

# Technical Guidance Note for Global Fund HIV Proposals



UNAIDS | World Health Organization | 2011

## Technical support and capacity development planning

### Introduction

In the past decade, a surge of commitment and funding has enabled countries to boost their HIV responses, but gains are fragile and country capacities must be developed in a range of core areas. The Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) vision of 'Zero New HIV infections, Zero Discrimination and Zero AIDS-Related Deaths' includes a focus on capacity development and comes at a time when the AIDS response is shifting 'from a sprint to a marathon'. Country ownership, health systems strengthening and sustainability are all key elements of capacity development.

Capacity development is the process by which countries, organizations, institutions and communities develop and improve their abilities to perform functions, solve problems, and set and achieve objectives in a sustained manner. Capacity development builds on lessons from decades of technical cooperation and goes beyond traditional technical assistance. The term 'technical support' refers to activities that contribute to a systematic, timely and demand-driven response to capacity needs at the country level. Technical support, unlike shorter-term technical assistance, helps individuals strengthen their specific areas of expertise, makes organizations more efficient, and helps to improve the implementation of the national AIDS response.

In support of national plans, UNAIDS has introduced the technical support planning process 'to identify national capacity needs and the technical support required to address key bottlenecks hampering implementation of the national strategic plan for AIDS'. This technical support planning process is being augmented to focus on capacity building, with the objective of achieving a sustained AIDS response.

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria recognizes the importance of capacity development as part of a sustainable response to AIDS. In the current Global Fund technical support planning process, technical assistance should address long-term local capacity-building needs and gaps and programme weaknesses, and should contribute to creating high-quality services. The Global Fund encourages applicants to include in their proposal a funding request for technical support aimed at strengthening implementation capacity and programme quality. Technical support plans need to be adapted to country contexts, disease burden and country needs.

### Purpose of this guidance note

This note provides guidance on capacity development and technical support plans in Round 11 proposals. Building upon the information provided by the Global Fund in its Round 11 guidelines, this document seeks to encourage countries to incorporate capacity-development activities in their Round 11 proposals and to introduce capacity building within their overall technical assistance and technical support planning. This note provides an overview to key capacity development components within HIV programming, highlights issues for consideration, and provides a list of resources to assist in planning capacity development. This note also provides guidance on how to develop a summary plan for technical support and capacity development for the Global Fund Round 11 proposal.

This guidance is intended to help Round 11 implementers, including principal recipients and subrecipients, to plan for technical support and capacity-development activities with the Global Fund Round 11 proposal.

## Capacity development and technical support

Based on experience and wide consultation, the following guiding principles form the basis of national capacity-building and technical support efforts:

- ◆ **National leadership and ownership:** To ensure the capacity-development process is owned by all relevant national partners and its implementation is undertaken in a coordinated manner, with the goal of scaling up the national AIDS response.
- ◆ **Alignment with national priorities:** To ensure capacity-development activities focus on national priorities and address the most critical issues identified in the national strategic plan for AIDS.
- ◆ **Participatory approach:** To ensure the process reflects the concerns of all relevant national partners and uses the capacities available among partners for joint development and implementation of the capacity development plan.
- ◆ **Coordination of stakeholders' contributions:** To minimize differences in approach among partners and to reduce transaction costs.
- ◆ **Mutual accountability of national authorities and partners:** To ensure national authorities and partners take joint and individual responsibility for achieving results.

## Capacity development planning and management in Round 11

For the purposes of this note, the terms 'technical support' and 'technical assistance' are used interchangeably, in addition to 'capacity development', which is used more in the context of a long-term sustainable approach. For the Round 11 proposal form, the following definitions are provided as guidance: Technical assistance may be defined as knowledge transfer or capacity building through the provision of staff, consultants and equipment to improve programmes, to reinforce implementers' management capacity or to address specific management gaps. It may be provided regardless of the source of programme funding or may focus specifically on Global Fund grants, especially in order to improve the preparation and implementation of grants. In this context, technical assistance also includes longer-term capacity building.

For the purposes of the Round 11 proposal form, a summary of a technical support and capacity development plan is requested, which should include a high-level estimated summary of:

- ◆ assistance needed (for suggestions and examples, see Table 1);
- ◆ assistance activity;
- ◆ intended beneficiary (if known);
- ◆ estimated timeline;
- ◆ total activity cost (detailed costing not requested in summary).

It is important to note that at the time of the proposal submission, applicants are requested to provide a summary plan based on the amount requested, rather than a detailed fully costed technical support and capacity development plan. If the applicant has already completed a fully costed technical support and capacity development plan, it may be submitted with the proposal. The Technical Review Panel will assess the funding request and summary information provided in the table in Part (a) of the question within the overall context of the proposal strategy and budget.

**Table 1: Potential common areas of capacity development and technical support**

Monitoring, evaluation and research	Systems strengthening	Management and implementation	Capacity building and training
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Data collection and M&amp;E systems</li> <li>◆ Programme evaluation</li> <li>◆ Surveys</li> <li>◆ Operational research</li> <li>◆ Epidemiological surveillance</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Community-based systems (general)</li> <li>◆ Health systems (general)</li> <li>◆ Procurement and supply management systems (including laboratory quality and capacity)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Financial management</li> <li>◆ Programme management, including subrecipient management</li> <li>◆ Governance</li> <li>◆ Implementation scale-up and support (general)</li> <li>◆ Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT)</li> <li>◆ Tuberculosis (TB) and HIV/TB</li> <li>◆ Gender</li> <li>◆ Human rights</li> <li>◆ Vulnerable groups/populations most at risk</li> <li>◆ Advocacy and communications</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ Institutional strengthening of civil society organization/nongovernmental organization principal recipients</li> <li>◆ Government principal recipients</li> <li>◆ Private-sector principal recipients</li> <li>◆ Subrecipients</li> <li>◆ Country coordinating mechanism capacity building</li> <li>◆ Capacity building and training are generally focused on topics listed in the other three categories</li> </ul>

Adapted from *Guidelines for proposals: Round 11*. Geneva, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, 2011.

## Capacity development and technical support planning process and involvement of partners

Development of technical support and capacity development plans should be linked to national programmes and be based on a consultative multi-stakeholder country-led process, as recommended by partners. It should also consider management and technical assistance that is already available from other funding sources to support the national programme. The implementation of Global Fund-financed programmes through a programme approach is at the core of the Global Fund model.

Including a technical assistance or capacity development plan in the proposal means that implementers should consider:

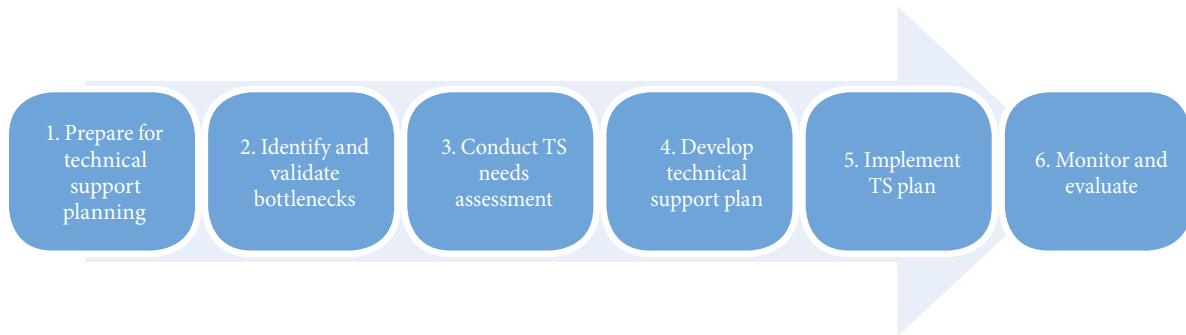
- ◆ country coordinating mechanisms and partner involvement in the definition of these needs, in particular through country-level needs assessments;
- ◆ establishing a national committee with representation of key actors involved in the HIV programme, including people living with HIV, and nominate a focal point for coordination;
- ◆ whether these plans address key (prioritized) areas of need, ideally linked to programme objectives and specific service delivery areas;
- ◆ assistance already available to support the programme at the principal recipient and subrecipient level and ways to complement and coordinate this assistance;
- ◆ use of local capacity;
- ◆ monitoring of budget and expenditures in relation to the plan;

- ◆ evaluation of the quality of the plan;
- ◆ setting up national workshops to achieve consensus.

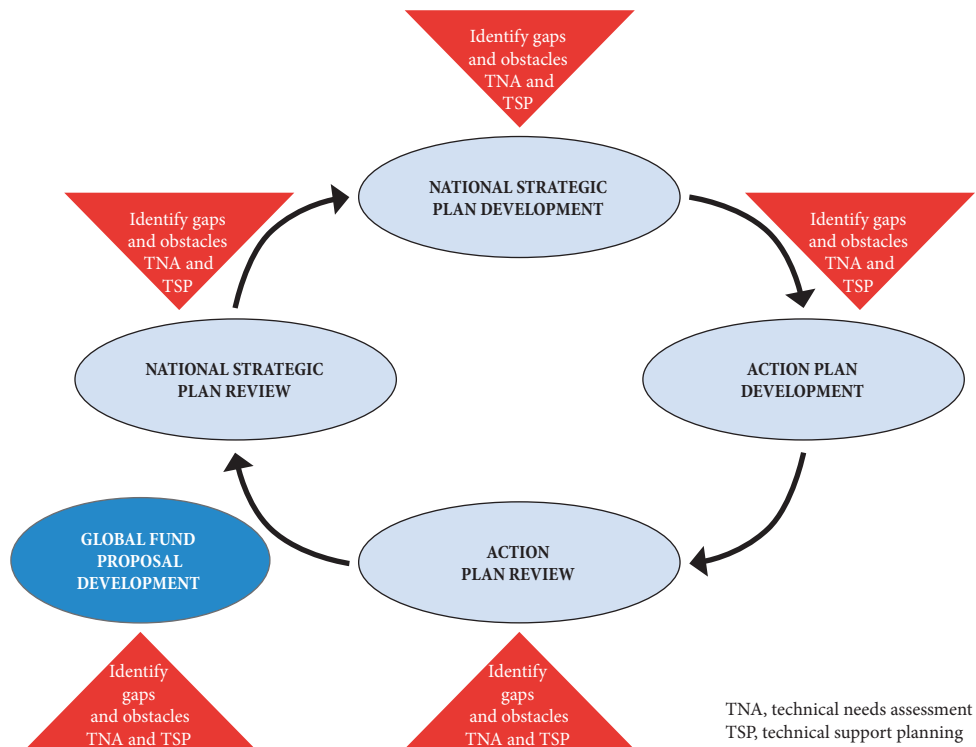
Countries requiring more in-depth guidance on technical support planning should consult the *Guidance note on technical support planning at the country level* (Geneva, UNAIDS, 2009), which provides a detailed framework for countries to develop national technical support and capacity development plans. The recommended steps are summarized below.

## Steps for planning and managing technical support and capacity development

The following six steps are recommended:



### Step 1: Preparation for technical support planning



## Step 2: Identification and validation of bottlenecks

Bottlenecks are gaps (what is missing) or obstacles (what is blocking) in the national response. To identify bottlenecks:

- ◆ Know your epidemic: for example, prevalence, concentrated or generalized epidemic, drivers of the epidemic, populations most at risk, and marginalized groups.
- ◆ Compare the epidemiological reality with the strategic objectives of the national strategic plan to check their relevance.
- ◆ Compare the achievements of the national response with the set targets to identify the areas in which the response is lagging behind.
- ◆ Validate with partners through discussion with focus groups and a steering committee.

## Step 3: Technical support needs assessment

- ◆ Identify technical capacity needs related to bottlenecks.
- ◆ Validate and prioritize technical capacity needs using the proposed criteria.
- ◆ Determine broad technical support areas to address each capacity need.
- ◆ Identify priority technical support activities for the first year using the proposed criteria.

## Step 4: Development of technical support plan

- ◆ There are a variety of technical support approaches. The following criteria are used to select a technical support approach:
  - ▶ acceptability;
  - ▶ technical soundness;
  - ▶ feasibility and affordability;
  - ▶ cost efficiency.
- ◆ The technical support plan should include key elements.
- ◆ Designate the accountable agency.
- ◆ Validation of the technical support plan.

## Step 5: Implementation of technical support plan

- ◆ Establish coordination arrangements.
- ◆ Mobilize resources.
- ◆ Prepare for technical support execution.
- ◆ Procure services.
- ◆ Execute technical support.
- ◆ Follow up recommendations made by the technical support provider.
- ◆ Use the knowledge and skills gained.

## Step 6: Monitoring and evaluation of technical support plan

- ◆ Integrate the technical support plan into the monitoring and evaluation framework of the national strategic plan/action plan.
- ◆ Monitor the:
  - ▶ individual technical support;
  - ▶ implementation of the technical support plan.

- ◆ Ensure quality assurance.
- ◆ Evaluate outcomes.
- ◆ Use the lessons learnt to improve good practice.

## Integrating technical support and capacity development plans into Round 11 proposals

The following are some issues for consideration when identifying capacity-development needs, planning capacity-development activities and making a request to the Global Fund:

- ◆ **Summary technical support plan:** As part of the Round 11 submission process, applicants are requested to identify possible technical and management assistance needs and to develop a summary technical assistance plan, which could include an indicative percentage of 3–5% of the total proposal budget. Applicants who choose not to submit a funding request for management or technical assistance, or who submit a request outside the indicative percentage range, are requested to provide a narrative justification.
- ◆ **Submission of fully costed technical support and capacity development plan:** If the proposal is recommended for funding by the Technical Review Panel and approved by the Board, the applicant will be requested to submit their technical assistance plan during the grant negotiation phase or within 1 year of the programme start date. During the 1-year period in which the applicant can submit their technical assistance plan, the technical assistance funding request notionally approved in the upper ceiling of the proposal will be subject to Technical Review Panel clarifications as applicable but will not be subject to efficiency gains and cannot be used for any other purposes. If the applicant does not present a technical assistance plan within 1 year of the programme start date, the budgeted resources for technical assistance will be deducted from the upper ceiling proposal budget and will not be made available for reallocation to other programme activities.
- ◆ **Country ownership:** Capacity-building plans should be linked to the national strategic plan, should involve a country-led consultative multi-stakeholder process, and should consider the technical support that is already available from other funding sources or development partners. Technical and management capacity at local levels should also be included.
- ◆ **Value for money:** The Global Fund Board places much emphasis on funding programmes that demonstrate the largest impact on country response to the AIDS epidemic relative to the amount of money being spent. For capacity development, indicators that include capacity development at the local level would be a good example of value for money.
- ◆ **Working with partners:** The Global Fund recommends that management and technical assistance plans focus on using local capacity whenever available and appropriate. If local capacity is not available, applicants may consider working with existing regional and global providers of management and technical support. At the regional level, a number of partners have established technical support mechanisms. The World Health Organization (WHO) has regional offices, which provide a range of technical assistance to in-country processes and ministries of health, and regional knowledge hubs. UNAIDS has regional support teams to assist countries and to coordinate country- and region-level activities. UNAIDS has technical support facilities in the Africa and Asia and the Pacific regions to provide a broad range of technical assistance, including capacity building.

Outside the United Nations system, there are several civil society providers of technical support at the regional level, such as the Civil Society Action Team and the International HIV/AIDS Alliance, and several bilateral partners, such as the German Technical Cooperation Agency and the United States of America Government Technical Assistance. The United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) New Partnership Initiative provides technical support to local organizations. The United States Government also funds the Grant Management Solutions consortium, which provides on-demand short-term support to countries with specific implementation and governance challenges.

## Useful resources

*Guidelines for proposals: Round 11.* Geneva, Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, 2011.

*AIDSPAN guide to Round 11 applications.* Nairobi, AIDSPAN (<http://www.aidspan.org/index.php?page=guides>).

*AIDSPAN Guide to Obtaining Technical Assistance.* Nairobi, AIDSPAN (<http://www.aidspan.org/index.php?page=guides>).

*Guidance note on intensification of technical support at the country level.* Geneva, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2010 ([http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/jc1698\\_guidance\\_note\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Report/2010/jc1698_guidance_note_en.pdf)).

*Accelerating action: A technical support guide to develop capacity and to benefit from local health financing.* Eschborn, GTZ, 2007 (<http://www.backup-link.de/>).

*NGO capacity analysis: A toolkit for assessing and building capacities for high quality response to HIV/AIDS and regional technical support hubs.* Hove, International HIV/AIDS Alliance (<http://www.aidsalliance.org>).

*Strengthening the national AIDS response through working with the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria.* Geneva, Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS, 2010 ([http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual/2010/jc1795\\_strengtheningnationalresponses\\_en.pdf](http://data.unaids.org/pub/Manual/2010/jc1795_strengtheningnationalresponses_en.pdf)).

Civil Society Action Team (<http://www.csactionteam.org/>).

*Management and Organizational Sustainability Tool (MOST),* 2nd edition (<http://www.msh.org/resource-center/most-management-and-organizational-sustainability-tool.cfm>).

Grant Management Solution (<http://www.gmsproject.org>).

AIDSTAR Capacity Development (<http://www.aidstar-two.org>).

*Supporting Capacity Development: The UNDP Approach.* New York, United Nations and United Nations Development Programme, 2008.

