



Independent observer
of the Global Fund

AIDSPAN RELEASES NEW STRATEGIC PLAN FOR 2016-2018

Aidspan has released a new [strategic plan](#) for 2016-2018. The plan is the product of a reform effort spearheaded by the Aidspan Board. (Editor's note: The link is to an abridged version of the strategic plan. To obtain the full version, please send a request via email to info@aidspan.org.)

The board's decision to reform Aidspan, some 13 years after its initial establishment in 2002 when the Global Fund (TGF) was set up, was based on several factors, including: (a) changes in the donor environment, in the health systems in many countries and in TGF; (b) the results of an independent external evaluation of the organization in June 2015; and (c) financial constraints faced by Aidspan. At its meeting at the end of August 2015, the Aidspan Board determined that Aidspan should remain as a stand-alone organization but slimmed down and more focused. The reform process will involve changes to the board and management structures, and areas of program focus, and significant changes to the budget. Aidspan's brand as an independent watchdog of the Fund will be strengthened to provide more value for money and a more penetrative critique that hits at the key issues in a dynamic global health arena on a more compact budget.

The Aidspan Board of Directors approved the strategic plan during its meeting of 24 November 2015, held in Nairobi, Kenya. The plan will be implemented using a phased approach.

Under the new strategic plan, Aidspan's mission remains essentially unchanged: To be an effective watchdog of TGF at global and country levels by providing information, critical analysis and commentary on developments at the Fund.

The strategy contains three strategic objectives, as follows:

1. TGF policies, processes, structures, and effectiveness improve as a result of Aidspan's critical assessment.
2. TGF becomes more transparent with more accurate and complete data made available.
3. Aidspan becomes stronger and more sustainable.

The goal of the plan is to have a positive effect on TGF operations by 2018.

In a Foreword to the strategic plan, Ida Hazinka, the chair of the board of Aidspan, said that for the last decade, Aidspan has highlighted the need for better reporting and analysis of TGF. Since 2011, she said,

Aidspan has critiqued Board- and Secretariat-level policies and processes and has increased tracking of events at country level.

“This strategy is the next step – an indication of our learning,” Ms Hazinka said.

For each objective, the strategic plan identifies specific areas of focus. These are described in the table below.

Table: Specific areas of focus, by strategic objective

Strategic objective	Specific areas of focus	
Objective 1: Fund policies, processes, structures, and effectiveness improve as a result of Aidspan’s critical assessment	1.1	Effectiveness of funding processes, assurance mechanisms, and governance and management structures at global and country levels.
	1.2	Contribution of the Fund to sustaining impact in countries transitioning from Global Fund financing.
	1.3	Effectiveness of policies and processes in enhancing involvement of key populations in country-level processes, the response to gender inequalities and violence, and the attention to human rights issues in the response to the three diseases.
	1.4	Effectiveness of the Fund’s role in increasing domestic funding for health as one step towards sustainability.
Objective 2: Fund becomes more transparent with more accurate and complete data made available	2.1	Extent of transparency with respect to Fund-related documents.
	2.2	Availability of quality data at country level for effective grant making and measuring success of Global Fund investments.
	2.3	Collaboration with experts and organizations working on transparency and data quality.
Objective 3: Aidspan becomes stronger and more sustainable	3.1	Improving board governance and oversight.
	3.2	Strengthening management structure, systems and processes.
	3.3	Efficient mobilization of financial resources.

The strategic plan identifies three enablers that will contribute to the success of the strategy: (1) a strong focus on strategic alliances and collaboration; (2) enhanced use of digital tools and communication media; and (3) a dynamic, adaptable, learning organization.

For each area of focus, the strategic plan identifies major activities that are planned for the three-year lifespan of the plan. For example, while Aidspan’s communications flagship product – the Global Fund Observer newsletter – will continue to publish news about the Fund regularly, a new quarterly publication will feature more in-depth analysis.

Other major activities planned include the following:

- assess the extent to which country level oversight bodies enhance effectiveness and accountability;
- assess the impact of TGF policies on strengthening national health systems;
- assess the strategy and policies the Fund adopts with respect to its role in the development and implementation of transition planning;
- investigate the impact of TGF withdrawal from supported countries, particularly on key affected populations;
- highlight gaps in information that should be made public by the Fund at all levels; and
- assess the Fund’s efforts to access quality country level data.

The strategic plan describes a revised organization structure for Aidspan. There will be three functional areas – Policy Analysis; Communications; and Finance & Administration – headed by senior managers who report to an executive director, and supported by a pool of experts who will be engaged as needed.

Finally, the new strategic plan will form the basis for a new fundraising strategy that aims to raise almost \$3.3 million for the three years of the strategic plan.

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