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## NEW CRITERIA ADOPTED FOR THE REVIEW OF FUNDING REQUESTS BY THE TRP

The criteria used by the Technical Review Panel (TRP) to review the technical soundness of funding requests have been completely revamped. The new criteria, which were approved by the Strategy Committee in October 2016, as part of revised terms of reference, are in line with the Global Fund's 2017-2022 Strategy. The revised TORs were outlined in a report that the TRP sent to the Board for its meeting in Montreux, Switzerland on 16-17 November.

The previous review criteria were based on four factors: soundness of approach; feasibility; potential for sustainability and impact; and value for money. The new criteria focus on the following five factors:

1. maximizing impact against HIV, TB, and malaria towards ending the epidemics;
2. building resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH);
3. promoting and protecting human rights and gender equality;
4. investing in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of program implementation through shared ownership and mutual accountability; and
5. sustainability and co-financing.

The table provides a list of the criteria for each of the five factors. More information is available in the TRP's revised terms of reference.

Factor	Criteria
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<p>Maximizing impact against HIV, TB, and malaria towards ending the epidemics</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategic focus</li> <li>• Technical soundness</li> <li>• Prioritization</li> <li>• Evidence-based programs for key populations</li> <li>• Scale-up and ambition</li> <li>• Leveraging partnerships</li> <li>• Monitoring and evaluation for impact</li> </ul>
<p>Building resilient and sustainable systems for health</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leadership and governance</li> <li>• Reproductive, maternal, neonatal and child health, and integrated service delivery systems</li> <li>• Strengthen community systems and responses</li> <li>• Invests in health information systems</li> <li>• Invests in procurement supply management systems</li> <li>• Invests in human resources for health</li> <li>• Strengthens financial management systems</li> </ul>
<p>Promoting and protecting human rights and gender equality</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Invests in programs to reduce human rights-related barriers to accessing services</li> <li>• Invests to understand and reduce gender-related barriers to accessing services, and advance gender equality</li> <li>• Engages key and vulnerable populations in decision-making</li> <li>• Empowers and engages key and vulnerable communities</li> </ul>
<p>Investing in increasing the effectiveness and efficiency of program implementation through shared ownership and mutual accountability</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has the necessary technical and implementation capacity</li> <li>• Value for money (efficient distribution of investments)</li> <li>• Adequate risk mitigation</li> <li>• Strategies to address bottlenecks</li> </ul>
<p>Sustainability and co-financing</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased emphasis on domestic financing</li> <li>• Complies with application focus requirements</li> <li>• Promotes sustainability</li> <li>• Transition planning and investment</li> </ul>

Among the other changes to the TORs is one that allows the TRP to differentiate review modalities in line with the core guiding principles of differentiation adopted by the Strategy Committee at its June 2016 meeting.

As a result of a self-assessment conducted recently, the TRP is implementing a series of actions. For example, the TRP is developing more dynamic and tailored approaches to iteration and clarifications. These approaches include establishing clear criteria and rationales for its requests; conducting remote reviews when appropriate; and delegating some issues to the Secretariat and to partners.

The TRP is also developing review methodologies to assess requests for catalytic investments and above allocation requests. In addition, the TRP is developing an operating procedures manual to document review modalities, support quality and consistency of its reviews of funding requests, and enhance institutional memory.

Further, the TRP said that it will refocus its review meetings around larger, more complex funding requests, with sufficient time for review and dialogue with the Secretariat and partners.

Finally, with respect to its own operations, the TRP said it is developing a framework to monitor performance, as well as a structured mechanism for “communicating and collecting individual TRP member performance.”

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Recruitment

A recruitment drive was conducted in 2016 to fill the TRP reserve pool from which new TRP members will be selected, as needed. One hundred and seventeen candidates were chosen, representing 49 nationalities. Forty-four percent were women, compared to 34% in the 2013 recruitment drive. (See the figure for a breakdown by region.) The TRP noted that some sub-regions are still “somewhere under-represented.”

The TRP said the recruitment drive expanded the range of expertise on the TRP to align with the new strategy, including human rights and gender, community systems strengthening, strategic investments, sustainable financing, and RSSH.

The new candidates constitute a robust pool of TRP members with a good mix of expertise and skills which are expected to perform the mandate of the TRP to a high level of quality and standard.

Funding requests for 2017-2019

In an [article](#) on 5 October in GFO 297, Aidspan reported that there will be three types of funding requests for the next allocation period: full review, tailored review, and program continuation. In its report to the Board, the TRP provided additional information on these modalities.

The TRP said that it expects that a full review will involve a comprehensive overall review of an applicant’s investment approach and strategic priorities. It added that full reviews will likely be carried out on components from high impact countries; components from focused and core countries referred to the TRP for a full review; and components not reviewed by the TRP in the previous allocation period.

(In line with the differentiation principles of the Global Fund, operational policies and processes are differentiated according to three portfolio categories: focused [smaller portfolio, lower disease burden, lower mission risk]; core [larger portfolios, higher disease burden, higher risk]; and high impact [very large

portfolios, mission critical disease burden]. The list of countries by category for the 2017-2019 allocation period is available in in the [Operational Policy Manual](#) – see “Overview of the Operational Policy Manual” at the beginning of the document.)

The TRP said that tailored reviews will be adapted to the objective of the funding request and to the applicant type. Tailored reviews will likely be done:

- for components requiring material change in defined program areas;
- for components receiving transition funding or otherwise using a transition work plan as a basis for their request;
- for components from countries in challenging operating environments requesting a material change in programming; or
- in situations best described as learning opportunities (e.g. national strategy pilot, results-based financing).

Finally, the TRP said that program continuation reviews would entail a streamlined process and would be done in focused or core country components (a) with less than two years of implementation; or (b) with demonstrated performance and no material change needed. The TRP said that that to maximize impact, program continuation components may also reprogram at any time (during grant-making or implementation).

Dr Lucie Blok, Chair of the TRP, said: “The newly developed differentiated application and review modalities enable the ‘right level of efforts’ being invested in different grant applications. The new application and review modalities and related formats also allow better alignment with country planning cycles by emphasizing the possibilities for reprogramming of grants whenever new information becomes available through program reviews rather than demanding revised planning and full concept notes for each grant at the time of application.”

“TRP Matters,” Board paper GF-B36-13, should be available shortly at [www.theglobalfund.org/en/board/meetings/36](http://www.theglobalfund.org/en/board/meetings/36). This paper contains the new review criteria. The criteria should also be posted in due course on the TRP pages of the Global Fund website [here](#).

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