# Round 10 Has Been Launched

The Global Fund's 10<sup>th</sup> round of funding was launched yesterday (20 May 2010). Applications must be submitted by 20 August 2010. Thus, applicants will have three months to prepare their proposals, one month less than in recent rounds.

There is considerable uncertainty concerning whether sufficient funds will be available to pay for all of the Round 10 proposals that are recommended for funding by the Technical Review Panel (TRP). In both Rounds 8 and 9, initially there were insufficient funds to cover all recommended proposals, and some proposals had to be "wait-listed." However, eventually, as more funds came in, all recommended proposals were approved. This may happen again in Round 10, or it may not: It depends on the total cost of the TRP-recommended proposals and on how much money the Global Fund is able to raise from donors. At its meeting in April 2010, the Global Fund Board decided that only funds received by the end of 2011, for use in 2011, can be used to finance recommended Round 10 proposals. (For details, see "Round 10 to Be Launched on May 20" in GFO 122 at www.aidspan.org/gfo).

Round 8, in 2008, was the largest round ever, representing costs of $3.1 billion for the first two years of approved proposals. For Round 9, the costs were $2.2 billion. (These figures are prior to the 10% "efficiency gains" mandated by the Board.)

The Global Fund says that, currently, based on confirmed pledges, no money is available for Round 10. However, the Global Fund is in the middle of a "replenishment," with donors due to specify in October how much they expect to give to the Fund over the next three years. Thus, the amount of money available for Round 10 will certainly increase by the time the Global Fund Board approves Round 10 proposals at its meeting in December 2010.

The determination of how much money can be used for Round 10 will be based on uncommitted money

that donors provide for use up to 31 December 2011. The Global Fund says that it "hopes for a successful Replenishment process which will enable all Round 10 TRP recommended proposals to be funded," but that "no assurances regarding the level of available resources can be made at this time."

(The Global Fund's full statement on money available for Round 10 can be found at www.theglobalfund.org/en/applicantsimplementers/resources.)

The Round 10 proposal form and various support documents will be available in six languages at www.theglobalfund.org/en/applynow. (When we went to press, some language versions had not yet been posted.) Applicants should be sure to follow not just the links provided on the main part of that page, but also those under the first few menu options on the left side of the page.

The major changes for Round 10 are as follows:

- Consolidated proposals. For the first time, applicants have the option of submitting a consolidated proposal instead of a "regular" proposal. A consolidated proposal is one that includes both new activities and activities from existing grants for the same disease. This is in line with the move towards a single stream of funding per disease per principal recipient (PR). (See Article 2.)
- Prioritisation criteria. New prioritisation criteria have been adopted for Round 10. They will be invoked if there is not enough money on hand to fund all Round 10 proposals recommended by the TRP. If this occurs, the recommended proposals will be ranked according to the prioritisation criteria and will be funded based on their ranking (if and when funds become available). The new criteria are based on a composite index that takes into account the proposal's technical merit (as determined by the TRP), the country's poverty level and the country's disease burden. (For details on the composite index, see "New Prioritisation Criteria Give Less Weight to Technical Merit" in GFO 122 at www.aidspan.org/gfo).
- MARP proposals. In Round 10, for the first time, applicants from countries that have concentrated HIV/AIDS epidemics within "most-at-risk populations" (MARPs) have the option of applying for funding specifically for MARPs under a new funding stream. (See Article 3.)
- Community systems strengthening (CSS). Increased emphasis has been placed on CSS in Round 10. A new question has been added to the proposal form, asking for a description of weaknesses and gaps in existing community systems. Applicants are also required to provide information on what is being done to address these weaknesses and gaps. Also, the Global Fund's information note on CSS has been updated. Finally, an 81-page "Community Systems Strengthening Framework" document has been developed. The CSS Framework is primarily aimed at strengthening civil society engagement with the Global Fund. It should be useful to applicants who want to ensure that their proposal includes solid strategies to strengthen community systems. The CSS framework is available at www.theglobalfund.org/documents/civilsociety/CSS_Framework.pdf. GFO will report further on the CSS Framework in a future issue.
- Conditional recommendations by the TRP. In Round 10, for the first time, the TRP can recommend approval of a proposal conditional on the removal of a limited set of elements. The removal of these elements is not subject to appeal.
- "Value for money." In Round 10, the Global Fund is asking applicants to demonstrate that their proposed programme represents good value for money, which the Fund defines as "using the most cost-effective interventions" and "the optimal use of resources to achieve the intended outcomes." The Global Fund says that good evidence on the value for money may not yet exist in many countries, so the TRP will not penalize applicants for not providing this evidence in Round 10. For Round 10, the Global Fund has produced an information note on this topic, at www.theglobalfund.org/documents/rounds/10/R10_InfoNote_VfM_en.pdf.
- TA Plan. Applicants whose Round 10 proposals are approved for funding will be required to prepare a Technical Assistance Plan (TA Plan) describing in considerable detail the TA that is included in its proposal. The TA Plan should be prepared at the time of grant negotiations. However, if the country

context does not permit that, the applicant will have up to the end of the first years of the grant to submit the plan. The TA Plan does not have to be submitted with the proposal, but a summary of what will be in the TA Plan does have to be included. This is similar to the existing rules that require that a Pharmaceutical and Health Products Plan and a Monitoring and Evaluation Plan be prepared prior to grant signing, and that summary information on these topics be included in the proposal.

Other changes for Round 10 include the following:

- Review criteria. The criteria used by the TRP have been updated to incorporate recent policy decisions by the Global Fund on topics such as gender equality, sexual orientation and gender identity, and community systems strengthening. (For details, see "Changes to the TRP Review Criteria" in GFO 122.)
- Gender. Questions on the proposal form about the capacity and experience of CCM members on gender issues have been strengthened.
- M&E. A new question has been added on impact and outcome measurement systems. Applicants are asked to provide information on surveys, surveillance activities and routine data collection that will be used to measure impact and outcome indicators relevant to the proposal.
- Salaries. In Round 10, applicants are being asked to demonstrate that budget amounts in their proposal for salaries are consistent with current in-country salary frameworks. This appears to be a response to concerns that some salaries paid with, or topped-up by, money from the Fund may have been out of line with what other people in the heath sector were earning.

In addition, improvements have been made to the proposal form. The instructions are, generally, more clear, and most of the guidance that was contained on past proposal forms has been relocated to the Guidelines for Proposals document.

All proposals submitted by the closing date will be reviewed by the Global Fund Secretariat to ensure that they meet the Fund's eligibility criteria. If something in the proposal is not clear, the Secretariat will contact the applicant and request clarification. Eligible proposals will then be forwarded to the TRP for consideration. The TRP will make recommendations to the Global Fund Board, which will make its decisions at its meeting scheduled for 13-15 December 2010. (In the past, all proposals recommended by the TRP for approval have indeed been approved by the Board, though sometimes they have been waitlisted pending funding availability.)

When the TRP members review the proposals, they will do so in their personal capacities – they must not share the information with or accept any instructions from their employers or their national governments. In deciding whether to recommend each proposal for approval, the TRP will take into consideration only technical factors, such as whether the project described in the proposal is technically sound, whether it is one that the specified organisations are capable of implementing, and whether it represents good use of the money. The TRP is required to ignore the question of whether it believes the Global Fund has enough money to pay for all of the proposals that it is recommending.

Once a proposal is approved by the Board, the Secretariat will enter into a lengthy and complex process of: (a) ensuring that the applicant answers, to the satisfaction of the TRP, any questions that the TRP asked regarding the proposal; (b) assessing the ability of the proposed PRs to perform the roles that the proposal assigns to them; and (c) negotiating grant agreements with the PRs. It is only after this multi-month process that the first cash disbursement will be sent. Thus, although proposals have to be submitted by 20 August 2010, it is unlikely that the first disbursements will be made for successful proposals before the middle of 2011.

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