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**25<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board**  
**Geneva, Switzerland**  
**8-10 December 2009**

**Review of the Global Implementation Support Team (GIST)**

**Additional documents for this item:** *none*

**Action required at this meeting:** *none*

**Cost implications for decisions:** *none*

## INTRODUCTION

1. At its 21<sup>st</sup> meeting in December 2007 the Programme Coordinating Board made the following decision:

*“7.2 – Requests that a review of the GIST be presented to the 23<sup>d</sup> meeting of the PCB, including an evaluation of its efficacy and value added”*

2. The purpose of this document is to provide the information requested in the decision point. Further, it serves to inform the discussions of the Programme Coordinating Board around the chapter of the Second Independent Evaluation on *“Technical Support”*.

## BACKGROUND

3. At its 21<sup>st</sup> meeting held in December 2007, the Programme Coordinating Board considered a Progress report on the Global Implementation Support Team. The report referred to an Independent Review of the Global Implementation Support Team which recommended a revised mandate and terms of reference. The Independent Review recommended that

*“The Terms of Reference should not stand alone, but will be further refined and informed by a logical framework and work plan to be developed following the outcome of the 23rd GIST meeting.”*

4. Subsequent to the 21<sup>st</sup> meeting, the PCB bureau approved the revised mandate and terms of reference in early 2008. On the basis of this approval the Global Implementation Support Team developed a workplan for its 2008 activities.

## WORKPLAN AND REVIEW

5. As a part of its 2008 workplan the Global Implementation Support Team undertook an End of the Year Review of the Annual Workplan (see Annex 1). The Review examined the extent to which GIST has responded to its mandate, as articulated in its three overall objectives.
6. **Objective One: *strengthened technical support***. Establish a forum for sharing real time information on major TA providers; identifying gaps in TA provision; responding collaboratively to TA needs; and advocating for consistency on approaches and tools.
7. **Key Achievements:** The Coordinating AIDS Technical Support (CoATS) database was launched October 3, 2008 (<http://coats.unaids.org>). CoATS is a practical tool for countries to monitor technical support. It facilitates greater accountability and country ownership of technical support by providing a clear picture of activities. The database indicates who is asking for the support, who is paying for it, who is supplying it and who is the consultant carrying it out and when, where the gaps for TS are etc. Seven countries are now using CoATS as part of their wider technical

support management. An additional five countries have indicated an interest in being a part of the second wave of the rollout in the coming months.

8. **Objective Two:** Ensure the provision of periodic expert analysis in the provision and coordination of technical support to countries for development of GF proposals and program implementation
9. **Key Achievements:** To better understand the realities of technical support needs, obstacles and coordination at the country level, GIST commissioned two studies over the course of the year.
  - The first study was a comprehensive review of ongoing and recently completed studies of Technical Support to AIDS programme implementation. The report, *A Rapid Review of the Available Literature of Studies of Technical Support for AIDS Programs*, includes more than 40 reviews and evaluations related to technical support and technical support providers.
  - The second *Study on Technical Assistance and Technical Support to Global Fund Grant Implementation at Country Level* explored key issues around technical support to country partner on issues ranging from Global Fund proposal writing through implementation of Global Fund grants. The study drew overall lessons from a series of case studies carried out in nine countries.
  - Apart from these studies, GIST focused on technical support gaps for civil society and brought together key civil society representatives to present challenges from the field and ways forward.
  - These studies have provided better understanding of technical support issues from a country perspective and the findings and recommendations from these studies have contributed to the UNAIDS TS strategy.
10. **Objective Three:** Serve as an interface to bring information of systemic country implementation bottlenecks and TA issues to the attention of constituent members.
11. **Key Achievements:** The GIST has been a conscientious and practical forum for information exchange among members. Partly this has been due to formalizing what has already been an informal network of sharing country information among its members; partly the newly established CoATS is contributing to this sharing of data and addressing information gaps, developing joint missions and planning to address implementation bottlenecks at the country level.
12. The conclusions of the review are below:
  - Deliverables are reasonably on target for 2008.
  - The Global Implementation Support Team brings together United Nations agencies, major donors, the Global Fund and civil society to discuss and seek solutions to systemic issues and obstacles in the efficient and effective provision of technical assistance to countries in their response to the AIDS epidemic

13. The Global Implementation Support Team has effectively played its role as articulated by the 2007 Independent Review:

“Its role is to oversee (rather than doing it itself) the enhancement of coordination of, and timely information about, technical support at the global level. This will support countries by increasing their access to a greater range technical support providers and will reduce duplication of TS and increase relevance timeliness and quality of TS provided to countries.”

14. In its oversight role, the Global Implementation Support Team has raised and addressed many issues regarding the coordination and alignment of technical support at the global, regional and country levels. GIST has actively participated and contributed to the consultations and development of the UNAIDS Technical Support Strategy.

**ANNEX 1**

# **Global Implementation Support Team 2008 End of year review of the Annual Workplan**

*February 2009*

## **Introduction:**

Established in response to the Global Task Team (GTT) recommendation<sup>1</sup> to address emerging bottlenecks affecting the implementation of Global Fund grants at country level, the Global Implementation Support Team (GIST) continues to evolve striving to maximise impact and efficient use of resources. Responding to the findings of the external review<sup>2</sup> undertaken in 2007 the Terms of Reference for GIST were reformulated and the scope and work reoriented. The ensuing new terms of reference and modus operandi were endorsed by GIST members in January 2008 (See Annex 1). The 2008 Workplan is the first to reflect the re-alignment of the GIST and focuses on three broad objectives:

**Objective One:** Establish a forum for: Sharing real time information on major TA providers; Identifying gaps in TA provision; Responding collaboratively to TA needs; and Advocating for consistency on approaches and tools

**Objective Two:** Ensure the provision of periodic expert analysis in the provision and coordination of technical support to countries for development of GF proposals and program implementation

**Objective Three:** Serve as an interface to bring information of systemic country implementation bottlenecks and TA issues to the attention of constituent members.

Emphasizing accountability, the workplan structure defines clear outputs with accompanying indicators, targets and timeline and activities clarifying how the output is to be achieved. Built into the workplan are both mid-term and end of year reviews, which have both been executed by GIST members. The mid-term review was completed as an agenda and discussion item at the 26<sup>th</sup> GIST meeting in Toronto, Canada in September 2008. During the same meeting a working group (GIST Secretariat, PEPfAR, AIDS Alliance, WHO and UNAIDS Secretariat) was established to complete the end-of-year review in early 2009. Financial status of expenditures can be found in Annex 2.

## **Key Findings of the Review**

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<sup>1</sup> Recommendation 3.2 (GTT 2005): Multilateral institutions and international partners would:

- *Assist national stakeholders to convene, under the umbrella of the national AIDS coordinating authority, task-specific teams for problem-solving and concerted action on monitoring and evaluation, procurement and supply management, technical support needs, and human resource capacity development.*
- *The joint UN system-Global Fund team will meet regularly to help address problems identified by country-level stakeholders.*
- *The joint UN system-Global Fund team will identify good practices and disseminate them together with the lessons learned to support countries' efforts to scale up their AIDS programmes.*

<sup>2</sup> Moodie, R., The Nossal Institute for Global Health, University of Melbourne, in collaboration with: HLSP London:

Report to the Global Implementation Support Team, October 2007.  
[http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/200710\\_gist\\_review\\_finalreport\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2008/200710_gist_review_finalreport_en.pdf)

The review findings are structured by Objective with an analysis of achievements, issues, and challenges and concluding with recommendations for future directions of the GIST in relation to the Objective. Results of the review, elaborated in this section, are expected to inform the 2009 GIST Workplan which is slated to be finalized at the 28<sup>th</sup> GIST meeting in March 2009.

**Objective One: Establish a forum for: Sharing real time information on major TA providers; Identifying gaps in TA provision; Responding collaboratively to TA needs; and Advocating for consistency on approaches and tools**

For clarity of review, the review of this objective is presented in its two parts:

**A. Establish a forum for sharing real-time information on major technical assistance (TA) providers; Identify gaps in TA provision; Respond collaboratively to TA needs**

*Achievements:*

On October 3, UNAIDS issued a press release on the launch of the Coordinating AIDS Technical Support (CoATS) database at <http://coats.unaids.org>. UNAIDS described CoATS as a “practical tool for countries to monitor technical support.” UNAIDS Technical and Operational Support Department Director Tim Martineau stated the following:

*‘CoATS facilitates greater accountability and country ownership of technical support by providing a clear picture of activities. The database will indicate who is asking for the support, who is paying for it, who is supplying it and who is the consultant carrying it out and when.’*

The aim of CoATS is to:

- Facilitate access by country partners to timely and quality assured technical support
- Encourage coordination of technical support between providers and users with increased accountability for results
- Facilitate collaboration and exchange of information on technical support activities at global, regional, and country level

The database can be searched by the following categories:

- Country
- Provider
- Activity type
- Recipient
- Funder
- Status
- Start and end dates

The following GIST member-organizations have provided data on technical support:



- Civil Society Action Team (CSAT)
- German Technical Cooperation (GTZ)
- The Global Fund to Fights AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund)
- International Center for Technical Cooperation (ICTC)
- International HIV/AIDS Alliance
- President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR)
- UNAIDS Secretariat
- U.N. Children’s Fund (UNICEF)
- U.N. Population Fund (UNFPA)
- U.N. Development Program (UNDP)
- World Bank
- World Health Organization (WHO)

The resulting information can be generated as reports and exported as PDF documents or as Excel spreadsheets.

UNAIDS distributed a CoATS brochure at the UNAIDS Program Coordinating Board (PCB) meeting in December 2008 in Geneva. Anecdotal evidence indicates that the

Indicator	Target	Progress to-date
# of TA providers available on web-based database	June 2008, 15 TS providers invited, members of and actively entering data in the database.	Sixteen providers, including all the GIST members and the four TSFs, were invited to provide data. Inputs received from 12 entities encompassing both direct provision of TA and funding support for provision of TA (e.g. consultants).
# of TA requests from country partners available on web-based database	100 requests, in addition to existing historical data (1 year) entered, by December 2008	As of 31 December 2008 the database included 255 entries.

database has been well received.

**Issues:**

In the [press release](#), UNAIDS noted the following:

Many countries require quality and timely technical support to plan, budget, implement and monitor their AIDS programmes effectively and efficiently. While the demand for technical support has increased, the number of providers has also grown dramatically resulting at times in competition, duplication and increased transaction costs for countries using these services.

**Challenges:**

The success and sustainability of the CoATs requires commitment and ownership at the country level. To catalyze country level action and ownership of this new tool, GIST will provide funding to support to an initial ten ‘roll-out’ countries in using

CoATS to monitor their technical support activities (including plans). The countries targeted for the first phase of the roll-out had other technical support coordinating initiatives ongoing. They included: Bangladesh, Burkina Faso, Cambodia, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Tanzania, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zambia.

To this effect, on October 16, Tim Martineau, UNAIDS Technical and Operational Support Department Director, sent out a letter to the UNAIDS Country Coordinators (UCCs) in the above countries informing them that:

- UNAIDS anticipates that each roll-out country would require a technical officer at country level to collect and enter the relevant data as well as be the focal point vis-à-vis other technical support providers
- GIST has approved approximately \$10,000 per roll-out country to support the consolidation phase of the CoATS roll-out
- The GIST Secretariat located at UNAIDS Secretariat, Geneva will continue to provide additional support as is required

Many GIST members sent similar letters to their field staff requesting their help and support for the roll-out. The UCCs in five countries (Bangladesh, Cambodia, Tanzania, Kenya, and Guyana) have reported that they are in discussions with national AIDS authorities and other country partners around implementation, linking the rollout of the CoATS to technical support plans. Ethiopia, Burkina Faso and Haiti are rolling out independent of any technical support plan development. Ukraine and Vietnam asked to be included in the second phase of the roll out. It is expected that CoATS will be rolled out more widely following the consolidation phase.

***Future Directions:***

The GIST has discussed how to a next-generation CoATS or CoATS 2.0. In particular, some GIST members and other interested parties have expressed interest in an “eBay-like” model. The GIST will further discuss specific functionalities of CoATS 2.0 and a draft concept note is attached.

**B. Advocate for consistency on approaches and tools**

***Achievements:***

GIST developed the ‘minimum standards’ principles of engagement and code of conduct in provision of technical support. In May 2008, the GIST formally released a set of *Principles for Technical Support* ([http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual/2008/gist\\_technical\\_support\\_poster\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual/2008/gist_technical_support_poster_en.pdf)) outlining basic principles as well as addressing the responsibilities of both users and providers of technical support. Available in English, Spanish and French, the Principles have been widely distributed amongst the GIST member organizations, at the 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico, and uploaded onto several websites including those of UNAIDS and the Global Fund.

Indicator	Target	Progress to-date
<p>Minimum standards in provision of technical support available, signed off by GIST member institutions and disseminated.</p>	<p>April 2008, Minimum Standards agreed and signed off by GIST member institutions; Published in 3 languages; June 2008, Officially launched at AIDS event (eg. Implementers meeting).</p>	<p>Principles of Technical Support completed in three languages (English, French, Spanish) and available on multiple websites including UNAIDS, Global Fund and UNFPA.</p> <p>Principles have been widely distributed by GIST members including distribution through list serves, and at the August 2008 International AIDS Conference in Mexico.</p> <p>Principles were made available as a background document to the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board Thematic Session December 2008 where rapporteur's report (Panel 1: Lessons from Technical Support and the implications of National Strategy Applications) included the need to define the principles of technical support (national leadership, ownership, meeting country needs).</p>

***Issues:***

The *Principles for Technical Support* are divided into three sections:

- Principles for all
- Roles and responsibilities of technical support providers
- Roles and responsibilities of technical support users

The Principles for all recognize/affirm/reconfirm/commit to the following:

- Requests for technical support are not an admission of failure or poor performance but rather that technical support is a valuable and measurable investment in countries' national, regional, and local HIV responses, bringing added value to program implementation
- Technical support needs are both organizational (including issues of governance, leadership, and management) and thematic (including provision of HIV prevention, treatment, care, and support programs)
- Technical support aims to build long-term, sustainable capacity and as such is not a one-off event but rather is a continuing, cyclical process, requiring long-term and flexible investment, while recognizing the need for one-off support in specific instances
- The provision of technical support must not only be timely but also forward looking, anticipating future technical support needs, and the time of both technical

support users and providers is itself a resource that when well invested will contribute to building long-term, sustainable capacity

- Technical support should be provided in keeping with the cultural context, particularly in terms of language issues, and the HIV epidemic itself and should evolve in relation to the growth of countries, organizations, and communities
- Supporting horizontal learning processes such as South–South cooperation, organizational twinning, and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, based on learning from experience, provides a foundation for real independence, inner confidence, and sustainable capacity development; horizontal learning can be supported as both a method and a methodology
- Responding to HIV is an indigenous, locally driven process, requiring support for epidemiologically informed, evidence-informed, and locally developed solutions, which can be supported by linking local processes to wider learning bilaterally, regionally and internationally
- National dialogue, leadership, and commitment are crucial to ensuring that the demand and supply of technical support are coordinated and harmonized at all steps of the process, including identifying and prioritizing technical support needs; identifying collective strengths; developing appropriate terms of reference; planning and budgeting for technical support activities; implementing, monitoring, and evaluating technical support; following up recommendations; and strengthening the provision of future technical support
- Involving people living with HIV and women, young people, sexual minorities, and other key populations at higher risk in identifying technical support needs and involve them as technical support providers by providing resources and supporting sustained efforts to build the capacities of these individuals and their organizations as technical support providers
- All parties are mutually accountable for ensuring that the provision of technical support is inclusive, transparent, and cost-effective
- Collecting and making publicly available, in easily understandable formats, complete data on technical support expenditure and outcomes, in accordance with the policies and operating rules of technical support funders and providers and those of donors concerning the publication of information
- The “Three Ones” principles, the Rome Declaration on Harmonization, and the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness by providing and implementing technical support in line with them
- Technical support often involves extensive and expensive travel and endeavor to reduce this through measures such as using consultants from the country or region, telephone conferencing, video links, and other means

***Challenges:***

Challenges remain for broad institutionalization and realization of Principles amongst partners.

***Future Directions:***

The *Principles for Technical Support* has been translated into French and Spanish and needs to be translated into other official UN languages at a minimum. It is hoped that the inclusion of the Principles on the Global Fund Website under their reference materials will be one of the factors that encourage countries to openly include technical assistance requirements in proposals and within national strategies. While they have been distributed at the International AIDS Conference in August 2008 in Mexico City, and discussed at the Thematic Segment before the UNAIDS PCB meeting, additional promotion and monitoring of use is needed. One action that the 2008 end of year review working group has suggested is the inclusion of queries in an external survey that addresses use and usefulness of this product. The external survey on GIST tools and support is to be included in the GIST 2009 workplan.

**Objective Two: Ensure the provision of periodic expert analysis in the provision and coordination of technical support to countries for development of GF proposals and program implementation**

***Achievements:***

To better understand the realities of technical support needs, obstacles and coordination at the country level, GIST commissioned two studies, led or executed by external consultants, over the course of the year. The first consultant was commissioned to conduct comprehensive review of ongoing and recently completed studies of Technical Support to AIDS programme implementation. The ensuing report is entitled: *A Rapid Review of the Available Literature of Studies of Technical Support for AIDS Programs*. The available literature includes more than 40 reviews and evaluations related to technical support and technical support providers. The aim of the review was to:

- Provide a clearer understanding of recent analyses of technical support demand and provision
- Explore the extent to which technical support mechanisms exist independently and to what extent they form an coherent “architecture”
- Provide background analysis for the UNAIDS PCB meeting

The second *Study on Technical Assistance and Technical Support to Global Fund Grant Implementation at Country Level* was executed through the commissioning of a lead consultant through a Technical Support Facility (TSF)/South East Asia. The lead consultant was supported by the work of national consultants who to completed each respective country level component. This study aims to carefully describe to key issues around technical support from Global Fund proposal writing through implementation of Global Fund grants. The study examines the following nine countries: Cambodia, Ethiopia, Haiti, India, Peru, Senegal, Ukraine, Vietnam, and Zambia.

Study objectives focused on:

- **Assessment:** To document provision of Technical Support by various providers to national AIDS programs to support Global Fund grant implementation.
- **Demand:** To document the Technical Support needs of implementation of national AIDS programs implementing Global Fund grants at different stages of implementation.
- **Supply:** To document the availability, accessibility, pricing and distribution of Technical Support for Global Fund Grant implementation.
- **Recommendations:** To recommend practical solutions to problems identified during the study,

Specifically, stated objectives were to:

- Evolve and recommend practical solutions to problems, deficiencies, and gaps identified in demand, supply, structures, programs, and policies relating to technical assistance and technical support to Global Fund grant implementation.
- Study and document the availability, accessibility, pricing, and distribution of technical support for Global Fund grant implementation from different sources in each sample country.
- Study and document the technical support needs of implementation of national AIDS programs implementing Global Fund grants at different stages of implementation and at different levels and the extent to which such needs are evident and felt by the program managements in each sample country.
- Collect information, document, and assess the different instances of technical assistance provided to national AIDS programs by different providers since 2007 to support Global Fund grant implementation in a sample of countries across the world.

Key questions included in the study key questions were:

- How well are country stakeholders able to articulate what technical assistance they need? How easily are country stakeholders able to access technical assistance when needed?
- What determines price and the payment process? Who is driving it? What are the caps and ceilings? What are the official rates, and what are the "going" rates?
- Is the technical assistance provided by the U.N. family adequate and appropriate? Are the different UNAIDS Cosponsors providing adequate technical assistance in their areas of lead as per the UNAIDS Division of Labor? What is the quality of technical support provided by UNAIDS? How effectively is UNAIDS able to play a role in coordinating the U.N. family? Are the country partners satisfied with the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of the technical support received?

- Is the technical assistance provided by key bilaterals and international nongovernmental organizations (INGOs) adequate and appropriate? Are the country partners satisfied with the quality, timeliness, and effectiveness of the technical support received?
- What are the main obstacles (both supply- and demand-related) to accessing and effectively using technical assistance in countries?
- Has technical assistance helped countries build national capacities and achieve sustainable progress?

The lead consultant presented emerging findings based on four countries (Cambodia, Ethiopia, Peru, and Ukraine) to the GIST on November 24, 2008 during its 27<sup>th</sup> meeting.

Preliminary key findings include:

- Inability of countries to clearly identify needs and seek appropriate technical support
- CCMs are often ineffective in articulation of technical support needs for implementation
- Technical support is mainly supply driven
- Many complaints recorded on specific technical support through various Technical Support Facilities (TSFs) even in countries where UN support is much respected.
- Technical support by co-sponsors of UNAIDS such as WHO, World Bank, ILO & UNICEF are respected in their traditional support areas everywhere.
- The satisfaction levels of technical support by Bilateral Donors and international NGOs were reported to be high
- Short-term consultants are often not available or accountable when problems arise or questions asked after their consultancy.
- UN staff (WHO/UNAIDS) spend considerable time on proposal development and feel that this is often not well recognized or appreciated.
- The Global Fund proposal process is perceived as too complicated which creates an artificial demand for consultants.
- Consultants are better suited to respond to short term needs and often do not result in capacity building of the principle recipients and does not facilitate sustainability

The final report is expected in the first half of 2009.

UNAIDS Secretariat has supported a number of countries in developing national Technical Support Plans based on technical support needs assessments. Based on the experience to date (10 countries have been supported to date and have developed costed technical support plans) UNAIDS has developed a TS planning guidelines.

The TS plans have also been an excellent platform to promote effective coordination of technical support at the country level and GIST has provided the CoATS as an effective accountability tool for monitoring the commitments made by the different international partners and in reporting on progress. UNAIDS has also built capacities of national and regional experts (consultants) who are available to support scale up of TS planning to other countries.

GIST also provided support to the establishment of Civil Society Action Team (CSAT), a coordinating mechanism to mobilize civil society involvement in the Global Fund programs with the focus on key affected populations. GIST helped establish long-term partnerships between 6 CSAT regional hubs and technical support providers. In 2008, through CSAT activities, organizations and networks of key affected populations benefited from technical expertise and funding of UNAIDS Regional Support Teams (RST), Technical Support Facilities (TSF) International Center of Technical Cooperation (ICTC), GTZ Backup Initiative, and Grant Management Solutions (GMS)/USAID.

As a result of technical support to civil society received through coordination between GIST members, proposals with civil society participation were prepared and approved in Round 8 in Indonesia, Nicaragua, and Ghana. Key populations became represented on CCMs in Indonesia, Nicaragua and Bolivia. New proposals are being prepared for Round 9 with strong civil society involvement in Cambodia, Vietnam, Philippines, India, China, Malaysia, Uzbekistan, Kyrgyzstan, Guinea Bissau, Egypt, Ethiopia, Uganda, and Ecuador. New initiatives started include mentorship programs in Nigeria for orphaned and vulnerable children supported by UNICEF.

Indicator	Target	Progress to-date
Country studies/analytical pieces result in improved coordination on provision of technical assistance	April 2008, ToRS for max 3 studies presented to GIST, Dec 2008, studies completed and presented to GIST;	2 studies commissioned: <i>A Rapid Review of the Available Literature of Studies of Technical Support for AIDS Programs</i> completed. <i>Study on Technical Assistance and Technical Support to Global Fund Grant Implementation at Country Level</i> initial finding presented to the GIST in November 2008. Final edits completed in Q1 of 2009.
Report finalized, presented to PCB and disseminated	Dec 2008, report finalised.	First draft of the report was made available to the PCB. Further work to finalise the document is being undertaken.
	June 2008, Mid-term Review of Progress; and December 2008, End of Year Review	Mid-term Review completed. 2008 end of year review completed.



# of countries where national technical support plans are developed	By December 08, at least 10 countries have developed national technical support plans	10 countries have developed multi-stakeholder national TS plans
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***Issues:***

Albeit the reviews and evaluations assessed were found to be disparate in design and focus, the analysis of the studies nevertheless identified four key issues:

- Short-term technical support often prioritized over long-term technical support
  - Many technical support providers have focused on short-term needs both through necessity (i.e. responding to immediate country concerns) and in part because these are easier to fulfil.
  - Efforts to assist countries in strengthening their long-term programmatic capacities have yet to be undertaken.
  - There remains a need for technical support providers to develop a coherent strategy for long term country level capacity development, including how (and by whom) short term technical support is provided.
- Lack of clear indicators for measuring technical assistance i.e. input, outcome and impact indicators:
  - Technical support providers should develop, negotiate and agree outcome indicators for the provision of technical assistance in a number of areas, including monitoring and evaluation, strategic planning, civil society organizations programme implementation and capacity strengthening.
  - There is a need to develop a professional quality assurance system for technical support providers.
- Joint activities by, and partnerships and synergies between technical support providers is insufficient:
  - Operationalization of the UNAIDS Division of Labour framework for the harmonized and coordinated provision of technical support to countries is lacking at all levels.
  - Where partnerships do exist, they are more the result of accident rather than by design or negotiation.
  - Increased efforts should be undertaken to operationalize the UNAIDS Division of Labour at the country level.
- The so-called ‘under-funded mandate’ and how this impacts upon technical support providers.
  - The Global Fund unlikely to provide direct funding stream for providers of technical support.
  - The Global Fund should reemphasize that countries are encouraged to submit proposals with a comprehensive budget for technical support.

- Technical support providers need to be creative in how they manage and fund their contribution to the Global Fund's efforts to scale up interventions to support universal access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.
- Technical support providers should encourage and support countries to submit grant proposals with comprehensive budget allocations for technical support.
- Technical support providers could consider realigning their programmes, including their technical assistance programmes, so that they are supportive of Global Fund efforts to empower countries to scale up and implement effective and efficient AIDS programmes.

Issues presented in the 9 country study, which are in line with the previous study noted, included:

- Countries and Country Coordinating Mechanisms (CCMs) are often unable to clearly identify technical support needs
- Technical support is often supply driven
- Concerns about quality of technical support through various TSFs
- Short-term technical support often prioritized over long-term technical support
- Short-term consultants are often not available or accountable when problems arise or questions asked after their consultancy.
- The Global Fund proposal process is perceived as too complicated
- Lack of clear indicators for measuring technical assistance
- Collaboration and synergies between technical support providers is insufficient;
- Lack of appreciation of technical support contributions of UN agencies in proposal developments and implementation

National TS plans have been developed and brings different technical support partners together and enables proactive planning and management of TS. However, effective implementation of these plans require significant capacity development of country partners to lead this. Given that a significant part of technical support provided by international partners focuses on short term support with limited capacity development investment, it is critical for GIST to develop guidance on long term capacity strengthening of country partners.

**Challenges:**

Broad challenges include:

- How can we help countries better define specific technical support needs?
- How can we assure that technical support is demand driven?
- What can be done to increase the availability high quality, long-term technical support?

- What mechanisms exist to facilitate collaboration and synergies between technical support providers?
- How can we promote capacity development of principle recipients, National AIDS Commissions and National AIDS Programs to clearly articulate both short and long-term technical support needs and identify appropriate technical support providers?
- What can be done to simplify the Global Fund application process and to develop capacity of countries to prepare robust proposals?
- How to assure adequate long-term funding to UN agencies to provide ongoing technical support to countries for Global Fund proposal development and program implementation?

Specific to the 9 country study, the consultants did not find instances of technical support specific to Global Fund implementation in most of the study countries. The consultants needed to include indirect instances where technical support provided to national programs also benefited Global Fund grants. Issues noted include:

- National programs in some study countries have limited ability to identify needs for and seek technical assistance
- Technical support in all study countries is still supply-driven
- Technical support needs often are not forecast accurately at the stage of developing proposals
- Local consultant rates in all study countries are far lower than U.N. rates which in turn are lower than international rates

***Future Directions:***

As noted previously, the GIST is awaiting the final draft of the *Study on Technical Assistance and Technical Support to Global Fund Grant Implementation at Country Level*. The GIST will discuss the final study and incorporate the lessons learned in drafting the report and the conclusions in it into its 2009 workplan. However, it is already clear from the studies that the GIST should take into consideration:

- Improved coordination needed to assist countries to clearly articulate both short and long-term technical support needs and to identify appropriate providers of technical support.
- Need to critically examine strengths and weaknesses of using consultants in providing technical support, especially long-term.
- Efforts are needed to develop technical support capacity at country and regional levels to assure a sustainable response.
- Innovative funding mechanisms are needed to assure the availability of long term, high quality technical support at the country level.

It is proposed that the GIST review the guidance note for TS planning and promote active engagement of the country offices of the GIST members in developing and implementing multi-stakeholder national TS plans. GIST may also consider working closely with the GF Board, in promoting development of costed technical support plans as a requirement of the Global Fund proposal.

**Objective Three: Serve as an interface to bring information of systemic country implementation bottlenecks and TA issues to the attention of constituent members.**

*Achievements*

The GIST has been a conscientious and practical forum for information exchange among members. Partly this has been due to formalizing what has already been an informal network of sharing country information among its members; partly the newly established CoATS (see above) is contributing to this sharing of data.

Two specific output indicators were agreed as part of the GIST 2008 workplan. These are:

- a) The number of meetings held annually with quorum attendance (target: quarterly meetings)
  - In 2008 three meetings were held. They took place on 30 April 2008 (Geneva), 11-12 September 2008 (Toronto) and 24-25 November 2008 (New York). Minutes of these meetings are available. A fourth meeting was decided against since the final 2008 meeting had happened in December 2007 and since most deliverables were well on track and would not have benefitted from an additional face-to-face meeting. All meetings had quorum attendance, with few absences/apologies.
  - In addition, frequent meetings were held in person and by teleconference between the GIST Secretariat and the Chair and Vice-Chair, as well as members serving on various subcommittees (e.g., the study review group).
- b) The number of Southern participants attending GIST meetings (target: three new organizations identified and invited to join the GIST)
  - In the course of 2008, Dr. Carlos Passarelli from the Brazil-based International Centre for Technical Cooperation on HIV/AIDS was invited to join the GIST as a representative of a Southern organization.
  - Full expansion was discussed yet held pending the PCB decision on continuation of the GIST

Indicator	Target	Progress to-date
# meetings held annually, with quorum attendance.	Quarterly meetings	First quarter meeting deferred given proximity to December 2007 meeting and targets met. Remaining meetings held in April, September and December 2008. Quorum achieved at each meeting.
# of Southern participants attending GIST Meetings	GIST members identify 3 new organisations and invite them to join the GIST.	Following the addition of International Centre for Technical Cooperation on HIV/AIDS action on further expansion membership held pending PCB decision on continuation of GIST. Interim decision to invite participant(s) from the South to individual meetings.

### *Issues*

- The GIST had a number of discussions about additional members that could potentially be invited (e.g., African Union, SADEC) but a final decision on invitees was deferred to 2009 given the uncertainty on the continuation of the GIST which would be resolved only following the UNAIDS PCB meeting in December 2008.

### *Challenges*

In 2009, the issue of Southern participations needs to be tackled.

### *Future Directions*

The 2009 workplan will address the unmet targets above and outline a concrete plan for increasing geographical representativeness of the GIST.

### **Conclusions:**

- Deliverables are reasonably on target for 2008.
- The GIST remains a unique opportunity to bring together United Nations agencies, major donors and civil society to discuss and seek solutions to systemic issues and obstacles in the efficient and effective provision of technical assistance to countries in their response to the AIDS epidemic.

## **Annex 1**

### **Terms of Reference**

#### **GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT TEAM (GIST)**

**Goal:** Strengthen and support the implementation of sound national strategies towards Universal Access to HIV prevention, treatment, care and support.

**Purpose:** A highly cohesive and collaborative group of key agencies working together and holding each other mutually accountable to harmonise and coordinate technical support to address implementation bottlenecks, disseminate lessons learnt and identify good practices.

#### **Functions:**

1. Establish a forum for:
  - a. Sharing real time information on major providers of technical support
  - b. Identifying gaps in technical support
  - c. Responding collaboratively to technical support needs
  - d. Advocating for consistency on approaches and tools for the provision of technical support
2. Ensure the provision of periodic expert analyses in the provision and coordination of Technical Support
3. Serve as an interface to bring information on systemic country implementation bottlenecks and technical support issues to the attention of constituent members

#### **Operational Procedures**

##### *Modus Operandi*

The GIST will operate as a task-focussed group that has an important coordination rather than direct operational role.

Its work is based on an annual workplan. The GIST will undertake a yearly assessment against indicators of success, based on the workplan and decide on its continuation, closure or readjustment.

The GIST's role is to strengthen coordination of, and timely information about, technical support at the global level. Regular face-to-face meetings will be held 3-4 times per year. Discussions on particular issues can be held among the whole group or among sub groups by video-conferencing on an "as needed" basis. GIST will work through its member organisations.

## ***GIST Structure***

### *Composition*

*The GIST comprises: UN organizations, bi-laterals, civil society organisations, Global Fund and other key partners as necessary.*

UNAIDS provides the Secretariat.

### ***GIST Secretariat***

The GIST Secretariat comprises the Chair, the Vice-Chair and the UNAIDS Secretariat. The members of the GIST select the Chair and the Vice-Chair every two years.

The GIST will report regularly to the GTT Oversight Reference Group.

### ***GIST Chair (supported by a half-time adviser)***

#### *Role:*

1. Works in close association with the GIST Secretariat to convene and chair meetings of GIST.
2. Provides leadership and vision, including identifying key priorities for the GIST.
3. Facilitates key communication and information sharing among members and external partners.
4. Ensures progress on defined GIST functions.

### ***GIST Vice Chair***

#### *Role*

1. Works in close association with the Chair, to convene and chair meetings of GIST.
2. Is a member of the GIST Secretariat and contributes to setting the agenda for meetings.
3. Ensures progress on defined GIST functions.

### ***The GIST Secretariat (supported by a coordinator in the UNAIDS***

#### *Secretariat)*

#### *Role:*

1. Facilitates information sharing in advance of and between GIST meetings
2. Supports the GIST and follows up on any decisions made, including leading the management of any analysis required.
3. Provides support to the Chair and Vice-Chair.
4. Manages all budget activities through the UNAIDS Secretariat.

## Annex 2: 2008 GIST Annual Workplan

Objectives	Expected Output			Activities	Quarter				Required inputs	Funding	Focal Point	Partners		Expenditures	Notes
	Definition	Indicator	Target		Description	1	2	3		4		Amount	GIST		
Establish a forum for: Sharing real time information on major TA providers; Identifying gaps in TA provision; Responding collaboratively to TA needs; and Advocating for consistency on approaches and tools	I. Maintained and improved TA information sharing tool responsive to end-users (TA providers and countries) needs	# of TA providers available on web-based database	June 2008, 15 TS providers invited, members of and actively entering data in the database.	1. Develop user-friendly web-based database on providers of TA, detailing specific areas of support including contact details.	x	x			Staff time, Consultant contract	\$350,000	UNAIDS Secretariat	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP	UNAIDS Cosponsors, other donors	\$ 78,000.00	APW Qim + Amendment
		# of TA requests from country partners available on web-based database	100 requests, in addition to existing historical data (1 year) entered, by December 2008	2. Populate the database by continuously collecting and organizing the requests for technical support (received by major TA providers) on the user-friendly web-based database, and that they use and promote the database.			x	x	Staff time	\$50,000	UNAIDS Secretariat	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP	Governments, UNAIDS Cosponsors, NGOs, donors including foundations	\$ 48,000.00	Internal commitment prepared in January 2009
	II. Advocating for consistency on approaches and tools for the provision of technical support	Minimum standards in provision of technical support available signed off by GIST member institutions and disseminated.	April 2008, Minimum Standards agreed and signed off by GIST member institutions; Published in 3 languages; June 2008, Officially launched at AIDS event (eg. Implementers meeting).	3. Develop minimum standards/principles of engagement/code of conduct in provision of technical support.	x	x	x		Staff time/consultant contract	\$6,000	UNAIDS Secretariat	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs	\$ 2,619.00	- Poster in ENG, FR, SP - Shipment to Mexico
Ensure the provision of periodic expert analyses in the provision and coordination of TS.	III. Periodic expert analyses in the provision and coordination of technical support results in improved coordination of TS for GF grant implementation	Country studies/analytical pieces result in improved coordination on provision of technical assistance	April 2008, ToRS for max 3 studies presented to GIST, Dec 2008, studies completed and presented to GIST;	4. Prepare GIST members to commission studies on critical issues in the area of TA: e.g. capacity building;	x		x		GIST Agenda/ Consultant contract	\$150,000	GIST Chair/ GIST Members/ UNAIDS Secretariat	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs	\$ 161,200.00	TSF SEAP contract
		IV. Better understanding of systemic country implementation bottlenecks and technical support issues	Report finalized, presented to PCB and disseminated	Dec 2008, report finalised.	5. GIST Sec commissions State of the Art Report on TS in 2008			x	x	Consultant contract	\$22,000	GIST Chair/ GIST Sec	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP,	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs	\$ 5,550.00
			June 2008, Mid-term Review of Progress; and December 2008, End of Year Review	6. GIST to prepare mid-year and end-review of workplan		x		x	Staff time	\$50,000	GIST Chair/ GIST Sec	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP,	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs		



Objectives	Expected Output			Activities Description	Quarter				Required inputs	Funding	Focal Point	Partners		Expenditures	Notes	
	Definition	Indicator	Target		Amount	1	2	3		4		GIST	Others			
	V. Improved identification of technical support issues at the country level	# of countries where national technical support plans are developed	By December 08, at least 10 countries have developed national technical support plans	7. GIST members to advocate with their country offices to support the development of well-coordinated national technical support (TS) plans minimising duplication and promoting quality of TS.	x	x	x	x	Staff time	\$0	UNAIDS	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs			
Serve as an interface to bring information of systemic country implementation bottlenecks and TA issues to the attention of constituent members.	VI. Periodic meetings to facilitate collaboration and coordination between constituent members	# meetings held annually, with quorum attendance.	Quarterly meetings	8. Organize face to face GIST meetings to discuss progress and bottlenecks around TA	x	x	x	x	Staff time	\$45,000	GIST Chair/ GIST Secretariat	All GIST members	Country partners as needed	\$ 29,231.00	April and September meetings (travels and local costs).	
														\$ 31,142.00	November meeting (travel and local cost)	
	VII. Expanded membership to include Southern representation	# of Southern participants attending GIST Meetings	GIST members identify 3 new organizations and invite them to join the GIST.	9. GIST members agree on a set of criteria for expanding the GIST, identify three organisations representing the global South and invite them to join the GIST.	x	x	x		Staff time	\$45,000	GIST Chair/ UNAIDS Sec	All GIST members; TSF, ASAP	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs			
	Travel Budget			GIST representation at Regional and International meetings/events.	x	x	x	x	Staff Time	\$100,000				\$ 1,880.00	CSAT Casablanca Meeting	
	GIST Secretariat Staffing			UNAIDS: P4, P3, G5. UNFPA: 50% P5	x	x	x	x	Staff time	\$600,000	UNAIDS	All GIST members	UNAIDS Cosponsors; Governments, NGOs	\$ 646,629.00	P-5 50%: \$159,500 P-4: \$376,000 P-3: \$111,129	
Interagency UBW										\$1,418,000	TOTAL		\$1,004,251.00			
<b>Total Funded</b>										<b>\$1,418,000</b>						

**Annex 3:  
CoATS 2 Concept Note**

**Technical Support Marketplace**  
Concept Note  
January 2009

**What ails the AIDS TA market?**

The AIDS Short Term Technical Assistance market, sometimes referred to as the consulting market, is relatively new and is unorganized. It consists of a large number of players (few firms, but largely individuals) across diverse language settings. It is unregulated, un-organized with limited networking as market players. There are no entry or exit barriers. Information is not freely available; there is an inherent incentive to not-share information.

Information is guarded and used for profit / survival - little or no information on rates and costs of consultants are available and transparency is limited. It is possible for the same consultant to charge different rates (with very little logic) to the same organization – the only focus being maximization of returns. There are no track records, no histories of either the clients or the consultants. There are fee-bands fixed by some organizations – many times these have not been effective and often are not adhered to. No transparency on load of consultants or how many assignments are running parallel. With inadequate information, it becomes difficult for organizations to verify efficacy; transparency, by design or default is minimal resulting in duplication of efforts.

There are thousands of registries, even amongst the UN agencies. These registries are built with enthusiasm but are difficult to maintain and are therefore not well maintained. Every agency re-invents service procurement methods, without learning lessons from each other. There is sometimes duplication of TA as there is no information on who has done what and where in a single place. Choice of consultants is based on less than optimum practices, largely through word of mouth and favorites.

Processes put in place by several agencies have tended to become mere bureaucratic processes not necessarily helpful in identifying the right person for the right job. Having a wide panel and making a choice has been difficult in most cases. There are no quality checks or certifications as there is no certification agency, no track record which is readily accessible and no standard protocols on measuring and reporting quality. Individuals and firms can deliver poor quality services; can get hired again by same or different agencies. There are un-evolved and archaic methods of computing fees - Per day charges is the predominant payment method. There are difficulties in judging the days and it is a well known fact that agencies pad days, where rate top limits fixed.

The problems result in:

- Limited choices (of consultants)
- Constrained approaches
- Less than transparent processes
- Pricing, which is varied

· Quality which is varied

### **Objectives of initiative**

To connect the various players in TA Market in a level playing field, using online tools and partnerships with a view to improve the efficiency of the market to deliver better services and be accountable to stakeholders

### **Why UNAIDS?**

UNAIDS is seen (and operates as) an honest broker. It is however a key player interested in a level playing field and efficient market and does not gain or lose the same way as key clients or consultants will. It has infrastructure and mechanisms through the TSFs it has established and also experience of managing AIDS TA across various regions and countries.

## Architecture

The market initiative will have two components broadly - An online portal ([www.aidsta.org](http://www.aidsta.org)) and several offline supportive activities. The online portal itself will consist of:

1. **Consultant registry**, which will consist of individual web page for each consultant / firm and an exhaustive and largely standardized set of skill sets, supported by a search function (searchable on Knowledge, Skills, Certified, Uncertified, Years of experience, Geography, Language, Types of organizations worked with, Kind of work)
2. **Clients registry** - Individual web pages for each registered client, TA plans and funds available
3. **Job postings** - Current consulting assignments available, assignments contracted, Ongoing, Completed assignments
4. **Knowledge management** – Toolkits, Registry of reports / documentation, Discussion forums, Blogs, Travel & facilities, Wizard tools for consultancy management, Country data (one page per country), All relevant HIV data, CRIS data, UNGASS reports, all other relevant documents for the country
5. **Rating system** (feedback) – For both Consultants and Clients
6. **Certification system**, through a regional panel
7. **Capacity building initiatives** – Online and offline (Face to face), including courses for those who want to change their track of work into something new, Online mentors and gurus and links of other CB providers
8. **UN capacities and resources** – country by country mapping of expertise and resources available of relevant UNAIDS Cosponsors that relate to HIV (may expand to include TB, Malaria and health systems)

## How will it work -Principles, strategies and mechanics ?

### Principles

- a) Start virtuous cycle of information availability, usage and more information available, incentivise processes focusing on easy usage and gains.
- b) Start slowly, adopt a gathering moss approach
- c) Work simultaneously on demand and supply side
- d) Ensure value addition for both consultants and clients - Instant information, Transparent, Useful tools, Networking opportunities, Feedback / rating,

### References -consultants and clients

The success of the initiative will be based on its usage, leading to actual gains both to the clients and consultants, eventually leading to better quality work and increased transparency.

**Demand side (pull) strategies:** Advocate with (client) partners to:

- Register and advertise for jobs regularly and
- That they select consultants through this mechanism

- Encouraging their own consultants to migrate / register in new portal
- Make search easy and fruitful (both within and outside portal)

**Supply side (push) strategies** would be to:

- Popularize site through advertising for encouraging consultants to register – both Online and Offline
- Use multiplication and references methods (for example - Using address book of registered users to send further invites, Automatic subscriptions through partnerships with existing mechanisms like ‘Linked in’)
- Existing registries - push active participants for migration to new portal
- Keep initial registration very simple - later detailed updates possible
- Technical Assistance Fund – make it available online to subsidize partners who require TA but can’t afford to pay for it
- Promote as alternate to tendering

**Keeping it relevant, useful and top of mind**, through:

- Automated responses and nags for number of people who visited, updating, etc
- Summary updates to clients and consultants on key action
- Customized newsletter, based on interests
- For clients - new consultants registered in their area of interest, updated CVs
- For consultants - job postings, toolkits, capacity development, etc

**Rating System:**

*Consultant rating* will be voluntary - will happen only when consultant is ready to subject themselves to rating. It will be made possible in the initiative only for clients who used consultants and TA work available in database. Extreme ratings will have to be justified with detailed comments and extreme comments will pass through a panel which will review whether the rating is justified (prima facie). Ratings will be available only to clients who have used the portal to hire and ratings cannot be shared publicly - nor will it be posed publicly.

Consultant will also have access to the ratings (but not on their page - but over e-mail). There will be an appeal and adjudication process in place.

**Client rating** will be similar to the consultant rating, except that the parameters will be different (e.g. clarity on TOR, support provided, payment on time, etc). An arbitration panel consisting of select Clients, Academicians and Consultants, whose configuration will be revisited if there is conflict of interest.

**Certification**

This will also be voluntary for consultants and be based on standard courses / Capacity building efforts. There will be two types of certification:

- Specific skill sets - through an application, test and certification
- Course based

**Capacity development:**

Clients and others agencies can offer their courses on line, including advertisements for offline courses. A panel clears the courses that can be offered (for content, quality). Consultants who take up courses through the website will receive a certificate, which is added online to the consultant page.

### **Knowledge management**

This will be a key part of the initiative where UNAIDS will collect and inventory all toolkits of the clients and consultants. Credits for clients and consultants who add tools - search will push up their results first. Tips and tricks on assignments, travel, etc will be part of this section. There will also be a place for interaction among consultants. Contribution to blogs and helping other consultants earn 'brownie points' to push up search results

### **Revenue models:**

There are broadly two possibilities:

Option 1: completely free model, funded by UN and donor partners

Option 2: Self sufficient model

Under Option 2, fixed annual charges for clients, certification charges for consultants, announcements, capacity development revenues (online) will be sources of revenue. Much more work is required to understand sources, possibilities of revenues and expenditure.

### **Outcomes expected**

The outcomes expected from the initiative are:

- Reduced efforts of search
- Improved quality of services
- Higher % of right people doing the right job
- Increased choices of consultants with ratings and certifications
- Increased opportunities for consultants, particularly new ones
- Increased transparency in jobs, ratings, rates and track record
- Reduced duplication of efforts
- Increased sharing of information
- Contribute to knowledge management

### **Partners**

This initiative will be managed by UNAIDS on a partnership mode with the following types of partners:

Swasti – for their knowledge of TA markets, consultants and knowledge management. They have developed extensive set of tools for consulting market, particularly based on their partner organisation which has provided several thousand days of TA in 15 countries, over a period of 14 years.

Technology – Possible partners include Google, Yahoo, Face book and Linked in

Potential clients – these are partnerships which will be upfront be involved in design and roll out of the initiative and will include GFATM, World Bank, DFID, GTZ, UN system and the TSFs. The initiative will not be limited to these partners but an open invitation will be for all other players (small and big) Consultants - Programme practitioners, Large / small firms, Existing forums of consultants (HR, Economist)

For the rating / certification and arbitration, partnerships will be formed with select clients, select consultants (through online election), academic institutions, organizations with arbitration background

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