

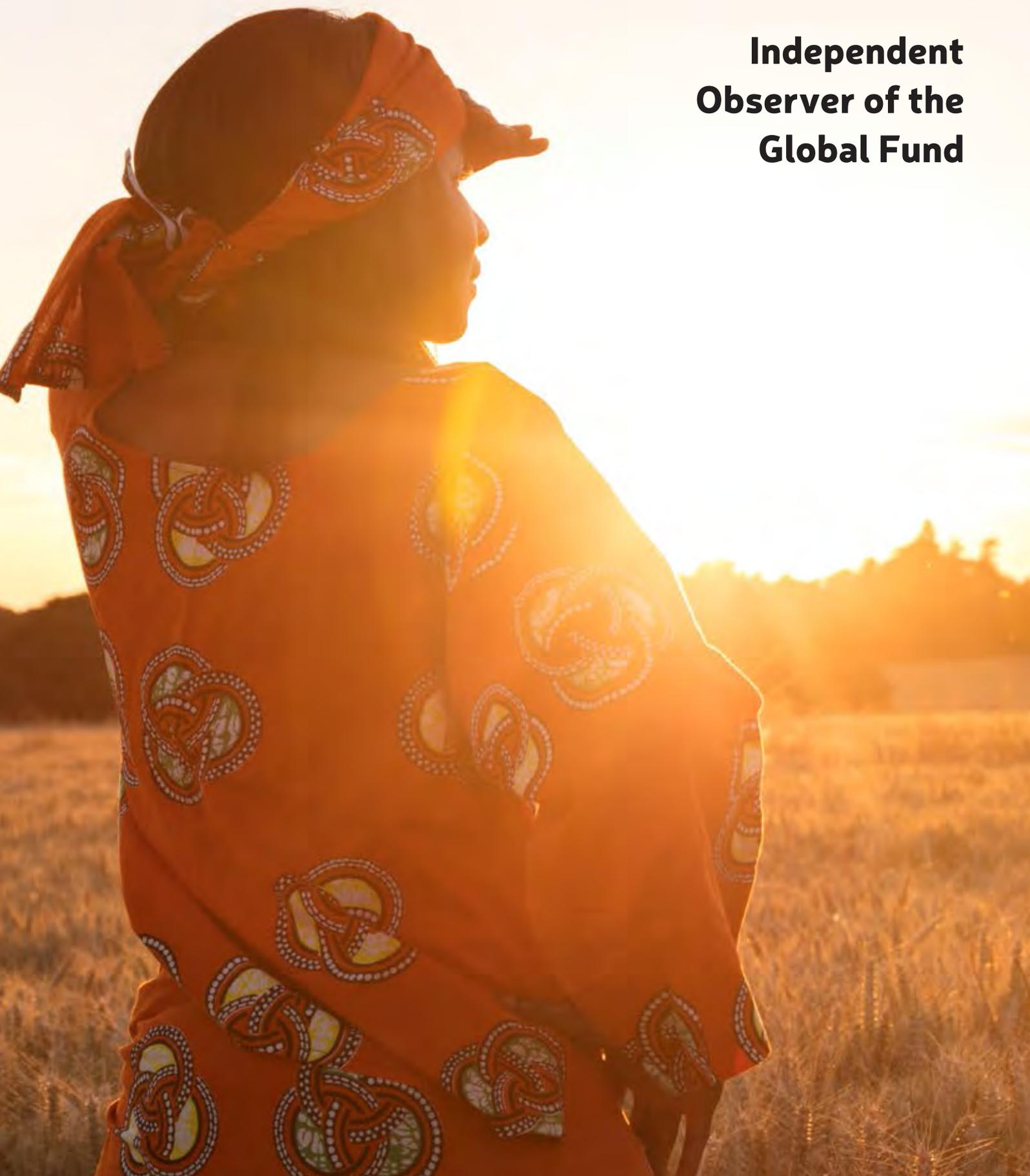


aidspan

Independent observer
of the Global Fund

2017 AIDSPAN ANNUAL REPORT

**Independent
Observer of the
Global Fund**



AIDSPAN'S TARGET AUDIENCES

**THE GLOBAL
FUND: THE
BOARD AND ITS
COMMITTEES,
SECRETARIAT,
OIG**

**GLOBAL FUND
DONORS**

**COUNTRY
COORDINATING
MECHANISMS
(CCMS)**

**IMPLEMENTERS:
PRINCIPAL
RECIPIENTS (PRS),
SUB-RECIPIENTS
(SRS) AND SUB-SUB
RECIPIENTS (SSRS)**

**RECIPIENTS
(SSRS)**

**LOCAL FUND
AGENTS (LFAS) AND
FISCAL AGENTS**

**NATIONAL AND
LOCAL POLICY
MAKERS**

**TECHNICAL
PARTNERS: THE
WORLD HEALTH
ORGANIZATION
(WHO), THE JOINT
UNITED**

**NATIONS
PROGRAMME ON
HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS),
ROLL BACK MALARIA
(RBM) AND, THE STOP
TB**

PARTNERSHIP

**CIVIL SOCIETY
AND MEDIA**

**RESEARCHERS AND
ACADEMIA**

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Vision

An effective and transparent Global Fund that attains its mission.

Mission

To be an effective watchdog of the Global Fund at global and country levels by providing information, critical analysis and commentary on developments at the Fund

Strategy Goal

By 2018, have measurable effect on the Global Fund's operations

MESSAGE OF THE CHAIRMAN TO THE BOARD AND THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

2017 was a significant year for Aidspace; it was the mid-point in our 2016-18 strategic plan and marked the beginning of the 15th year as an independent observer of the Global Fund to fight HIV, TB and malaria (hereafter the Global Fund). This same year, the Global Fund adopted a new six-year strategy for the 2017 – 2022 period and launched its next three-year implementation period.

Aidspace is aware of many grant implementation challenges, absorption capacity and policy interpretation issues, both at the Secretariat and country levels. Over the years, Aidspace has continued to report on, analyse, and comment on these challenges, as well provide actionable recommendations. For instance, during the funding request process in 2017, many country requests for stand-alone Resilient and Sustainable Systems For Health (RSSH) were denied at the initial stages. In that context, Aidspace's timely publication on this topic was critical in raising awareness and discussion during the subsequent board meeting (see GFO 310 Uganda and Zimbabwe).

Through timely, regular publication of issues, Aidspace has successfully raised attention when policies and process have not worked, showcased best practices, and pushed for the publication of key documents. It is clear that independent watchdogging - with an emphasis on a cooperative relationship built on trust and shared goals - works.

Nevertheless, there are still many policies that need review and documents that the Global Fund is yet to make public. These include: Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) funding requests, Technical Review Panel (TRP) review forms, board committee meeting reports, implementation arrangement maps, country approved work plans, and budgets.

We are cognizant that Aidspace has thrived through continuously adapting to an evolving Global Fund; maintaining our credibility and independence has required great innovation and flexibility. To this end, the Aidspace team continues to cultivate strong and strategic partnerships and when needed, we offer our expertise and knowledge to our numerous target audiences.

Aidspace's flagship newsletter has gained name recognition and is the largest entry point for audiences seeking Aidspace content and information. The Global Fund Observer (GFO/OFM) is published bi-monthly in English, and monthly, in French. Our audience has provided feedback on articles and suggested topics of analyses. The GFO now reaches more than 14,000 subscribers, while social media updates have garnered about 9500 followers on Facebook and Twitter.

Aidspan's research reports and guides, as well as data platforms like the Aidspan Portal Workbench (APW) and Grant Performance Analysis Tool, have become essential to many of our target audiences.

Aidspan is therefore achieving our mission of holding the Global Fund accountable as many affirm its strong professionalism, independence, transparency and objectivity. Going forward, Aidspan is finalizing its 2018-2022 Strategic Plan, which will place greater emphasis on in-depth analyses, country-level implementation successes and challenges, and best practices in all regions.

We eagerly anticipate partnering with you as a subscriber, reader, source, partner or funder of Aidspan's efforts towards an efficient, effective Global Fund that is changing the lives of all affected by HIV/AIDS, TB and Malaria.

We would like to thank you for showing commitment to the vision of an effective and efficient Global Fund through your multifaceted support.

James Deutsch, Chairman of the Board

Ida Hakizinka, Executive Director of Aidspan



AIDSPAN OVERVIEW

Aidspan is an international NGO based in Nairobi, Kenya whose mission is “to be an effective watchdog of the Global Fund at global and country levels by providing information, critical analysis and commentary on developments at the Fund”.

Since 2002, Aidspan continues to build its reputation for responsible reporting, commentary and analysis on all aspects of the Global Fund ecology. We have an extensive global network of links and sources and our commentary seeks to constructively comment on the extent to which the Global Fund's Board, Secretariat and grant implementers are being effective, and are living up to the Fund's founding principles.

We do this by publishing timely and relevant information and thoughtful, incisive analysis and; through facilitating critical debate; and promoting greater transparency, accountability, effectiveness and impact. One of our main channels to date has been the Global Fund Observer (GFO) and Observateur du Fonds Mondial (OFM) in French.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 1: FUND POLICIES, PROCESSES, STRUCTURES, AND IMPROVE EFFECTIVENESS AS A RESULT OF AIDSPAN'S CRITICAL ASSESSMENT

In 2017, Aidspan's website provided access to its flagship GFO/OFM publications, reports on specific issues and access to data tools (<http://www.aidspan.org/page/data-analytics>). The Aidspan Portal Workbench tool provides Global Fund grant implementation updates linked to the Global Fund website and regularly updated. Other data tools include Grant Performance Ratings, Grant Portfolio as well as Donor Pledges and Contributions.

ANNUAL WEBSITE HITS



The Global Fund Observer

Over 14000 subscribers receive the GFO/OFM newsletters. The GFO/OFM is a one-stop shop for all Global Fund related information, analyses and commentary. Through the 25 issues published in English and 24 in French, Aidspan offered 332 articles.

NUMBER OF GFO SUBSCRIBERS



TEN MOST ICONIC ARTICLES IN GFO

ARTICLE	TYPE
Allocation letters shed further light on catalytic investment priorities	NEWS
Uganda CCM and the Global Fund at odds over funding request	ANALYSIS
Three Board donor constituencies call on the Global Fund to review the role of CCMs	NEWS
Paper presents options for future selection process for Global Fund Board chair and vice-chair	NEWS
Main decisions made at Global Fund Board meeting	NEWS
Global Fund steps up investments in women and girls	ANALYSIS
Kenya's TB/HIV funding request to the Global Fund zeros in on HIV prevention among key populations and on finding missing TB cases	NEWS
Blended finance: A fresh breath of innovation for the Global Fund	COMMENTARY
The Global Fund and PEPFAR: Complementary approaches, successful collaboration	COMMENTARY
Is the Global Fund systematically neglecting Latin America and the Caribbean?	COMMENTARY

In a Nutshell: Global Fund Themes in 2017

A REVIEW OF GFO ARTICLES HAS HIGHLIGHTED COMMON AND EMERGING GLOBAL FUND THEMES

ONGOING THEMES

- > Resources
- > Partnerships
- > Data limitations
- > Country ownership
- > Transition and sustainability
- > Governance
- > Allocations
- > Services for marginalized populations
- > Eligibility rules
- > Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)
- > Human rights and gender
- > wambo.org
- > Supply chain
- > Performance of CCMs
- > Achievements

EMERGING THEMES

- > Grant absorption capacity
- > Heavy commoditization of grants under partnership
- > Women and girls
- > Finding the right balance in managing risk between financial controls and operational, programmatic results (impact)
- > Co-financing
- > Funding requests

Reports and Round tables

In the past year, Aidspan undertook a study in five countries focusing on aspects of its first two strategic objectives.

The study funded by the GIZ focused on: Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia.

Aidspan examined the involvement of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in the audit and oversight of the Global Fund grants, analysed data collected and used in grant operations, and reviewed the selection perception of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).

1. A multi-country case study in Cameroon, Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda and Zambia: Involvement of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in Global Fund Grants

The study found that Cameroonian and Malawian SAIs are not involved in grant audits. On the contrary, the Kenyan and Rwandan State implementers are audited by the SAIs. Zambia is an interesting case as the last OIG grant audits was conducted in partnership with the SAI. The report and summary of findings are published on the **website** and **GFO**, respectively.

2. A Roundtable Meeting: Involvement of Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) in Global Fund Grants

Following the study, Aidspan organized a two-day round table meeting on Supreme Audit Institutions (SAIs) involvement in the Global Fund grants audit. Participants included: the Heads of the SAI or their representatives, Principal Recipients, CCM members, some civil society organizations (including AFROSAI the umbrella organization of the English Speaking SAIs) as well as the Global Fund Secretariat and the OIG.

Participants emphasized the importance of SAIs involvement in auditing the Global Fund grants on condition that they meet established criteria and standards, as required by the Global Fund board. Such involvement (which might require some SAI capacity building) is perceived as a key element in improving the accountability of implementers, country ownership through higher-level visibility and information for decision makers.

A second part of the study with its associated round-table was conducted in the first quarter of 2018.

Recommendations of the round-table on the Involvement of Supreme Audit Institutions in the Global Fund grants

Communication

- Clear, specific communication between the Global Fund, PRs, CCM with SAIs in regard to the Global Fund funding cycle;
- Consistent stakeholder consultation amongst PR, Global Fund, OIG and SAIs throughout the audit cycle;
- Aidspan advocacy for the implementation of recommendations made to Global Fund/OIG;
- Aidspan's publication of detailed analyses on program implementation and challenges.

Co-operation

- Strengthen CCM, SAIs and PRs relationships during the implementation of Global Fund grants;
- Encourage and strengthen exchange of best practice between INTOSAI sub regional groups such as AFROSAI-E and AFROSAI-F.

Capacity building

- Establish and communicate on SAI maturity levels, as per the Global Fund requirements (Global Fund, AFROSAI, SAIs);
- All SAIs that meet the requirements and standards should be involved in the audit of Global Fund grants within their countries (Global Fund, SAIs);
- All SAIs that do not meet the requirements and standards should be assisted through capacity building initiatives (Global Fund, AFROSAI, SAIs, Government);
- The INTOSAI sub regional groups such as AFROSAI-E should increase the number training/ experience sharing sessions within all SAIs that are conducting the audit of Global Fund grants (Global Fund, AFROSAI, SAIs, AIDSPAN);
- Retain the SAIs responsibility to oversee private audit firms performing Global Fund audits.

3. Allocations paper: A comparison of Global Fund allocations for 2014-2016 and 2017-2019

In 2017, Aidspan compared Global Fund's allocations to countries for the periods 2017-2019 and 2014-2016, which was the first funding cycle under the new funding model (a similar analysis was done in 2014 – The New Funding Model Allocations; An Aidspan analysis).

This work revealed that the 2017-2019 and the 2014-2016 allocations cannot be compared with a methodologically sound approach. The 2014-2016 allocation period represented a transition from the old rounds-based system to the new funding model, and contained both existing sources of funds which were undisbursed as at 31 December 2013 and additional (i.e. new) money raised from the Fourth Replenishment in 2013. The 2017-2019 allocations contain primarily new money raised from the Fifth Replenishment in 2016. In addition, the 2014-2016 allocations were intended to cover four years instead of the usual three. A detailed explanation can be found in the GFO article [Comparisons between Global Fund allocations for 2014-2016 and 2017-2019 are misleading](#), found [here](#).

Aidspan similarly looked into the Global Fund contribution to Tuberculosis in High Burden Countries but that review would also not have been methodologically feasible due to the different lengths of grants.



STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 2: FUND BECOMES MORE TRANSPARENT WITH MORE ACCURATE AND COMPLETE DATA MADE AVAILABLE

The Global Fund has made progress toward greater transparency within the Global Fund but challenges remain. We have emphasized in this report three areas of Global Fund opacity where Aidspan continues to advocate for open information sharing.

Timely publication of grant application and implementation documents :

Aidspan continued to push for allocation letters to be made public (see **GFO article**). We had already made a call for these letters to be made public in 2016 (see **GFO article**). We are unable to report on all countries, because the allocation letters are not published on the Global Fund's website, more than a year after they have been communicated to the countries. There is nothing secret or sensitive in the letters and by not making them public the Global Fund is failing to live up to its commitment to transparency.

In addition, Aidspan continues to push for grant application and implementation documents to be made public, such as:

1. **Funding requests: these includes initial and final versions (after iterations by the Secretariat, Technical Review Panel (TRP) and Grant Approval Committee (GAC)**
2. **TRP and GAC reports**
3. **Grant detailed budget**
4. **Annual Expenditure Financial Report (AEFR): the AEFR is currently published at the end of the grant; we believe these should be made public annually**
5. **Local Fund Agents (LFA) in-country assessment reports**
6. **Portfolio optimization reports**
7. **Approved proposals for emergency funding**
8. **Principal recipients (PR) annual audit reports**

Timely publication of commissioned reports:

Aidspan has argued that papers commissioned by the committees, or for the committees, should be made public (as opposed to papers prepared by the committees when they are debating policy). Without this policy change, interested parties, such as Aidspan, resort to asking for permission, paper by paper before publication. All reports, whether commissioned by the board or its committees, should be made available to the public in a timely manner.

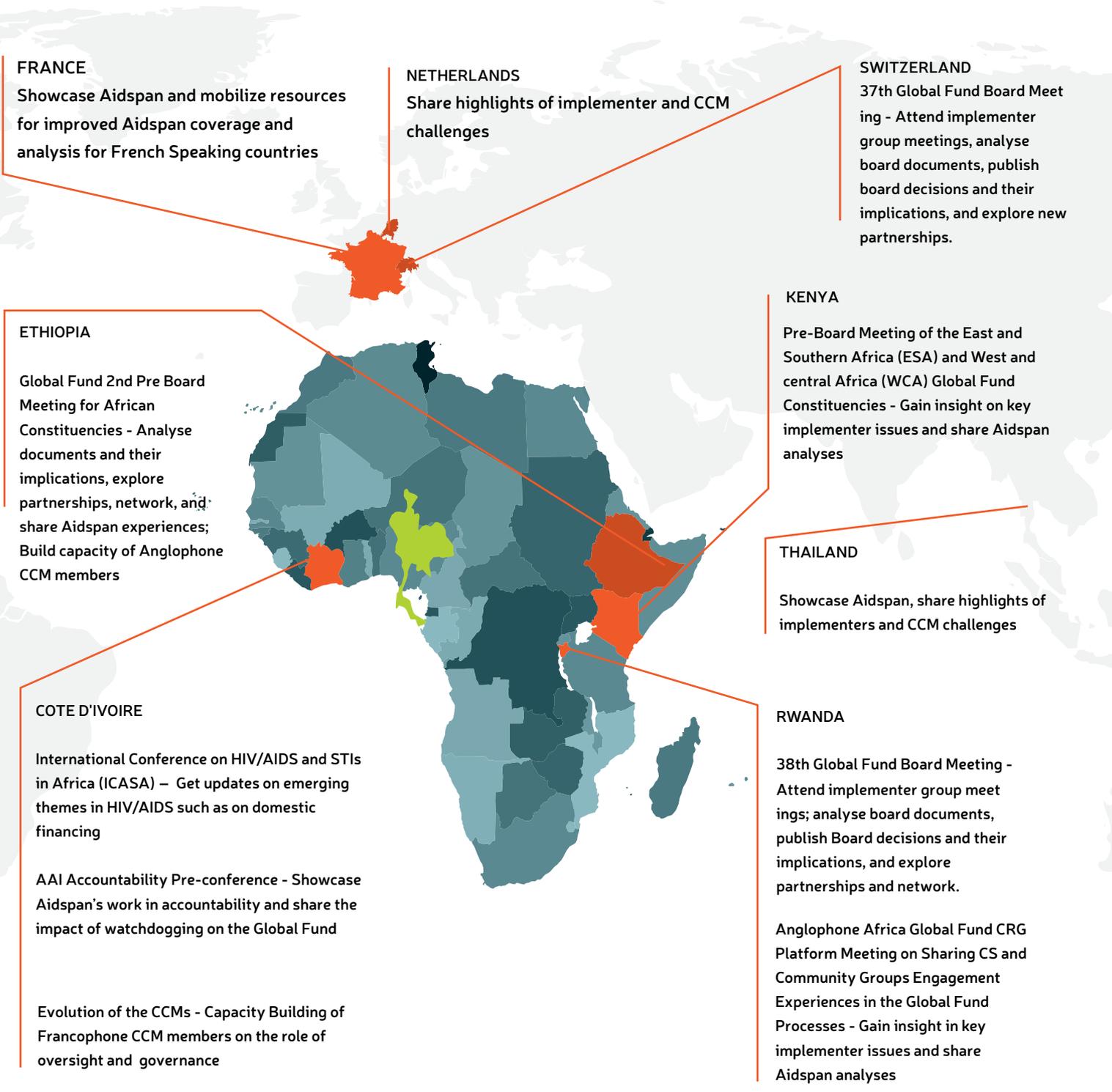
Also, the Board regularly delegates some decision making power to specific committees. Aidspan believes that such decisions should be made public.

Timely publication of Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) reports:

In the past, most TERG reports were published but this is no longer the case. TERG independently evaluates "the Global Fund business model, investments and impact". Thus, the TERG role cannot be overstated and its reports are of great interest to the Global Fund Stakeholders. Aidspan believes that the TERG reports should be made public.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE 3: AIDSPAN BECOMES STRONGER AND MORE SUSTAINABLE

Aidspan weighs in on key discussions in 2017



Leadership and management

Aidspan is headed by the board of directors comprising of 5 members of 5 different nationalities. Management is headed by an Executive Director with a structure of three main units: policy analysis, communications and administration and finance.

Quality assurance for all external communications

All reports, presentations and other significant communication materials (other than GFO which has a separate mechanism) undergo internal quality assurance to ensure appropriateness and consistency of content.

Strategic alliances and partnerships

Aidspan works closely with institutions with similar interests in accountability. In 2017we worked closely with the Eastern African National Network of AIDS Service Organisations (EANNASO), AIDS Accountability International (AAI), International HIV/AIDS Alliance and Réseau d'Accès aux Médicaments Essentiels (RAME).

Resource mobilization

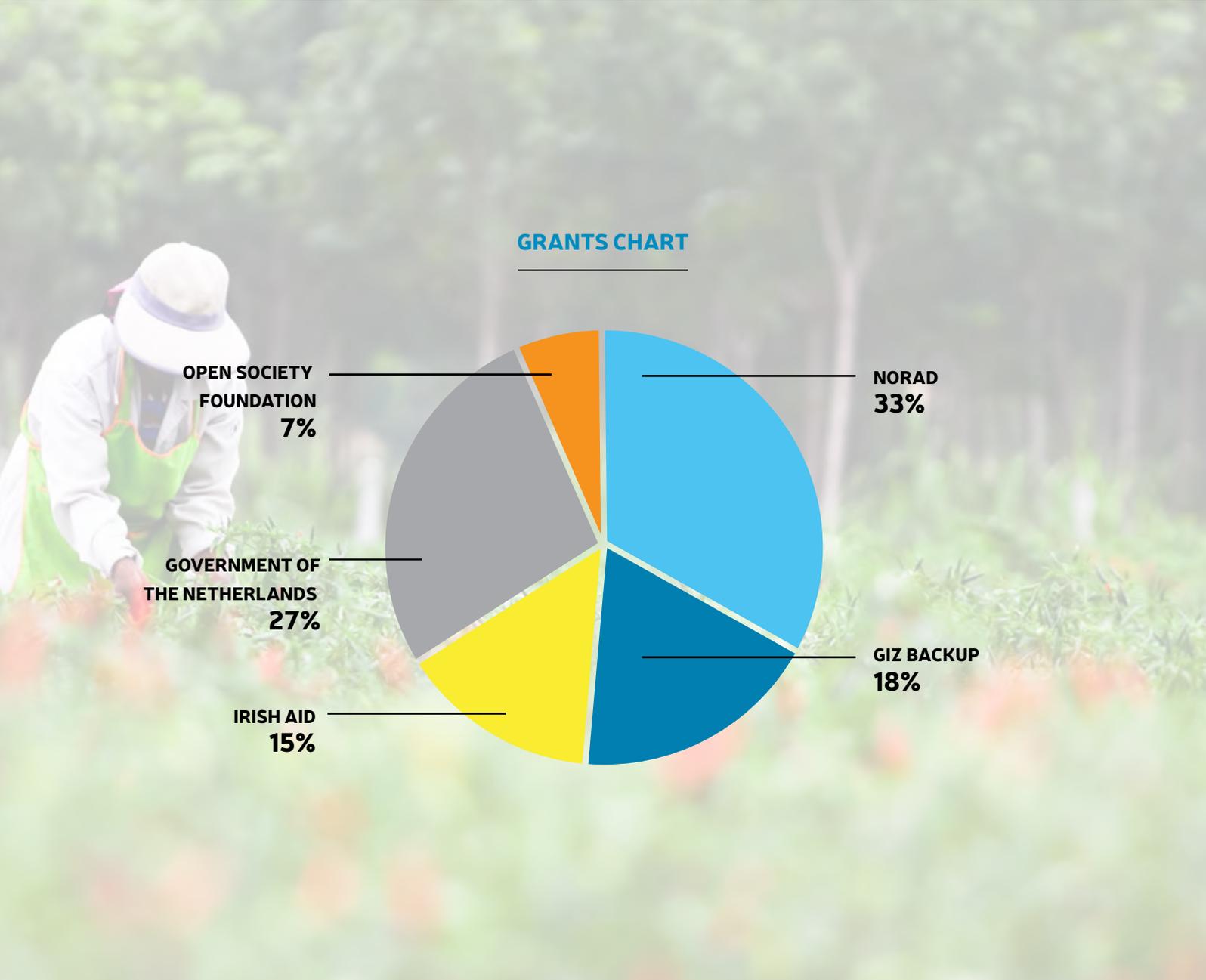
In 2017, we retained all our traditional donors, and secured a new funding partner in GHPro. Going forward in 2018 the board of Aidspan has developed a new Strategic plan 2018-2021 in-line with the Global Fund new strategy. In this regard, Aidspan will continue to expand its donor base to sufficiently fund its strategic goal for the period.



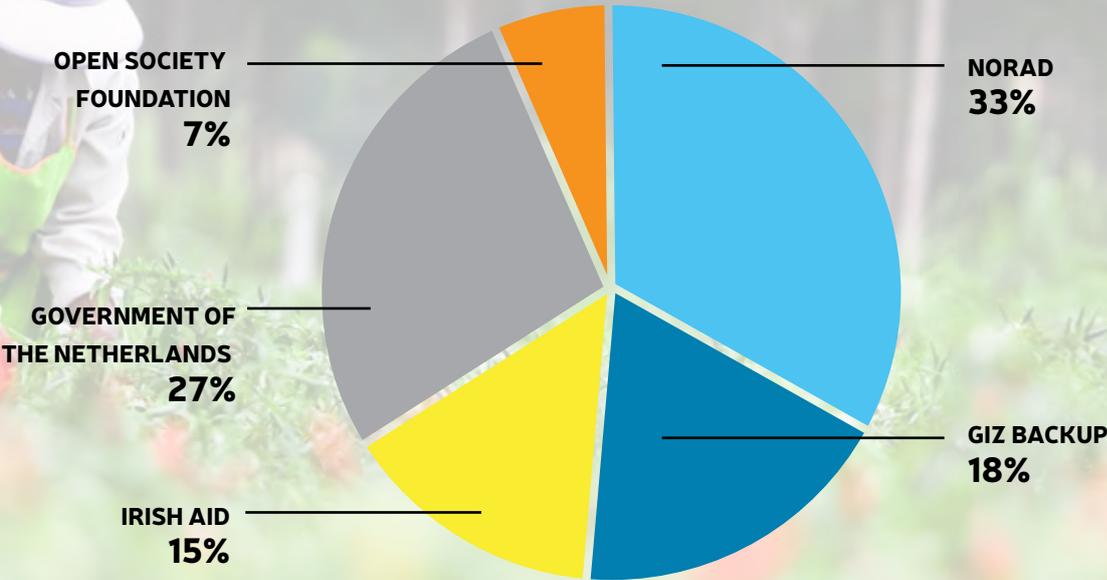
Participants of the round table on the involvement of SAIs in the Global Fund grants held on December 2017
Sitting: fourth on the left: Auditor General, Malawi, and Auditor General, Rwanda

AIDSPAN FINANCIALS

GRANTS FOR 2017	GRANT AMOUNT IN \$	
	2017	2016
DONOR		
NORAD	255,372	211,734
GIZ BACKUP PROJECT	139,528	58,935
IRISH AID	113,176	106,490
GOVERNMENT OF THE NETHERLANDS	210,980	220,887
OPEN SOCIETY FOUNDATION	50,000	75,000
TOTAL	769,056	673,046



GRANTS CHART



LOOKING FORWARD

At the end of 2017, Aidsplan commissioned an evaluation of the organization and its strategic plan. An analysis of Aidsplan's strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats (SWOT) reveals that:

- Independence, transparency and objectivity are the main strengths of the organization.
- However, the depth of analysis, range of issues and degree of country-level information published by the Global Fund Observer newsletter needs improvement. Also, the GFO is one of many sources of information in its content areas, rarely a primary source, making it vulnerable to competition and substitution.

Going forward, Aidsplan publications will seek to offer:

- Even deeper analyses that explores and connects the relevant context, constituent elements and implications of an issue.
- Country-level content that evaluates how the Global Fund strategy, policies or decisions approved by its Board are implemented through grants; and provides feedback to the Global Fund on the experiences of those involved in grant implementation and other Global Fund processes.
- Broader context so that critique or analysis of Global Fund strategy, policies or grant implementation takes into account the relevant political, socio-economic or environmental context.
- Highlights in data gaps across the Global Fund grant lifecycle, by mapping out where data collection should take place, and critiquing where such data or information is missing or inadequate.

As we map out the road ahead for our 2018-2021 strategic plan, Aidsplan commits to building on our achievements, strengths, values and capacities.

The Aidspan Audience Speaks

“Well, as a communication specialist, I confess that I frequently look at the newsletters and the website to find information and analysis. For me, AIDSPAN does a great job”

“An area for improvement would be to improve Aidspan's country-level audience, engagement strategies and impact.”

“Twice in the last few months Global Fund staffers mentioned to me that they really enjoy GFO articles.”

“It's a good source of information on new developments related to the Fund.”

“Practical and useful guides and sources of information provided to the [... Global Fund] beneficiaries.”

“Much as I have commended you on creating the platform through which we are able to follow Global Fund issues, I feel there is the need to take a step further. If you could also consider covering voices from the ground. There are more challenges that we face in the implementation of Global Fund grants. It would therefore be good to cover real life experiences from the grassroots; governments, CSO, communities, among others.”

“There is a need to expand ... source of information gathering at the country level and then triangulating intelligence gathered in-country.”

In 2018, Aidspace plans to continue on this successful trajectory.



We need your help to continue such work!

Donate to Aidspace: info@aidspace.org

Sign up for the Global Fund Observer e-newsletter

Download our publications

Use our data platforms

Give us feedback about our services; help us serve you better!

ABBREVIATIONS

- CCM: COUNTRY COORDINATING MECHANISM**
- ED: EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**
- GF: GLOBAL FUND**
- HIV: HUMAN IMMUNODEFICIENCY VIRUS**
- OIG: OFFICE OF THE INSPECTOR GENERAL**
- PR: PRINCIPAL RECIPIENT**
- RSSH: RESILIENT AND SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS FOR HEALTH**
- SR: SUB RECIPIENT**
- SAI: SUPREME AUDIT INSTITUTION**
- TB: TUBERCULOSIS**
- TERG: TECHNICAL EVALUATION REFERENCE GROUP**
- WHO: WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION**





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