invited to participate in the First Learning Wave for a given disease based on a range of factors, including the strength and duration of their current national disease strategy, also ensuring overall geographic and disease diversity.

Countries that submitted successful Round 8 proposals to the Global Fund are not being invited to participate in the First Learning Wave. This is to enable national program staff in those countries to focus on the negotiation of Round 8 grant agreements. Participants in the First Learning Wave will be countries that:

- have a well articulated and documented national strategy developed through an inclusive process in the relevant disease area with an unexpired term at least through to the end of 2012;
- have a strong partnership with bilateral donors and technical agencies in the country to support them in the application process where necessary, and in grant implementation.

The First Learning Wave of NSAs will involve a two-stage process. In the **first stage**, a national strategy and accompanying documentation (such as an operational plan) will be desk-reviewed to ensure that they contain enough information to be considered as the basis of a funding application. If the outcome of this desk review is favorable, a review team will make a country visit to seek clarifications and collect additional information. A favourable desk review will also lead to an invitation to proceed to

the **second stage**: the CCM submitting a short application focused on the financial request for consideration by the Global Fund Technical Review Panel.

### **Issues for applicants to consider**

The NSA First Learning Wave will run as an alternative application procedure for invited countries at the same time as Round 9, however, countries will not be able to submit both an NSA in the First Learning Wave and a Round 9 application *for the same disease*. Countries that do not have a favorable outcome of the desk review will, however, be able to apply for Round 9 with an extended deadline for the application. The Global Fund Board has decided that the NSA First Learning Wave will have the same priority for resource allocation as Round 9.

It may not be possible to fully achieve all the anticipated long-term advantages of NSAs in the First Learning Wave. For example, the First Learning Wave reviews of national strategy documents will be mainly carried out by members of the Global Fund Technical Review Panel. This may expand to other partners in the future.

Applicants to the First Learning Wave should see a number of advantages. The Global Fund Secretariat is aiming to ensure that the paperwork involved in applying for resources through the NSA First Learning Wave is lighter than applying for resources through Round 9. This is because NSAs will be based primarily on existing national strategy documentation. Although the Global Fund will require countries to submit some additional information along with existing national documentation, this will be kept to a minimum.

The process of reviewing national strategies will involve a country visit by review team members. There will therefore be more opportunity for country stakeholders to interact with the reviewers during the application process than is the case with a rounds-based application. In addition, the review of national documentation may provide feedback that countries may find useful for strengthening their national strategies in the future.

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The Global Fund Secretariat is aware that invited countries have an important decision to make as to whether to participate in the First Learning Wave.

Staff at the Global Fund Secretariat and partners are available to discuss technical issues that may affect your decision to participate in the First Learning Wave of NSAs.