

Improving the performance
of Global Fund grants

CSAT ACTION ALERT: URGENT ACTION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ROUND 9 PROPOSALS

October 2008

Prepared by the International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO), CSAT Global Host¹

The Global Fund launches its 9th Call for Proposals on October 1, 2008, only seven months after the 8th Call was launched.

This CSAT Action Alert provides information and practical suggestions for actions that civil society can take in relation to the forthcoming Round 9 Call for Proposals by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund.)

The two key actions you can undertake:

- As civil society, review the response to Round 8 decisions
- Get started on Round 9

FORTHCOMING GLOBAL FUND OPPORTUNITIES

Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCM) are responsible for submitting proposals, as well as for monitoring ongoing programmes, many of which are implemented by civil society organizations. There are often specific opportunities for which civil society should mobilize. In the coming months there are **two major opportunities**.

- From Round 8 onwards the Global Fund has introduced a new process whereby CCMs receive early notification of the Technical Review Panel (TRP) recommendations related to their submitted proposals.* This means that countries whose proposals are not recommended for funding in Round 8 will have more time to rectify them before the next round of funding (see the "Proposal recommendations process" box for more information on this.) In these countries, civil society organizations will be able to use the recommendations as a basis for their planning and advocacy work in preparing Round 9 proposals.
- The Global Fund has announced that it will launch its 9th Call for Proposals on October 1, 2008, only seven months after the 8th Call was launched.*² This means there will have been two calls for proposals in 2008, and that to make the most of this opportunity, CCMs and civil society organizations will need to start their proposal development process much sooner than they have in previous years.

¹ CSAT operates through global and regional hosts: International Council of AIDS Service Organizations (ICASO); Association de lutte contre le sida (ALCS), Middle East and North Africa; African Council of AIDS Service Organizations (AfrICASO), West and Central Africa; Southern African Network of AIDS Service Organisations (SANASO), East and Southern Africa; Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN), Eastern Europe and Central Asia; Asia Pacific Network of People With HIV/AIDS (APN+) / 7 Sisters, Asia Pacific; AID For AIDS (AFA), Latin America and the Caribbean

² See http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/media_center/press/pr_080604.asp



Proposal recommendations process

When the Global Fund receives proposals, they are reviewed for eligibility by the *Screening Review Panel* before being passed on to the *Technical Review Panel* (TRP). The TRP is a panel of independent experts whose role is to review the technical merit of proposals and to make recommendations to the Global Fund Board to enable it to decide on whether to approve funding for the proposal or not. The TRP provides four categories of recommendations:

Category 1: Recommended for approval without changes (and no or only minor clarifications);

Category 2: Recommended for approval provided that clarifications or adjustments are met within a limited timeframe;

Category 3: Not recommended for approval in its present form but strongly encouraged to resubmit following major revision;

Category 4: Rejected.

TWO KEY ACTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY ORGANIZATIONS

A. *Review the response to Round 8 decision*

On October 13, 2008, the Global Fund will inform applicants of the preliminary recommendations that will be submitted to the Global Fund Board in relation to Round 8 applicants. In countries where applications are classified as Category 3 or 4 and therefore not recommended for funding, this should have a major impact on plans for applying for Round 9. Civil society representatives on CCMs should obtain the preliminary recommendations, and should discuss them with broader civil society constituents. They should consider the following questions, among others:

- Do the TRP comments refer to or imply a lack of civil society involvement in the proposal development process or the lack of an open process?
- Do the TRP comments refer to or imply a lack of civil society involvement as eventual implementers of the proposal, either as principal recipients or sub-recipients?
- Do the TRP comments refer to or imply a lack of involvement of marginalized groups?
- Does the TRP identify any other issues that civil society organizations would be well placed to help resolve in future applications?

Civil society organizations should analyze the TRP recommendations and discuss how best the country can respond to them in a revised or new proposal during Round 9. Civil society CCM representatives should then put forward these suggestions during CCM meetings where Round 9 is discussed.

B. *Get started on Round 9*

Although the official Round 9 Call is being released on **October 1, 2008**, with a **deadline of January 21, 2009**, it is not too early to start planning how you will respond to the Call, with civil society organizations starting discussions on Round 9 as soon as possible. Then, when CCMs discuss whether to respond to Round 9, the civil society representatives will be able to express and argue in favour of their position.

The Global Fund has already announced that the application documents and guidelines for Round 9 will be the same as those used during Round 8. When Round 8 was launched, CSAT issued an Alert outlining eight urgent actions for civil society organizations. For Round 9, we recommend essentially the same actions, as follows:

1. Find out more about the Global Fund and Round 9.
2. Find out more about Global Fund projects in your country or region.
3. Find out what your CCM is planning for Round 9.
4. Consult within the civil society sector.
5. Mobilize your civil society colleagues and partner organizations to advocate for greater attention to the civil society contribution and participation.
6. Get involved in the process to develop the Round 9 proposals.
7. Get support.
8. Keep track of the process for Round 9.

1. **Find out more about the Global Fund and Round 9.** All of the documents related to Round 9 are available on the Global Fund website: <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/rounds/9/>. They are available in Arabic, English, French, Russian and Spanish. It is not necessary to read all the documents from cover to cover.

The key documents are:

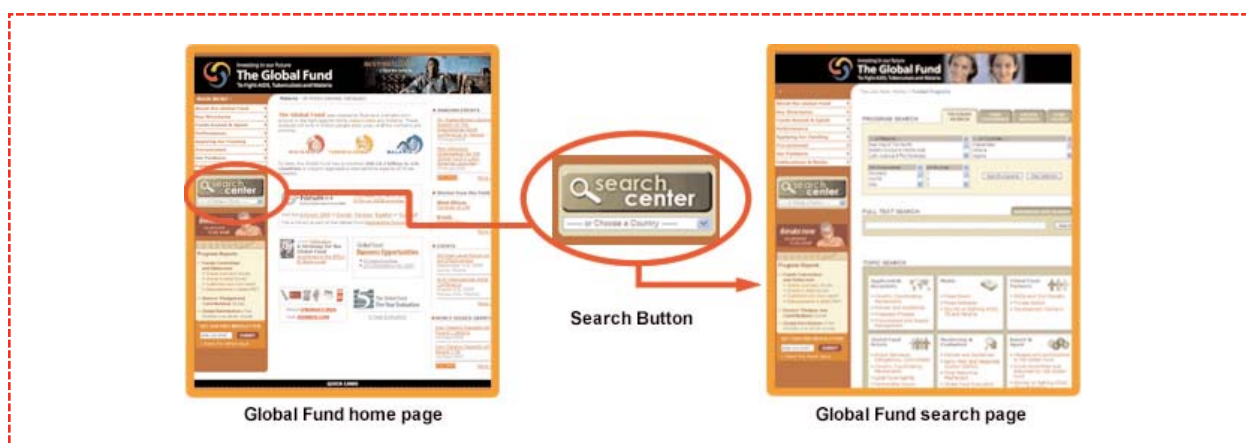
- Information on key dates for Round 9:
http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/ccm/CP_R9_CountrySupport_KeyDates_External.pdf
- Guidelines on CCMs (http://www.theglobalfund.org/pdf/5_pp_guidelines_ccm_4_en.pdf) and clarifications of these Guidelines (http://www.theglobalfund.org/pdf/Clarifications_CCM_Requirements.pdf)
- Guidelines for Proposals, Sections A1, A2 and A3 (http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/rounds/8/GuidelinesR8_single_en.pdf)
- Factsheets on community systems strengthening, dual-track financing, gender, and sexual minorities (all available at <http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/apply/call8/other/>)
- Some independent websites also provide useful information for those new to the Global Fund, and to those who are already familiar with the Fund but would like more up-to-date information or guidance on how to apply. Aidspan (<http://www.aidspace.org/index.php>) is a particularly good example.

2. **Find out more about Global Fund projects in your country or region.**

Key questions are:

- What proportion of the CCM is made up of NGOs? Do these members include people representing key populations?
- What is the contact information of non-governmental members of the CCM?
- What programmes, if any, are Global Fund grants currently supporting?
- Are any NGOs currently acting as Principal Recipients for Global Fund grants in your country or region?

It should be fairly straightforward to identify the CCM and to obtain all of this information - the Global Fund asks all CCMs to be transparent. You can also find much of this information on the Global Fund website. From the home page <http://theglobalfund.org> choose the button labelled "search centre". Select your country from the list, and you will be redirected to a page providing all of the relevant information on that country, in particular in relation to CCMs and existing Global Fund grants.



3. **Find out what the CCM is planning for Round 9 proposals.** Contact the CCM Secretariat, Chair or Civil Society representative. There are a number of key questions:

- Is the CCM planning to develop and submit a proposal for AIDS for Round 9? Has the proposal development process begun?
- What opportunities are there for Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to get involved, both in proposal development and grant implementation? Do these opportunities fit with the expectations of CSOs and of the Global Fund?

- Has the CCM given consideration to how the following issues will be addressed in the proposal?
 - i. **Participation of key populations and sexual minorities:** encouraging a greater focus on key populations and sexual minorities, strengthened representation in CCMs and enhanced emphasis on social and gender equality.
 - ii. **Dual-track financing:** dual-track financing (sometimes referred to as DTF) means that proposals are designed to be implemented by Principal Recipients from both the government and the non-government sector.
 - iii. **Community systems strengthening:** the factsheet on community systems strengthening (available at http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/rounds/8/R8CSS_Factsheet_en.pdf) outlines a range of types of non-governmental organizations that might require support.

For definitions and explanations, read: http://www.icaso.org/publications/csat_aa_mar08_1.pdf

Note: It is particularly important that CCMs do not rule out making a Round 9 application until the preliminary recommendations on Round 8 proposals are made public by the Global Fund on October 13, 2008.

4. Consult within the civil society sector Those individuals or organizations who have found out more about the CCM's plans should share this information with the civil society sector, and discuss what the next steps should be. The following questions may provide a good way to frame discussions:

- Does the composition of the CCM reflect the Global Fund requirements and recommendations?
- Do the CCM plans for Round 9 reflect the potential role of civil society - in particular, have the needs of key populations, and recommendations around Dual Track Financing (DTF) and Community Systems Strengthening (CSS) been taken on board? If not, why not?
- In general, do the CCM plans reflect the Global Fund's efforts to strengthen the role of CSOs in Round 8?

Once these questions have been discussed, the civil society sector should agree on the next steps. If the CCM is in favour of enhancing civil society's role in Round 9, it will be important to agree how civil society can effectively participate in the proposal development process and that CSOs with adequate capacity are selected as potential PRs. If, however, the current plans will not adequately allow for an enhanced civil society role, the sector should plan to influence the CCMs decision.

5. Mobilize your civil society colleagues and partner organizations to advocate for greater attention to the civil society contribution and participation. How you do this will largely depend on the outcomes of the consultations and discussions described above. In some countries, the decision may be to focus on demanding and ensuring meaningful civil society participation (including participation of key populations) on CCMs. In others, the emphasis may be on ensuring that advantage is taken of the opportunities provided by DTF and CSS. It may also be necessary to advocate for a more open and transparent proposal development process, as this is a Global Fund requirement. Contact the regional hubs of CSAT for guidance on how to lodge a complaint (see the contact details below.)

6. Get involved in the process to develop the Round 9 proposal. Non-government sector representatives on CCMs should ensure that the broader civil society sector is meaningfully involved in the proposal development process. This means that the CCM should arrange consultations with the broader civil society sector in order to get input into the proposal. Particular attention needs to be paid to ensuring that marginalized groups (such as key populations and sexual minorities) are able to participate in this process. The process for proposal development is different in every country, but you may want to advocate for the inclusion of these key areas:

- Defining the overall priorities of the proposal. The proposal should prioritize actions and population groups that are currently neglected in the response. CSOs working at the community level are often very well placed to identify such gaps.
- Obtaining submissions from CSOs to be included in the proposal. The CCM should review and include these submissions in the overall proposal in a transparent way.
- Identifying civil society organizations (CSOs) to act as Principal Recipients (PRs). Dual-track financing provides real opportunities for CSOs to act as PRs. CSOs should identify and promote suitable organizations.

Making the most of "community systems strengthening" (CSS). CSS, newly introduced in Round 8, is essentially about ensuring that CSOs have the capacity and support to effectively implement their component of the proposal. It should therefore be seen as an element of every "sub-proposal" submitted by a CSO.

Important indications from the Round 8 process are that CSS was not very effectively used as an opportunity for strengthening civil society organizations. Civil society organizations may wish to consider making CSS a major theme of what they propose for Round 9. The Global Fund guidance on CSS can be found at http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/rounds/8/R8CSS_Factsheet_en.pdf

7. Get support. The Civil Society Action Team (CSAT) was created to help improve the contribution of civil society to Global Fund programmes. We are happy to talk to you about what the Round 9 opportunities mean in your country, and about ways to deal with the different barriers you come across.

- We may be able to put you in touch with organizations in your country.
- We are also connected to organizations that provide technical and financial support, and may be able to help you access support for the Round 9 process. You will find our contact details at the end of this Alert.)
- Contact your national AIDS programme, national tuberculosis programme, and national malaria programme.
- You should also contact international organizations and initiatives such as your UNAIDS country office (contact details available online at: <http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/Countries/default.asp> Technical Support Facilities (<http://www.unaids.org/en/CountryResponses/TechnicalSupport/TSF/default.asp>), and WHO, as they will be well-informed and able to provide support.

8. Keep track of the process for Round 9. The Global Fund is constantly evolving, in response to what happens in countries. Consider keeping track of your experiences, whether they are positive or negative, as they will provide valuable lessons on how countries made use of the Round 9 opportunities. Please share your experiences with CSAT as it will strengthen our efforts to advocate for changes at global level. Send them to nataliac@icaso.org or to the CSAT regional coordinators (see contacts below).

Civil Society Action Team (CSAT)



www.csactionteam.org
www.icaso.org/csatsat.html

CSAT is a new civil society-led global initiative that coordinates, brokers, and advocates for technical support to civil society organizations implementing or seeking grants from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria (Global Fund). CSAT's key priorities are:

- Mobilize civil society organizations to engage in Global Fund opportunities.
- Advocate for active participation of community organizations, and particularly of those representing key populations, in HIV and AIDS programs funded by the Global Fund.
- Improve access of community organizations to technical support and capacity building.

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