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GLOBAL FUND RELEASES NEW RESOURCES RELATED TO THE APPLICATIONS PROCESS

The Global Fund has released two resources which will be of interest to persons involved in the applications process – an [Applicant Handbook](#), designed to support applicants in the preparation of funding requests for the 2017-2019 funding cycle; and a Funding Request Status Tracker. This article provides information on both resources. It also reports on some items of interest contained in the Applicant Handbook.

Applicant Handbook

The Applicant Handbook offers practical information on the different stages of application process, along with guidance on best practices and lessons learned from the last funding cycle. The handbook contains some case studies. It also provides information on other resources that are available for each stage.

The main headings in the table of contents provide a quick summary of what the guide contains:

- What's in my allocation letter?
- What do I need to do before submitting a funding request?
- How do I prepare a program continuation request?
- How do I prepare a tailored and full review request?

The handbook also contains sections on the country coordinating mechanism (CCM) eligibility requirements and co-financing.

The section of the handbook on “What do I need to do before submitting a funding request?” includes a

case study on the decision by Cambodia's CCM and technical partners to hire an engagement consultant to ensure that vulnerable communities were able to fully and meaningfully participate in the country dialogue.

Items of interest

Applicants were informed in their allocation letters what type of funding request they were recommended to submit. However, according to the handbook, applicants eligible to submit a program continuation request can decide to submit another type of funding request instead.

(As described in GFO articles [here](#) and [here](#), there are three types of funding requests: program continuation, tailored review and full review. Tailored review is, in turn, divided into four sub-categories: material change, transition, challenging operating environments, and national strategy-based pilots.

(The Secretariat informed Aidspan that many applicants have the flexibility to select a different type of funding request. For example, a tailored to material change applicant could opt to do a different tailored request or a full request. The only applicants that lack the flexibility to change the type of funding request are those that the Secretariat has identified as full or tailored to transition.)

The handbook says that program continuation requests for grants that are scheduled to start earlier than 1 July 2018 must be submitted in the first window, the deadline for which is 20 March 2017. For grants that start on or after 1 July 2018, the requests must be submitted in the second program continuation submission window, which is Window 4: deadline 31 January 2018. Tailored and full requests are not limited to these two windows.

The handbook says that the process from submission of the request to grant signing will likely take, on average, nine months.

For the tailored and full review requests, page limits have been placed on the responses to each question on the funding request template. The handbook says that concept notes submitted in the 2014-2016 funding cycle often exceeded 100 pages and that this was onerous for both the applicants and the reviewers.

Key changes to grant-making (compared to 2014-2016), include the following:

- There is no modular template for applicants to fill out at the application stage. Instead, applicants will complete a performance framework template, and continue to build on this document during grant-making.
- It is no longer mandatory for all principal recipients (PRs) to undergo a capacity assessment. The assessment can be skipped for existing PRs, unless there is a particular reason for doing the assessment, such as the PR is undertaking a new area of activity.
- As part of the Fund's differentiated approach, Focused countries will complete a performance framework that has a reduced number of indicators and work plan tracking measures.

Country portfolios are categorized as Focused, Core or High Impact. Focused countries have smaller portfolios (country allocations of less than \$75 million) and lower disease burdens (cumulatively, Focused countries represent 7.4% of the global disease burden). Core countries have larger portfolios (country allocations of between \$75 and \$400 million) with slightly higher disease burdens (16.7% of global disease burden). High Impact countries have very large portfolios (greater than \$400 million) with very high disease burdens (75.9% of global disease burden).

Another change from 2014-2016 is that most funding requests will be reviewed only once by the Grant Approvals Committee (GAC); the review will be after grant-making. The Applicant Handbook explains that

in the 2017-2019 funding cycle, funding requests will also be reviewed before grant-making only for components eligible for matching funds or if the extra review was specifically requested in order to provide additional grant-making guidance. In the last funding cycle, the concept notes were reviewed before grant-making, and grant documents were reviewed after grant-making.

Funding Request Status Tracker

As its name implies, the Funding Request Status Tracker will provide the current status of funding requests for components that will be submitted during the 2017-2019 funding cycle. The tracker, which is available via a page on the Fund's website [here](#), is similar to one that was used for the concept notes from the 2014-2016 funding cycle.

For each component expected to submit a funding request, the tracker shows the type of application to be used for the request and the review window (i.e. when the request is expected to be submitted). The tracker lists the first four windows. The deadline for submissions for each of the windows is as follows:

Window 1 – 20 March 2017

Window 2 – 23 May 2017

Window 3 – 28 August 2017

Window 4 – 31 January 2018

The window shown for each component represents an estimate by the Secretariat. Countries are free to select whichever window they want.

Important Note: For now, all components for which funding requests are to be submitted in 2018 or later are grouped together in Window 4. If necessary, a Window 5 or a Window 6 will be added later to the spreadsheet.

There are a number of columns on the spreadsheet that are currently blank. As each funding request works its way through the system, these columns will show the date of the Technical Review Panel recommendation; the date of the final GAC meeting at which the request was discussed; and the date of Board approval.

There is also a column that will show the duration of the whole process (i.e. from submission to Board approval).

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