



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

Information for Early Applicants

This article summarises the guidance provided by the Global Fund for early applicants under the new funding model (NFM), the process that these applicants will follow, and the information these applicants are required to submit.

Guidance provided by the Global Fund

The concept note template provided by the Global Fund contains guidance for applicants in the form of annexes. The annexes include a glossary of key terms; a description of the minimum standards for implementers; a description of what constitutes a sound national strategic plan; a description of the elements of a technically sound response; and the criteria to be used by the Technical Review Panel (TRP) to review concept notes.

In addition, the Global Fund is providing Concept Note Instructions for Early Applicants. The instructions provide guidance on how the concept note should be filled out.

The Global Fund is also providing a number of other resources, including:

- Transition Manual. Provides an overview of the new funding model.
- Strategic Investment Guidance from technical partners. Available for HIV, TB and malaria.
- Global Fund information notes on strategic investments. Available for HIV, TB, malaria and health and community systems.
- Thematic information notes. These are similar to the information notes provided under the rounds-based system.
- Pre-assessment. See below.
- Performance and impact profile. See below.

- CCM performance assessment. (See [GFO article](#).)

The pre-assessment is a country-specific document provided during the country dialogue that summarises performance and implementation issues related to existing grants (from the perspective of the Global Fund Secretariat). It is meant to guide the country coordinating mechanism (CCM) on issues it should address during the preparation of the concept note.

The performance and impact profile is a country-specific document that provides a consolidated view of a country's epidemiological information; the latest coverage, outcome and impact data; an analysis of the current funding landscape; an assessment of risk; and an assessment of the performance of existing principal recipients (PRs).

Process for early applicants

The Global Fund Secretariat will officially invite the nine early applicants to submit a concept note. This communication will also inform applicants of the amount of funding allocated to them, and will explain how competition for the incentive funding will work.

Those early applicants that are CCMs are expected to use most elements of the NFM, and to provide feedback to assist the Global Fund to refine the NFM process.

The invited applicants are expected to confirm their participation within a specific time frame. The Global Fund expects that concept notes will be developed within 2–4 months after the invitations are issued. Then, the Secretariat and the TRP will have 1–2 months to review the concept notes.

The time from submission of the concept note to Board approval is expected to be highly variable and will depend on factors such as the implementation capacity of the PRs and the complexity of the grant negotiations. The process could take between five and 24 months. The Global Fund anticipates that it should take less than 12 months for most applicants.

The Global Fund has identified seven steps that make up the applications process under the NFM, as follows:

1. Development and/or strengthening of national strategic plans.
2. Country dialogue.
3. Preparation of concept note.
4. Assessment by the Technical Review Panel.
5. Determination of funding by the Secretariat's Grant Approval Committee.
6. Grant-making.
7. Approval of funding.

These steps are described in considerable detail in the Global Fund's Transition Manual. The Global Fund said that early applicants will test most of the elements of the NFM.

For Step 3, preparation of the concept note, applicants may receive input from technical partners and operational guidance from the Global Fund's Country Teams.

In Step 4, the TRP review will result in one of three recommendations: (1) proceed to the next steps (determination of funding ceiling and grant-making); (2) resubmit the concept note, with changes; or (3) submit a new, completely revised concept note. The Global Fund says that TRP reviews are scheduled for April and August 2013, though other reviews may be added.

In Step 5, determination of funding, the Secretariat will decide what the upper ceiling will be for grant-

making, and will place any remaining unfunded quality demand into a queue for possible future funding.

During Step 6, grant-making, PRs, the CCM and in-country partners will work closely with the Secretariat to ensure the implementation arrangements are in place before the Global Fund Board approves each grant, so that the programmes are implementable and “disbursement-ready.”

The grant-making stage includes three steps: (1) development of a workplan for the period from grant negotiations to Board approval; (2) capacity assessment of implementers; and (3) development of integrated grant performance and reporting tool.

Information required from applicants

Applicants are required to submit a completed concept note form. The concept note form contains a summary information section and five additional sections, as follows:

1. CCM eligibility requirements. How the application development process complies with the CCM Eligibility Requirements.
2. Country context. An explanation of the country’s epidemiological situation and the current legal and policy environment, and how the national strategic plan (NSP) responds to the country disease context.
3. Programmatic gaps. The assumptions, methodology and sources used in estimating the programmatic gaps.
4. Funding request to the Global Fund. The initiatives for which the applicant is seeking funding, and an explanation of how they will contribute to greater impact.
5. Implementation arrangements. How the program will be implemented.

This is fairly similar to the flow of proposal forms under the rounds-based system.

In the concept note, applicants are asked to indicate the amount of new funding they are requesting, broken out into (a) indicative funding and (b) incentive funding. Proposed initiatives for incentive funding must be presented in order of priority. This is for the purposes of the queue (mentioned above).

The Secretariat will provide early applicants with an “indicative” split by component for the indicative funding request. An applicant can request a different split but if the deviation is 10% or more, the applicant must obtain approval from the Secretariat for the revised split prior to submitting the concept note.

The concept note form requires that applicants complete a “self-assessment” of the nominated PR against the minimum standards for implementers. (See [GFO article](#).)

Applicants are asked to provide a “complete programmatic picture” of the funding requested from the Global Fund. This means that, for each component, applicants have to quantify and describe existing funding as well as new funding being requested. Existing funding includes approved but yet unsigned agreements for new proposals or for Phase 2 of existing proposals.

In addition to the completed concept note template, applicants are required to provide six attachments, as follows:

1. CCM Membership Form (including endorsement of concept note)
2. Programmatic Gap Table
3. Modular Tool
4. Financial Gap Analysis and Counterpart Financing Table
5. List of abbreviations and acronyms used by the applicant
6. List of annexes included in the concept note

The Global Fund is providing templates for Attachments 1–4.

Attachments 1 and 4 are similar to what was used for proposals under the rounds-based system.

With respect to Attachment 2, the Programmatic Gap Table, applicants are asked to provide information on the key gaps in the implementation of their NSP – specifically, the top 3–6 programme areas that constitute the lion’s share of the NSP in terms of cost and scope, and for which funding is being requested from the Global Fund. This table is similar to a table that was included in proposal forms for most recent rounds of funding.

Attachment 3, the Modular Tool, replaces the performance framework and the budget template used for proposals under the rounds-based system. (See [GFO article](#).)

Early applicants are asked to submit their complete concept note using an online NFM portal established by the Global Fund; or by email to an address provided by the fund, with a copy to the applicant’s fund portfolio manager.

Early applicants that have questions related to the concept note template or instructions should contact Accesstofunding@theglobalfund.org or ATF@theglobalfund.org.

NFM-related materials produced by the Global Fund are available on the Fund’s website [here](#).

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