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The Global Fund

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NSA LEARNING REPORT COMMISSIONED BY THE GLOBAL FUND
"STUDY OF COUNTRY STAKEHOLDER EXPERIENCE WITH THE NSA FIRST LEARNING
WAVE"



Study of Country Stakeholder Experience with the NSA First Learning Wave

THE GLOBAL FUND

Final report
8 March 2010

Report prepared by McKinsey & Co.

Glossary

ASAP	AIDS Strategy and Action Plan
ARV	Antiretroviral
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
FLW	First Learning Wave
FPM	Fund Portfolio Manager
HSS	Health Systems Strengthening
IHP+	International Health Partnership
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illness
JANS	Joint Assessment of National Strategies
LFA	Local Fund Agent
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDGs	Millennium Development Goals
NAC	National AIDS Council
NACC	National AIDS Coordinating Commission
NSA	National Strategy Application
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
RBM	Roll Back Malaria
RCC	Rolling Continuation Channel
RFP	Requests for Proposals
SRT	Strategy Review Team
TRP	Technical Review Panel
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WHO	World Health Organization

Note: Different countries use different terminologies to refer to their national disease strategies. For clarity throughout this report we use the term “national strategy” for all countries.

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Executive Summary

In 2007, the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria committed to introduce a new way for countries to apply for Global Fund resources known as “National Strategy Applications” as part of its commitment to improving aid effectiveness and alignment and harmonisation.¹ The purpose of the National Strategy Application (NSA) approach is to allow countries to use their national strategies as the primary basis of their applications, rather than Global Fund specific proposal forms. The First Learning Wave (FLW) piloted the NSA approach in a limited number of countries. The primary objective of this study was to gather and synthesise perspectives on the FLW from a range of country stakeholders and relevant global level stakeholders who were closely involved with the NSA FLW process, to help guide the broader roll-out of the NSA approach.

The study was conducted by McKinsey & Company between December 2009 and February 2010 and is primarily based on the experiences of those countries that participated in every step of the First Learning Wave (China, Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal, Rwanda). These findings are complemented by a comprehensive desk review of all FLW documentation and with selected interviews with some countries that participated in the First Learning Wave process until the desk review but were unsuccessful in continuing forward (Cuba, Ethiopia, Ghana, Guyana, Mozambique, Swaziland). Particular care was taken to note the unique features (“idiosyncrasies”) of the FLW and to identify and manage any interviewee biases. This study is intended to complement and complete the stakeholder survey exercise begun by the Secretariat, which compiled lessons learned from various stakeholders throughout each stage of the First Learning Wave.

FINDINGS: VALUE OF NSA APPROACH

Overall, the value of the NSA modality is perceived to be strongly positive, as recognised by all countries surveyed and by the vast majority of interviewees, and compares favourably to the regular Global Fund proposal-based applications process. When asked if they saw any “added value” in the NSA process, over 98% of the respondents were positive with many listing multiple benefits:

- Improved alignment of Global Fund financing with country priorities;

¹ Decision GF/B15/DP7 “Modified Application Process for Supporting Country Programs.”

- More efficient use of country resources than repeated funder-specific mechanisms such as the regular Global Fund proposal-based process;
- Easier to “line up” donors around the plan and negotiate their contributions;
- Strong incentive for a wide range of stakeholders to become involved in the strategy development process and to recognise the national strategy as the primary planning mechanism; and
- For countries without a well-developed national strategy in place, the FLW was a catalyst that helped to accelerate strategy development.

FINDINGS: DESIGN AND IMPLEMENTATION

Scope: There was broad support for the disease focus of the First Learning Wave although this finding is limited by the disease-focus of most interviewees. Many stakeholders felt the disease focus of the First Learning Wave made an important contribution towards strengthening their national disease strategies. Applicants could also attach an optional health systems strengthening (HSS) cross-cutting section to the NSA. However, countries struggled to meaningfully incorporate an HSS cross-cutting section resulting in unsuccessful requests for the two countries that chose to attach this aspect.

Selection criteria: Countries felt strongly that they should have the freedom to determine whether to participate and which disease(s) to submit rather than being “invited” which risks raising expectations of a successful outcome.

Multi-stakeholder involvement: The majority of civil society stakeholders in Kenya, Malawi, Madagascar, and Rwanda expressed satisfaction with their level of involvement in the overall process, ownership of both the strategy and NSA submission to the Global Fund, and commitment to contribute to its implementation. The NSA is seen to encourage more participation from them because the application is based on a national strategy in which all civil society partners can participate through transparent, consultative processes, whereas in the regular Global Fund proposal-based process, CSOs and NGOs often “compete against” each other. However, with the exception of Madagascar, national disease authorities for countries that submitted malaria and TB strategies felt it was less appropriate for the CCM to take the decision to participate in the First Learning Wave due to perceptions that their CCMs are dominated by HIV/AIDS stakeholders.

National strategy assessment: Most countries found the conceptual design of a desk review and in-country visit to be a good model for assessing the national

strategy although the majority of stakeholders in Rwanda and several in Nepal found the steps repetitive and suggested combining them. Countries were particularly positive about the benefits of the in-country review as an opportunity to present their strategies and engage with the Strategy Review Team (SRT) although some countries (Rwanda, Malawi, Kenya) found the size of the delegation unwieldy. Feedback from the desk review and in-country visit was taken positively by nearly all countries and used to improve their national strategies and inform their NSAs. Most countries felt that the dialogue with the TRP should be further enhanced during desk review and prior to the in-country visit.

National strategy application review: Given the centrality of the national strategy in the NSA, countries struggled to draw a clear distinction between the NSA review and national strategy assessment. Multiple stakeholders from Kenya, Nepal, Malawi, and Rwanda were unclear on the links between the strategy assessment and NSA with many believing that it was duplicative to the previous steps. While the NSA form is recognised as easier to complete with some frustration on page limitations, countries struggled to understand what information should be contained in the application itself versus what could be referenced in the strategy. It was recognised that the gap analysis formed the most important part of the NSA however; Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda found costing the overall national strategy and preparing the financial gap analyses required for the NSA particularly challenging.

Timeline and communications: Despite the novelty and necessarily short timescales of the First Learning Wave, countries were able to navigate the process from strategy assessment to NSA review. Countries were clear about the important steps and the associated deadlines from the beginning of the process.

FUTURE CONSIDERATIONS

In thinking about a future rollout of NSAs the Global Fund should consider:

Scope

- The scope of NSAs (disease- vs. national health strategies) and the dimensions that determine the conditions under which countries could submit national health strategies;
- Whether the goals of financing HSS activities can be achieved within the NSA itself or whether separate HSS cross-cutting sections are required – and if so how to help countries make them successful;

Selection criteria

- The extent to which the Global Fund wishes to trade off a desire to allow countries to take the decision to participate for themselves with the need from the Global Fund's perspective to manage the NSA process;
- The scalability of the national strategy assessment model;

Multi-stakeholder involvement

- How to ensure the national disease authority supports the decision to prepare an NSA prior to the CCM making a decision;
- Different ways to provide guidance indicating the tasks involved in the preparation of an NSA with suggested delineation of roles and responsibilities particularly between national disease authorities and CCMs including allowing flexibility for the national disease authority to manage the strategy assessment process rather than the CCM; and
- How to make dual-track financing in NSAs most effective through enhanced guidance to encourage strong coordination against the national plan.

National strategy assessment

- How to ensure the national strategy assessment mechanism allows for accurate and timely assessment of national strategies and in particular the role of the desk review in relation to the in-country visit;
- What other (additional) assessment mechanisms may be possible such as self assessment, in-country stakeholder assessment, or peer review;
- How to make the in-country visits as efficient as possible (e.g., by limiting the number of observers);
- How to clarify the possible outcomes of completing a national strategy assessment and improve the linkage of that outcome to the review of the NSA;

National strategy application review

- How to clarify the specific criteria that the TRP will consider when reviewing an NSA application; the level of detail required within the NSA form itself versus what is within the national strategy; and what is acceptable to submit for the financing request (i.e. the whole gap or a portion) and Global Fund expectations on what should be included to justify the request; and

Timeline and communications

- Making an agreed set of attributes that any future national strategy assessment will be based upon (e.g., IHP+) available to countries as soon as possible.

Context

In 2007, the Board of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria committed to introduce a new way for countries to apply for Global Fund resources known as “National Strategy Applications” as part of its commitment to improving aid effectiveness and alignment and harmonisation.² The purpose of the National Strategy Application (NSA) approach is to allow countries to use their national strategies as the primary basis of their applications, rather than Global Fund specific proposal forms.

In 2008, the Global Fund Board decided to introduce NSAs through a phased roll-out, beginning in 2009 with a “First Learning Wave.”³ NSAs are funding requests to the Global Fund which are based primarily on a disease-specific national strategy that is considered to be sufficiently robust to serve as the basis of an application. The First Learning Wave (FLW) piloted the NSA in a limited number of countries based on selection criteria⁴ set by the Global Fund Secretariat.

Under the intended future model for the NSA approach as envisaged by the Board:⁵

- Countries could submit their existing national strategies and relevant accompanying documentation (e.g. operational plan, national policies, etc.) for a ‘joint assessment’. This joint assessment would be a shared multi-partner process, based on a commonly accepted set of criteria (“attributes”) for sound national strategies;
- Countries could then use the ‘jointly assessed’ national strategy as the primary basis for an application to the Global Fund, and to other funders that agreed to recognise the joint assessment process. The National Strategy Application to the Global Fund would include limited supplemental funder-specific information requirements.

² Decision GF/B15/DP7 “Modified Application Process for Supporting Country Programs.”

³ Decision GF/B18/DP20 “Phased Roll-out of National Strategy Applications, with First Learning Wave.”

⁴ The Global Fund invited 22 CCMs to express their interest in participating in the First Learning Wave. Countries were invited to participate based on a range of factors, such as the duration of their current national disease strategy, their application history in Round 8, while also ensuring overall geographic and disease diversity.

⁵ Decision GF/B15/DP7, “Modified Application Process for Supporting Country Programs.”

The anticipated benefits of the NSA approach are:

- Improved alignment of Global Fund financing with country priorities, national programmatic and budgetary timeframes;
- Reduced transaction costs and paperwork for countries (in comparison to repeated funder-specific proposal development);
- Improved harmonisation with other donors that have agreed to use the same criteria for reviewing national strategies;
- The opportunity to extend multi-stakeholder involvement to the scope of the national strategy;
- A focus on managing for results and accountability within national strategies; and
- In the longer term, improved quality, consistency and credibility of national strategic frameworks.

The aim of this First Learning Wave of NSAs is to draw policy and operational lessons to guide the broader roll-out of the new application procedure beyond 2009.

The First Learning Wave involved two distinct stages: firstly the review of the national strategy and its supporting documentation and secondly the review of the National Strategy Application. Within each of these stages there were specific steps as illustrated in Figure 1 below.

The national strategy review stage was comprised of the following steps:

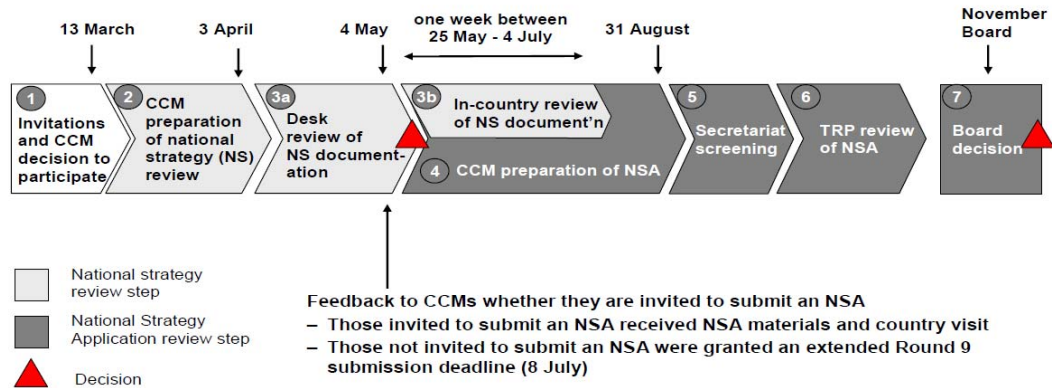
- CCM preparation of the national strategy documentation for review (Step 2 in Figure 1 below);
- Desk review by the TRP of the national strategy documentation (Step 3a). If the outcome of the desk review was favourable the country was invited to submit an NSA;
- For strategies successful at the desk review, an in-country review of the national strategy documentation (Step 3b) was conducted.

The National Strategy Application review stage (applicable only to strategies successful at the desk review) comprised the following steps:

- CCM preparation of the National Strategy Application (Step 4);
- Secretariat screening of the National Strategy Applications received (Step 5);
- TRP review of the National Strategy Applications (Step 6); and

- Board decision on the recommendations of the TRP (Step 7).

Figure 1: NSA First Learning Wave process



The design of the First Learning Wave included many features which were representative of the intended future model of NSA funding and which were piloted in this exercise. It also included a number of design attributes that are, unique to the First Learning Wave –“idiosyncratic.” These include:

- The limited number of countries invited to express interest in participating;
- A review of national strategies exceptionally performed by the Global Fund Technical Review Panel (TRP), in contrast to the joint assessment approach foreseen in the future;
- The short timescales driven by the need for TRP-recommended applications from the FLW to be presented for Board approval in November 2009;
- The use of national strategies developed without prior knowledge of the strategy assessment attributes developed by the International Health Partnership (IHP+).

Study Objectives

The primary objective of this study was to gather and synthesise perspectives on the First Learning Wave from a range of country stakeholders and relevant global level stakeholders who were closely involved with the NSA FLW process, to help guide the broader roll-out of the NSA approach. This study is intended to complement and complete the stakeholder survey exercise begun by the Secretariat, which compiled lessons learned from various stakeholders throughout each stage of the First Learning Wave. As such, this review explicitly is not evaluative.

Specifically, the study considered:

- The extent to which the First Learning Wave process supported the relevant Global Fund guiding principles and the relevant principles of the international aid effectiveness agenda as highlighted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action (directionally as too early to comment in detail);
- The effectiveness of the design and implementation of each component of the First Learning Wave process (in detail);
- Key considerations that should be taken into account in the design and planning of any future roll-out of NSAs.

The scope of the review included all FLW steps shown in Figure 1 above from the issuing of invitations and CCM decisions to participate in March 2009, to the approval of NSA grants by the Board in November 2009. Issues relating to steps beyond the Board decision such as NSA grant negotiation, grant signing and grant management processes were beyond the scope of this assignment.

The review aimed to gather feedback in relation to both the more permanent design features of NSAs and the idiosyncratic characteristics of the First Learning Wave which are not currently anticipated to be repeated in the future. In this report we distinguish between findings related to idiosyncratic aspects of the First Learning Wave compared to the more permanent NSA design features.

Study Approach & Methodology

The review was conducted by McKinsey & Company between December 2009 and February 2010. The review team drew on three main sources of evidence:

- A comprehensive desk review of documentation related to the First Learning Wave including guidance prepared by the Global Fund, documents submitted by countries, relevant lessons learned reports, TRP documents, etc.;
- Interviews with country-level stakeholders involved in the First Learning Wave. The five countries (both successful and unsuccessful) that participated in the entire process were the primary source of country evidence. This was complemented by interviews with select stakeholders in some countries that did not pass the first step of process (desk review). The number of interviewees for each country was planned to be proportional to their ‘progress’ through the process (although this was affected by interviewee availability) These countries included:
 - All four countries that completed the entire process and were successful in their NSAs (China, Madagascar for malaria, Nepal for TB, Rwanda for HIV and TB);
 - The two countries that completed the entire process but were unsuccessful in their NSAs (Kenya for HIV, Malawi for HIV);
 - Six of the 12 countries that submitted strategy documentation for desk review but were not subsequently invited to continue in the NSA process (Cuba for HIV, Ethiopia for malaria, Ghana for TB, Guyana for malaria, Mozambique for TB, Swaziland for HIV).
- Interviews with global stakeholders involved in the First Learning Wave including TRP members, technical partners and other donors (see Appendix C).

METHODOLOGY

A standardised methodology was employed throughout the study. Raw data from individual interviews was captured in an Excel tool and then synthesised by country (country summaries for the countries visited in person are included in Appendix E). The team used a structured survey tool to ensure consistency between interviewers, to enable direct comparison between interviewees and to allow for easy comparison of positive and negative responses to specific questions.

The team also followed best practice interview techniques such as using a mixture of both open and closed questioning to uncover root causes and beliefs. Responses from interviewees were triangulated with the results of other interviews and documentation provided by the Global Fund and countries.

Of particular concern to the team was understanding and managing the potential biases that different interviewees may have had (discussed in detail below). Care was taken to find supporting evidence for statements that were likely to be influenced by bias and to challenge interviewees to explain the rationale for their responses.

The review team members were also careful to keep the idiosyncrasies of the First Learning Wave (described above) in mind throughout the course of the review and to encourage interviewees to think beyond the specific design attributes of the First Learning Wave when considering recommendations for the future.

The review was conducted across three distinct phases.

Phase 1: Set-up and desk review (2 weeks)

The study methodology and tools were developed during the initial phase. An interview guide was drafted with a comprehensive set of questions to be asked against each of the elements of the First Learning Wave. Each interview question was targeted according to different types of interviewees, to generate customised interview guides by role. For example, specific questionnaires were developed for civil society stakeholders and global stakeholder interviewees. Questions related to idiosyncratic elements of the process were highlighted to allow for specific analysis. The full library of questions is attached at Appendix A.

A customised excel tool was developed to allow evidence from interviews to be comprehensively captured and analysed, along with specific quotes from each interview. Particularly positive or negative remarks were flagged, enabling the team to map responses across large numbers of interviewees and quickly identify any patterns or clusters in responses.

Exhibit 1: Interview excel-based tool

We developed a tool that allowed us to track the evidence as it is gathered from each source and provide status reports as required

EVIDENCE GATHERING AND TRACKING TOOL

Breakdown of each question and sub-question

Categories of interviewee

Questions can be tagged to indicate, idiosyncrasies audience etc.

Red / Green indicator of whether strong positive or negative views expressed will make it easy to spot biases

Tool used to generate:

- interview guides for different interviewees
- status reports at any point in the process

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A comprehensive desk review of the First Learning Wave documentation also took place during Phase 1. This included an examination of all the materials that the Secretariat distributed to countries, the guidance provided to the TRP, the materials that countries submitted for review during the First Learning Wave, lessons learned documents from in-country visits, and relevant Global Fund Board documents including TRP reports. A full list of the documentation reviewed is attached at Appendix B. Insights from the review were used to inform the development of the interview questions as well as providing a useful triangulation tool later in the process.

Phase 2: Interviews (6 weeks)

In the second phase a total of 90 structured interviews were conducted with over 166 interviewees. Most interviews were conducted on an individual basis, and some interviews took place in small groups. See Appendix C for a full list of interviewees.

A total of 66 face to face interviews were conducted with stakeholders from five countries that completed the entire NSA FLW process (Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Nepal and Rwanda) and one country that submitted documentation for review but were not invited to submit an NSA (Ethiopia). Due to the Chinese New

Year festival it was not possible to arrange an in-country visit to China so these interviews were conducted by telephone.

Interviews were conducted with the following country stakeholders groups involved with the First Learning Wave:

- Relevant government stakeholders including representatives from Ministries of Health, national disease coordinating bodies and implementing agencies, including those represented on CCMs;
- Representatives from civil society including both international and local non-governmental organisations, the private sector, and affected communities, including those represented on CCMs; and
- In-country representatives of technical partners and both bilateral and multilateral donor agencies.

Interviewees were identified with the support of a CCM identified focal point per country and Fund Portfolio Managers (FPMs). For those countries who participated in the entire First Learning Wave process, the team strove to meet the same people in-country that the Strategy Review Teams interacted with during the in-country visits. These stakeholders were identified based on direction from the TRP to the CCM on who they wanted to meet during the in-country visits.

A further 23 phone interviews were conducted with stakeholders from other countries who had submitted strategy documentation for the desk review (Cuba, Ghana, Guyana and Mozambique). For these countries, the team requested the CCM identify at least four stakeholders in the country representing the national disease authority, technical partner, civil society, and CCM leadership who could be interviewed for the study (noting the limitations described in the following section led to this not being achieved in several countries). In cases of no CCM response, FPMs assisted the team in identifying potential interviewees and setting up introductions.

The number of stakeholders interviewed was largely dependent on the schedule set by the CCM focal point and interviewee availability. In some cases, interviews were conducted with a group rather than an individual. In Kenya and Malawi, the majority of interviews included at least three stakeholders whereas in Madagascar, Nepal, and Rwanda, interviews were mostly conducted individually. The team observed that the nature of which disease was being discussed also affected the amount of stakeholders to interview. With HIV/AIDS applicant countries (Kenya, Malawi, Rwanda), there were more stakeholders to interview as identified by the CCM focal point across government, technical partners, and civil society. With

malaria and TB applicant countries, there were fewer stakeholders to interview from all constituencies, in particular civil society stakeholders.

Table 1: Constituency breakdown of interviewed stakeholders

Country	Government	CCM Secretariat	Local NGOs	INGOs	Private Sector	Technical Partners	Other
Successful NSA countries							
China	2		1			1	
Madagascar	3	2	5			6	2
Nepal	5	1	3	2		2	3
Rwanda	8	1	8	1		7	1
Unsuccessful NSA countries							
Kenya	21	1	13	2	3	5	
Malawi	15	1	5	2	2	14	1
Unsuccessful Desk Review countries							
Cuba	1		1			1	1
Ethiopia	2						
Ghana	1		1		1	1	
Guyana		1					
Mozambique			1			1	

Finally, nine interviews were conducted with global stakeholders involved with the First Learning Wave process identified by the Global Fund NSA team such as TRP members and partner / donor representatives (PEPFAR, Stop TB, RBM, UNAIDS, WHO).

Evidence from interviews was summarised and captured within 24 hours of each interview taking place. Summary reports (see Appendix E) were produced highlighting the key messages from each of the countries visited. These reports were used to test and validate the findings and key messages with each of the countries either at a workshop at the end of each country visit or via email correspondence after the visit.

Note that the interviews were conducted on a non-attributable basis. For that reason quotes have been anonymised throughout this report although where possible the interviewee country and role have been included.

Phase 3: Analysis and synthesis (2 weeks)

The final stage of the study involved analysing the evidence collected from the desk review and interviews, identifying important themes and messages, and synthesising these findings into the final report.

At this stage the team analysed the full interviewee data set looking for patterns across countries and stakeholder groups. Hypotheses generated by the team were tested against the interviewee evidence and were triangulated with documentary evidence.

The three high-level questions from the RFP were used to structure our thinking (and this final report).

- To what extent did the NSA First Learning Wave process support:
 - the anticipated benefits of NSAs;
 - the relevant Global Fund guiding principles; and
 - the relevant principles of the international aid effectiveness agenda as highlighted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action?
- How effective was the design and implementation of each component of the NSA First Learning Wave process?
- What are the future considerations that should be taken into account in the design and planning of the Global Fund’s next roll-out of NSAs beyond the First Learning Wave?

IDENTIFYING AND MANAGING POTENTIAL BIASES

Throughout the process the team placed a particular emphasis on the identification and management of potential biases. For example, the views of particular interviewees in particular countries may be influenced by factors such as the outcome of the NSA process; their particular role in relation to the First Learning Wave; and their previous experiences interacting with the Global Fund. Specifically, the review team noted:

- Overly positive (or negative) views based on successful (or unsuccessful) outcome of application;
- Possible biases associated with particular roles in the process (e.g., CCM Chairs; Country focal points; National Facilitators);
- Overly positive or negative views related to previous experience with the Global Fund:
 - As an individual (e.g., involved with submission of previous application);
 - As a country (e.g., success in previous rounds).

Interviewers asked interviewees for facts and evidence to support their assertions, used a combination of open and closed questions as well as other techniques such as counter-factual questioning to stress-test statements made during interviews, and cross-checked interviewee statements with documentary evidence and with other interviewees' statements. Where possible, interviews were attended by at least two interviewers to ensure accurate note-taking and sense-checking within the team.

The data collection tool allowed patterns in responses to be quickly identified such as within a particular country or stakeholder group (e.g., if one country was particularly negative about an element of the process).

To the extent possible, the team further triangulated statements that demonstrated particular bias with the available desk research particularly guidance provided by the Global Fund, e-mail communications, TRP desk review forms, and other documentation.

Syntheses of interim findings were tested with five of the six countries that completed the entire First Learning Wave process through debrief sessions at the end of the country visits and a summary presentation of the visit highlighting the key findings provided to the country.

LIMITATIONS

The study focused on preparing robust findings based on the available evidence recognizing that there were several limitations in conducting the review which include:

- Size of the First Learning Wave- there were only six countries that completed the entire NSA process representing different diseases and regions (three sub-Saharan Africa HIV/AIDS, one sub-Saharan Africa TB, one sub-Saharan Africa malaria, and one Asia malaria).

- Short timeframe of the study, required to prepare the report in time for the Global Fund Board's Policy and Strategy committee (PSC) meeting in March 2010- the study was completed over a period of 10 weeks starting prior to the December holiday within which a thorough analysis of the desk research, five country visits, and numerous phone interviews were conducted.
- Difficulty in reaching interviewees- the timeframe of the study particularly with the holiday break led to challenges in reaching people for the phone interview countries. Often, multiple requests were sent including attempts to reach identified interviewees by tele-conference.
- Relying on the CCM for selection of interviewees- For the in-country visits, the team was reliant on a CCM identified focal point to support the management of the visit. The team requested the focal points arrange meetings with those who participated in the in-country visit but was conscious that the very nature of the meetings being arranged by the CCM could impact some of the statements made by interviewees. For some unsuccessful desk review countries, there was no response from the CCM or it was received extremely late in conducting the review which limited both the number of countries and the amount of stakeholders interviewed by phone.
- Limitations in number of stakeholders to interview for countries who were not successful in the desk review- the team was challenged in identifying relevant stakeholders, particularly from civil society, to interview from those countries who were unsuccessful in the desk review particularly for those that submitted malaria or TB strategies.
- Comparison to regular Global Fund proposals- most stakeholders in their interviews discussed their experience with the NSA as compared to their previous experience with regular Global Fund proposals. While the team limited direct questions requesting comparisons of the two, stakeholders often framed their responses in such manner. The scope of the study was limited to those countries who participated in the First Learning Wave, therefore, a comparative analysis for countries participating in the Round 9 process was not conducted to determine whether there could be further evidence to support these comparisons. Therefore, findings and quotes expressed by stakeholders should be interpreted as directly related to the experiences of countries that were considered in this study, particularly the six that went through the whole process, and should not be perceived as an assessment of the regular Global Fund proposal system.

These limitations have been taken into account in formulating our findings and considerations. For example, the team has avoided stating 'findings' that are based

on only 2-3 interviewee statements and ensured that statements can be backed up consistently through a wide range of interviewee statements.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE

McKinsey's project management approach is reviewed and assured rigorously and McKinsey & Company is accredited under ISO9001.

The team adopted mechanisms to ensure we challenged our own thinking throughout the process:

- Team problem solving sessions in which evidence was shared and discussed and hypotheses tested; and
- Regular reviews with a McKinsey steering committee, who provided challenge and guidance.

The team also stayed in regular contact with the NSA team at the Global Fund. An inception workshop was held in December and calls were held weekly to ask clarifying questions, ask for further information when required and discuss emerging findings. An internal stakeholder workshop was held with a broader group at the Global Fund Secretariat on 1 March 2010 to further test and validates findings.

Findings: Value of NSA Approach

This section discusses to the extent which the NSA First Learning Wave supported:

- The stated anticipated benefits for NSAs;
- The relevant principles of the international aid effectiveness agenda as highlighted in the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and the Accra Agenda for Action; and
- The relevant Global Fund guiding principles.

Overall, the value of the NSA modality is perceived to be strongly positive, as recognised by all countries surveyed (regardless of NSA outcome) and by the vast majority of interviewees. When asked if they saw any “added value” in the NSA process, over 98% of the respondents were positive with many listing multiple benefits. This included many interviewees from countries that had not continued beyond the desk review stage and countries whose NSAs had not been successful.

ANTICIPATED BENEFITS OF NSAS

Six anticipated benefits of NSAs were outlined at the outset of the First Learning Wave⁶:

- Improved alignment of Global Fund financing with country priorities, national programmatic and budgetary timeframes;
- Reduced transaction costs and paperwork for countries (in comparison to repeated funder-specific proposal development);
- Improved harmonisation with other donors that have agreed to use the same criteria for reviewing national strategies;
- The opportunity to extend multi-stakeholder involvement to the scope of the national strategy;
- A focus on managing for results and accountability within national strategies; and
- In the longer term, improved quality, consistency and credibility of national strategic frameworks.

It is too early to assess the extent to which each of these anticipated benefits has been achieved. However, the First Learning Wave has already provided some relevant evidence that provides some useful early indications of progress to date and likely progress in the future.

Improved alignment of Global Fund financing with country priorities

The NSA is widely seen to contribute to improved alignment of Global Fund financing with country priorities particularly because: 1) national strategies are truly owned by the countries and their partners; and 2) countries were free to choose the format and content of their strategies which they submitted.

- “The main difference between rounds based process and NSA is that in Rounds, you are picking things piecemeal. The NSA allows you to be comprehensive. Each programme is complementary to the other strategies.” – Ghana technical partner
- “The NSA was a very appealing process because there was buy in towards the national strategy. It was reinforcing and providing momentum to something done anyhow.” – Kenya government official
- “The NSA allows us to ask for funding directly in line with national priorities. In Round 7, there was a good consensus among stakeholders on what priorities were but it was not necessarily aligned with the strategic plan and overall Rwandan strategies. The advantage is working in a national strategic plan.” – Rwanda technical partner

However, there were some elements of the First Learning Wave that are potentially in conflict with this principle although they are related to the idiosyncratic aspects of being a pilot and can likely be corrected in a future roll out:

- Participation criteria dictated which diseases were eligible for the NSA FLW process rather than allowing countries to decide this for themselves;
- The accelerated timelines were not aligned with national planning cycles; and
- Lack of alignment with national budgeting cycles for some countries due to fixed dates for submission of national strategies and NSA.

⁶ Five objectives were outlined in Global Fund Financing through National Strategy Applications: Practical information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”. The multi-stakeholder involvement benefit was added later

Reduced transaction costs and paperwork for countries

The NSA modality is widely viewed as a more efficient use of country resources than repeated funder-specific mechanisms such as the regular Global Fund proposal-based process. Although the time and energy invested in developing a robust national strategy were often very high, this was recognised as essential work that the country would “need to do anyway.” With a robust national strategy in place, the incremental effort of preparing the NSA was regarded by most interviewees as lower than preparing a regular Global Fund proposal-based application.

- “In Round 7, two of us worked full time for three months on the application. The NSA took one month so it was much quicker.” – Rwanda technical partner
- “Global Fund rounds are a nightmare as they completely take the country's attention away from implementation. The NSA process should help to resolve this by putting a longer term national strategy in place that everyone can sign up to and then deliver against.” – Nepal technical partner

However, the overall experience to receive resources with the NSA considering the grant signature process seems much longer for countries as compared with regular Global Fund proposals. At the time of conducting the country visits for this study (end January – early February 2010), many interviewees were unclear about the next steps required by the Global Fund in order to receive resources and how the grant signature process would be different from their previous experiences. The Global Fund has since communicated to countries how grant signature of the NSA will differ from regular Global Funds proposals.

Improved harmonisation with other donors

With a comprehensive national strategy and a robust funding gap analysis in place, countries reported finding it easier to “line up” donors around the plan and negotiate their contributions. The NSA process helped catalyse alignment against the plan, not only by encouraging the development of the national strategy and gap analysis, but also by providing a clear process through which the funding gap may be filled. Knowing that the Global Fund was “taking the plan seriously” encouraged other funders to engage.

- In Madagascar, the national strategy developed as a result of the NSA has enabled the country to negotiate more effectively with UNICEF and the U.S. government's President's Malaria Initiative. “We complain to donors that they do what they want in the country, but that's because there is no country

strategy. With a strategy, the balance of power changes, and we can ask a donor to "fit in" with the strategy"— Madagascar CCM member

- In Rwanda, interviewees felt that the NSA process helped PEPFAR align its financing to the same national strategic plan submitted to the Global Fund. “NSA added value became clear with the second round of PEPFAR. The goals in the PEPFAR partnership framework are exactly the goals in the national strategy. Everything is now aligned. This had never been done before. Even if we had the national strategy, if the NSA channel wasn’t there, it may have been harder to convince the PEPFAR colleagues.” – Rwanda government official

The NSA was also seen as a mechanism that encourages financial transparency which enhanced harmonisation with other donors. In particular, the detailed funding gap analysis that the NSA requires allowed all stakeholders to see the different sources of financing and how that money was being spent. None of the countries interviewed had previously developed a comprehensive funding gap analysis that had been agreed with all relevant in-country stakeholders prior to taking part in the First Learning Wave.

The extent to which other donors were able to align around the First Learning Wave was somewhat surprising given that no formal mechanisms were in place (e.g., joint assessments, joint NSA reviews). The process of systematically working through the funding gap analysis (usually led by the national disease authority or a consultant employed by them) brought donors together. The donors themselves benefited from the greater clarity achieved as a result as it became far easier to see how their contributions fitted in to the larger whole.

However, this was also seen as an “unintended consequence” for those countries that were not successful in their NSAs. In both Kenya and Malawi, other donors had “come to the table” prior to the NSA being submitted or just after with an expectation that the Global Fund would provide a certain share of the identified gaps. The NSA process catalysed harmonisation in these countries but is now “out of step with the donors” who have financed along the country-validated national strategy. Stakeholders in these countries believed there was a greater risk in an NSA being unsuccessful as compared to regular Global Fund proposals given the alignment of donors prior to a submission.

To some extent, harmonisation has occurred at the exclusion of the Global Fund with the other donors aligning around the national strategy *prior to* the NSA being submitted leaving the Global Fund with the remaining gap. This is a perfectly adequate solution, but somewhat different to the alternative vision of all donors “sitting round the table” once a jointly assessed strategy has been agreed.

Extended multi-stakeholder involvement

The NSA process provided a strong incentive for a wide range of stakeholders to become involved in the strategy development process and to recognise the national strategy as the primary planning mechanism. A strong national strategy improves the co-ordination of different players by making it much clearer who is responsible for what and how different activities relate to one another.

Participating in the First Learning Wave was seen to strengthen multi-stakeholder involvement and ownership in the development of the national strategy, particularly for HIV/AIDS applicants.

- In Rwanda, civil society felt the NSA process makes it easier for them to be directly involved in planning and implementation and increases transparency around the funding gaps. “Now every NGO has a copy of the national strategy and understands how the strategy will be implemented” – Rwanda CSO
- Kenya’s large and diverse group of HIV/AIDS stakeholders worked closely together throughout the NSA process and the different groups now have a clearer understanding of how their different contributions come together as a coherent whole. “Kenya has a huge number of stakeholders including a very active civil society and many government stakeholders. Without a framework, weak co-ordination leads to a waste of resources. The NSA was a real opportunity to bring everyone together.” – Kenya government official
- “The NSA was very, very useful. It was the first time all the partners had actually sat down and worked on the plan together.” – Malawi technical partner

Increased focus on managing for results and accountability within national strategies

This objective is the hardest to assess at this stage given that it is primarily related to the post-approval process whereas this study focused on the pre-approval steps. However, countries did express a belief that the NSA would make it easier to align different processes and metrics for tracking performance as all would be required to relate back to the single national strategy and that these mechanisms would need to be nationally owned.

- “Civil society even had their own meetings to prepare for the NSA and so did the public sector and then we met together. With that, you have accountability

and results. Then you know if it is not delivered, then who to go to.” – Kenya government implementer

- “Another benefit of the NSA is the results based management and budgeting. The budgeting process is better than the previous national strategy.” – Rwanda government implementer

Improved quality, consistency and credibility of national frameworks

For countries without a well-developed national strategy in place prior to the First Learning Wave, the NSA process was a catalyst that helped to accelerate strategy development. The possibility of accessing additional funds galvanised the national disease authorities, CCM, technical partners and civil society to collaborate, and the First Learning Wave deadlines acted as a forcing mechanism for countries to make rapid progress and quickly resolve issues.⁷

- “Without the Global Fund actually offering the NSA, China would not have developed a national strategy on malaria which is an incredibly powerful thing to happen.” – China, CCM member
- “NSA was an opportunity to push ourselves to develop a new Stop TB strategy.” – Nepal technical partner
- “We received the invitation for the NSA when the review for the previous strategy was happening. The invitation was a boost to revise and finalise the next version.” – Rwanda technical partner

Additionally, some countries who were unsuccessful in the desk review found that participating in the First Learning Wave has helped to improve the quality of their strategies to be financed in the future.

- “Going through the process has been very useful. HIV [team] are now involved in the preparing their strategy, and we have shared the IHP+ attributes and the comments from the TRP so these can be taken into account. We hope this will help strengthen any future HIV NSA.” – Mozambique technical partner
- “Weaknesses and strengths were discussed [from the desk review form]. This document has become part of the program that makes revisions to the national strategy.” – Cuba government official

⁷ Some possible drawbacks of accelerating national strategy development are discussed below under “Timeline”

SUPPORTING PARIS AND ACCRA PRINCIPLES

Around ten per cent of respondents referenced (without prompting) the Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness and/or the Accra Agenda for Action arguing that the NSA approach clearly supported the principles outlined therein.

- “This is very much in the spirit of the Paris Declaration, and thus welcome.” – Madagascar technical partner
- “Another benefit [of the NSA approach] is the alignment to the national priorities in line with the Paris declaration.” – Rwanda technical partner
- “The collaboration for support for strategic frameworks on HIV and AIDS was further strengthened during the NSA-FLW process. This approach is further alignment of support as provided in the Paris Declaration. Several partners supported this process and strengthened partnerships have resulted from this engagement.” – Swaziland stakeholder

As discussed in the intended benefits, the First Learning Wave has demonstrated it goes some way towards meeting the Paris principles of *alignment, harmonisation, managing for results, country ownership* and *mutual accountability*.

A future intended benefit perceived by countries is that the NSA will strengthen *predictability*, a key principle in the Accra Agenda for Action. Multiple interviewees believe that the Global Fund is seen as an (if not the most) appropriate donor for countries to request financing for national strategies as it is the more predictable with a five year funding cycle when many other donors finance for less.

SUPPORTING GLOBAL FUND PRINCIPLES

The benefits described above suggest that NSAs are aligned with several Global Fund guiding principles as stated in its Framework Document (see Appendix D) particularly its emphasis on respecting national ownership, country led processes, and encouraging multi-stakeholder involvement. There are some tensions between efforts to uphold these principles and the First Learning Wave such as that the conflict between fixed date submission of the national strategy and NSA and supporting national planning and budgeting cycles.

The First Learning Wave also strengthened the Fund’s commitment to evaluating proposals through rigorous independent review processes that take into account local realities and priorities with the addition of an in-country visit that allowed reviewers to understand the country context. However, as the criteria against

which the NSAs were assessed by the TRP were not clear to countries (discussed in more detail below) adherence to this principle could be improved.

As discussed in relation to the anticipated benefits, the First Learning Wave supported Global Fund principles of expanding multi-stakeholder involvement in national development planning processes and builds on, complements, and coordinates with existing regional and national programs in support of national policies, priorities and partnerships.

Findings: Design and implementation

This section discusses the effectiveness of the design and implementation of each component of the NSA First Learning Wave process. Our findings have been clustered under six main headings. The key messages are summarised below and evidence underlying each finding is then discussed in more detail.

■ **Scope**

- There was broad support for the disease focus of the First Learning Wave although this finding is limited by the disease-focus of most interviewees.
- Countries struggled to meaningfully incorporate a cross-cutting HSS section into the NSA.

■ **Selection criteria**

- Countries would prefer the freedom to determine whether or not to apply for an NSA and which disease(s) to submit a funding request for rather than being “invited” which risks raising expectations of a successful outcome.

■ **Multi-stakeholder involvement**

- The NSA increased engagement in the development of the national strategy and NSA from a broad range of stakeholders and is seen to be less “consultant driven” than regular Global Fund proposal-based applications.
- Participation in the NSA was seen to strengthen and clarify the roles and responsibilities between national disease authorities and CCMs and improve their partnership, particularly for HIV/AIDS applicant countries.
- As Global Fund grants move towards financing national strategies, there may be tensions in oversight between the CCM and government accountability body for the national strategy particularly related to the selection and oversight of Principal Recipients.

■ **National strategy assessment**

- Most countries found the conceptual design of a desk review and in-country visit to be a good model for assessing the national strategy.
- The Global Fund provided extensive and appreciated guidance to countries to help them prepare for the assessments.

- Countries were particularly positive about the benefits of the in-country review as an opportunity to present their strategies and engage with the SRT although some countries found the size of the delegation unwieldy.
 - Feedback from the desk review and in-country visit was taken positively by nearly all countries and used to improve their national strategies and inform their NSAs.
- **National Strategy Application review**
 - Given the centrality of the national strategy in the NSA, stakeholders in four countries struggled to draw a clear distinction between the national strategy assessment and NSA review.
 - Countries found costing the overall national strategy, particularly for HIV/AIDS, and preparing the financial gap analyses required for the NSA particularly challenging.
 - While the NSA form is recognised as easier to complete with some frustration on page limitations, countries struggled to understand what information should be contained in the application itself versus what could be referenced in the strategy.
 - Countries and technical partners were unclear as to the extent to which the TRP were assessing i) the technical merits of the national strategy; ii) the quality of the financial analysis; iii) the reasonability of the ask.
 - **Timeline and communications**
 - Clarity of communications from the Global Fund about the process enabled countries to navigate the First Learning Wave despite the necessarily short timescales.

SCOPE

In the First Learning Wave, countries were invited to submit national AIDS, TB, and/or malaria strategies and were told that in future, national health strategies may be considered.⁸ They were also informed that they could also attach an optional health systems strengthening (HSS) cross-cutting request.⁹

Disease focus

There was broad support for the disease focus of the First Learning Wave although this finding is limited by the disease-focus of most interviewees.

Many stakeholders felt the disease focus of the First Learning Wave made an important contribution towards strengthening their national disease strategies and elevating their importance: over 90% of interviewees reported that participating in the First Learning Wave led to strengthening of the national disease strategy. This was due to two reasons. First, having to submit a national strategy as the basis of a funding application to a major donor increased the rigor with which the strategy was developed. Second, countries that were developing or significantly revising their strategy during the First Learning Wave, such as China, Kenya, and Madagascar, found that the TRP feedback from the desk review and in-country visit helped strengthen the strategies.

- “The NSA gave us a solid reason as to why we have our national strategy. This is a document that has really been used and the NSA has contributed to the strategy being used. If the NSA didn’t exist, it would have been more of a document as a vision. With the NSA, you set the target, you know how much it costs, and who can pay.” – Rwanda government official

Most likely due to the fact that most interviewees were disease-focused stakeholders, very few expressed a preference for submitting national health strategies in the future. The limited discussions with non-disease focused stakeholders in two countries raised the following issues:

- In one country where interviews were conducted with senior Ministry of Health stakeholders, their view was that the scope of the First Learning Wave was not in line with the vision of financing national strategies expressed in the IHP+ which should be based on donors accepting national health strategies

⁸ Global Fund Financing through National Strategy Applications: Basic information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”

⁹ NSA Guidelines

rather than those that are disease specific. From their perspective, the scope of the First Learning Wave was not appropriate and going forward, it should expand towards accepting national health strategies.

- “I would prefer the NSA to be based on national health strategies. This would have multiple benefits including: improve PR capacity, avoid the multiplication of Programme Management Units, and make the NSA more relevant to national capacity development of entire health system.” – Nepal technical partner
- “NSAs on the basis of health system strategies are a reasonable idea but detailed strategies will still be required for the diseases.” – Nepal government official

Therefore, while the disease-only scope of the First Learning Wave was seen to be appropriate, the limitation of interviewing mostly disease focused stakeholders constrains this finding.

HSS cross-cutting section

Countries struggled to meaningfully incorporate a cross-cutting HSS section into the NSA. The NSA guidelines made it clear that requests for financing national HSS interventions that are part of the national disease strategy may be included directly in the NSA. However, countries were also provided the opportunity to submit an additional HSS cross-cutting section where identified health systems constraints extended beyond the disease for which the NSA funding was sought and where the strategies to address those constraints were not included in the relevant national disease strategy. The application form for the cross-cutting HSS request was exactly the same as that for Round 9.

Two applicants chose to attach an HSS cross cutting sections to their NSA. The TRP rejected both applications noting that in both cases, “the HSS sections seemed to have little relationship to the disease strategy that they accompanied.”¹⁰

- In Kenya, the development of the NSA and HSS cross cutting section were led by different entities; NACC through an extensive multi-stakeholder process for the NSA and the Ministry of Health with WHO for the HSS. Initially, the HSS cross-cutting section was to be attached to either the Round 9 malaria or TB applications but was not based on the extended timeline to submit the NSA. This likely contributed to the lack of consistency between

¹⁰ GF/B20/11 “Report of the Technical Review Panel and Secretariat on Funding Recommendations for the National Strategy Applications of the First Learning Wave”

the HSS cross-cutting section and Kenya’s HIV/AIDS NSA. Perspectives about whether or not an HSS cross-cutting section should be part of an NSA were varied, with one technical partner noting that there was an active debate at country level on the topic. On the one hand, including an HSS cross-cutting section can significantly strengthen a national strategy; on the other hand, a minority of interviewees felt that including it within an NSA appears to “projectize” HSS which would have negative implications.

- For Madagascar, the TRP recommended the malaria NSA for approval but rejected the HSS cross-cutting section. Many stakeholders felt the success of the malaria NSA would be threatened by the lack of financing for HSS aspects seen as critical to program delivery, although some in-country technical partners did recognise that the HSS cross-cutting section was not well coordinated with the malaria NSA.

Rwanda considered adding a HSS cross-cutting section to its application but decided against it largely due to perceptions that the guidelines were not clear as to how a HSS cross-cutting section related to an NSA. There was a sentiment among some that including a HSS cross-cutting section to the NSA made it too similar to a “rounds-based project approach.”

The TRP also raised a similar issue about the HSS cross-cutting section. In their report to the PSC, the TRP stated “that the cross-cutting health systems strengthening section in its current form is not appropriate to be reviewed together with an NSA. Further discussions on how to improve these cross cutting health systems strengthening sections for the purpose of an NSA are needed.”¹¹

¹¹ GF/B20/11 “Report of the Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat on the NSA First Learning Wave”

COUNTRY SELECTION CRITERIA

Two criteria were used to select the countries invited to participate in the first learning wave:

- National strategy duration: countries were required to have national disease strategies in place until at least 2012; and
- Round 8 exclusion: countries with successful Round 8 applications for the disease in question were excluded.

Countries would prefer the freedom to determine whether to participate and which disease(s) to submit rather than being “invited” which risks raising expectations of a successful outcome.

Duration of national strategies to 2012

Countries were required to have national strategies in place until at least 2012 in order to have at least two years remaining (equivalent of Phase 1 duration) by the time approved NSA funding would start to flow. Countries believed it was reasonable for the Global Fund to place a minimum criterion regarding strategy duration and did not express a desire to submit strategies for less than two years.

The Global Fund Secretariat largely assumed that invited countries had national disease strategies in place that were agreed to at least 2012. In reality, countries were at different stages of strategy development:

- *Countries with a strategy plus supporting documentation already mostly in place (varying degrees of quality):* Cuba, Guyana, Madagascar, Mozambique, Rwanda (HIV and TB)
- *Countries in the process of reviewing their national strategies in preparation for revisions when invitation received:* Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi
- *Countries who significantly re-wrote their strategies during the First Learning Wave:* China, Nepal
 - China’s strategy was “barely five pages” at the time of invitation and the country used the opportunity to shift the malaria strategy towards an elimination approach. The national strategy was entirely revised under the leadership of the national malaria program with the help of technical partners.

- Nepal’s TB strategy was out of date (written in 2002) and not based on Stop TB so a new national TB strategy was created largely from scratch with significant support from WHO.

As both China and Nepal were successful in their NSAs (and conversely some countries with well developed strategies at the outset were not successful) this suggests that having a well-developed strategy in place at the beginning of the First Learning Wave is not a necessary condition to success.

However, even in China and Nepal it was acknowledged that it would be preferable to have developed the strategy prior to being invited to participate in the First Learning Wave as the strategy development process was significantly expedited to fit in with the First Learning Wave timetable. While neither country indicated the short timelines had a negative impact on multi-stakeholder involvement, some interviewees felt that it reduced the time for linkages with broader health sector and poverty reductions strategies.

Round 8 exclusion

Countries with successful Round 8 applications for the disease in question were excluded.¹² The logic behind this criterion was based on two reasons: 1) that applying for an NSA would be an unhelpful distraction for countries that were also in the process of signing their Round 8 grants; and 2) recommendations from the TRP that countries consider preparing proposals less regularly as it is difficult to “assess and recommend the new proposal as being genuinely complementary to the existing grant or grants.”¹³

While there was acknowledgement from many interviewees that this was a possible limiting factor, most felt that this should be a country decision rather than an enforced criterion from the Global Fund for three reasons:

- A large funding gap may still exist regardless of whether the country had been successful in recent Rounds particularly due to new needs arising (e.g., a change in WHO guidelines for medication);
- The ability of the country to successfully implement a recent grant while simultaneously applying for an NSA will be driven by the nature of the grant

¹² Ethiopia was an exception although were not on the initial invitation list and were invited late based on a desire from the RBM partnership to include more sub-Saharan African countries with high malaria disease burden in the pilot.

¹³ GF/B18/10 Report of the Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat on Round 8 proposals

in relation to the wider strategy and the capacity of the country to implement – both of which the country is in the best position to judge; and

- Imposing any criteria is perceived to contradict the Global Fund guiding principle of being country-driven and respecting country priorities.

Psychology of “invitation”

Interviewees also reflected on the psychology of being “invited” to participate in the First Learning Wave. Many felt that such an invitation raised expectations that a successful outcome was likely despite the fact that all Global Fund communications (including the written documentation; the Geneva workshop, the SRT messages in-country etc.) consistently made it clear that the final funding decision depended on the strength of the NSA as assessed by the TRP.

- “We were flattered that we were invited because we assumed it meant we were doing a good job.” – Malawi NGO
- “We understood it was new and that there were few countries invited and that Kenya had been invited because we were developing a plan. We thought since there were few countries, our chances of succeeding would be higher than the Rounds approach.” – Kenya government implementer
- “We did debate whether to give it a shot or not. We thought that we could be successful because only a few countries had been selected for the short list. If it had been open I’m sure we would have not tried.” – Ghana stakeholder
- “The general perception was that the invitation to participate meant we would be successful” – Nepal CCM representative

Being invited to participate in the First Learning Wave raised expectations of a successful outcome for many stakeholders. The Global Fund was consistent and clear in their messages and made efforts to manage expectations, but some disappointment was inevitable in those countries that were unsuccessful.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

This study assessed the various roles and responsibilities of different stakeholders during the development of the NSA and to a lesser degree, during the development of the national strategy itself. In the First Learning Wave, the CCM took the decision to participate and provided oversight of the process, playing a very similar role as in regular Global Fund proposal-based applications. Most countries noted that the roles and responsibilities of key actors at country level, and the relationships between them, are different for an NSA as compared to a regular Global Fund proposal-based application.

Stakeholder engagement in First Learning Wave

The NSA increased engagement in the development of the national strategy and NSA from a broad range of stakeholders and is seen to be less “consultant driven” than standard Global Fund proposal-based applications. This is particularly true for HIV/AIDS applications which usually have more complex and diverse sets of stakeholders than for TB or malaria.

HIV/AIDS

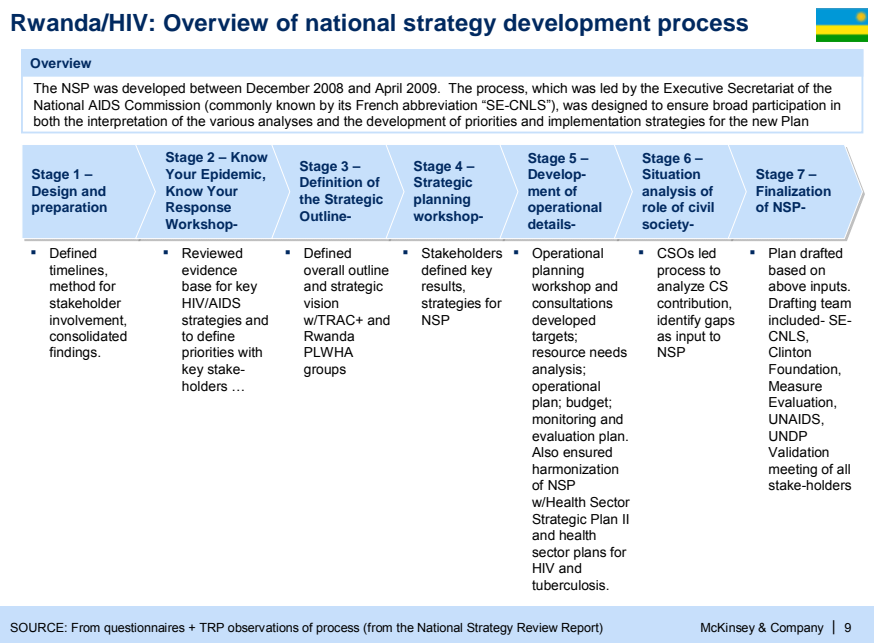
In the case of HIV/AIDS applicants, there was extensive consultation amongst stakeholders regarding the decision to participate in the First Learning Wave prior to the CCM decision to participate. Interviewees from these countries believed the CCM was the appropriate body to take the decision to participate given it represents all stakeholders from the relevant government ministry, national disease authority, civil society, technical partners, and in-country donors.

- In Cuba, there were various consultations with the Ministry of Health, PAHO, National AIDS Technical commission, and NGOs. The decision was taken by the CCM to participate in the FLW after these consultations took place.
- In Malawi, there was an initial discussion at the CCM where members were requested to consult with their constituencies and a decision was taken at the following CCM meeting. CBOs felt they had enough time to consult their constituencies and that it was a participatory process.
- In Kenya, the discussion to participate started at the Interagency Coordinating Committee (multi-sectoral committee chaired by NACC that involves all HIV/AIDS stakeholders with strong representation of civil society). Once a decision was endorsed at the ICC, the Executive Director of NACC presented it to the CCM. CCM members were then given the opportunity to further

consult their constituencies prior to taking the decision. NGOs represented on the CCM noted they had the opportunity to consult with their constituencies further although many had endorsed the decision previously at the ICC.

Although countries received the IHP+ attributes after they had begun their strategy development processes, in Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda, there were existing or planned consultative processes particularly aimed at ensuring civil society involvement. This was largely due to the following factors: commitment from the national disease authorities to ensure multi-stakeholder participation and ownership in planning processes, active involvement by NGOs, and technical support aimed at strengthening civil society engagement from UNAIDS.

Exhibit 2: Overview of national strategy development process in Rwanda



Civil society stakeholders believed that the invitation for the NSA enhanced these consultative processes because of the Global Fund’s recognized commitment to multi-stakeholder involvement in its financing approach. The majority of civil society stakeholders in Kenya, Malawi, and Rwanda expressed satisfaction with their level of involvement in the overall process, ownership of both the strategy and NSA submission to the Global Fund, and commitment to contribute to its implementation.

- “The NSA was probably one of the few times when you had government, donors, partners and implementers like us working together.” – Malawi NGO

- “There was a very consultative process was followed to develop the national strategy. We were a key contributor to the evolution of the national strategy.”
– Malawi CBO
- “NGOs were discussing how the national strategy will be implemented in detail at the district level. In planning, the districts were fully involved in suggesting activities. We were working at the district level to ensure everyone is informed about the national strategy and the NSA.” Rwanda CBO
- In Kenya, the level of engagement was so high that some civil society members felt they were “over consulted” and “living at the NACC.” While not all stakeholders, particularly some in civil society, were fully aware of each step of the process and many confused the national strategy development and NSA processes, most noted strong trust in the NACC and CCM to manage the process and felt that they had mandated them to play that role.
- 80% of respondents from HIV/AIDS applicant countries agreed that “the First Learning Wave has strengthened participation of non-government stakeholders including civil society, private sector and affected communities.”

Many civil society organisations interviewed in Kenya, Rwanda, and Malawi, including those representing vulnerable populations, believe that the NSA encourages more participation from them than regular Global Fund proposal-based applications because of the financing implications: in the NSA, the application is based on a national strategy in which all civil society partners can participate through transparent, consultative processes, whereas in the regular Global Fund proposal-based process, CSOs and NGOs often “compete against” each other in the different proposals offered to the CCM for consideration.

- “When rounds are being developed, a consultant can just write down what ever activities they can imagine which are not necessarily connected to the reality on the ground.” – Rwanda NGO
- “Ordinarily the NACC is quite good at engaging civil society. NSA took that a notch higher in that civil society was actively involved in some of the committees, developing the results based framework, the budgets, etc. We were involved in the details and know the plan inside out.” – Kenya NGO

Malaria/TB

For countries that submitted malaria and TB applications, the relationship between the CCM and national disease authorities is less strong given the national disease authorities’ belief that the CCMs are dominated by HIV/AIDS stakeholders. National disease authorities from unsuccessful countries that submitted malaria

and TB strategies for desk review felt it was less appropriate for the CCM to take the decision to participate other than in its role as an interlocutor with the Global Fund. Multiple stakeholders in Nepal also questioned the role of the CCM in making the decision to participate in the First Learning Wave and its future role in providing oversight of the approved NSA.

- In Ghana, the national disease authorities were not supportive of the decision to participate in the First Learning Wave as they believed the timing was too rushed for them to complete the national TB strategy. They were compelled to participate and rush the development of the strategy for desk review submission based on the decision taken by the CCM.
- In Guyana, only one member of the CCM has a direct interest in malaria as most are HIV stakeholders.
- Nepal stakeholders felt the CCM is mostly focused on HIV and real decisions are taken by Ministry with a “rubber stamp” from the CCM when necessary. “It is understandable that as the official connection to the Global Fund they needed to make the decision but it is easy to envision a future in which the CCM no longer exists and this decision [to put forth an NSA] is taken by the Ministry of Health or National TB Commission.” – Nepal NGO
- In an additional country, some felt that the CCM lacked the capacity to make decisions regarding the NSA approach given a perception that its members lack of basic knowledge of the health sector.

The invitation for the NSA was not seen to positively or negatively affect multi-stakeholder participation in the development of the strategy in either Rwanda or Nepal where it was already strong, but was seen to strengthen it in Madagascar.

- In Madagascar, civil society was extensively involved in developing the community systems strengthening component of the malaria NSA. As a result, civil society participation has improved with the CCM. “Now civil Society representatives speak more at the CCM meetings and attend more frequently.” – Madagascar NGO
- In Nepal, participation in the First Learning wave did not positively or negatively impact multi-stakeholder involvement. Non-government constituencies were heavily involved in workshops and brainstorming. This was not unique to the NSA as there is a strong network of TB related stakeholders already in place in Nepal.
- In Rwanda, there was a validation workshop at which the TB strategy was endorsed by all the relevant stakeholders prior to submission for the desk

review but this would have occurred in any case as part of the country validation process and was not unique for the Global Fund.

Exhibit 3: Overview of national strategy development process in Nepal

Nepal/TB: Overview of national strategy development process



Overview

The current NTP Long Term Plan is for 2002 – 2012 period and covers all elements of DOTS strategy. This plan was prepared with technical support of WHO Nepal Country Office and NTP partners. Since NTP has adopted Stop TB Strategy the current Long Term is being revised to incorporate the additional components of this strategy. We expect the revised Long Term Plan (July 2010 – July 2015) to be completed and approved by mid April 2009. The revised Plan will consolidate existing Workplan of GFATM Round 4 and Round 7 as well as it will also address programme gaps envisaged for July 2010 – July 2015 period

Stakeholders	Management	Process
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Britain Nepal Medical Trust (BNMT) Family Health International (FHI) Health Research & Development Forum (HERD) International Nepal Fellowship (INF) German Nepal Tuberculosis Project (GENTUP), Nepal Anti TB Association (NATA) and South Asian Association for Regional Cooperation (SAARC) TB HIV Center (STC) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A working group including NTP, WHO and Partners is leading the revision of the Plan Subgroups formed for development of various components of the Plan including- Diagnosis/Laboratory Network, Treatment, MDR TB Management, Health System Strengthening (Practical Approach to Lung Health, Infection Control, Urban TB Control), Private Public Partnership, Advocacy Communication & Social Mobilization and Operational Research. WHO Medical Officer is coordination the development of the LTP under NTP Director's leadership WHO and partners are also providing additional technical support through experts/consultants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regular consultations and involvement within and outside concerned departments/units of Ministry of Health & Population and technical and development partners NTP shared the draft of the revised Long Term Plan with TB Technical Sub-Committee of CCM on 30 March 2009 Committee gave its approval and on their advice the Plan was put forward to CCM for comments/approval

SOURCE: From questionnaires + TRP observations of process (from the National Strategy Review Report)

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Relationship between CCM and national disease authorities

Participation in the NSA was seen to strengthen and clarify the roles and responsibilities between national disease authorities and CCMs and improve their partnership, particularly for HIV/AIDS applicant countries.

For regular Global Fund proposal-based applications, the process of developing an application is typically managed through the CCM with heavy use of international consultants. Many interviewees felt that this exacerbates the tension between the CCM and disease authorities. In the case of the NSA, the national disease authorities and in-country stakeholders felt they owned the application itself given the centrality of the national strategy to the proposal. It was felt that the NSA was “nationally driven” compared to the “consultant driven Rounds.” While consultants were used for various aspects of the strategy development and NSA development, there was a greater effort to use local consultants in Rwanda and Kenya and a sentiment amongst stakeholders in these countries that the consultant was managed effectively by the national disease authorities who had been charged by the CCM to develop the application.

In both Rwanda and Kenya, national disease authorities and CCMs felt the NSA was a catalyst to improve the dialogue regarding the appropriate roles and responsibilities between the two entities.

- “Before, NACC was part of the CCM and their roles were less clear. In the NSA they were given more specific roles and the coordination role that became apparent to stakeholders.” – Kenya CCM Member
- “The coordination mechanism was very clear in the NSA. In rounds, the CCM is the lead and sometimes there is no link between the multi-sectoral NACC and them. But this time, NACC was the multi-sectoral stakeholder and CCM was forced to work with them and coordinate. This helped to bring the two groups together. There was great ownership in the whole plan.” – Kenya government implementer
- “The CCM and the national disease authority had complimentary roles. The national disease authority took the lead on the technical aspects whereas the CCM was more involved with the submission process and providing oversight.” – Rwanda technical partner

As Global Fund grants move towards financing of national strategies there may be tensions in oversight between the CCM and government accountability body for the national strategy particularly related to the selection and oversight of Principal Recipients.

Most interviewees see clearly distinct roles and obligations for governments and CCMs: governments’ obligations are to develop and oversee national disease strategies, through accountable government entities such as NACCs, Ministry of Health, or TB and malaria programmes; the CCM has an obligation to provide oversight to Global Fund grants, and its membership generally includes the relevant accountable government entity along with a range of non-government stakeholders including NGOs, technical partners, and in-country donors.

Some interviewees feel that that the First Learning Wave has amplified potential tensions regarding the oversight of grant implementation between the CCM and national disease authority and that there is a need to clarify their relationships as Global Fund grants move closer to financing (all or significant parts of) national disease strategies. While some believed that the First Learning Wave had helped clarify these roles during the application process, many felt the relationships would become more challenged during grant management when resources are received.

- “It is clear that the relationship between CNLS (National AIDS Control Commission) and CCM has to be reviewed and adjusted to the new reality

with the NSA ...now that the NSA is an important part of the national strategy and CNLS being responsible for it, the way CCM manages the NSA has to be coordinated in a tighter manner with CNLS.” – Rwanda technical partner

- “Something has changed in our relationship with the NSA. CNLS has been a CCM member for all the years. Ministry of Health is the PR and CNLS was mandated by the Ministry to closely monitor the implementation of these resources. We are a CCM member but are now also overseeing how it is used.” – Rwanda government official
- “The role of structures established by the Global Fund like the CCM and PR becomes very unclear when you look at NSA. Because it is based on a national strategy, it needs to be anchored with the existing accountability mechanisms. All partners are anchoring into that process. CCM can’t have the oversight just of the NSA, it has to be linked to the large mechanisms.” – Kenya technical partner

The TRP agreed that conflicts may arise in grant management stating that “conflicts of authority may arise when the signature of a national strategy grant confers the oversight of the grant to the CCM while the oversight of the strategy itself rests with the disease control programme. This may require a review of the terms of reference and mandates of the CCM.”¹⁴

The selection of Principal Recipient (PR) has the potential to create oversight challenges in the implementation of the national strategy. In the First Learning Wave, countries were encouraged to use dual-track financing to increase civil society PRs but were given the freedom to select the option that is best for them. However, the sentiment expressed in countries is that the Global Fund *strongly recommends* or *requires* dual-track financing and that it should be a goal for the future even if not included as part of the current grant request.

In Rwanda, a country that did not elect dual-track financing and maintained a single government PR, several interviewees commented that dual-track financing may not be appropriate for NSAs as a likely success factor for the country was having one, strong government PR with broad strategic responsibility. In Kenya, some interviewees felt that there would likely be issues between the PR and NACC in grant management given conflicting oversight responsibilities.

¹⁴ Technical Review Panel Lessons Learned Report on the Global Fund’s First Learning Wave of National Strategy Applications

- “One PR as the government may be good as long as there is transparency in the management of Funds. Dual-track financing may not be necessary.” – Rwanda technical partner
- “There will be PR/NACC issues and an unnecessary confusion. The PR should be the one who has the primary oversight and responsibility of the national strategy.” – Kenya technical partner

At the same, Madagascar proposed four PRs as part of its NSA, which some interviewees explained as being on the basis of the four major components of their application.

The TRP questions whether the Global Fund’s demand for multi-sectoral participation in strategy development is always essential, suggesting that “national strategy development may be more governmental in process than the CCM processes which are more external to government regarding proposal solicitation and development.”¹⁵

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¹⁵ Technical Review Panel Lessons Learned Report on the Global Fund’s First Learning Wave of National Strategy Applications

NATIONAL STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

In the First Learning Wave, the assessment of the national strategy occurred through a two step process which included a desk review followed by an in-country visit for those who successfully passed the desk review.

There were two unique features in relation to the national strategy assessment during First Learning Wave that are considered to be “idiosyncratic” and are unlikely to be repeated. Firstly, in the future, the assessment of the national strategy is intended to involve a broader group of partners as a “joint assessment” rather than relying only on TRP members. Secondly, the in-country visit would normally be concluded prior to the preparation of the NSA whereas these steps overlapped during the First Learning Wave.

Relationship between desk review and in-country visit

Most countries found the conceptual design of a desk review and in-country visit to be a good model for assessing the national strategy.

Countries believed that the conceptual design of a desk review and in-country visit was a good approach in the First Learning Wave and most suggested maintaining these steps. In particular, countries felt the desk review step was a good checking point for the Global Fund to determine whether the strategy was of reasonable quality to continue with the assessment.

However, for Rwanda and Nepal, the separate desk and in-country reviews of the national strategy were perceived as repetitive with the majority of stakeholders in Rwanda and several in Nepal who suggested that these steps could be combined. In these countries, it created a perception that the reviews were distinct, did not build on the lessons learned previously, and had no or few overlapping TRP reviewers (although information provided by the Global Fund proposals team shows there was strong overlap with 4 of the 5 reviewers in Rwanda participating in both reviews and 2 of 3 reviewers in Nepal respectively).¹⁶

These countries also noted that the desk review TRP comments and in-country Strategy Review Team (SRT) did not always agree with each other as observed in the discussions they held with members of the SRT during the in-country visit.

- “The desk review and in-country review felt like two completely different processes. In-country TRP dismissed the desk review comments. The desk

¹⁶ Global Fund Country Proposals team information, provided by e-mail on 25 February 2010

review feedback was not used at all in structuring the agenda for the in-country visit.” – Rwanda government implementer

Mostly, these differences can be explained as a result of countries themselves adapting their strategies in the interim and/or new information coming to light during the in-country visit but several interviewees believed there were disagreements on previously validated issues.

- “The TRP teams revised some of the findings of the desk review, sometimes because issues had since been addressed by the CCM in response to comments from the desk review, but sometimes also because the country visit helped provide a better contextualised understanding of the issues.” – TRP report for the Board on the First Learning Wave¹⁷

Kenya, Madagascar, and China who were all significantly revising their strategies throughout the process found the two staged assessment helpful as the technical comments received after both steps was appreciated and believed to strengthen their strategies.

Most countries also felt that the dialogue with the TRP should be further enhanced during desk review and prior to the in-country review. Countries that did not pass the desk review felt they should have had the opportunity for dialogue with TRP via tele-conference to clarify issues rather than an outright rejection based on paper.

- “We highly recommend that a visit is made prior to making a decision, so we would have a chance to 'translate' our documents.” Cuba government stakeholder

Successful NSA countries believed there could be advance work done by tele-conference prior to the in-country visit or during the desk review stage to clarify easier issues to enhance focus of the visit. Additionally, government and technical partner stakeholders in Rwanda suggested that tele-conferences could further be utilized to determine if the visit was even necessary.

Guidance provided by the Global Fund

The Global Fund provided extensive and appreciated guidance to countries to help them prepare for the assessments. This included written guidance on the overall process and the details of the steps; the opportunity to ask questions via email using a dedicated address or via telephone; and conducting a First Learning

¹⁷ GF/B20/11 “Report of the Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat on funding recommendations for National Strategy Applications of the First Learning Wave”

Wave workshop with countries that passed the desk review and technical partners in May 2009 in Geneva.

While countries broadly felt the guidance from the Secretariat was clear about the steps required for the assessment and the deadlines, there were several areas where more guidance would have been helpful:

- Countries appreciated the fact that templates were not provided so as not to dictate how their strategies should be structured. Where available, countries made use of internationally recognised frameworks (e.g. Stop TB, ASAP). However, many would have welcomed additional guidance related to budgets and costing which were the most challenging aspects. This would include specific endorsement from the Global Fund on a costing approach and expectations on how the financing request should be justified. In the absence of specific guidance on the format and presentation of these financial elements, some countries made use of existing Global Fund budget guidance and submitted budgets as they would in a regular Global Fund proposal.
- Some countries would have appreciated more guidance as to the *content* of exactly what the Global Fund was expecting during the assessment stage. While the list of documents to submit for the desk review was viewed as useful, many noted that more guidance should be given on the standards of those documents and what they should ensure they contain. The role of the IHP+ attributes is discussed in more detailed below.

In general, countries erred on the side of caution by providing multiple supporting documents for the desk review and in most cases, these documents were truly reflective of the strategies that countries were implementing or intending to implement in the future. However, in some cases, this made the review process more cumbersome for TRP reviewers who noted that “when submissions include large numbers of documents, the volume of documentation may create difficulties for the reviewer, in particular in assessing coherence between disease programme and wider health sector issues.”¹⁸□

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¹⁸ Technical Review Panel Lessons Learned Report on the Global Fund’s First Learning Wave of National Strategy Applications

National strategy assessment criteria

Initial guidance¹⁹ circulated by the Global Fund at the time of the invitation to participate in the First Learning Wave stated that “the National Strategy Documentation... will be reviewed against the list of attributes of sound national strategies.” This was in reference to the IHP+ attributes²⁰ which were attached to the guidance.

Many interviewees seemed not to be aware of this guidance or the IHP+ attributes or stated that they became aware of them too late to significantly influence their strategy development process. As many countries already had strategies in place the IHP+ attributes were received “too late” in the sense that they would have been most useful during the strategy development process itself. For this reason, all countries said they would have found it helpful to see the IHP+ attributes earlier in the process. However, the TRP was mindful that national strategy documents had not been developed with the attributes in mind and recognised that “it would be unlikely that the strategies would meet all high standards presumed in the IHP+ attributes.”²¹

Once the guidance was issued to CCMs it was clearly their responsibility to circulate this guidance to the relevant stakeholders in-country. This varied largely due to the size of the country, size of the stakeholder community, and communication mechanisms of the CCM. For example, in a smaller country such as Rwanda with established strong CCM communication mechanisms, all stakeholders including community based organisations and people living with HIV/AIDS organisations were extremely familiar with the attributes. However, in Kenya, a country with an extremely large stakeholder network and a CCM that is reforming its communication mechanisms, not all stakeholders were familiar with their role beyond the NACC leadership team, development partners, Ministry of Health, and some civil society who are engaged with the ICC advisory council or CCM.

For those that used them, most found the IHP+ attributes provided a helpful checklist.

¹⁹ Global Fund Financing through National Strategy Applications: Practical information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”

²⁰ The International Health Partnership+ (IHP+) Working Group on National Strategies formulated a list of ‘attributes’ that it believes should be reflected in sound national strategies. Nine attributes were used as a basis for the desk review, on the grounds that these attributes were considered as core. Information pertaining to the remaining attributes was examined during the country visit.

²¹ GF/B20/11 “Report of the Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat on funding recommendations for National Strategy Applications of the First Learning Wave”

- “The attributes were helpful because they did make you check to see if there were any gaps in the strategy.” – Ghana stakeholder
- “WHO did a desk review “in house” using the IHP+ attributes and carried out financial gap analysis. We wanted to know if our national strategy responds to all requirements.” – Mozambique stakeholder
- “The IHP+ attributes were very helpful as a checklist to review and confirm.” – Kenya CCM Representative

One criticism of the IHP+ attributes is that they do not provide detailed guidance in how to achieve those attributes and would benefit from a tool-kit to assist countries in achieving them.

In-country visit

Countries were particularly positive about the benefits of the in-country visit as an opportunity to present their strategies and engage with the SRT.

The in-country review step of the national strategy assessment was comprised of a week long visit by the SRT including 3-4 TRP members and 3-4 National Facilitators who were selected by the country based on certain principles provided by the Global Fund. There were also several observers to each visit from the Global Fund Secretariat and sometimes partners such as UNAIDS and PEPFAR.

Most countries recognised the in-country visit as a useful step in the strategy assessment process that supplemented the desk review. They appreciated the opportunity to present their strategies. This is particularly important for the NSA, because countries felt strongly that their national strategies were complex documents, necessarily embedded in the country context, that are very difficult to assess purely through a desk review. The main benefits quoted included:

- “The in-country visit demystifies the TRP and Global Fund. You see the face of the TRP and you know who actually reviews and the process for review. Involving some of the National Facilitators was very good.” – Kenya technical partner
- “We were very worried because we submitted in English and it’s not our language and we’re not confident if the Global Fund understands our situation. But having the technical team come to China and visit the field at township level, allowed them to really understand. They gave us very clear feedback and we discussed in detail what the proposal meant. It was quite good.” – China stakeholder

- “The in country review is useful as a checking mechanism. It allowed the SRT to see the country context, check implementation and learn more about how the plan was developed in line with the local context, CCM role, and private sector” – Nepal NGO
- “The SRT asked specific questions and suggested issues to improve such as resolving financing of simple (free) and complex (user fee) malaria patients and expanding management of children with malaria to encompass all major childhood illnesses, in line with IMCI.” – Madagascar technical partner

As a result, the time and resources required to set up the in-country review were seen as worthwhile investments in the process. There is no evidence to suggest that countries expected the SRT to provide any form of technical assistance.

Some found the precise role of the SRT unclear, especially when they were made aware of the “firewalling” with the NSA TRP review team which was a result of efforts to avoid potential conflicts of interest between those participating in the in-country visit and those reviewing the final NSA. In part, this is likely to be a result of the following unique First Learning Wave characteristics: i) the in-country review happened in parallel to the NSA development thus reducing the distinctiveness of the in-country national strategy review as a separate step ending with an explicit TRP decision point; and ii) that both the assessment and NSA review were conducted by the TRP.

Countries were generally positive about the composition of the SRT. SRT members were perceived to have strong technical expertise in the relevant disease areas and often complemented each other in terms of their skills and knowledge they provided. SRT experience from other regions was highlighted as particularly interesting for countries submitting malaria and TB NSAs.

Countries were generally positive about the use of the TRP during both stages of the national strategy assessment. Many interviewees argued that the TRP added credibility to the strategy assessment by clearly linking it to the Global Fund and therefore the possibility of funding.

However, there were some observed challenges with the SRT composition:

- During the First Learning Wave, there were a large number of “observers” (e.g. technical partners and the Global Fund Secretariat) accompanying the SRT in Rwanda, Kenya, and Malawi. While the Secretariat was there to support the SRT in managing the visit, the perception from some stakeholders was that they were equal members of the SRTs. The role of technical partners observing the visits was also less clear particularly as their national

counterparts were part of the visit. This caused confusion amongst many stakeholders about who exactly was conducting the review and many countries referring to them as the “team that came from Geneva”. The significant number of observers also meant that the visit teams were quite large resulting in unwieldy, overly formal meetings and complicating logistical arrangements.

- In some cases, the SRT lacked a detailed understanding of the country context which was observed as a challenge for HIV/AIDS applicant countries. “They were technically competent, but lacked understanding the country context. Most had never been to Rwanda or East Africa at all. The team really lacked basic understanding of working in Africa/Rwanda and how to plan their visit.” – Rwanda stakeholder
- Nearly all interviewed National Facilitators were unclear about the role they should play which was equally observed by their TRP counterparts as referenced in their Lessons Learned reports. While they helped provide useful context to the review team and answered questions from the SRT as they arose, many National Facilitators felt they should be “advocates” for the strategy and therefore struggled with a conflict of interest in some discussions with the review team. Nearly all felt the role was not made sufficiently clear prior to the in-country visit. Some national facilitators, particularly from civil society, did not feel the Global Fund adequately prepared them for their role. A small minority believed they were not given the prominence and respect they deserved from the SRT.

The “Lessons Learned Reports” compiled by the SRTs for the Global Fund cited that members of the SRTs themselves were equally challenged by some of the same issues felt by countries regarding the team composition.

- For the Malawi visit, there were four TRP members and four National Facilitators comprising the SRT and there were eight observers from Global Fund partners and the Secretariat. The SRT report suggests that in future to “limit the number of observers to maximum a third of the review team” and “define clear roles of attendance.”²²
- Regarding the country context limitations, the China SRT noted, “no TRP member had previous experience with China which might have limited the understanding of the specific context of the country.”²³

²² Report on Lessons Learned from Malawi country visit for NSA First Learning Wave

²³ Report on Lessons Learned from China in-country visit for NSA First Learning Wave

- National Facilitators in Kenya were representatives of the CCM which was observed to create conflicts of interest. “The national facilitators were very useful and strong. However they were all closely tied to the CCM and the NSA process (one of the national facilitators was vice-chair of the CCM). This created a bit of a conflict of interest situation.”²⁴

Finally, while countries did feel the visit was useful, hosting such a visit is a major commitment at country level which significantly raised expectations of likely financing by the Global Fund.

Feedback from the desk review and in-country visit

Feedback from the desk review and in-country visit was taken positively by nearly all countries and used to improve their national strategies and inform their NSAs.

Following the desk review, countries received feedback from the TRP in a Desk Review Summary Sheet. This provided strengths, areas for improvement and items to be clarified during the in-country visit against each of five main IHP+ categories. Uniquely in the First Learning Wave, the TRP was asked to make a determination as to whether or not each strategy was judged to be “sufficiently robust to form the basis of an NSA” after the desk review rather than (more ideally) waiting for the outcome of the in-country review. This was to allow countries with clearly insufficiently robust strategies to still have an opportunity to apply via the concurrent Round 9 if they so wished.

For countries that were successful in the desk review, the Desk Review Form was taken positively with the exception of Rwanda where multiple government and technical partner stakeholders believed that the comments were not useful toward strengthening the strategy.

- “We were very surprised because there was almost no criticism [from the desk review]. As much as we’re proud of the national strategy, we had a hard time thinking it was so good that there was no flaw. The initial desk review was quite superficial.” – Rwanda government stakeholder

Countries that did not pass the desk review stage had more mixed feelings about the usefulness of the TRP feedback. Some countries (e.g., Mozambique, Cuba) were very positive, incorporating the comments into their national strategies and believing their strategies will be stronger as a result; others dismissed the

²⁴ Report on Lessons Learned from Kenya in-country visit for NSA First Learning Wave

feedback as unhelpful and/or irrelevant if they were not continuing with the NSA.

After the in-country review, countries received verbal feedback from the SRT at the end of the visit and a written National Strategy Review Report that highlighted strengths and weaknesses/areas for improvement against each of five main categories of IHP+ attributes. Importantly, the National Strategy Review Report included a section highlighting the “critical issues for consideration before the submission of NSA.”

The verbal SRT feedback and National Strategy Review Report were seen as particularly useful for some countries in finalising the national strategy and preparing the NSA.

- “[The SRT] pointed out challenges and made recommendations. They were very open in their report. They didn’t hide anything. When they left we were motivated to work even harder because we knew the weaknesses.” – Kenya CCM member
- “There were two issues that they wanted addressed. When they conducted in-country review, we hadn’t finished the in depth budget and work plan. The first suggestion, finish the detailed budget as soon as possible and they gave suggestions on unit prices, which we accepted in our work plan. The second suggestion was that we should involve more NGOs in the NSA which we accepted in our last version of the NSA documents. We included more national and international NGOs and civil society and other governments sector.” – China government implementer
- “The paediatrician on the team really pushed our 'embryonic' children's strategy; and the team really challenged us on sustainability. They explained that elimination would require an entire system to be put into place. They also challenged us to make our free/co-payment approach more coherent ...so it will now be all free.” - Madagascar government implementer

In Nepal and Rwanda, some stakeholders felt the TRP’s comments were not “technical” enough in nature and focused on “managerial” issues such as human resource capacity. This suggests a lack of clear understanding in the scope of the IHP+ attributes in which implementation and management is a distinct category covering the “soundness of arrangements and systems for implementing and managing the programmes contained in the national strategy.”²⁵ The perception in

²⁵ “Attributes for a Sound National Strategy,” International Health Partnership working group on National Strategies.

these countries was that the lack of “technical” comments on the strategy itself meant their NSA was likely to be successful.

- “The TRP can help us to see if the strategy is coherent as a whole. The national strategy is a general doc, its normal that it does not go into the details of implementation. The main role of the TRP should be to make sure that all the basic elements of the strategy are there to develop later. I had the impression that many questions were about the implementation rather than the structure of the strategy.” – Rwanda technical partner

Overall, positive TRP comments (or few significant negative comments) were generally interpreted as a strong indicator that the NSA would be successful despite the recognition that the NSA itself was a separate step in the process.

- “It’s obvious that if you put everything down on paper that they raised and give it to them, then obviously you’re going to get it [the NSA].” – Nepal CCM representative

NATIONAL STRATEGY APPLICATION REVIEW

NSA submission and review is conceived as a distinct step separate from the strategy assessment phase however, as noted above, the in-country national strategy assessment stage overlapped with the NSA preparation stage which was considered an idiosyncratic aspect unique to the First Learning Wave.

Purpose of NSA

Given the centrality of the national strategy in the NSA, countries struggled to draw a clear distinction between the NSA review and national strategy assessment.

Countries generally recognised that the purpose of the NSA was to make an application for funding to the Global Fund based on the financing gap identified in their assessed national strategy. However, multiple stakeholders from Kenya, Nepal, Malawi, and Rwanda were unclear on the links between the strategy assessment and NSA with many government and CCM stakeholders believing that it was duplicative to the previous steps. Countries believed that getting to the NSA submission phase meant that their national strategy had been approved through the previous assessments.

Elements that blurred the boundary between the national strategy assessment and the NSA included:

- The in-country visit overlapped with the NSA preparation;
- The TRP conducted both the national strategy assessment and the NSA review;
- The NSA was visually presented as the final step on a single process that began with the national strategy assessment. The familiar flow diagram explaining the process (which many interviewees could recall) included in multiple documents shows the NSA preparation, review and decision as steps 4,5 and 6 in a six-step process; and
- Section 3 of the NSA form asked countries to respond to clarifications requested in the Strategy Review Report (based on the feedback from the desk review and the in-country visit).

The first two points are directly related to idiosyncratic features of the First Learning Wave and so are unlikely to be problematic in the future and the third point can be easily addressed. The connection between the Strategy Review Report

and the NSA is more fundamental as it brings into question the extent to which a national strategy has been fully assessed prior to submission of an NSA.

Financial analysis

It was recognised that the gap analysis formed the most important part of the NSA however, **countries found costing the overall national strategy, particularly for HIV/AIDS, and preparing the financial gap analyses required for the NSA particularly challenging.**

Countries found preparing a gap analysis more challenging for the NSA than for previous Global Fund rounds-based applications because of the need for the gap analysis to be prepared in connection with a national strategy which requires validation from in country stakeholders particularly other donors. In previously submitted Global Fund rounds proposals, interviewees stated that the gap analyses have not been prepared with validation from other donors and stakeholders such as civil society except to the extent that they are represented on the CCM. Four aspects of the costing and gap analysis were highlighted as particularly difficult.

Firstly, *deciding which methodology to follow* (i.e. resource based modelling, activity based costing, etc.). Rwanda, Kenya, and Malawi struggled with deciding which methodology to use as there is not an agreement amongst technical partners on the best approach to cost a national HIV/AIDS strategy. The debate is largely between the resource-needs based model (RBM) and the activity-based model. In all three countries, an external consultant was used to support countries in selecting and applying a particular methodology although one country expressed dissatisfaction with this support. The use of a consultant to support costing appeared to be more useful in countries where there was a strong, nationally led costing process with multiple stakeholders involved.

- “We initially used the Resource Based Model which was inflexible and useless. Then we went to activity based which is based on costs of what we're doing on the program and more realistic.” – Malawi government implementer

Secondly, *gathering costing data at the required level of granularity* and making suitable assumptions about how these costs might evolve in the future.

- “We appreciate the need to do the costing but have to consider the level of detail we need because unit costs will change eight months from now when we do the procurements.” – Rwanda government official
- “A strategy cannot roll out with a five year budget to the unit cost level. Countries don't have five year budget cycles. There needs to be a significant

shift in how the Global Fund asks these things to be developed to make it more applicable and smoother.” – China stakeholder

Thirdly, *countries were not clear about what they should submit as their “ask”* within the NSA and would have appreciated more guidance from the Global Fund on this aspect. For example, countries were not clear whether they should request funding to fill their entire funding gap or only selected parts, because the NSA guidance did not provide any specificity on this aspect. They were also unclear about what ratio of the strategy would be appropriate for the Global Fund to finance particularly in countries where the Global Fund is already providing the majority of resources for the disease and there are few or no external additional donors. When asked directly by countries, the Global Fund Secretariat or SRT would not specify based on their desire to allow the request to be determined by the country in line with country driven principles. If countries selected financing selected gaps, they were also unclear in how to justify how they came to determine the amount for involvement.

Fourthly, *countries had difficulty ensuring the gap calculation was robust and accurate.* The total size of the funding gap is sensitive to an agreement on the cost of services and transparency in all donor contributions to the strategy. This required heavy consultation and lengthy meetings between all relevant stakeholders. Although countries have been requested to submit a financial gap analysis that relates to the national program needs within regular Global Fund proposals, most stakeholders acknowledged it had not previously been done to the rigor and transparency for the NSA. Additionally, a number of country and global interviewees questioned the robustness of the entire funding gap calculation arguing that it could be made to be as small or as large as desired with relative ease. Several countries conducted a preliminary gap analysis which resulted in a gap that was either “too small” or “too large” leading to the assumptions being revisited. As a result, the extent to which the funding gap is a true reflection of reality was questioned by some.

Ease of completion

While the NSA form is recognised as easier to complete with some frustration on page limitations, countries struggled to understand what information should be contained in the application itself versus what could be referenced in the strategy.

Compared to previous rounds-based proposal form, the NSA form is recognised as easier to complete in terms of time and information requested (once a robust national strategy is in place).

Fundamentally, countries were not clear which information should be included *directly* in the NSA form versus what could be *referenced* from other strategy documents. The guidance²⁶ itself stated that “the NSA will take the reviewed National Strategy documentation as its starting point. The NSA application form will only ask applicants to provide additional information relevant to their request for Global Fund financing, which would not typically be contained in the National Strategy Documentation.”

Despite this, several countries were concerned that information not included or at least referenced in the NSA would risk being overlooked during the review. The strategy documentation was often long and there was a concern the TRP wouldn’t be able to fully digest it, especially as the NSA guidelines requested that documentation submitted for the desk review should not be resubmitted.

- “We focused on what the NSA would achieve, and we thought it was very clear how it was linked with the KNASP (Kenya National AIDS Strategic Plan). We focused on what the funds would achieve, we didn’t spend that much time on the sourcing of it because we thought the KNASP was what they would base everything on and all the answers were there.” – Kenya technical partner
- “The information required [by the NSA] was quite scant compared to the rounds proposal. The most elaborate part of the NSA form was responding to the specific concerns picked up by the in-country review.” – Nepal NGO
- “We were a bit perplexed in how to answer some of the questions regarding the degree of detail to go into and about how the money was going to be used.” – Rwanda government official
- “The guidelines suggested that the NSA should be short and reference the national strategy. In retrospect, considering the comments of the TRP it looked like we should actually develop a "proper" proposal for the NSA. If the guidelines were clear that you shouldn't just reference the national strategy but should write it in the NSA again then we will do it.” – Kenya stakeholder

The TRP themselves found that some of the NSA submissions provided limited information regarding the strategy itself stating “there is clearly a need to balance between making the NSA application form as light as possible because it is based on a national strategy that has already been reviewed and providing sufficient

²⁶ Global Fund Financing through “National Strategy Applications” – Practical information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”

information to the NSA reviewers to make an informed technical assessment based on the contents of the application.”²⁷

There were some specific areas identified in terms of how the NSA form could be improved.

- *There was not enough space to answer some questions:* Countries felt constrained in their responses based on page limitations. For example a maximum of one page was available to “explain how the management, oversight and implementation arrangements that would apply to the interventions supported by the National Strategy Application are linked to, or a part of, the arrangements that apply to the overall implementation of the national strategy” for Section 6.1.1 and a maximum of two pages was available to explain “current programmatic gaps based upon currently anticipated funding available including key program areas that require funding and the impact it will have on targets contained in the national strategy” for Section 4.
- Questions on identifying gaps and utilizing funds seemed repetitive: for example, section 4.3 covered for “current programmatic gaps and section 4.4 asked “how the funds requested in this NSA will be used”. For some countries the answers to both these questions felt very similar. “We had a difficult challenge identifying 4.3 and 4.4 because those questions seemed similar. In 4.3, we identified the gaps but then in 4.4., we felt we were repeating ourselves.” – Malawi government official

TRP review criteria for the NSA

Countries and technical partners were unclear as to the extent to which the TRP were assessing i) the technical merits of the national strategy; ii) the quality of the financial analysis; iii) the reasonability of the ask. As a result of i) and to some extent ii) the distinction between the criteria considered during the national strategy assessment and those taken into account during the NSA review was not obvious to countries.

The guidance provided to countries at the beginning of the process stated that “eligible NSAs will be reviewed by the TRP to assess the soundness and feasibility of the request for Global Fund financing in the context of the whole

²⁷ GF/B20/11 “Report of the Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat on funding recommendations for National Strategy Applications of the First Learning Wave”

National Strategy Documentation.”²⁸ Countries found this description vague although some assumed the same criteria as used in Rounds applications would apply.

The Guidelines for National Strategy Applications stated that “[the TRP] will review the applications based on the criteria set out in Annex 1 of these Guidelines”. Annex 1 listed the disease specific and HSS activities that the Global Fund will support but did not describe how the NSA itself would be assessed.

The TRP itself was provided with specific guidance²⁹ as to what should be considered which included Annex 1, plus seven other considerations. This guidance explicitly excluded the technical merits of the national strategy except those aspects related to the critical issues identified in the National Strategy Review Report.

The TRP guidance stated: “*Given the national strategy documentation has previously been reviewed, TRP reviewers shall apply the following review criteria in assessing FLW NSAs:*

- a. Consistency between NSA and national strategy documentation;*
- b. Consistency with what the Global Fund will support (see Annex 1);*
- c. Value for money of Global Fund requested interventions;*
- d. Performance of existing grants that are related to the national strategy;*
- e. Feasibility of implementation arrangements, especially organisational and capacity aspects;*
- f. Consistency and soundness of updated financial gap analysis and the related funding request to the Global Fund;*
- g. Additionality of Global Fund financing to existing funding efforts; and*
- h. Whether critical issues, when taken together have been or are planned to be sufficiently addressed.”*

For successful countries, in retrospect, the issue of lack of clarity in understanding the TRP review criteria was of less concern, as their NSAs were nevertheless approved. For the unsuccessful countries (Malawi and Kenya), this issue matters a great deal and stakeholders in those countries felt the lack of understanding on the criteria could have been a factor in their failures.

²⁸ Global Fund financing through “National Strategy Applications”: practical information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”

²⁹ Additional Guidance for the Technical Review Panel for the Review of National Strategy Applications

- “The NSA assessment criteria were not clear, in fact this is the one thing we discussed as most frustrating about the whole process - it was basically white space for us” – International NGO, Kenya
- “What was the weighting of the proposal, the soundness of the proposal or the issues, this is still very confusing.” – Malawi government implementer

Unsuccessful countries also believed there was a lack of consistency in the TRP’s assessments across countries.

- “We reviewed the TRP forms for all of the countries since we are on the Board and did not believe there was any consistency. Major things were included as small issues for clarification for some countries and minor things were amplified for the rejected ones. This made us believe the rejection was not for technical reasons.” – Kenya government official

TIMELINE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Clarity of communications from the Global Fund about the process enabled countries to navigate the First Learning Wave despite the necessarily short timescales.

The timeline for the First Learning Wave was primarily driven by the need to make final funding decisions at the 20th Global Fund Board meeting in November 2009. This resulted in a condensed timeline of six months from the initial invitation to participate to the deadline for NSA submission and an overlap between national strategy assessment and NSA review. Both of these are “idiosyncratic” to the First Learning Wave.

Despite the novelty and necessarily short timescales of the First Learning Wave, countries were able to navigate the process from strategy assessment to NSA review (noting some were more successful than others). Countries were clear about the important steps in the First Learning Wave and the associated deadlines from the beginning of the process.

- “The deadlines were clear and it was clear that the process consisted of more than one step.” – Cuba government implementer
- “We followed the dates on the chart [provided by the Secretariat] very closely. The process and deadlines were very clear.” – Rwanda NGO

Countries cited clear, consistent communications from the Secretariat as particularly useful in clarifying the new process. For example, email and phone contact were considered very helpful and the Geneva workshop was viewed as a useful opportunity to ask questions directly and share experiences with other countries.

- “The Global Fund did a lot to help us. The Geneva workshop was particularly helpful.” – Madagascar government implementer

Most countries found the timeline of the First Learning Wave very demanding considering the amount of work they needed to do on their strategies and supporting documentation. Not surprisingly, those countries with the least developed strategies struggled the most to meet the deadlines. In many cases, technical assistance through in-country partners and local/international consultants played a crucial role in helping countries to rapidly develop their strategies and applications.

The period between the decision to participate and submission of documentation for the desk review was highlighted by countries as very challenging and was likely a factor for those countries who were not successful in the desk review. Countries had at most seven weeks from receipt of the invitation letter (February 13th) to submission of documentation for the desk review (April 3rd). This time was short given the number of changes that many countries wished to make to their strategies and so significant resources were deployed to rapidly develop strategies prior to submission for the desk review.

- “The team had to work 16 hour days over an intensive 3 week period to get the first draft of the strategy finished.” – Nepal NGO
- “We definitely needed more time. The format looked simple at first but we soon realised that it was much more than we could accomplish within the timeframe.” – Ghana stakeholder
- “It is not feasible to develop a national operational plan in 4-6 weeks” – Malawi stakeholder
- “The time frame for the process did not allow the CCM Secretariat to mobilise the resources needed to conduct more widespread consultation. Therefore, we were very limited in what we could do to strengthen the strategy.” – Guyana stakeholder

Some interviewees expressed concern that the short timescale for the preparation of documentation may have limited the extent to which civil society, private sector and affected communities could be engaged although this study has not found evidence to support this concern in the countries that participated in every step of the process. Given the challenges in identifying interviewees from civil society from those countries that were unsuccessful in the desk review, this study is unable to determine whether civil society engagement may have been limited in those countries due to the timelines or other factors such as limited civil society engagement in malaria and TB, relationships with national disease authorities and CCMs, etc.

Most countries used the period between the desk review notification (May 4th) and the in-country visit (between May 25th and July 4th) to continue to adapt and extend their strategies and supporting documentation guided by the comments from the desk review. This period was often taken up with more detailed financial modelling on costs and strengthening the financial gap calculations. Again, many countries felt that this time was short given the significant work that was required in advance of the in-country visit.

The period between the in-country visits and the deadline for NSA submission (August 31st) was the main time used by countries to work on the NSA itself (although countries had been advised to start as soon as they had received notification of a successful desk review). Specifically, the National Strategy Review Reports received after the in-country visits included a number of critical issues that had to be addressed in the NSA.

Countries provided clear feedback that they would have appreciated more time in the process to develop their strategies and incorporate the feedback that they received from the desk review and the in-country visit. However, they recognised that this need was driven by the extent to which they had been able to develop their national strategies in advance. It is therefore not clear that more time is actually required.

Future considerations

This section discusses the considerations that could be taken into account in the design and planning of the Global Fund's future roll-out of NSAs. These are based on our findings from this study, rather than on a full assessment of all the different issues involved. They are therefore intended to be helpful to the deliberations of the Global Fund, and not intended to provide definitive recommendations.

We first discuss the context within which a future NSA wave may be implemented. We then discuss the considerations under the same headings as the previous section: scope; selection criteria; multi-stakeholder involvement; national strategy assessment; NSA review; and timeline and communications.

FUTURE CONTEXT

The scope of this study was focused on the country perspectives of the First Learning Wave, and it is within this context that the future considerations below are described. These considerations are largely dependent on a number of strategic questions for the Global Fund to consider that were out of the scope of this study. These questions include:

- How can the Global Fund move toward jointly assessing national strategies?
- At what scale should a future roll out of the NSA be launched?
- When should the next NSA opportunity be launched and how will it link with upcoming rounds?
- Which types of countries is the NSA approach most appropriate for?

The future considerations below assume that a future roll out of the NSA will be couched within the new architecture approved at the 20th Board meeting which intends to streamline and simplify the Global Fund grant architecture. The following are the key features proposed for the Global Fund architecture: ³⁰

- A Single Stream of Funding per PR, per disease, each with a fixed commitment and review cycle;
- One primary channel for all funding requests thus eliminating current confusion and duplication;

³⁰ GF/PSC12/02 "Architecture Review"

- The requirement that all new funding requests are made through a consolidated disease proposal clearly demonstrating how new funding will add to the programs already being funded in that disease; and
- An improved Phase 2 Review process, the “Periodic Review” conducted every three years, which will review all funding in a country for a disease, and which will place greater emphasis on outcome and impact evaluations.

The new architecture and NSA approach share the same goals of alignment and harmonisation and the core elements of the new architecture are seen to be compatible with the NSA approach both in principles and operational terms. The NSA is simply a different entry point to access the single stream of funding compared to the regular Global Fund proposals.

Four of the five approved NSA proposals of the First Learning Wave countries will be signed under the new Global Fund architecture provisions and will be consolidated into a single stream of funding. This was a perceived benefit to the process.

- “The different rounds of funding are managed by different program managers who are only focused on achieving their grant targets. The consolidated NSA can bring all of China together.” – China government stakeholder

The NSA approach will likely be a good entry point to move countries into a more streamlined approach, and to help countries receive the benefits of the new architecture through consolidation particularly for those with multiple grants facing fragmentation, aligned to a strong national strategy. The NSA approach, focusing as it does on the national strategy from the inception of the process, naturally delivers this alignment. This hypothesis can be further tested after the approved First Learning Wave countries complete the grant signature phase.

SCOPE

As discussed above, the focus on disease specific strategies was broadly supported by countries in the First Learning Wave. However, there was also an argument that, in the future, NSAs should be able to accommodate national health strategies to be more fully aligned with the international aid effectiveness agenda. As part of the invitations to countries to participate in the First Learning Wave, the Global Fund indicated that “national health strategies may be included at a later stage.”³¹

³¹ Global Fund Financing through “National Strategy Applications:” Basic information for potential applicants to the “First Learning Wave”

Countries were also invited to attach an optional cross-cutting HSS section to their NSAs.

Disease focused strategies vs. national health strategies

The scope of the study did not provide detailed evidence to formulate considerations on whether the Global Fund should or should not move towards a model of accepting national health strategies. However, the study does provide lessons that the Global Fund could consider on the conditions under which countries could submit national health strategies.

Based on the key success factors for approved First Learning Wave countries and challenges faced by those not approved, the Global Fund could review the following dimensions to determine the conditions under which countries could submit national health strategies:

- The status of development of these strategies and whether they have been prepared in a results-based format;
- The scope of financing that countries may submit requests for (e.g. disease interventions, HSS, broader health approaches);
- The extent to which the strategies are developed through a multi-stakeholder process and how they are validated at country level;
- The level of technical assistance available to support countries in developing national health strategies;
- The available “tool-set” to help countries cost their strategies and prepare gap analyses; and
- The composition and skill sets required of the TRP to assess the funding request.

Experience from the First Learning Wave suggests that the incentive of national strategy focused funding encouraged rapid and significant improvements in national disease strategies in most countries. It is possible that a future wave focused on national health strategies would have a similar beneficial effect. However, the greater complexity of developing health strategies, and therefore the greater risks involved in ‘incentivising’ their rapid production, should also be evaluated.

The role of the HSS cross-cutting section in a future wave of disease focused NSAs

As discussed previously, countries struggled to incorporate an HSS cross-cutting section into their NSAs during the First Learning Wave. The Global Fund could consider whether the goals of financing HSS activities can be achieved within the NSA itself with strengthened guidelines. If a separate HSS cross-cutting section is maintained, the Global Fund could also consider how to improve guidance to:

- Help countries understand how the HSS cross-cutting section should link to the NSA, and
- How to manage potential negative implications to grant success when an NSA is approved but the corresponding cross-cutting HSS section is not, as the consequences may be more severe than when compared with a regular Global Fund proposal due to the nature of supporting a national strategy.

SELECTION CRITERIA

A key consideration for any future NSA roll out is the extent to which the Global Fund wishes to trade off a desire to allow countries to take the decision to participate for themselves with the need from the Global Fund's perspective to manage the NSA process.

Country feedback from the First Learning Wave clearly showed that countries preferred to have the freedom to decide whether to participate and for which diseases. However, the evidence also clearly demonstrates the significant investment of time and resources from the Global Fund Secretariat, countries, and the TRP/SRTs.

The scalability of the assessment model in the future will therefore likely be a factor when considering whether, and in what ways, the Global Fund needs to set constraints on the number of countries applying for NSAs and the timing of their applications.

MULTI-STAKEHOLDER INVOLVEMENT

The First Learning Wave tended to strengthen engagement across a broad range of stakeholders, particularly for HIV/AIDS applications. While this was partially due to the incentive of funding against a national strategy, in most countries, there were existing mechanisms in place for stakeholders to participate and contribute to national strategy development and the NSA. The invitation to participate in the First Learning Wave strengthened these mechanisms. Participation was also seen

to strengthen the roles and responsibilities of national disease authorities in relation to CCMs for HIV/AIDS applicants.

Based on country feedback from HIV/AIDS applicants, it appears appropriate that the CCM take the decision to participate in an NSA given the necessity for these strategies to be owned by a broad set of stakeholders who are typically represented on the CCM already. The NSA also strengthens ownership and engagement in the development of both the national strategy and application from a broad range of stakeholders and is seen to be less “consultant driven” than regular Global Fund proposals.

For malaria and TB countries, the relationship between the CCM and national disease authorities is less strong particularly as many CCMs are seen to be HIV dominated. It is therefore seen by some interviewees, particularly national disease authorities, as less appropriate for the CCM to have responsibility to make the decision to participate, manage the development of an NSA funding request, and have a prominent role in the assessment of the strategy.

A key consideration for the future is therefore how to protect and enhance these benefits for HIV/AIDS applicants while recognising that the role of the CCM in the various stages of the process may need to be rethought for malaria and TB applicants. The Global Fund could consider:

- Providing guidance indicating the tasks involved in the preparation of an NSA with suggested delineation of roles and responsibilities;
- Ensuring the national disease authority has recommended the decision to put forth an NSA to the CCM prior to it making a decision; and
- Employing a flexible approach in the strategy assessment process by allowing national disease authorities to manage this step rather than the CCM.

The Global Fund Board could further consider how to make dual-track financing in NSAs most effective recognising the potential tensions in oversight that may occur between the national disease authorities who have legal obligations to deliver against the strategies and the PRs who have a legal obligation to report to the Global Fund. Additional guidance may be required for countries that elect to use dual track financing or multiple PRs to ensure strong coordination against the national plan. In formulating the guidance, the Global Fund should acknowledge the role of the national disease authority in delivering against that plan within the country’s existing accountability system.

Finally, technical partners could consider strengthening guidelines and communications to civil society regarding the IHP+ attributes to ensure they understand their purpose and how they can be used as a country advocacy tool.

NATIONAL STRATEGY ASSESSMENT

Two-step process

Countries had different viewpoints regarding whether the conceptual design of a desk review plus in-country visit should be maintained. Some believed it was helpful to receive two rounds of feedback allowing them to improve their strategies during the process. Others believed that it was repetitive and felt the steps could be combined. However, as noted above, “passing” each stage did lead to rising expectations of success for some countries.

We see two considerations for this step:

- Does the mechanism allow for an accurate and timely assessment of the national strategy?
- What are the resource implications?

This study did not explicitly consider the resource implications of the two-step approach from the perspective of the Global Fund and other potential funders, so the discussion is focused on the first point.

As noted above, there was some concern in countries that desk reviews alone are not sufficient to thoroughly assess and understand large, complex national strategy documents. In the First Learning Wave, the purpose of the desk review was not to offer an in-depth assessment of the strategy but rather to ensure the strategy was sufficiently robust to form the basis of an NSA (allowing countries with weaker strategies to make a Round 9 application if they wished).

The role of the desk review in any future NSA will therefore likely to be somewhat different and could, for example, be combined with the in-country review. It is likely that some form of in-country review will always be required given the complexity of national strategies and the importance of understanding the country context.

Other mechanisms, raised during the research of this study, that could help to strengthen the national strategy assessment process include:

- Requiring countries to carry out self assessments of their strategies and attaching those to their documentation;

- Requiring countries to have their strategies validated by in-country stakeholders prior to submission; and
- Encouraging greater use of peer review.

Review team for desk review and country visit

The Global Fund Board stated clearly in November 2008 when launching the FLW that “the Board reiterates its commitment to the development of a credible, shared validation approach for national strategies, which will form the basis of the NSA procedure once it becomes available.” We therefore assume that in the future joint review teams are most likely to be formed.

There are three lessons from the First Learning Wave that should be considered when establishing such teams.

- If a desk review and in-country visit are maintained, the review teams should be the same wherever possible to maximise knowledge transfer and learning – noting again the misalignment of desk review and SRT feedback seen in some cases in this review.
- During an in-country visit, observers from the Global Fund and international partners should be clearly identified, limited in number, or possibly excluded, given the confusion this caused with countries in understanding who the SRT was and with whom they should be having discussions during the visit.
- Where possible, the SRT should be encouraged to favour smaller discussions and limit the number of political and ceremonial meetings, given its limited time in country.

National strategy assessment outcomes

The experience from the First Learning Wave shows that countries assumed their strategies had to some extent been “validated” by successfully passing through the desk review and receiving predominantly positive comments after the in-country review.

As seen within the TRP Review Forms of both successful and unsuccessful NSA applications, the TRP provided technical critique not only of the aspects of the funding application comprising the NSA but also regarding the national strategy itself. This surprised countries who had believed they had completed the assessment phase and that issues had been addressed in dialogues with the SRT during the in country visit.

In a future roll out, when the national strategy assessment is conducted jointly (e.g. not by TRP members only), the Global Fund could consider the possible outcomes of completing a national strategy assessment and improve the linkage of that outcome to the review of the NSA. For example, the Global Fund could consider three possible outcomes from the assessment:

- *No significant weaknesses identified.* National strategy is recommended to form the basis of a National Strategy Application at the next available NSA funding opportunity. The NSA cannot then be rejected on the grounds that the strategy is insufficiently robust.
- *A small number of significant weaknesses identified* which the SRT believe are addressable in the short term. A second desk review conducted prior to the NSA with the same SRT will be required to assess whether the issues have been addressed to the satisfaction of the SRT prior to the NSA being reviewed by the TRP. If this is the case, then the NSA can proceed and as above cannot be rejected on the grounds that the strategy is insufficiently robust. If the weaknesses have not been addressed then the NSA cannot proceed.
- *A large number of significant weaknesses identified* which the SRT does not believe are addressable in the short term. The national strategy is deemed not suitable as the basis of an NSA.

This clarity will be even more important if the national strategy assessment is entirely decoupled from the NSA (i.e., if the strategy assessment is adopted by other donors and therefore not tied to a specific funding mechanism).

NATIONAL STRATEGY APPLICATION REVIEW

Overall, countries preferred the National Strategy Application forms to previous regular Global Fund proposal based approaches although noting some frustrating at the specific page limitations. While some noted the questions were more complex, it was perceived as easier to complete given its basis on country's national strategy.

There are several areas where the Global Fund could improve guidance based on challenging areas for countries in the First Learning Wave. Specifically,

- The specific criteria that the TRP will consider when reviewing an NSA application;
- The level of detail required within the NSA form itself vs. what is within the national strategy; and

- What is acceptable to submit for the financing request (i.e. the whole gap or a portion) and Global Fund expectations on what should be included to justify the request.

Given that all HIV/AIDS applicant countries struggled with costing their national strategies and preparing the gap analysis, more support is likely needed going forward. Technical partners could consider the following:

- Review the existing tools, determine their shortfalls, and develop a revised tool-kit;
- Develop standards for common unit costs; and
- Gain consensus on which tools should be used under which country conditions and context.

TIMELINE AND COMMUNICATIONS

Countries provided clear feedback that they would have appreciated more time in the process to develop their strategies and incorporate the feedback that they received from the desk review and the in-country visit. However, they recognised that this need depended on the extent to which they had been able to develop their national strategies in advance. It is therefore not clear that more time is actually required, and indeed it may be possible to shorten the process if more fully developed strategies are submitted limiting rework during the process.

Critically, the IHP+ criteria (or equivalent) should be made available as soon as possible as the agreed set of attributes that any future national strategy assessment will be based upon, to ensure that countries have as much time as possible to develop strategies with these attributes as a guide.

Other considerations for any future NSA roll out include the following.

- *How much time should be allowed between the desk review and the in-country visit (assuming both steps remain in place)?* An important benefit of the 2-step process is that it allows countries to respond to feedback. As such, it makes sense to ensure the timeline includes sufficient time for the feedback to be carefully considered by countries. On the other hand, too much time between the reviews risks the strategy evolving to the extent that one review bears little resemblance to the other.
- *How much time should be allowed for preparation of the NSA?* Assuming there is no overlap of the in-country review and NSA preparation steps in the

future the time allocated to NSA preparation in the First Learning Wave (four months) seems adequate (and possibly generous).



Study of Country Stakeholder Experience with the NSA First Learning Wave

THE GLOBAL FUND

APPENDICES

8 March 2010

Report prepared by McKinsey & Co.

Appendices

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Appendix A – Questionnaire

0. Interviewee background

- 0.1 Name
- 0.2 What is your role?
- 0.3 What was your involvement in the NSA FLW process? Describe and code [extensive / moderate / limited]
- 0.4 How familiar are you with the Global Fund? Describe and code [very familiar / moderately familiar / not very familiar]
- 0.5 How many previous Global Fund rounds have you been involved with?

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate

- 1.1 Did you take part in the decision to participate in the FLW? Were you for or against it? What was the decision process? Did you feel that it was a fair process? Why or Why not?
- 1.2 Did you see any “added value” in the NSA approach in comparison to the standard rounds funding approach? If yes, what was it? If no, why not?
- 1.3 Were you given enough information / time to decide whether to participate? Was the information easy to understand? If no, what other information would have been needed?
- 1.4 Do you think it is appropriate that the CCM was asked to take the decision to participate in the NSA FLW? Why? If not, which organization should have taken this decision?
- 1.5 What decision making process did you follow? Who was involved? Did you feel that all stakeholders had an equal voice in the decision?
- 1.6 Was the decision made in CCM meeting or through consultations with relevant authorities? Did national disease authorities fully participate in the decision-making?
- 1.7 Were you involved in the decision making to participate in the FLW? If no, did you expect to be involved and why?
- 1.8 Were the deadlines clear from the initial information? Was it clear that the review will include more than one step – review of national strategy documentation and review of the NSA (application)?
- 1.9 What would have made this decision easier for you?
- 1.10 To what extent were civil society, private sector, and affected communities involved in the decision to participate in the FLW?
- 1.11 How was the decision communicated back to the GF? And within your sector/constituency? Was this communication effective? Do you think most members of your community were aware of the decision?
- 1.12 Do you think the two main criteria for participation (strategy with timeframe at least until 2012 and no successful R8 application for the same disease) were appropriate? What selection criteria would you apply for the next wave? Should there be selection criteria for the next wave? If so, what?

2. CCM preparation for national strategy desk review

2.1 How useful did you find the guidance provided for the desk review submission? The desk review questionnaire? The IHP+ attributes? (scope, overall clarity)

2.2 The desk review questionnaire guidelines contained a list of documents that could be submitted. Was this list helpful?

2.3 What were the challenges, if any, encountered at this stage? (e.g., FYI only: choice of documentation, state of documentation, timing). In particular, were you given enough time to collate the necessary documentation for the national strategy desk review?

2.4 Which organizations/stakeholders were involved in assembling/preparing the necessary national strategy documentation? What was the role of the CCM versus the role of national disease authorities and technical partners? Would additional technical assistance have been helpful at this stage?

2.5 Do you know which documents were submitted for desk review? Were members of your constituency/sector involved in the selection of documents submitted for desk review? Do you feel the document submission step was fully transparent to members of your constituency?

2.6 To what extent did you make use of existing documentation versus creating new material and/or improving national strategy documentation specifically for the NSA FLW? If creating new or improving existing documentation, why did you decide to do this?

2.7 To what extent were non-government constituencies, including civil society, private sector and affected communities involved in the development of national strategy documents submitted for desk review in the FLW (whether documents were new or pre-existing)?

2.8 Should countries that have a strategy that is under development / already under implementation / be allowed to participate in the process?

3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation

3a.1 Was it clear what attributes or criteria your national strategy documentation would be assessed against during the desk review? Do you feel the correct documentation was submitted for the review of these attributes?

3a.2 Did you receive a desk review form? How useful was the desk review form that you received after the desk review? Was the information in this form shared with members of your constituency/sector? How was this information disseminated and used? Was it clear to members of your constituency how this information affected the next steps of the national strategy review process, or how it might affect the content of your national strategy and NSA? (esp. the “issues for further consideration”)

3a.3 Were there perceptions that a positive outcome of the desk review signified the Global Fund’s agreement to fund the NSA? If so, why? And how can such misconceptions be avoided in the future?

3a.4 In the future, the assessment of national strategies (e.g. through a desk review) may be carried out not by the Global Fund’s TRP, but by an independent group of experts including national and international partners working jointly. Do you know about this possibility? Do you think this will improve the process? What risks or concerns might this raise? What would be important to ensure this was successful?

3a.5 Is there anything you would change about the desk review step in the future? Why?

3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation

3b.1 Are members of your constituency aware that there was an in-country review? And that it was an important step in the FLW process? Were the purpose and objectives of the in-country review clear to you and to members of your constituency? How do you understand them? Was it clear how the in-country review related to the desk review? How do you understand the relationship? SUGGEST: Do you think that the in-country review was intended as a form of technical assistance for preparation of the NSA? Did it? Did it not? Was this principle upheld?

3b.2 How easy / difficult was it to organise the in-country review? What steps were involved in the in-country review? Were you/your constituency allowed to contribute to the agenda for the in-country review? Would you have done anything differently than in the final agenda (e.g. total time, time distribution; locations (capital vs non-capital cities, urban vs. rural, actual venues for the meetings: govt. versus non-government), meeting participants and invitees, meeting formats) Was the timeframe of 5 days appropriate to the scope of the in-country review?

3b.3 Do you/do members of your constituency know who took part in the in-country review? From the country side? From the international side?

3b.4 Did you find the in-country review team were knowledgeable about a) their areas of health expertise (TB, HIV, malaria, HSS); and b) country specifics? c) community engagement and multi-stakeholder approaches to AIDS, TB and malaria

3b.5 Did you/your constituency know there were national facilitators working with the in-country review team? How important was the role of the national facilitators? What worked well and not so well? Did you/your constituency participate in selecting national facilitators? What criteria should be used in the future for the selection of national facilitators? What should be their role?

3b.6 Do you think the in-country review was useful? Was it necessary in addition to the desk review? Why or why not? Was it clear that the in-country review didn't aim to provide assistance with preparation of NSA? Was this principle held in practice?

3b.7 To what extent was civil society involved in the in-country review? Would you have done anything differently with respect to their involvement?

3b.8 To what extent was private sector involved in the in-country review? Would you have done anything differently with respect to their involvement?

3b.9 To what extent were communities of people living with and or affected with disease involved in the in-country review? Would you have done anything differently with respect to their involvement?

3b.10 Are you aware that a strategy review form provided feedback on the NS based on the in-country visit? Was this form shared with you and with members of your constituency? Was it clear to you how the feedback could affect the content of your NS and/or your NSA? Was there a clear national process as to how the feedback would be applied? Was this process clear to you and to members of your constituency? Did this process ensure that you and members of your constituency would be involved (e.g. if in response to the feedback parts of the NS were changed)?

3b.11 How helpful was the feedback your received from the in-country review (Strategy Review Form)? a) in preparing your National Strategy Application? b) in helping you further improve the quality of your national strategy.

3b.12 How could the in-country review of national strategy documentation be improved in the future?

3b.13 In the future, the in-country assessment of national strategies may be carried out in a joint manner together with other partners, including national and international partners. Would this be a positive or a negative development? Why/how?

4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)

4.1 Was the purpose of the NSA review clear, compared to the earlier review of national strategy documentation? Was it clear to what extent the review of the NSA would be different from the review of the national strategy?

4.2 Did you receive the NSA application form and guidelines in time? (in May?) Were the NSA application form and guidelines clear enough to begin preparation of the NSA? Did you feel you had sufficient time to prepare your NSA?

4.3 In comparison to the preparation of a Global Fund rounds-based proposal (and without taking into account the national strategy review process!!) were the national strategy application's documentation requirements more or less burdensome? Was the process of preparing the NSA easier/equal or more difficult than preparing a rounds-based application? To what extent were you able to rely on existing documentation in preparing the NSA?

4.4 Did you further develop your NS before submitting the NSA? Would you normally have done the same for a regular (non-NSA) rounds-based proposal? Were these changes based on the feedback received from the desk review or in-country review of national strategy documentation?

4.5 What were the respective roles of the CCM and national disease authorities in preparation of the NSA? Were there any challenges in this respect? Was their level of involvement optimal? If not, what would be the preferred respective role of each?

4.6 Please describe the process used for developing the NSA. Which parties participated? How did you decide what parts of the national strategy to include in the NSA request for funding? To what extent did non-government sectors including civil society, private sector and people living with and affected with disease have a chance to contribute to this decision? How does the process for involvement of non-government sectors compare between NSAs and regular (non-NSA) rounds-based proposals? How appropriate was it to use the CCM as the decision authority for deciding what parts of the national strategy are considered in the NSA?

4.7 Did you receive assistance with preparation of the NSA? If so, from whom? To what extent did it meet your needs?

4.8 To what extent were civil society involved in the decision to apply for an NSA and NSA development?

4.9 To what extent were private sector involved in the decision to apply for an NSA and NSA development?

4.10 To what extent were people living with and affected by the disease involved in the decision to apply for an NSA and NSA development?

4.11 Are you aware that the NSA was assessed for compliance with the 6 minimum requirements for CCMs before it was allowed to go before the TRP? Are you aware that the NSA could have been blocked from going to the TRP if these 6 requirements were not met?

4.12 Why did you select / did you not select the dual track financing option in your NSA? In comparison to a normal Global Fund "rounds-based proposal: Was it easier/equal/ or more difficult to propose a dual-track financing mechanism for implementation?

5. TRP review of NSA

- 5.1 Was it clear to you the criteria against which your NSA would be assessed?
- 5.2 Do you believe your NSA includes all the information the GF needed to make a funding decision? If not, what additional information would you suggest should be included? Was there any information requested in the NSA application form that could be taken out?

6. Overall experience of the NSA FLW

- 6.1 What were the benefits and disadvantages of the NSA FLW compared to the Global Fund rounds-based process?
- 6.2 To what extent were you able to rely on existing documents, frameworks, and processes during the FLW NSA process so far?
- 6.3 Why, in your opinion, was your national strategy documentation considered (not) sufficiently robust for preparation of an NSA ?
- 6.4 Why, in your opinion, was your NSA successful/unsuccessful?
- 6.5 To what extent has participation in the FLW led to strengthening of the national strategy?
- 6.6 To what extent has participation in the FLW strengthened/weakened participation of non-government stakeholders including civil society, private sector and affected communities in a) development of NS; b) development of NSA;
- 6.7 Are there any other benefits or disadvantages you see as having arisen from the FLW?
- 6.8 Do you think the outcome of the national strategy and/or NSA review has (or will) in any way help or hinder other donors funding your NS? Why? How?
- 6.9 What was the CCM's role in the process from start to finish (compared to the role of other groups such as the national disease coordinating body)? Were these roles appropriate? If not, what changes would you suggest in the future?
- 6.10 Did you/your constituency receive all the information briefs that were distributed to the CCMs during the national strategy review and NSA preparation process? (Doc 1, Doc 3, info guidance on in-country visit, etc.) How useful was the NSA inbox? Would you consider the communication from the GF Secretariat as "good" "sufficient", "not-sufficient"? What aspects should be improved?
- 6.11 How was information about the NSA FLW passed on to other stakeholders in your country?
- 6.12 Given your experience of the FLW would you wish to participate in future NSA windows or revert to rounds-based proposals?

7. Global stakeholders

- 7.1 To what extent and how was your organization involved in the IHP+ working group on joint assessment of national strategies? The ongoing piloting of JANS?
- 7.2 To what extent was your organization involved in the design of the Global Fund NSA FLW (and in what aspects in particular?) Specifically, how were you involved?
- 7.3 To what extent and how was your organization involved in supporting countries through the Global Fund NSA FLW? Which countries did you support? Which steps did you support?

- 7.3.1 Supporting CCM decision to express interest to participate?
- 7.3.2 Supporting CCM preparation for national strategy desk review?
- 7.3.3 SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation?
- 7.3.4 Supporting preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)?
- 7.4 Reflecting on your level of involvement overall, do you think this was sufficient given your organisation's mandate/role/value-add, etc.? If no, in what areas could your involvement be enhanced? How could your organization add more value? Why?
- 7.5 What are the main lessons you think should be drawn from the NSA FLW? For the Global Fund? For countries? For your own organisation?
- 7.6 To what extent will you focus additional efforts on TA for national strategy development (as opposed to proposal development) in the future? How will you do this?
- 7.7 Would you consider funding NSAs on the basis of jointly assessed disease or national health strategies? What is your level of support for JANS attributes and tools?
- 7.8 How important do you think it is that TRP members were used during i) the national strategy desk review; ii) the SRT in-country review; iii) review of NSA? What, if anything, would you change about TRP involvement in the future?

8. Civil society, private sector and affected communities

- 8.1 To what extent was a multi-stakeholder process followed for the development of the national strategy? To what extent were civil society and affected communities involved throughout?
- 8.2 Who specifically was involved?
 - 8.2.1 What was the level of participation of members of relevant at-risk and vulnerable groups (injecting drug users, men who have sex with men, sex workers, prisoners, youth, women)?
 - 8.2.2 What was the balance between urban and rural sectors?
 - 8.2.3 What was the balance between national and decentralized sector?
 - 8.2.4 What non-government participants were involved? Did they represent a single issue, an identity group or was their contribution broader?
- 8.3 How were representatives from civil society and affected communities engaged?
 - 8.3.1 How transparent was the national strategy development process? How were representatives of non-government stakeholders identified and invited to participate in strategy development? At which stages in particular were you involved?
 - 8.3.2 How is the degree of involvement characterized e.g., consultation, drafting, validation of a finished product?
 - 8.3.3 Was the national strategy written by a consultant with minimal consultation of civil society/private sector/other non-government stakeholders? Was there a comprehensive and inclusive process? Did it include decentralized processes to reach out to remote districts or communities? How were non-government stakeholders involved?
- 8.4 To what extent were inputs from non-government stakeholders and issues raised by them integrated into the final version of the national strategy and addressed by it?

8.4.1 Advocacy: Were the opinions of civil society/private sector/other non-government partners properly taken into consideration in the final version of the national strategy submitted for validation? Did the non-government partners feel that their participation made a difference? What were the 2-3 most important issues advocated for by civil society/private sector/other non-government partners?

8.4.2 Final product: Has the final strategy been shared with civil society/private sector/other non-government partners? Have these issues been integrated? What was left out? Why was it left out? How satisfied are civil society/private sector/other non-government partners with the process and with the final product of the national strategy?

8.4.3 What percentage/proportion of the national strategy focuses on community programs, and to what extent are community based organizations funded directly or, in the national strategy, identified as playing a key role (quantified in some sense) in implementation?

9. Recommendations

9.1 What worked and is important to keep in the next wave of NSA?

9.1.1 What were the three most successful elements/benefits of FLW?

9.1.2 Which parts of the NSA FLW process worked particularly well?

9.1.3 Which interactions with the GF were most useful?

9.2 What should be changed in the next wave?

9.2.1 If you could change three things about the FLW what would they be?

9.2.2 What elements of the NSA FLW process would you change?

9.2.3 How could communications be made clearer?

9.3 What should definitely be stopped in the next wave?

9.3.1 What was the single least successful element of the NSA approach?

9.3.2 Were any parts of the NSA FLW process entirely unnecessary?

9.3.3 Were any interactions with the GF or others unhelpful?

Appendix B: Documentation reviewed

Global Fund and NSA background

- The Global Fund - who we are, what we do
- The Framework Document of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
- "Accelerating the Effort to Save Lives - A strategy for the Global Fund"
- GF/PSC10/04 National Strategy Applications
- GF/PSC12/02 Architecture Review
- Round 8, 9 Proposal Guidelines
- FLW NSA grants: recommendations for grant negotiation and management

NSA FLW background materials provided to countries by the Secretariat

- Invitation Letter from the Executive Director to countries
- Global Fund financing through "National Strategy Applications" - Basic information for potential applicants to the "First Learning Wave"
- Global Fund financing through "National Strategy Applications" - Practical information for potential applicants to the "First Learning Wave"
- Information Note - First Learning Wave of Global Fund Financing Through "National Strategy Applications"
- Guidelines for completing the National Strategy Review Questionnaire
- National Strategy Application form and guidelines
- International Health Partnership+ documents
- Practical information on in-country review First Learning Wave of National Strategy Applications

Documents submitted by countries to the TRP

- Completed National Strategy Review Questionnaires and supporting documentation
- Completed National Strategy Application forms and supporting documentation

Guidance provided to the TRP

- Additional Guidance for the TRP for the Review of National Strategy Applications

Documents sent to countries outlining TRP findings

- Desk Review Summary Reports and notification letters
- NSA FLW Country Visit forms
- National Strategy Review Reports
- TRP Review Forms and notification letters

Compiled Lessons Learned Documents

- SRT Lessons Learned Reports from In-Country Visits (China, Kenya, Madagascar, Nepal, Rwanda, Vietnam)
- Summary of Technical Review Panel (TRP) group discussions at the conclusion of the National Strategy Desk Review Meeting, Divonne, France 19-24 April 2009
- Feedback presented by Participants to the NSA FLW Workshop, 19 May 2009, Geneva
- Global Fund Assessment of National Strategies during the First Learning Wave of National Strategy Applications - Lessons Learned of Possible Relevance for the IHP+ Joint Assessment of National Strategies
- Overview on lessons learned from First Learning Wave (PPT)
- GF/B20/12- Report of the Technical Review Panel and the Secretariat on Funding Recommendations for National Strategy Applications of the First Learning Wave
- Documenting the First Learning Wave of the NSA Modality (UNAIDS) October 2009, Geneva
- Presenting National Strategic Plans on HIV/AIDS (NSPs) to the Global Fund Through the National Strategy Application (NSA) Modality: Review of Country Experiences from the First Learning Wave (FLW) (UNAIDS) October 2009 (interim summary paper)

Appendix C: Interviewees (by country)

GLOBAL STAKEHOLDERS

Mazuwa Banda	<i>HIV Department, WHO</i>
Suprotik Basu	<i>RBM Harmonization Working Group</i>
Anja Nitzsche-Bell	<i>UNAIDS</i>
Josef Decosas	<i>TRP NSA focal point</i>
Tonya Himmelfarb	<i>PEPFAR</i>
David Hoos	<i>TRP NSA focal point</i>
Jantine Jacobi	<i>UNAIDS</i>
Nicole Klingen	<i>World Bank</i>
Michele Moloney-Kitts	<i>PEPFAR</i>
Margaret Lidstone	<i>PEPFAR</i>
Pierre-Yves Norval	<i>Stop TB</i>
Tanya Peterson	<i>PEPFAR</i>
Guinnevere Roberts	<i>PEPFAR</i>
Ritu Singh	<i>PEPFAR</i>
Jason Wright	<i>USAID</i>

SUCCESSFUL NSA COUNTRIES

China

Dr Zheng Bin	<i>National Institute for Parasitic Diseases</i>
Dr Wang Li ying	<i>Malaria NSA focal point, Ministry of Health</i>
Dr Tang Linhua	<i>Director, National Institute for Parasitic Diseases</i>
Dr Bernard Schwartländer	<i>CCM Vice Chair / UNAIDS</i>
Dr Yang Xusheng	<i>National Facilitator / China Red Cross Society</i>

Madagascar

Dr. Damoela	<i>Health Policy Advisor, WHO</i>
Don Dickerson	<i>USAID</i>
Dr. Alyssa Finlay	<i>USAID</i>
Bruno Maes	<i>UNICEF</i>
Dr. Henintsoa Rabarijaona	<i>CCM</i>
Dr. Jean-Claude Rakotomalala	<i>ASOS (civil society)</i>
Dr. Noe Rakotondrajaona	<i>USAID</i>
Dr. Dominique Rakotomanga	<i>Executive Director, FISA (civil society)</i>
Lina Raharisdavelohanta	<i>AIM (civil society)</i>
Dr. Benjamin Ramarosandratana	<i>Head, National Malaria Programme, Ministry of Health</i>
Dr. Nirinjaka Ramasinjatovo	<i>PACT (civil society)</i>
Dr Louise Ranaivo	<i>National Malaria Programme, Ministry of Health</i>
Edmond Randrianoarivony	<i>RTM (civil society)</i>
Lucien Rataova	<i>CCM Secretariat</i>
Dr. Celine Seignon	<i>WHO (CCM Vice-Chair)</i>
Pr Alain Tehindrazanarivelo	<i>Deputy PM / Minister of Health</i>
UGP representative	
Salama representative	

Nepal

Mr Surya Prasad Acharya	<i>Director of HR, Ministry of Health</i>
Dr Mohammed Akhtar	<i>WHO / National Facilitator</i>
Dr Alexander Andjaparidze	<i>Chief of Mission, WHO</i>
Dr Margaret Ashwell	<i>Head of PMU</i>
Mr Devendra Bahadur	<i>President, National Anti TB Association (NATA)</i>
Dr Bam	<i>Former CCM chair</i>
Mr Gokamma Basatta	<i>CCM co-ordinator</i>
Dr Kashi Kant Jha	<i>NTP Director</i>
Mr Rajiv Kafle	<i>NAP+N (civil society) CCM Vice Chair</i>
Dr Pushpa Malla	<i>Former NTP Director</i>
Mr Anant Nepal	<i>Programe co-ordinator, HERD</i>
Dr Bhanu Bhakta Niraula	<i>Country Director, The Britain Nepal Medical Trust (BNMT)</i>
Mr Satish Raj Pandey	<i>Deputy Director, Family Health International</i>
Mr Mahesh Sharma	<i>National Facilitator / Independent consultant</i>
Dr Sudha Sharma	<i>Secretary of Health / CCM chair, Dept of Health & Population</i>
Mr Madan Sharman	<i>LFA</i>

Rwanda

Dr Jack Abdoulie	<i>Vice Chair, CCM</i>
Mwananawe Aimasle	<i>Rwanda NGO Forum on AIDS & Health Promotion</i>
Dr Anita Assiimwe	<i>CNLS Director</i>
Muramira Bernard	<i>Strive Foundation Rwanda (civil society)</i>
Dr. Agnes Binagwaho	<i>Permanent Secretary</i>
Janean Davis	<i>Deputy Director for Health, USAID</i>
Ruturwa H. Dieudonne	<i>UNAIDS</i>
Pierre Dongier	<i>CNLS/UNDP</i>
Dr Corrine Karema	<i>Acting Head, TRACPlus</i>
Dr Michel Gasant	<i>Head of TB Programme, TRACPlus</i>
Elisabeth Girrbach	<i>GTZ</i>
Mary Nancy Godfrey	<i>Health Team Leader, USAID</i>
Joseph Guhuyire	<i>RRP+ (civil society)</i>
Ida Hakizinka	<i>CCM Secretariat</i>
Erik Josephson	<i>Clinton Health Access Initiative</i>
Rusimbi John	<i>Rwanda NGO Forum on AIDS & Health Promotion</i>
Celestin Karmira	<i>UNAIDS</i>
Dieudonne Kimenyi	<i>CSDI (civil society)</i>
Dr Amadou Moctar	<i>UNAIDS</i>
Dr Jules Mugabo	<i>Acting Director, HIV programme, TRAC plus</i>
Janviere Mukantivah	<i>Prefed Rwanda (civil society)</i>
Rusanganwa Leon Pierre	<i>Rwanda NGO Forum on AIDS & Health Promotion</i>
Elisabetta Pegurri	<i>UNAIDS</i>
Dr. Vianmey Nizeyimana	<i>Rwanda NGO Forum on AIDS & Health Promotion</i>
Dr. Amina Rwakunda	<i>CNLS</i>
Dr Martine Toussant	<i>TB Programme, TRACPlus</i>

UNSUCCESSFUL NSA COUNTRIES

Kenya

Michael Aryona	<i>NASCOP</i>
Mark K. Bor	<i>Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Public Health & Sanitation</i>
Matiko Chacha	<i>CCM CSO, LICASU</i>

Girmay Haile	<i>Senior Inst. Development Advisor, UNAIDS</i>
Charles Kadua	<i>WOFAK (Civil society)</i>
Florence Kabuga	<i>PMO (Civil society)</i>
Peter Kamau	<i>KANCO (Civil Society)</i>
Nguru Kangu	<i>Public Health Innovations</i>
John Kanuugwi	<i>Deputy Director, Policy, Strategy, NACC</i>
Abdulrahman Said Kassim	<i>Programme Officer, NACC</i>
Tobias Kitcharea	<i>National Facilitator, Umbrella consortium of NGOs</i>
Prof. James L. Ole Kiyapi	<i>Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Medical Services</i>
Harriet Kongii	<i>Head 5C, NACC</i>
Peter Kubebea	<i>National Facilitator & CCM Vice Chair (Private Sector)</i>
Louis Ltere	<i>CCM Secretariat</i>
Tom Magenti	<i>South Consulting</i>
Jackie Makokha	<i>Partnership Advisor, UNAIDS</i>
Ruth Marsha	<i>Action Aid</i>
Richard Maticanya	<i>International HIV/AIDS Alliance</i>
Vera Mendonca	<i>HIV Coordinator, UNICEF</i>
Michael Mills	<i>Lead Economist, World Bank</i>
Dr. Ibrahim Mohammed	<i>NASCOP</i>
Dr. Rex Mpaznje	<i>HIV Country Officer, WHO</i>
Dr. Stephen Muketha	<i>KIRAC (Faith-based organization)</i>
Dr. Irene Mukui	<i>NASCOP</i>
Wanjiru Mukoma	<i>Director of Policy, Research and Performance, LVCT</i>
Sobbie Mulinda	<i>Deputy Director, Coordination & Support, NACC</i>
Dr. Nicholas Muruyen	<i>NASCOP</i>
Francis Muu	<i>HTS, NACC</i>
Patrick Muviithi	<i>Head, M&E, NACC</i>
Peninah Mwangi	<i>Bar Hostess Empowerment and Support Program</i>
Rosalind Mwangi	<i>Christian Health Association of Kenya</i>
Damaris Mwawzia	<i>Ministry of Health</i>
Millicent Namusunze	<i>Kenya Human Rights Commission</i>
Joshua Ng'elu	<i>NACC</i>
Christine Njogu	<i>CCM CSO, National Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS</i>
Hannington Onyango	<i>Field Officer, NACC</i>
Professor Alloys Orago	<i>Director, NACC</i>
Hanningtou Otineo	<i>Field Officer, NACC</i>
Steven Oyugi	<i>NACC</i>
Kibe Ranji	<i>Field Officer, NACC</i>
Dr. Andrew Sulek	<i>Ministry of Public Health</i>
Jeffre Wabimbw	<i>Ishtar(MSM CSO)</i>
Solomon Wambua	<i>Ishtar(MSM CSO)</i>
John Wauyuufh	<i>NASCOP</i>
Malawi	
Stephen Ahfana	<i>SASO (civil society)</i>
Lily Banda-Malira	<i>National Facilitator / USAID</i>
Dr Patrick Brenny	<i>Programme Director, UNAIDS</i>
Roberto Beornt Campos	<i>Partnership Adviser, UNAIDS</i>
Charles Chabuka	<i>Women & HIV/AIDS Coordinator, Ministry of Gender</i>
Victor Chayamba	<i>Planning Officer, NAC</i>
Bridget Chibwana	<i>Acting Executive Director, NAC</i>
Olive Chikaukheri	<i>Principle Secretary, Ministry of Gender</i>

Pepickair Chickuulwa	<i>M&E Adviser, UNAIDS</i>
Agnes Chimbiri	<i>Assistant Res Rep, UNDP</i>
Dr. Frank Chimbwandira	<i>HIV/AIDS Program, Ministry of Health</i>
Jacqueline Chipembere	<i>Programme Assistant, UNAIDS</i>
Veronica Chipeta Chirwa	<i>Deputy Director of Health, CHAI</i>
Cyrus Jeke	<i>Ministry of Gender</i>
Washington Kaimvi	<i>Director of Finance & Administration, NAC</i>
Davie Kalomba	<i>Head of Planning, Monitoring, Evaluation & Research, NAC</i>
Linley Kamtengeni	<i>Gender Expert, Ministry of Gender</i>
Jacqueline Kanbambe	<i>Child Protection, UNICEF</i>
Florence Kayambo	<i>NAC</i>
Benjamin Kayla	<i>M&E Coordinator, Ministry of Gender</i>
Mr D. Kolondo	<i>National Association of PLWHA</i>
Dr. Newton Kumwenda	<i>National Facilitator, College of Medicine</i>
Eddie Lambalsa	<i>HIV/AIDS Country Officer, WHO</i>
Patrick Makondesa	<i>National Project Co-ordination & CCM, ILO</i>
Dr Grace Malenga	<i>CCM Vice-Chair (private sector)</i>
Malla Masava	<i>OVC Expert, Ministry of Gender</i>
Pamela Mkwamba, NPO	<i>HIV & Gender, UNAIDS</i>
Humphrey Moyo	<i>M&E Expert, Ministry of Gender</i>
Jack Mwosa	<i>MAIC</i>
Pastor M.A.B. Natulu	<i>AIDS Alternatives Christian Charitable Organization</i>
Mr Robert Ngaiyaye	<i>Malawi Interfaith AIDS Association</i>
Kondwani Ngoma	<i>HIV/AIDS, UNICEF</i>
Ms Madalo Nyambose	<i>CCM</i>
Ishmael Nyasusu	<i>NPO - TB / HIV, WHO</i>
Dr. Erik Schouten	<i>HIV/AIDS Program, Ministry of Health</i>
Dr Mary Shawa	<i>Principal Secretary, Department of Nutrition, HIV and AIDS</i>
Humphreys Shumba, NPO	<i>HIV Prevention, UNFPA</i>
Timothy Shawa	<i>Programme Analyst, UNDP</i>
Kisimbi Kyumwa Thoma	<i>Country Director, CHAI</i>
Dr Mamadi Yilla	<i>PEPFAR</i>

UNSUCCESSFUL DESK REVIEW COUNTRIES

Cuba

Dr. Jorge Hadad Hadad	<i>PAHO</i>
Mrs. Myrna Villalón Oramas	<i>Acting CCM Chair</i>
Sr. Juan Raúl Valdés Trigueiro	<i>CCM civil society representative</i>
Dra. María Isela Lantero Abreu	<i>HIV/AIDS Programme Manager, Public Health Ministry</i>

Ethiopia

Minister Tedros Ghebreyessus	<i>Minister of Health, CCM Chair</i>
Dr Kesetebirhan Admasu	<i>Director General of Health Promotion and Disease, Ministry of Health</i>

Ghana

Mr Frank Boateng	<i>CCM Chair(Private Sector)</i>
Mr Frank Bonsu	<i>National TB Programme Manager, Ministry of Health</i>
Mr Rhehab Chimziz	<i>TB Technical Advisor, TBCAP</i>
Mr Chief Austin Arinze Obiefuna	<i>TB Civil Society</i>

Guyana

Sarah Insanally

CCM Secretariat Coordinator

Mozambique

Dr Shalala Ahmadova

Dr Narciso Matos

Technical partner, WHO

CCM Chair (Civil society)

Swaziland

Thembi Gama

NERCHA (Principal Recipient)

Appendix D: Selected Global Fund Guiding Principles

The Global Fund's guiding principles are outlined in its Framework Document, accessible at: http://www.theglobalfund.org/documents/TGF_Framework.pdf

Some of the relevant principles for consideration in the study include:

- The Fund will base its work on programs that reflect national ownership and respect country-led formulation and implementation processes;
- The Fund will evaluate proposals through independent review processes based on the most appropriate scientific and technical standards that take into account local realities and priorities;
- The Fund will seek to establish a simplified, rapid, innovative process with efficient and effective disbursement mechanisms, minimizing transaction costs and operating in a transparent and accountable manner based on clearly defined responsibilities. The Fund should make use of existing international mechanisms and health plans.
- In making its funding decisions, the Fund will support proposals which
 - Strengthen and reflect high-level, sustained political involvement and commitment in making allocations of its resources;
 - Build on, complement, and coordinate with existing regional and national programs in support of national policies, priorities and partnerships, including Poverty Reduction Strategies and sector-wide approaches;
 - Focus on the creation, development and expansion of government/private /NGO partnerships.
 - Strengthen the participation of communities and people, particularly those infected and directly affected by the three diseases, in the development of proposals.

Appendix E: Country summaries

The PowerPoint slides that follow include the summarised version of the feedback received during the in-country interviews.

Appendix E: Country summaries



Investing in our future

The Global Fund

To Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

March 8 2010
Report prepared by McKinsey & Co.

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Kenya HIV/AIDS: Key messages



The NSA as a concept is strongly supported in Kenya and there is little desire to go back to the Rounds. The NSA:

- Is less disruptive than Rounds because there are resources in place to support planning processes for NSP rather than NACC having to mobilize additional resources.
- Reinforces, energizes, and provides momentum to national planning processes.
- Is seen to strengthen the relationship between the CCM and NACC by helping improve the dialogue between the two entities regarding their roles and responsibilities in preparing a financing request for the Global Fund.

Despite its rejection, the FLW helped to catalyse development of the KNASP:

- Feedback from both desk review and in-country review was seen to strengthen the KNASP.
- The SRT helped catalyze a dialogue at country level to develop solutions for challenging issues such as procurement (e.g. decision to use VPP).
- Increased transparency for all stakeholders (on the strategy itself and on details such as costs)

(Legitimate) expectations were raised throughout the process, especially after the in-country review:

- Being invited to participate and passing desk review after elimination of many other countries.
- Strong belief that passing the desk review, in-country review, meant there was a near certain chance of being financed; no perception that a country could be “rejected” from an NSA and no appeal mechanism.
- Belief that strong signals were sent from the SRT during in-country visit, particularly in the final debrief session, that KNASP had “passed” quality assurance tests and few major issues left to resolve.

Strong disagreement with TRP assessment of Kenya’s NSA for several reasons:

- Evaluation criteria were unclear and weighting not known (i.e. very minor points were amplified)
- Not enough space to adequately respond to the issues cited in TRP comments (“form worked against them”)
- Belief that TRP did not read supporting material as many comments referred to elements answered there.
- Weak link between SRT and final TRP as many issues considered “resolved” during visit re-appeared.
- TRP comments felt to reflect technical aspects of NSP rather than NSA
- Wide sentiment rejection was based on a “political reasons” such as a disagreement with Kenya’s two Ministry structure rather than technical reasons.

Kenya HIV/AIDS : Positive feedback related to process



Positive comments related to specific process steps

Positive comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits very clear; moving from “artificial, project Rounds” to NSP • Timing of invitation felt like a “meeting of the minds” • Multiple stakeholders involved with decision and felt ownership 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA is “the way of the future.” There is little desire to go back to Rounds which would be seen as “a step backwards”.
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many stakeholders were involved in preparing the documents and knew what was submitted including civil society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA created a lot of momentum and energized KNASP planning and significantly strengthened the plan.
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback received taken very seriously, identified strengths/weaknesses, improved KNASP • Comments helped identify further TA needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Civil society, including marginalized groups, felt their role was strengthened in the process compared to Rounds; CSOs felt strong ownership in both KNASP/NSA
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In country review team were knowledgeable • NFs played an important role in process • Demystification of Global Fund and TRP • No expectation of TA • Review was beneficial for the country and strengthened KNASP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA drove costing the KNASP and the gap analysis which is seen as a huge success and increased transparency and helped align other donors.
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA submission had wide buy-in and ownership amongst a range of stakeholders • NSA preferred to Rounds forms based on linkage with NSP • Purpose of NSA understood to be submission of funding gap, not assessment of NSP. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In country review seen as an the most beneficial part of process to both interact with technical experts and improve KNASP.
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No positive comments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gave more clarity on roles and responsibilities and strengthened NACC/CCM relationship.

Kenya HIV/AIDS : Negative feedback related to process



Negative comments related to specific process steps

Negative comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Timelines were very tight • Process seen as one continuum with each step relating to the other rather than 2 phases 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance on NSA kept arriving in pieces and the full information about process wasn't communicated at the start.
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of guidance regarding the form/content of documents to submit. • Not enough time to pull together documents • Lack of technical capacity for Results-Based planning in country 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Country didn't fully understand each step was a unique, independent activity. They felt it was a joint process of learning together and didn't think it could not be funded
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment criteria not known or understood • Purpose, role, and utilization of IHP+ Attributes not understood by civil society based on confusion of role of IHP+ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other donors participated in KNASP development and with costing/gap analysis done for NSA so when it was submitted to GF, all others had aligned; impact of rejection significant given potential program gaps for ART with little potential for additional external resources.
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFs did not understand their role, not prepared by GF • TORs of SRT not clear, TRP didn't understand their role • Visit raised expectations, building confidence of likely future success given few unresolved issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of the TRP was not useful because of disconnect between SRT and NSA review teams; difference in their role between how they review rounds vs. NSA; lack of consistency in review approach across countries.
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Form was not expansive enough to respond to issues • Felt heavier than Rounds because of many documents and unclear process. • Guidelines were not clear about how much detail was required in the NSA vs the NSP, similar to Rounds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expectations were rising throughout the process because of the level of engagement; receiving the rejection was very painful.
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria the TRP were using to assess the NSA were not clear • TRP "firewalling" between in-country and NSA team not known • Unclear if lessons from SRT taken into account for NSA • Perception rejection was based on political reasons 	

Kenya HIV/AIDS : Recommendations for the future



Elements that worked well and should be maintained	Elements that should be adapted	Elements that should be radically re-thought
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA approach vs. Rounds must be kept • Strong technical feedback from independent reviews. • Maintain in-country visit • Pushing country to develop a fully costed program and financial gap. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthen guidelines on requirements for application, how to complete form, link with NSP, criteria on what is being assessed. • More clear guidelines on how reviews link with each other to avoid disjointed reviews. • Guidelines should articulate role/need of high level buy-in of the national government. • More time and aligned with country's NS development process process. • More communication about IHP+ attributes and their link with IHP+ partnership at country level and how civil society should engage. • Delink development of national strategy from NSA (e.g. ensure NS is near complete prior to starting NSA assessment) • Improve TORs and preparation for in-country visit • Improve transparency in the process 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TRP team conducting in-country visit should be involved in final evaluation. • Countries should be assured some grant funding upon invitation to participate recognizing preparing the NS to the quality for submission to the GF is a high investment for countries. • Someone from GF should personally engage in helping country navigate process rather than relying on too many documents. • Don't include HSS as part of NSA • In country visit should also review impact/performance of previous grants. • HIV should be reviewed differently than malaria/TB to assess multi-stakeholder engagement and community involvement and systems strengthening. • Include a domestic financing component as a criteria for an NSA • GF should engage in NSP development earlier on with the other donors and be involved with on-going in country reviews.

Madagascar/Malaria: Key messages



1. 'Validity' of NSA approach . Madagascar experience suggests that the main notions behind the NSA approach are sound, useful, and useable by countries. The process has incentivised the development of a stronger strategy than would otherwise have happened. This strategy has then served as the basis for not only the GF grant but also UNICEF and PMI support. The general feeling among stakeholders is that with a strong national strategy, they will be:

- Better placed to 'negotiate' with donors for what they need
- Able to drive future grant applications more efficiently
- The process, while challenging, has nonetheless been feasible for them, with some particularly rewarding aspects, as below.

2. Added value of the NSA approach relative to rounds-based financing. There is a fairly unanimous view that the NSA approach adds value in a number of ways:

- Incentivising the development of a strong strategy has led to (1) more coordination in strategy development, e.g., between malaria, mat and child health, and HSS groups, (2) a stronger gap analysis than ever before, and (3) a very helpful external review which further pushed them to address particular weaknesses in the strategy (e.g., integration with other children's health services)
- Increasing engagement, e.g., with other government departments (HSS), NGOs, and international experts
- Future 'consolidation' and a more comprehensive approach that project-based applications

3. High points of this pilot experience

- A clear and well-explained process, which was cascaded to all participants, so that, for example, everyone understood that funding was after the NSA, not the national strategy validation
- Excellent support from the GF team in Geneva, through meetings, emails, and phone calls
- A very helpful external evaluation of the strategy which challenged the country and forced them to address a range of issues

4. Low points of this pilot experience

- Unclear approach to resolving the problems caused by approving the disease strategy and rejecting the accompanying HSS strategy
- Unclear evaluation criteria for the NSA, which left them unsure of how to best write the application
- Lack of clarity on when funds would be disbursed post approval: they assumed "very soon", which is proving not to be the case

5. Success factors

- Main country success factor: strong country expertise at various levels (national programme, technical and financial partners, etc.), long history of collaboration and coordination in country
- Main GF success factor: excellent support throughout the process, tailored to their specific questions and needs

Madagascar/Malaria: Positive feedback related to process



Positive comments related to specific process steps

Positive comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Decision process was open debate during CCM meeting which people felt was fair. There was enough time to reach a decision Deadlines were made clear, including the 2-stage process All important stakeholder groups involved in the decision 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple benefits of NSA highlighted <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better aligned with overall strategy; Forced a revision and strengthening of strategy; Strong NSP validated by international experts helpful for driving donor discussions; Reduces time taken to write multiple project applications for every year's Round Bigger, longer-term grants gives us more time to do work, rather than writing grants every year Concept of NSA is aligned with Paris Declaration (and therefore very much welcome) Technical committee of the national RBM partnership led much of the work, reporting to CCM Civil society engagement strengthened throughout process
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Guidance (incl. list of documents) was clear and useful Inclusive process. Different committees formed to handle different parts of the strategy development and application preparation Almost all materials existed already, but needed revision 	
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Made clear in GF documents that the desk review was not an application review 	
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All stakeholders involved with visit and purpose clear SRT had good expertise, good understanding of situation in Madagascar, and relevant international expertise Feedback useful and helped to strengthen strategy 	
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purpose of NSA vs. NSP review clearly explained in documents. Clear that funding decision would only follow NSA Timing was tight, but feasible with some overtime work Wide range of stakeholders involved 	
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No significant comments</i> 	

Madagascar/Malaria: Negative feedback related to process



Negative comments related to specific process steps

Negative comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One interviewee believed that decision to participate should have been the government's decision rather than the CCM's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> One interviewee felt strongly that it was inappropriate for CCM for drive process, as (1) national strategy is responsibility of the state, and (2) there are potential/likely conflicts of interest on the CCM
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No significant comments</i> 	
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Many of the questions the TRP raised in their feedback were already answered in the documents so somewhat frustrating 	
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Not apparent who was a TRP member and who was just an observer on the SRT More time required between desk review and country visit. Had 1.5 months, would have preferred 3 months 	
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No significant comments</i> 	
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detail of criteria and assessment were not clear More feedback required decisions (esp. rejection of HSS) 	

Madagascar/Malaria: Recommendations for the future



Elements that worked well and should be maintained	Elements that should be adapted	Elements that should be radically re-thought
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommend that GF move to full NSA-based funding and eliminate rounds. Other donors can do the equivalent of round-based funding for countries that require this mechanism• Support from Global Fund (written communication, telephone, email etc.) well appreciated• Geneva conference worked well. Suggestion to hold a similar conference to share the lessons from the FLW with participating countries• In-country visit very appreciated and very motivating. Helped to integrate strategy with other strategies and sector wide approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Consider providing additional TA to help countries develop their NSP / complete the NSA• Process for choosing PRs non-transparent. Unclear how to handle a poorly performing PR• More clarity on timing of disbursement vs. approval• Need to help countries think through options when disease proposal is accepted but HSS proposal is not	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scaling up SRT to multiple diseases and multiple countries will be challenging (sourcing experts etc). GF needs to develop a more scaleable model

Malawi HIV/AIDS: Key messages



Despite the disappointment of rejection of their NSA interviewees were still clear about the benefits of the FLW

- Catalysed finalisation of NSP and extended analysis in key areas such as costing
- Brought all stakeholders (gov, donors, partners, implementers, civil society) together around the plan for the first time
- Broadened the thinking on approach – “it helped us think outside the box”

The main costs of the NSA FLW for Malawi were time and opportunity costs

- *Time*: process considered to be extremely demanding in terms of people’s time due to multiple meetings with a wide range of stakeholders; hosting the in-country visit; and the analysis and drafting processes
- *Opportunity cost*: despite being rejected there is a strong feeling that the NSP has very many strong elements which would have obtained funding in R9. This opportunity was lost as a result of NSA

The costing and gap analysis were the most challenging elements but also the most rewarding resulting in the first ever fully costed NSP for Malawi and bringing all funders (except GF) to the table

- Unclear what costing methodology to adopt. A consultant was hired and first followed a resource-based modelling (RBM) approach but this was later discarded in favour of an activity based costing (ABC) approach. In the future more guidance would be welcomed on suggested tools and approaches as time was wasted experimenting
- Funders were open about their commitments and plans (e.g., CHAI revealed its funding to other partners for the first time as a direct result of this process)
- Insight gained will help with future funding cycles and model expected to be improved over time

(Legitimate) expectations were raised throughout the process, especially after the in-country review

- Being invited to participate and passing desk review with small number of comments seen as very positive
- Belief following in-country review that if SRT’s comments were addressed then NSA would be successful

Final TRP assessment of Malawi’s NSA viewed as deeply flawed for several reasons

- Evaluation criteria were unclear and weighting not known (i.e. very minor points were amplified)
- Not enough space to adequately respond to many of the questions posed / some confusing questions (4.3/4.4)
- Doubtful whether TRP read supporting material as many of their comments referred to elements answered there
- Weak link between SRT and final TRP as many issues considered “resolved” during visit re-appeared
- TRP comments showed fundamental lack of understanding of country context (e.g., regarding high risk groups)

Malawi HIV/AIDS: Positive feedback related to process



Positive comments related to specific process steps

Positive comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Multiple benefits to NSA acknowledged up front The deadlines were clear from the initial information Timing worked well as NSP already being updated Wide consensus that going for NSA was a good idea 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear leadership was provided by NAC throughout the process with the CCM playing an overseeing role Malawi took the feedback from the desk review and the in-country review extremely seriously, reviewing it carefully, considering how to respond, and ensuring it was reflected in their NSA Strong participation of Civil Society and affected communities throughout the process Cost analysis a useful (if painful) process to go through that has helped create the clearest picture of funding and expenditure for HIV/Aids in Malawi that has ever existed
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Were able to predominantly rely on existing documents NSA acted as a catalyst where additional work required A wide range of constituencies were involved 	
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strengths and weaknesses were analysed and discussed at the CCM and with wider technical partners Comments from the desk review were seen as important pieces of feedback to be taken account of in the NSA 	
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Feedback from SRT was used to strengthen NSP and NSA and resulted in bringing in a consultant for support Some (not all) felt that the purpose of the in-country review was clear 	
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> NSA compared favourably to rounds for ease of completion 	
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>No positive comments</i> 	

Malawi HIV/AIDS: Negative feedback related to process



Negative comments related to specific process steps

Negative comments related to the overall process

<p>1. CCM decision to express interest to participate</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not clear why Malawi had been selected (but flattered) • Not clear how grant consolidation would fit with the NSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some interviewees felt that the NSA FLW accelerated the NSP review in an unhelpful way forcing the country to rush the process. Confusion was caused between the NSA and the NSP processes because the NSP review overlapped with NSA preparation • Expectations were managed poorly throughout the process. Malawi interpreted the fact they had been invited to participate as a good sign and then became increasingly confident as each stage passed. Making the final rejection all the more disappointing • Frustration that TRP comments responded to in earlier stages cropped up again in the NSA (when the country thought they had been answered). Widely held belief that the TRP had not in fact read the material submitted alongside the NSA • “All eggs in one basket” resulting from binary TRP decision at end of process. Potentially strong elements of the proposal therefore lost out. More risky than Rounds as entire NSP being considered (not just some narrow elements)
<p>2. CCM preparation for NS desk review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guidance provided wasn't very clear • Short timescales may have limited broader stakeholder involvement 	
<p>3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attributes that TRP were using to assess documentation not clear to all stakeholders (e.g., CBOs, partner organisations) • Expectations of a successful NSA were raised after passing through the desk review 	
<p>3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of in country team poorly understood as clearly not providing TA or helping with NSA • SRT gave the impression that the NSA was “virtually a certainty” • Role of National Facilitators unclear 	
<p>4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There was not enough space on the NSA to go into the level of detail that the TRP were evidently expecting 	
<p>5. TRP review of NSA</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation criteria very unclear, particularly how different elements would be weighted • Many of the issues raised by the TRP were actually covered in the documentation 	

Malawi HIV/AIDS: Recommendations for the future



Elements that worked well and should be maintained	Elements that should be adapted	Elements that should be radically re-thought
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Retain the in-country review as a very useful opportunity to interact directly with the TRP and also exposed TRP members to “real life”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Guidance from Global Fund about the purpose and expectations of each stage needs to be radically improved. In particular, the guidance as to what should be included in the NSA and what exactly the TRP are considering at this stage should be significantly extended• Guidance should be provided to countries well in advance (i.e. 12 months) to allow them to prepare their NSPs in good time• NSA should mandate grant consolidation (shouldn't be optional)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use same TRP at each stage to avoid loss of knowledge and inconsistencies in assessments• Allow TRP to make partial awards based on the strongest elements within the NSA (make the decision less binary) or...• ...increase dialogue with country post NSA to allow the most critical elements to be strengthened

Nepal/TB: Key messages



The NSA as a concept is viewed very positively and when asked most interviewees listed multiple benefits compared to the rounds based process. The NSA approach:

- Provided opportunity to update the National Strategic Plan
- Provides the opportunity to accelerate progress with 5 year plan and extend the scope of programmes
- Is genuinely country-driven
- Reduces time and resources required for annual proposal development (therefore focusing more on implementation)
- Resulted in a higher quality plan than would otherwise be the case

The process adopted by the country was robust and involved all the main TB stakeholders in Nepal

- The effort was led by NTP and a core group of NGOs in conjunction with WHO. This group reported up through the national disease authority and the CCM
- Communications from GF were rapidly and widely circulated
- As a result there is strong involvement in and ownership for the strategy across all the core stakeholders

On balance, the NSA FLW process was seen as well-organised, fair and evidence-based. Key points of positive feedback include:

- The deadlines and process for NSA FLW were clear at the outset. NSA team at GF were helpful and responsive
- The role of the TRP as both strategy reviewer and TRP reviewer was seen as logical due to the TRP's expertise and association with the Global Fund
- The NSA form is far more straightforward than a rounds application form to fill in

Negative feedback from Nepal relates to increasing the flexibility or clarity of certain elements of the process

- *More flexibility*
 - More time required to prepare the national strategy documentation (up to a year)
 - Suggestion that elements of the timeline (e.g. strategy submission) could be driven by country rather than by GF
- *More clarity*
 - Stronger guidance or TA on expectations around contents and format of strategy documentation
 - Role of National Facilitators unclear to several interviewees and risked conflict of interest for those National Facilitators who had been heavily involved in the development of the NSP
 - Weak distinction drawn between national strategy review and NSA. Process seen as continuum

Nepal/TB: Positive feedback related to process



Positive comments related to specific process steps

Positive comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excited to be invited to take part • The deadlines and process were clear at the outset • Wide range of stakeholders involved in the decision to participate • Existing 2002-12 plan was out of date so NSP completely re-written 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The NSA has many benefits over the standard rounds process <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Provides opportunity to accelerate progress with 5 year plan and extend the scope of programmes - Is genuinely country-driven - Gives assessment of needs and plan for 5 years - Reduces time and resources required for annual proposal development - Results in a higher quality plan than would otherwise be the case • Happy for TRP to conduct review throughout the process because: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - TRP are technical experts - Clear link to funding mechanism • All communications from GF were circulated widely and in a timely fashion • Would apply for NSA again given the chance (e.g. for another disease type)
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan developed through collaborative “bottom-up” process 	
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assumption that TRP are assessing technical merits of the plan • TRP comments seen as useful (at least for the purposes of NSA) 	
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of in-country review clear: to pick up any points from desk review and give TRP first hand clarifications • In-country review team were knowledgeable • No assumption that in-country review was supposed to provide TA 	
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA application form is far more straightforward than a round’s application form • Sufficient time was provided for the completion of the NSA 	
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that a strong explanation of the size and nature of the funding gap was an important element of the NSA 	

Nepal/TB: Negative feedback related to process



Negative comments related to specific process steps

Negative comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation criteria contradict guiding principle to be country-led • Perception that as this was FLW it would be “easier” • NSA FLW was a distraction from R7 implementation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Difficulty distinguishing between national strategy review and NSA. Process viewed as a continuum • Each step in the process led to an increased belief that the NSA would be successful (e.g., why would we be invited to participate if we didn’t have a good chance?) • Requires a significant amount of investment up front (to develop the strategy rather than complete the NSA) • Unrealistic to pretend that strategy is for a basket of funders as GF provides 80%+ of TB funding in Nepal
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough time to prepare documentation / consult widely • Guidance was too vague / IHP+ attributes not ready • Not clear what the TRP desk review process was going to be • TA from GF would be appreciated to assist strategy development 	
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some mistakes / misconceptions in TRP feedback • TRP feedback more managerial than technical 	
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of NF’s not clear to some and risked conflict of interest where NF had been heavily involved in NSP development • Feedback not substantially different from desk review and suffered from the same flaws – in particular very little technical comment 	
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Purpose of NSA (as different from previous steps) unclear 	
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Doubts that information within NSA is sufficient for TRP to make a robust judgement as difficult to understand NSP from desk review alone 	

Nepal/TB: Recommendations for the future



Elements that worked well and should be maintained	Elements that should be adapted	Elements that should be radically re-thought
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall satisfaction with NSA process as is (perhaps not surprising from a country that bid successfully)• NSA team were very responsive to questions (e.g. through email) and the Geneva workshop was extremely useful to get answers to a wide range of questions• In-country review seen as a positive additional step as it allows TRP to see the situation on the ground for themselves	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Relationship between desk review and in-country review could be adapted in various ways<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Combine into a single step- Have in-country review before desk review to give TRP necessary background- Maintain same TRP members for both steps• Provide more templates that can be used to develop plans (e.g. budgets)• Clarify role of National Facilitators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Participation criteria should be scrapped because:<ul style="list-style-type: none">- Plans unlikely to be available “off the shelf” and difficult for GF to assess robustness of plan before process begins- Contravenes GF guiding principle of being country led• Implication of above is that countries can choose which disease(s) they wish to submit for NSA• Scope of NSA should be broadened to include multiple diseases (e.g. TB/HIV) or broader health strategies• NSA could involve multiple funders rather than purely GF• GF could provide or facilitate TA for strategy development

Rwanda TB/HIV: Key messages



Rwanda's experience of the NSA process was very positive thanks to a number of factors:

- High quality NSPs for TB and HIV/Aids were nearing finalisation at the beginning of the NSA FLW process (if the process had started much earlier or later it would have been less ideal and disrupted planned country planning processes)
- The NSPs had been developed through a highly collaborative process which has resulted in a wide sense of ownership amongst all key stakeholders
- Extensive collaboration continued throughout the NSA FLW process ensuring that all key stakeholders were involved throughout (e.g., through workshops, meetings of CCM technical committees)
- Communications in-country from the CCM and between different stakeholders is very strong. For example, all stakeholders were familiar with the TRP clarifications requested post approval
- Strong leadership from the Rwandan government from the President down supported by high calibre civil servants
- Recognition that this was a learning wave and so prepared to be flexible and learn along the way with the GF

The primary focus of the work during the NSA FLW was on developing a robust cost and financial gap analysis which resulted in several benefits

- Recognition that a detailed cost and gap analysis would not have been completed in the absence of the NSA FLW
- Benefits include: a better understanding of unit costs throughout the system; increased transparency on sources and uses of funding for all stakeholders; improved ability to negotiate with other funders (e.g. PEPFAR)
- Desire for more guidance from Global Fund on level of detail expected for gap analysis
- Surprise that TRP did not pay more attention to the technical elements in the NSP during the strategy review

The NSA as a concept is strongly supported and when asked most interviewees listed multiple benefits compared to the rounds based process. The NSA approach:

- Switches focus to overall strategy (from project financing) making the NSP a real working document
- Allows the country to be more ambitious in their vision
- Helps to align sources of funding (e.g., PEPFAR has aligned their Partnership Framework in Rwanda to the NSP)
- Provides increased transparency for all stakeholders (on the strategy itself and on details such as costs)
- (And uniquely to Rwanda) captures synergies in applying for both HIV & TB together to avoid duplications and have peer review opportunities in developing the strategies

Rwanda TB/HIV : Positive feedback related to process



Positive comments related to specific process steps

Positive comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefits of NSA clear to all stakeholders • Time and process provided by GF were clear • Wide range of stakeholders involved in the decision to take part in NSA FLW 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • GF team provided excellent support throughout the process. Materials were clear, quick to respond to phone/email and the Geneva workshop useful
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IHP+ criteria enabled HIV/AIDS team to carry out a thorough self-assessment of their NSP before submission • NSP was already in place so could focus on costing and gap analysis 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The timing of the process happened to be “just right” for the Rwandan planning process as the NSPs were virtually completed when the invitation to participate in NSA arrived...
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear that strategy would be assessed against IHP+ attributes and for technical merit • Feedback was useful 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ...as a result the NSP did not change dramatically throughout the process and the main focus on the work was on conducting a robust financial analysis to develop the funding gap
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In country review team were knowledgeable in the relevant disease areas • Role of national facilitators was clear / no conflict of interest • Appreciated opportunity to enter into dialogue with TRP 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A wide range of stakeholders including NGOs, civil society, private sector and affected communities were actively involved throughout the process
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recognition that NSA itself is more focused on costing and funding gap than previous stages • NSA is much easier than a rounds application (if the NSP is already in place) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Process seen as supportive of Paris declaration resulting in better alignment of donors
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NSA contains all the necessary information for the TRP to make a funding decision (note - disputed by some) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Relative roles of CCM and national disease authority for HIV (CNLS) clear throughout the process

Rwanda TB/HIV : Negative feedback related to process



Negative comments related to specific process steps

Negative comments related to the overall process

1. CCM decision to express interest to participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Would be possible to have successful R8 application but still benefit from NSA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The “value add” of the TRP in the strategy review steps was questioned by many interviewees. Although they were grateful for any feedback, and to get a better indication of the TRP thought process it was generally felt that the comments provided at both the desk review and in-country review were rather minor / not technical and did not lead to significant alteration of the NSP. This is likely to be due, in part, to the fact that Rwanda already had very well developed NSPs prior to the process • Despite the fact that the process steps were clear many interviewees were convinced that positive feedback from the desk review and in country review did in fact indicate that their NSA would be successful “because the NSA is based on the NSP” • The time from the initial submission to the receipt of funds it too long and was not made clear at the outset
2. CCM preparation for NS desk review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not enough time to finalise documentation and bring all the stakeholders together • Difficulties getting hold of the necessary data to conduct a robust financial analysis 	
3a. TRP desk review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feedback from the desk review was “light” and focused on managerial aspects rather than technical points, felt “superficial.” • Belief that positive feedback from desk review (and in-country review) meant that NSA likely to be successful 	
3b. SRT in-country review of national strategy documentation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of in-country review to country not clear • Difficult for TRP to get up to speed quickly enough • As with desk review, feedback was relatively “light” 	
4. Preparation of National Strategy Application (NSA)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Preparing the financial gap analysis was the biggest challenge. Not clear how detailed this was expected to be 	
5. TRP review of NSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Criteria the TRP were using to assess the NSA were not clear 	

Rwanda TB/HIV : Recommendations for the future



Elements that worked well and should be maintained	Elements that should be adapted	Elements that should be radically re-thought
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Requirement that countries have a well developed NSP already in place is vital. This was a key success factor for Rwanda• Support from the GF team was extremely strong and should be maintained. Geneva workshop was a very useful opportunity to ask questions and share experiences with other countries	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time allocated to the preparation of documentation for the desk review needs to be extended• Combine the desk review with the in-country review• Only have a single TRP team throughout• Clearer guidance is required around the level of detail expected for the costings and gap analysis• Clearer guidance is required around the PR within the NSA and role of dual-track-financing for civil society. For example, is having a single PR (e.g. MoH) now more appropriate?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post-approval clarifications process feels too much like the old process for rounds when it should be adapted to take account of NSA. This means requiring less detail on specific projects and taking a more holistic approach• The time between the first submission and the first funds disbursement should be reduced by shortening the signature period after the NSA has been approved• Countries should decide when their strategies are ready to be reviewed (given the importance / luck of the NSA FLW timing for Rwanda)