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of the Global Fund

REPORT ON ROUND 7 SCREENING RAISES SOME IMPORTANT ISSUES

The “Report of the Round 7 Screening Review Panel,” which is the subject of the previous article, raises a number of issues with respect to (a) the application of the six minimum requirements for CCMs and (b) applications from non-CCMs.

The CCM Minimum Requirements

The six minimum requirements for CCMs have been in place for over three years. They were adopted for a reason – to promote greater involvement of the non-government sectors in the operations of coordinating mechanisms (CCMs, Sub-CCMs and RCMs). The coordinating mechanisms have to meet the requirements in order for their applications to be eligible for consideration by the Global Fund.

If one were to judge only by the results of the screening process used by the Global Fund, one would have to conclude that the minimum requirements have had their desired effect. After all, 80 of the 84 applications submitted by coordinating mechanisms in Round 7 were deemed to have met the minimum requirements. The story was similar for Round 6: 93 of the 96 applications submitted by coordinating mechanisms were deemed to have met the requirements.

On the other hand, there is considerable anecdotal evidence that on many CCMs, civil society representatives are far from being equal partners. And questions have been raised over the years about how rigidly the Global Fund Secretariat is applying the minimum requirements when it screens applications. Aidspace conducted an analysis of what applicants said about some of the minimum requirements on the Round 6 proposal forms (see GFO #84, 29 January 2008). The analysis concluded that “we do not really know to what extent CCMs are complying with the requirement that members

representing the non-governmental sectors must be selected by their own sectors through a transparent process.”

The “Report of the Round 7 Screening Panel” makes it clear that the Secretariat is exercising a considerable amount of discretion when screening applications. The most obvious example is the decision to accept that if the CCM can demonstrate that at least 50 percent of NGO representatives have been selected by their sector through an open and transparent process, the Secretariat can then say that the CCM is fully compliant with the requirement – despite the fact that there is nothing in the requirement itself that says that the CCM needs to be only 50 percent compliant.

It is also clear from the language in the report than many CCMs are struggling to meet the minimum requirements. A few examples:

- “a good number of applicants had difficulty demonstrating that the PR had been selected in a transparent and documented process”
- “...had difficulties demonstrating first-rate compliance”
- “many applicants who were deemed FC by the SRP barely met the requirement”
- “other applicants could also benefit from a deeper discussion on how best to demonstrate an open and transparent process to review proposal solicitations”
- “many applicants had had difficulties to meet the spirit of the requirement”

This raises a number of questions which ought to be taken up by the Global Fund Board:

1. Are the reasons why the minimum requirements were adopted in the first place still valid?
2. Have CCMs not had enough time by now to live up to the requirements?
3. Is it appropriate for the Secretariat to exercise considerable discretion in the application of the minimum requirements?
4. If the Global Fund Board thinks that it is appropriate for the Secretariat to exercise considerable discretion, should there not at least be a process for ensuring that delinquent CCMs are making progress towards meeting the requirements?
5. Does the Global Fund Board consider any of the requirements to be too stringent? If yes, how does the Board suggest the requirements be modified?
6. Has enough been done to educate CCMs about the requirements and how best to fulfil them?

Applications from Non-CCMs

The Global Fund has always discouraged direct applications from NGOs and FBOs. Instead, the Fund encourages them to work through their CCMs. The Global Fund has done such a good job of discouraging applications from Non-CCMs that (a) the number of such applications has declined in every successive round; and (b) civil society advocates have all but abandoned efforts to persuade the Fund to accept more Non-CCM applications.

But now we have a report from the Round 7 Screening Review Panel saying that maybe the Fund should re-think its policy. The report says that in the current era of trying to rapidly scale up the response to the three diseases, the “non-CCM window of opportunity” may be too narrow. This is a significant observation, yet this aspect of the report seems to have garnered little attention. There ought to be further discussion of this at the level of the Global Fund Board and within civil society.

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