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of the Global Fund

Global Fund Releases New Operational Policy Manual

The Global Fund has issued a new 229-page Operational Policy Manual, developed to assist Global Fund Secretariat staff to provide guidance on Global Fund policies and processes relating to grant management. The manual will also be of interest to grant implementers – and, to a lesser extent, grant applicants.

(The Global Fund used to have an earlier version of this manual, but it was not widely available and was not kept up to date.)

Although the manual is perceived by the Global Fund as mainly an internal document, it is posted on the Fund's website where anyone can download it. The manual complements the Operational Guide, which was designed for an external audience and which was released a few months ago (see [“Global Fund Releases Detailed Operational Guide”](#) in GFO 129.)

The manual contains operational policy notes (OPNs) and information notes (INs). OPNs explain how steps in the grant cycle must be managed. Each OPN integrates policies approved by the Board and procedures established by the Secretariat. INs provide more general information on concepts (such as alignment), funding streams (such as national strategy applications) and entities (such as principal recipients).

On most topics of interest to grant implementers, the manual provides more in-depth information than the Operational Guide. For example, on the subject of the Global Fund's Additional Safeguard Policy (ASP), the Operational Guide contains a very short introduction to the topic, whereas the Operational Policy Manual contains a three-and-a-half page OPN that, among other things, outlines the criteria for invoking the ASP, describes the seven minimum safeguards under the policy, and explains how the annual reviews of grants managed under the ASP are conducted.

Other OPNs in the manual cover topics such as amending grant agreements, grant extensions, enhanced financial reporting, and the pre-allocation of grant funds. The Global Fund Secretariat will be adding to the manual over time; some of the items listed in the table of contents are labelled "forthcoming."

There are some apparent gaps in the topics covered – for example, programme income (i.e., funds generated through social marketing and user fees), and grant suspensions – but it is not clear whether the Global Fund has formally adopted policies and procedures for every topic.

One implementer told GFO that the manual is a "huge step forward," but that there are areas for improvement. In the past, principal recipients (PRs) often felt constrained in their dealings with fund portfolio managers (FPMs) because they didn't know what "rules" the FPMs were following. Now, at least, PRs have access to much of that information.

"The Global Fund Operational Policy Manual" is available in English only at www.theglobalfund.org/en/policies. The "Operational Guide" is available on the same page.

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