



Aidspan

Independent observer  
of the Global Fund

## The Need for Technical Assistance

Long before Round 3 took place, the Secretariat projected that the cost of Years 1-2 of grants approved in Round 3 would be about \$1,600 m., almost double the cost of Round 2. As it turned out, the cost of Round 3 approved grants came to only \$623 m., which is almost 30% \*less\* than in Round 2. This was caused, in part, by the fact that the percentage of proposals recommended by the Technical Review Panel (TRP) for approval went down.

This strongly suggests that the technical merit of proposals being submitted to the Fund is not increasing, and quite possibly is decreasing. Contributory reasons might be that the countries most capable of submitting good applications had already done so in Rounds 1 and 2; that these countries are not yet ready to submit applications for follow-up projects (or don't realize that the Fund is very open to additional proposals being submitted long before earlier projects have been completed); and that some applicants – particularly some NGOs and regional organizations – simply don't understand that the type of application they are submitting has almost no chance of being recommended by the TRP.

Behind every rejected proposal is a sad story. It is not unknown for Ministries of Health almost to come to a halt while they race to complete a Global Fund proposal. There are also sad stories behind countries that have never applied, or that were rejected once and did not try again.

Clearly, therefore, there is a strong need to increase the quality and availability of Technical Assistance to help applicants with deciding whether to apply, with crafting their actual applications to the Fund, and with thinking through the underlying strategy. In addition, as more and more countries get launched on the actual implementation of their Global Fund projects, there is an increasing need for Technical Assistance regarding project relationships (e.g. between Principal Recipient and sub-recipients) and project implementation. Finally, many CCMs are inefficient, and/or are mere extensions of governments. Help is

needed to overcome these problems.

The Global Fund is a financing mechanism; it does not have sufficient staffing to provide technical assistance. But it could usefully do more in encouraging multi-lateral and bilateral institutions, NGOs, companies and academic institutions to offer technical assistance to countries that wish to obtain Global Fund financing.

[Bernard Rivers ([rivers@aidspan.org](mailto:rivers@aidspan.org)) is Executive Director of Aidspan and Editor of its GFO Newsletter.]

[Read More](#)

---