

AAAH Country Support for Global Fund Round 7 Application



8 - 10 May 2007

Background

In many Asia-Pacific countries, weak health and health workforce systems are a major obstacle to the progress towards the health MDGs and to scaling-up and sustaining HIV, tuberculosis, and malaria programs. The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (GF), on March 1st 2007, announced its Seventh Round of grant application which presents an opportunity for eligible countries to fund health system strengthening (HSS), including the health workforce. Any eligible country may submit a proposal with HSS strategic actions integrated within specific disease components.

A few countries have been successful in securing the HSS fund from the GF in the past. For example, the GF enabled Malawi to strengthen its health workforce in both the near and longer term. It supported Rwanda to significantly improve access of poor people to health services and helped Cambodia to strengthen its drug procurement and distribution system and its health sector planning capacity. In 2005, Malawi used the Fund to support part of its Emergency Human Resource Programme, including expanding health professional pre-service training capacity and recruiting, training, and paying the salaries (at the Emergency Programme's enhanced compensation levels) of hundreds of nurses, doctors, clinical officers, and counselors, and even more community-based health workers. Other innovative uses of the Fund for health system strengthening have included support for a community-based health insurance scheme and electrifying and rehabilitating health facilities.

With such an important opportunity for countries to seek financial support to develop comprehensive, costed health sector plans, including human resources for health development strategies, it is important for each applicant to prepare a strong proposal to the Global Fund with necessary contents and details. However, this is not an easy process. Malawi and Rwanda in Round 5, Both proposals had strong and detailed analyses of the current health system situation and relevant national strategies and plans. The Physicians for Human Rights recommends that good proposals should be of appropriate size, should contain sufficient details with realistic indicators, pace of activities, detailed budget, and could demonstrate sustainability (Friedman 2006).

In the previous rounds, several HSS related proposals were turned down by the Global Fund's Technical Review Panel (TRP) because of poor quality. For example, as stated in the



Report of the TRP to the GF Secretariat on Round 6 proposals, the TRP was "disappointed and concerned by the low overall quality of the HSS elements proposed within many of the Round 6 proposals reviewed" (GF 2006). The weaknesses identified most often in the TRP comments on proposals submitted during the third, fourth, fifth and sixth rounds of funding were related to inadequate narrative description of the program, inaccurate or insufficient budget information, inability to demonstrate complementarity or additionality to existing programmes, and unavailability of good situational analysis (Aidsplan 2006).

With strong technical requirements in the proposal development, providing technical support from experts and experienced grant writers to countries can increase the quality of the proposal and the chance of getting the fund. In addition to the conventional outside expert assistance, there is a need to empower applicants to be able to draft convincing applications. The Asia-Pacific Action Alliance on Human Resources for Health (AAAH), with several requests from its members and with support from the Global Health Workforce Alliance (GHWA), proposes to organize a training workshop to support countries in integrating HSS strategic actions, whereby human resources are the indispensable elements of HSS, into the proposals to the GF. The Workshop will also serve as a platform to assist countries in the national process of proposals development by having the country's disease control experts and the HSS and HRH experts working together in the inclusion of HSS activities in the proposal. A mock peer-review process will also be carried out before the deadline for the Global Fund submission by 4 July 2007. Note two key timelines, the TRP will review the proposal on 26 August to 7 September 2007 and that the 16th GF Board would make funding decision on Round 7 on 14-16 November 2007.

Objectives

The objectives are threefold.

1. to clarify the GF Round 7 guidelines and application forms and process, including lessons drawn from the past round applications
2. to build up capacity to country applicants on the integration of HSS and HRH components into diseases specific application to the Global Fund
3. to build up capacity of technical advisors to provide supports to countries (either directly or through internal peer review processes) in their efforts to draft a successful proposal.



Activities

1. Grant Proposal Writing Workshop

A 3-day workshop on integration of HSS components into the GF Application will be organized by AAAH Secretariat in Bangkok, Thailand with participation from 8 Asia-Pacific countries. Preference will be given to countries that are AAAH members if there are more applicants than the available space.

Global experts who have long experience in HSS grant writing and review (e.g. Bo Stenson, Walaiporn Patcharanarumol) will be invited to be Workshop resource persons in addition to global and regional experts from the World Health Organization (WHO), the Global Fund, the World Bank, and the UNAIDS. In addition, local experts from Thailand will be invited to provide mentoring support to the workshop participants. It is expected that the participants from each country will be local technical expert(s) with expertise in HSS or HRH and local experts in the three diseases (HIV/AIDS, Tuberculosis, Malaria) who are active in the preparation of GF application.

Tentative schedule of the Workshop is as follows:

Day 1 (May 8th)	Morning	Clarification of the GF Round 7 Call for Application and the HSS components and past rounds experiences
	Afternoon	Components of GF HSS requirements Potential areas of HSS and HRH investments and interventions
Day 2 (May 9th)	Morning	Practical points and caveats on the integration of HSS actions into GF application
	Afternoon	Individual writing exercise with active expert support for HSS integration into actual application
Day 3 (May 10th)	Morning	Individual exercise (continue)
	Afternoon	Learning from each other

Participants are expected to prepare a draft HSS workplan and/or existing national HSS strategy to the Workshop to facilitate its integration into the disease specific proposal.

2. Mock Proposal Review

After the workshop, participants are expected to continue to develop their proposal further when they go back to their countries. One expert will be assigned to each country group to

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follow up on the proposal progress (electronically) as well as to provide technical support at request. By the end of May, each country is expected to submit the draft of the proposal to the AAAH Secretariat who will forward it to the expert team for review and comments. The suggestion from the expert team is expected to be helpful for the last chance of proposal revision before submission of the final proposal by 4 July 2007.

Timeline

1-31 March	Identification of host country, technical experts, budget support
15 April	Deadline for workshop application
1-30 April	Country preparation: identification of country projects for proposal writing, preparation of proposal draft
8-10 May:	Workshop on HSS integration to GF proposal
1-31 May:	Further proposal development
1-30 June:	Final proposal review & feedback to countries
4 July:	Proposal submission

Expected Outputs

1. Successful Global Fund Proposals with integrated HSS components
2. Local capacity in member countries on HSS components for GF proposals
3. Regional capacity in technical advisory support for HSS components integration into the Global Fund proposals

Organization and Financial Support

The workshop will be organized by the AAAH Secretariat at International Health Policy Program, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand. Financial support for the Workshop's organization will be provided by the GHWA. It is expected that participating experts from the World Bank, World Health Organization, the Global Fund, and UNAIDS will require no AAAH funding for their travel. AAAH will assist workshop participants in their search for travel funding support through various organizations such as the WHO (country offices), and the GTZ. In selected cases, the AAAH may be able to provide limited travel funding support using its limited pool of funds provided by the GHWA.