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of the Global Fund

A MAJOR CONTRIBUTOR OF GLOBAL FUND-RELATED TA, GMS WILL CLOSE ITS DOORS IN SEPTEMBER

USAID's Grant Management Solutions project (GMS), a major provider of Global Fund-related technical assistance (TA) is ending in September. The purpose of GMS is to improve the functioning of Global Fund grants – primarily through urgent, short-term TA – and thereby increase the effectiveness and efficiency of prevention, care and treatment interventions for HIV, TB and malaria.

~~There is no word yet on whether USAID will launch a new project similar to GMS to provide Global Fund-related TA.~~

Funding for the GMS project comes from the 5% that the U.S. withholds from its contribution to the Global Fund and makes available to USAID to provide Global Fund-related TA. The first phase of the GMS project ran from 2007 to 2012. GMS' contract was then renewed for a second phase which covered the period from October 2012 to September 2017.

GMS comprises 29 partner organizations. Management Sciences for Health (MSH) is the principal partner. It is MSH that signs the contracts with USAID. GMS has international, regional and sub-contracting partners. International partners (six in all) include Pact and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance. Regional partners (12) include the Curatio International Foundation, Oasis Financial and Management Services, and Fundacion Plenitud. Sub-contracting partners (10) include the Euro Health Group and Results in Health.

According to its website, GMS has a staff of at least 25 people.

Up to June 2017, GMS had provided TA to grantees in 61 countries and supported more than \$2.5 billion

worth of grants. During its second phase, GMS helped 91 principal recipients (PRs) and sub-recipients (SRs) establish or strengthen organizational structures and procedures.

GMS also helped to strengthen the functioning of country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs), including (a) helping them to become eligible to submit proposals to the Global Fund; and improving governance and oversight.

In addition, GMS developed a number of tools that will continue to be useful resources for Global Fund grantees and stakeholders after the project ends. These tools include: grant management dashboards, an SR management tool, and a regional dashboard. The grant management dashboards were originally known as the “CCM dashboard.” They were later adapted for use by PRs (the “PR dashboard”) – hence the generic term “grant management dashboard.” GMS has also developed a CCM Summary dashboard.

According to GIZ’s BACKUP Health program, the GMS project has been developing grant dashboards in collaboration with the Global Fund Secretariat and the German IT company SAP since 2013. In July, BACKUP’s newsletter reported that a dashboard handover event was held on 15-19 May 2017 in Dakar, Senegal, focusing on the suite of dashboard tools and methods for introducing them. Applications, materials and guidance for using the grant dashboards were handed over to consultants, TA partners, and staff of the Global Fund Secretariat. The event was one of a series of activities organized by GMS to ensure the sustainability of GMS tools and approaches after the project ends. BACKUP Health was among the TA partners participating in the event. The newsletter said that BACKUP Health will continue to support the introduction of dashboards for PRs and CCMs within the framework of its TA services to improve grant performance.

Since GMS was a major provider of Global Fund–related TA, Aidsplan asked USAID if it intended to establish another vehicle to carry on the work of GMS. USAID’s Office of HIV/AIDS Communication Team would only say that “the USG remains committed to supporting countries in achieving their national disease strategies and grant targets. We are funding multiple on-going activities across the three diseases and for strengthening health systems.”

Might we expect to see an announcement from USAID about a successor project to GMS sometime in September? Aidsplan has seen no indication that this will happen. Given the current political climate in the U.S., nothing is certain. Also, since GMS has organized handover events for tools it pioneered, such as the grant management dashboard, one might conclude that any successor project will look quite different.

More information on the activities of GMS is available at www.gmsproject.org.

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