



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

A key Global Fund manual that poses as many questions as it provides answers

I was due to continue my review and critique of the Global Fund's Operational Policy Manual (OPM) but, after my Part 2 article in March this year, the Secretariat reviewed the format of the OPM and issued a new version on 1 May 2022. So, I have to begin again to review the operational policies and procedures.

This OPM has been compiled for use by Global Fund staff but it is not user friendly and looks to be of little use to new staff. For them, it would be useful if a Global Fund organisation structure were included in order to understand who is involved and where. For example, the Access to Finance Department is the nominated process owner for this OPM; but where is it located in the organisation and how does it relate to Global Fund Country Teams (GFCTs)?

The manual is a compilation of 25 operational policy notes (OPNs) and operational procedures presented in three sections: (1) Access to Global Fund funding; (2) Grant implementation; and (3) Implementation period reconciliation and grant closure. After the contents page, the introduction explains that policies and procedures are differentiated according to portfolio categorisation and then shows the categorisation for the 2020-2022 allocation cycle for countries and multi-country programs receiving grants in the allocation period. Confusingly, there is a note that Cameroon and Malawi are categorised as High Impact but are located in AME; however, AME is not shown and there is no explanation of its meaning.

That leads to another general point: there is no list of acronyms. When the reader begins to read the introduction to Section 1, s/he must already be familiar with the acronyms TRP, PR and CCM which have not previously been mentioned; and, similarly, on page 16 the reader must already be familiar with DH, FPM, GAC, GMD, RFM, RSSH, and TAP. Interestingly, the Global Fund requires applicants to include a list of acronyms in the Funding Request (FR); so why does the Global Fund omit the inclusion of its own

list of acronyms?

The first OPN concerns the design and review of FRs. As the reader might expect, the OPN's first topic heading is 'Objectives' but the reader is left to interpret from a text which does NOT specifically state the objectives. The diagram provided is not explained or referred to.

The uninformed reader is then truly confused by the explanation that the FR design and review process (which, as later becomes evident, comprises three separate processes) is guided by: the Global Fund Framework Document; the Global Fund Strategy; the Sustainability, Transition, and Co-Financing (STC) Policy, the Technical Review Panel's (TRP) terms of reference and six 'core' differentiation principles. However, when we read on, we see that Global Fund staff have also to refer to: the Allocation Methodology; the Global Fund Guidelines for Grant Budgeting; Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) Eligibility Requirements; the CCM Policy Including Principles and Requirements; the OPN on Grant Revisions; the Guidelines on Implementer of Global Fund Grants; the STC Guidance Note; the OPN on Co-Financing; the OPN on Challenging Operating Environments; the OPN on Risk Management; and the Additional Safeguard Policy.

At page 10 there is a chart that makes clear that there are three separate stages to the process:

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