

Global Fund financing through “National Strategy Applications”

Practical information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”

INTRODUCTION

This document provides practical information to facilitate the Country Coordinating Mechanism’s (CCM) decision as to whether to participate in the First Learning Wave (FLW) of National Strategy Applications (NSAs). It supplements the information provided in the invitation from the Executive Director of the Global Fund by describing the steps, timelines and key practical considerations relevant to the NSA FLW.

The specifics of the steps and timelines described below are the best currently available. Since the NSA FLW is a learning opportunity for the Global Fund and countries alike, the Global Fund welcomes feedback at any stage on the NSA FLW and encourages FLW participants to submit suggestions on how to modify or improve the process.

As insights are gained along the way, some adjustments to the steps and timelines may need to occur. These will be communicated clearly and as far in advance as possible. Efforts will also be made as much as possible to minimize the impact of any adjustments on participating countries.

KEY STEPS AND TIMELINES OF THE FLW PROCESS

The six steps for the NSA FLW process are shown in the diagram below, along with the applicable dates. The process encompasses two major reviews:

- The review of the national strategy and its accompanying documentation (such as the operational plan) to ascertain whether these together provide a sound basis for an application for Global Fund financing (Step 3 in the diagram below).
- The review of the “National Strategy Application” (NSA) to determine whether it is to be recommended for funding (Step 5 in the diagram below).

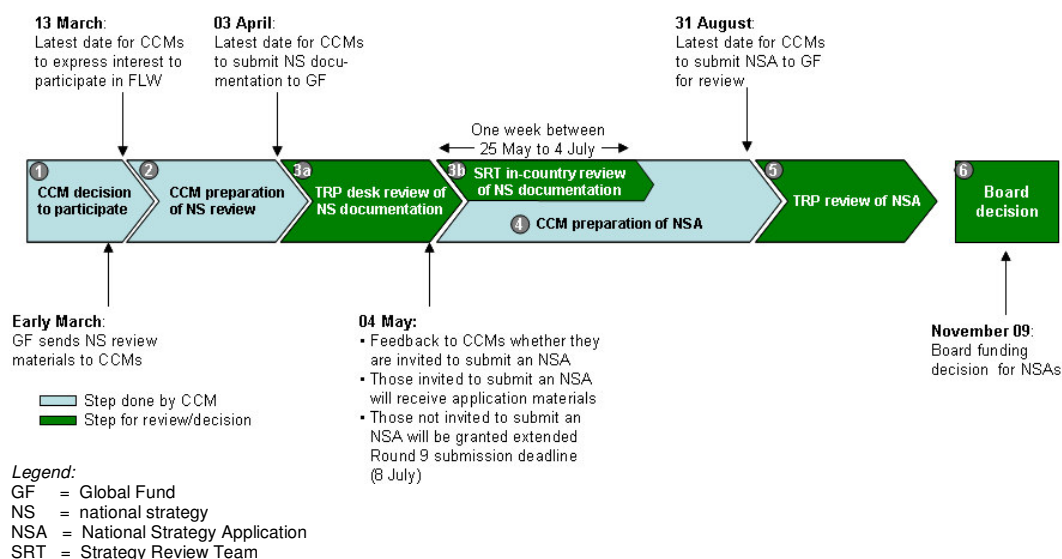


Diagram: Key steps and dates of the FLW NSA process

The rest of this document provides a detailed description of each step in the diagram, together with associated key dates and practical considerations for participants in the FLW.

Step 1. CCM decision to participate in the FLW:

Invited CCMs are asked to decide whether they intend to participate in the NSA FLW by 13 March 2009 at the latest. In making this decision CCMs can draw on the information provided in this and the other documentation¹ they have received from the Global Fund.

CCMs can also receive support from the Fund Portfolio Manager for their country and from partners. If you have additional questions or need clarification, you may send enquiries to the following email address: NSA@theglobalfund.org. A regularly updated list of frequently-asked questions and corresponding answers will be published on a website, whose address will be sent to you shortly.

Practical considerations for Step 1:

- Useful information to help you decide whether to participate in the FLW (including a list of anticipated benefits) can be found in the document “*Global Fund financing through ‘National Strategy Applications’ – Basic information for potential applicants to the ‘First Learning Wave’*”.¹
- As part of your decision, you will need to consider whether you can have the required documentation ready in time. Please see Step 2 below, which describes what is needed.
- Your participation in the NSA FLW would assist the Global Fund and partners to draw policy and operational lessons to shape the broader roll-out of the NSA approach, which will ultimately benefit you and many other countries. However, we understand that individual circumstances may lead some CCMs to decide not to participate in this process at this time. If you decide not to participate in the NSA FLW this will not impact any other application to the Global Fund which you may be considering.

Key date for Step 1:

No later than 13 March 2009:

- *CCM to advise the Global Fund Secretariat of its intent to participate in NSA FLW*
- *If CCM wishes to participate, CCM to specify (in order of preference) three options for dates for a week-long visit to the country by the Strategy Review Team (dates to fall between 25 May - 4 July 2009)*

Step 2. CCM preparation of the national strategy review:

CCMs that decide to participate in the FLW will be asked to submit by 3 April 2009 at the latest the following documentation:

- The national AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria strategy (as applicable) – this should be a well articulated and documented national strategy, developed through an inclusive process, with a term running at least to the end of 2012;
- Accompanying documents relevant to the national strategy that would facilitate the review (e.g., yearly operational plans, program review reports, epidemiological reports, etc. – *see below for more information on how to select these*);
- The completed “National Strategy Review Questionnaire” (which will be provided by the Global Fund to CCMs in early March 2009); the main aim of this questionnaire will be to allow CCMs to indicate where in their various national documents different types of important information can be found.

The documents listed above are together referred to as the “National Strategy Documentation” in the rest of this document.

Practical considerations for Step 2:

- The FLW will focus on national AIDS, tuberculosis or malaria strategies only, and will not include health sector strategies. The national strategy you submit should be the national disease strategy

¹ Attached to the invitation letter from the Executive Director of the Global Fund.

for the specific disease for which you have been invited to participate, which covers at least the period from early 2010 up to the end of 2012. This could be an existing strategy or a new strategy (e.g., for the period 2010 to 2014).

- The International Health Partnership (IHP) working group on national strategies has compiled a draft list of “attributes” it believes should be reflected in sound national strategies. You should select the accompanying documentation to submit for review with your national strategy so that these *all together* provide the information listed in the IHP attributes. These attributes can be found in the accompanying document entitled “*Attributes of a Sound National Strategy - from International Health Partnership working group on national strategies*”.
- With the exception of the short National Strategy Review Questionnaire, you will not be expected to submit any new documentation that is not already available within your country.

Key date for Step 2:

- *Global Fund to release national strategy review materials (including the National Strategy Review Questionnaire) in **early March 2009***
- *CCM to submit all relevant documentation to the Global Fund Secretariat **by 3 April 2009 at the latest***

Step 3. Review of the National Strategy Documentation

The review of the National Strategy Documentation by the Global Fund will consist of two sub-steps:

- Step 3a: a desk review of the National Strategy Documentation by members of the Global Fund Technical Review Panel (TRP); and
- Step 3b: if the outcome of the desk review is favorable, a country visit by a “Strategy Review Team”, which will be composed of members of the Global Fund TRP, possibly supplemented by individuals representing non-country based partner organizations.

Step 3a. TRP desk review of the National Strategy Documentation

Documents received will be sorted and the desk review by members of the TRP will start on 20 April 2009. The National Strategy Documentation submitted by the CCM will be reviewed against the list of attributes of sound national strategies. Based on the desk review, the TRP members will advise the Secretariat whether they regard the reviewed National Strategy Documentation as suitable to form the basis of an NSA. The Secretariat will then inform CCMs by 4 May 2009 whether or not they will be invited to submit an NSA.

- Where this is the case, the Secretariat will arrange with the CCM a country visit by a Strategy Review Team to seek clarifications and collect additional information. To facilitate the country visit the CCM will be provided with a summary outcome from the desk review indicating the identified strengths and gaps of the National Strategy Documentation, and areas requiring further clarification during the country visit.
- In certain cases, the TRP members may conclude that in their opinion the National Strategy Documentation reviewed is not sufficiently robust or complete to support an NSA (e.g., because it does not adequately address several or many of the attributes). In such a case there will be no country review and CCMs will not be invited to submit an NSA in the FLW. These CCMs will however have the option, should they so wish, to submit a regular Round 9 proposal for the relevant disease and will be granted *an extended submission deadline (of 8 July 2009) for their Round 9 proposal* to compensate for any time lost during the process of National Strategy Documentation submission and review. These CCMs will also receive a summary of the strengths and gaps of the National Strategy Documentation reviewed.

Key dates for Step 3a:

- *TRP members to conduct desk review of National Strategy Documentation between **20 April and 1 May 2009**;*
- *Global Fund Secretariat to notify CCMs of outcome of desk review on **4 May 2009***
- *Extended Round 9 deadline of **8 July 2009** for CCMs not invited to submit an NSA*

Step 3b. In-country review of National Strategy Documentation by Strategy Review Team

CCMs with a positive outcome of the desk review will receive a week-long country visit from the Strategy Review Team. Through discussions with key stakeholders, the Strategy Review Team will collect information on areas of the National Strategy Documentation identified as needing clarification during the desk review.

The one-week-long country visits will be conducted in the time window between 25 May and 4 July. At the end of the visit the Strategy Review Team will conduct a de-briefing with the CCM to provide information on the main identified gaps or areas for further clarification in the National Strategy Documentation, and recommend which of these should be addressed in the NSA to be submitted as a next step.

Soon after the country visits, CCMs will receive a written “National Strategy Review Report” produced by the Strategy Review Team, which will include an assessment of strengths and gaps in the National Strategy Documentation and issues to be addressed in the NSA application form.

Practical considerations for Step 3b:

- To facilitate scheduling of the country visit, CCMs will be requested, at the time of expressing their interest in participating in the NSA FLW (in Step 1 - by 13 March 2009), to propose three sets of possible dates for this visit in the time window between 25 May and 4 July. In selecting these dates, the availability of the following stakeholders should be taken into account: CCM members, national authorities responsible for the disease program, key technical and development partners, representatives of civil society organizations involved in the development and implementation of the national strategy.

Key date for Step 3b:

- *Strategy Review Team to conduct one-week country visit between 25 May and 4 July 2009*
- *Global Fund to send CCM the National Strategy Review Report shortly following completion of country visit*

Step 4. CCM preparation of the National Strategy Application (NSA)

CCMs from countries whose national strategy has received a positive desk review outcome will be advised on 4 May 2009 to begin preparing their NSA (the request for Global Fund financing based on their reviewed National Strategy Documentation). They will simultaneously be provided with the necessary NSA application form and guidelines. CCMs will have until 31 August 2009 at the latest to submit their NSA to the Secretariat.

Practical considerations for Step 4:

- To optimize the time available, CCMs should begin preparation of their NSA immediately after being notified of the outcome of the desk review on 4 May 2009 – *in parallel with* the in-country review of National Strategy Documentation by the Strategy Review Team (Step 3b).
- The NSA will take the reviewed National Strategy Documentation as its starting point. The NSA application form will only ask applicants to provide additional information relevant to their request for Global Fund financing, which would not typically be contained in the National Strategy Documentation. This will include for example:
 - Information on the CCM, its participation in the development of the NSA, and its endorsement of the NSA being submitted;
 - Information on the Principal Recipient(s) and the selection process for the PR(s);
 - Size of the financing requested from the Global Fund, and programmatic and financial information relating to this request;
 - Information addressing issues identified during the review of the National Strategy Documentation.
- In the FLW, CCMs will be allowed in their NSA to request funding for the remaining timeframe of their national strategy, up to a maximum duration of five years. To ensure parity with the funding conditions available under the rounds-based channel, the following conditions will apply for the FLW of NSAs:
 - The initial funding commitment will be for two years, consistent with the two-year Phase 1 for rounds-based applications;

- Funding will be able to be renewed based on performance (like in the Phase 2 process for rounds-based applications) up to the end of the term of the national strategy. The funding for the remaining years will receive the same funding priority as the Phase 2 of a rounds-based application;
- In cases where the remaining timeframe of the national strategy (as measured from the expected time of grant signing) is less than five years, the CCM will – before the expiry of its national strategy – be able to request further funding based on its new national strategy. This will allow the timing of the new funding request to be aligned with the country’s planning cycle. For this new funding request, a Phase 2 funding priority will be assigned to the years completing the full five-year period from the time of grant signing.
- (For example: If the remaining timeframe of the initial strategy is three years from the time of grant signing, the initial funding commitment will be for *two* years; the renewal at the end of the second year of funding will be for *one* year; a subsequent request based on a new national strategy would then receive Phase 2 funding priority for its first *two* years – to make up the five-year period from the time of initial grant signing.)

Key dates for Step 4:

- CCM to commence preparation of NSA immediately following notification of outcome of desk review on **4 May 2009** (in parallel with country visit - Step 3b)
- CCM to submit NSA **by 31 August 2009**

Step 5. TRP review of the NSA

As with rounds-based proposals, NSAs will be screened by the Secretariat for CCM minimum eligibility requirements. Eligible NSAs will be reviewed by the TRP to assess the soundness and feasibility of the request for Global Fund financing in the context of the whole National Strategy Documentation. The TRP will transmit its recommendations to the Global Fund Board for consideration at the Twentieth Board Meeting in November 2009.

Step 6. Board decision

The Board will consider and make funding decisions on the TRP’s recommendations on the FLW NSAs at the Twentieth Board Meeting in November 2009.

Practical considerations for Step 6:

- Board-approved NSAs will receive the same funding priority as proposals submitted under Round 9.
- The initial funding commitment for approved FLW NSAs will, as for rounds-based proposals, be for a period of two years.

Key date for Step 6:

- Global Fund Board to make funding decisions at the Twentieth Board Meeting, expected to take place in the **first week of November 2009**