

**REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL REVIEW PANEL (TRP) ON THE FIRST WAVE
OF EARLY APPLICANTS IN THE TRANSITION TO THE NEW FUNDING
MODEL**

Purpose:

This report summarizes the lessons learned from the TRP's review of the first wave of concept notes from early applicants in the transition to the new funding model.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The TRP reviewed five early applicant concept notes for technical merit during 18-21 April 2013 in Geneva, Switzerland. This was the first review under the new funding model and as such proved to be a rich opportunity for learning. Some key observations follow:

1. This was an important test of the new funding model. While recognizing there is much to learn and evolve, the TRP was extremely encouraged by what it saw. The TRP also recognizes the tremendous effort by all stakeholders – applicants, Secretariat and technical partners.
2. Unlike in the Rounds-based model, the TRP review was designed to work towards fundable high impact programs – getting to an outcome of “yes”. This is a radical change from what was previously required of the TRP where up to half of the proposals reviewed faced an uncertain path to funding. The TRP endorses this change, and will continue to refine its review mode accordingly.
3. The TRP, as an independent technical body of the Global Fund, reports directly to the Board through the SIIC. In the past the TRP reported its funding recommendations directly to the Board. In the new funding model the TRP will be providing its funding recommendations to the Secretariat’s Grant Approvals Committee (GAC), while remaining accountable to the SIIC and Board. Adequate institutional support to maintain the role of the TRP as an independent technical panel and the GAC as a funding body is essential.
4. The concept note and accompanying information provided the right level of detail in terms of a strategic view of funding requests. However the level of information does not allow for detailed scrutiny and therefore the TRP purposefully delegated more actions to the Secretariat in recognition of the rigorous scrutiny anticipated during the grant-making process.
5. The TRP recognizes the Board’s objectives in establishing “indicative” and “incentive” funding. This requires applicants to prioritize funding requested within these ranges in the concept note stage and then again once the funding ceiling is set, will require new budgets for grant-making. The TRP recognizes the additional and at times disproportionate burden that this can place on all stakeholders. The TRP also sees certain unintended and negative consequences to this design feature.
6. Related to the above, the TRP was asked to recommend the awarding of “incentive” funding to the GAC. Given the level of funds available were far less than the quality demand, this required a prioritization across interventions competing within a disease; and interventions competing across diseases and countries. The TRP also notes the need for realistic expectations by countries regarding any resulting “Unfunded Quality Demand.” Prior to the full roll-out it is important to revisit how best to operationalize these funding streams to ensure any unintended negative consequences are managed and the burden on applicants, technical partners and the Secretariat are minimized.
7. Lessons learned, as described in this report, are based on a limited sample and short timeframe. Learning here also does not include the GAC review and approval processes and how these inter relate to the TRP process. These too are important parts in the governance of the new funding model. For this reason it is important that the Secretariat continue to gather lessons from remaining transition phase applicants and throughout 2014. This should continuously be used to modify and refine the new funding model.

PART 1: INTRODUCTION

1.1 The Technical Review Panel (TRP) met from 18-21 April 2013 to review the first wave of early applicant concept notes for technical merit, as well as test elements of the new funding model prior to the full roll out.

1.2 The meeting consisted of 16 TRP members and the TRP Chair, Mr. Shawn Baker. They reviewed five concept notes from three countries:

Country	HIV	Malaria	Tuberculosis
Myanmar	○	○	○
El Salvador	○		
Zimbabwe	○		

Table 1: First wave of early applicants

1.3 In line with the flexibilities granted by the Board for the transition,¹ the review panel consisted of both current permanent TRP and former members to ensure necessary expertise and language skills were available.

1.4 The TRP reviewed concept notes for: i) soundness of approach; ii) feasibility; iii) potential for sustainability and impact; and iv) value for money, as per the criteria² defined in the current TRP Terms of Reference³.

1.5 The TRP recommendations focused on the technical soundness and strategic focus of each concept note for those (i) program elements to be funded within the indicative amount⁴; and (ii) program elements to be funded if additional money is available, which is the “above indicative”⁵ amount.

1.6 This report does not provide the TRP funding recommendations for each concept note which have been provided to the Grant Approvals Committee. Instead this report provides observations, lessons learned and recommendations. Recommendations are highlighted in bold throughout the report.

1.7 This report is structured as follows:

Part 1: Introduction

Part 2: Review of the First wave of early applicants

Part 3: Lessons learned, observations and recommendations

¹ Board decision point: GF/B28/DP5

² [The Terms of Reference of the Technical Review Panel](#), Attachment 1 “Proposal Review Criteria”.

³ Decision Point GF/B23/DP18, which approved the most recent Terms of Reference.

⁴ The indicative funding is an amount of funding that has been derived from an allocation formula for each country and is communicated during country dialogue. This amount for early applicants has been calculated based on a country’s disease burden and Gross National Income (GNI) per capita, and the total projected available funding by disease.

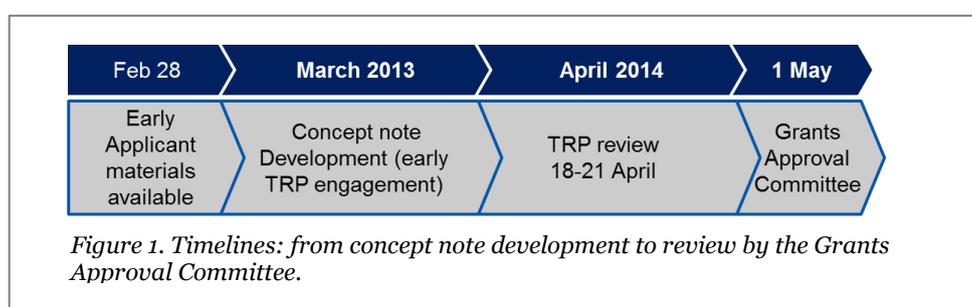
⁵ The ‘above indicative’ request refers to the amount that is over and above the indicative amount communicated by the Secretariat. This request is reviewed by the TRP for technical soundness, which may be recommended for funding through any incentive funding available, and/or kept on a register of unfunded quality demand.

PART 2: REVIEW OF THE FIRST WAVE OF EARLY APPLICANTS

2.1 In its review of the first wave of early applicant concept notes, the TRP recognized the tremendous effort undertaken by the applicants, Secretariat Country Teams and technical partners in the concept note development process, which occurred in a very short timeframe (figure 1).

2.2 The TRP would like to highlight the exemplary support from the Access to Funding Team which enabled the TRP to take on this challenge and ensure that the documentation of the individual and overall outcomes were made available under tight timelines.

2.3 Overall, and notwithstanding requested clarifications/adjustments, the TRP deemed the five concept notes as technically sound and strategically focused for both the “indicative” and “above indicative” funding requests, and generally well-aligned with the country national strategies. However, not all concept notes provided a breakdown between requests for indicative and above indicative funding which made it challenging for the TRP review of the different requests, since the TRP was requested to make recommendations on the indicative and ‘above indicative’ funding separately.



Characteristics

2.4 As summarized in Table 1 above, a total of five concept notes were reviewed by the TRP (El Salvador HIV; Myanmar HIV, tuberculosis and malaria; and Zimbabwe HIV). No stand-alone concept notes were submitted for health systems or community systems strengthening (HCSS); however, countries did include cross-cutting HCSS interventions in their disease concept notes.

2.5 All concept notes presented a consolidated funding request which included existing grant funds⁶. Applicants were encouraged to include a “full expression of demand” (e.g. the total amount of funding needed to finance an ambitious, technically appropriate response to the disease) within their concept notes. A total of USD 1 billion was requested in the five concept notes. The USD 1 billion included \$205 million of existing grant funds, USD 391 million of indicative funding and USD 419 million, as part of their ‘above indicative’ request. Myanmar’s total ‘above indicative’ funding request represented 53 percent of its full need according to its financial gap analysis table; El Salvador’s total funding request represented 16 percent; and Zimbabwe’s total funding request represented 63 percent⁷. Figure 2 provides a breakdown of each concept note funding request.

2.6 The limited sample size and characteristics of the concept notes reviewed have limited the TRP from formulating general lessons-learned – although it has been a rich learning

⁶ Existing Global Fund grants is defined as existing grant funds as well as any unsigned Phase 2 grants or uncommitted Phase 2 amounts and any approved but unsigned proposal (e.g. Round 10 or Transitional Funding Mechanism (TFM) which is expected to approved/signed during the implementation period) that will be on-going through any part of the duration of the funding request.

⁷ Full demand has been calculated based on the information provided by applicants in the Financial Gap Analysis and Counterpart Financing table. These numbers were not verified by the TRP.

process. Recognizing that the next set of early applicants⁸ to be reviewed in the later part of 2013 will also be small, it is important to continue the learning process throughout 2014.

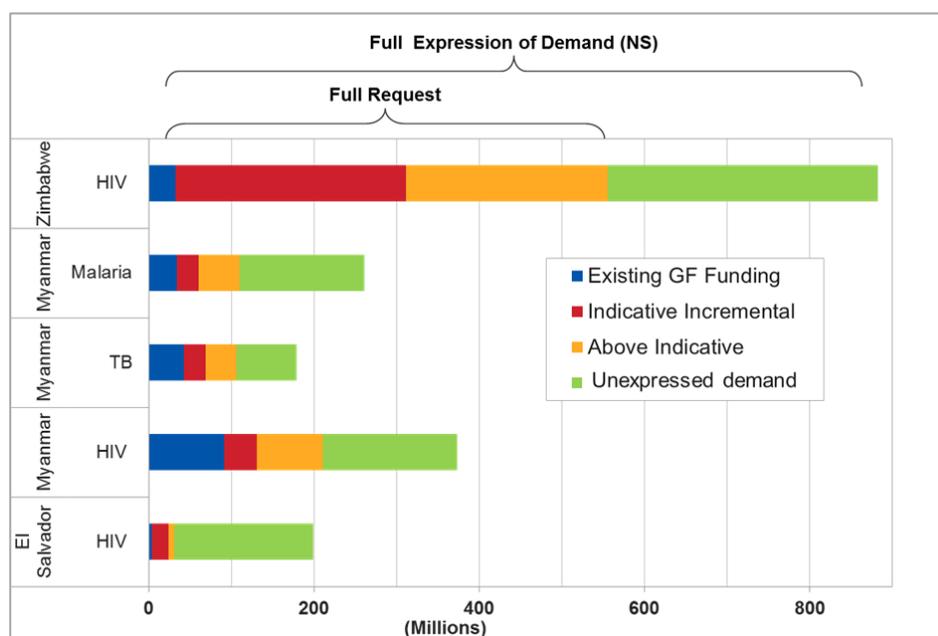


Figure 2. Breakdown of early applicants' funding requests. Source: Financial Gap Analysis and Counterpart Financing Tables for each concept note.

Concept Note Review Process

2.7 As this was the first review of funding requests under the new funding model, it was important to ensure that a sufficient number of reviewers were involved in order to engage in the learning process. The Panel consisted of four HIV experts, three tuberculosis experts, three malaria experts and six cross-cutters. Of the 16 members, 13 were current TRP members and three were former TRP members called upon based on their regional expertise and language skills.

2.8 Key features of the TRP review included:

- early engagement with applicants through Secretariat Country Teams (see sections 2.8 -2.13 for more information);
- work in small review groups (with at least two disease experts and two cross-cutters) to review each concept note. TRP members received these documents prior to the meeting, and had individually reviewed these remotely;
- engagement with Secretariat Country Teams – through structured written input (Country Team memorandum), presentation, and where required, follow-up questions managed through the Access to Funding team;
- small review group meetings to discuss the review of the individual concept notes;
- TRP funding recommendations finalized through a TRP plenary session, during which the TRP agreed on the assessments and recommendations and content of TRP Review Forms. The plenary also debated the most strategic use of the incentive

⁸ Philippines HIV, Democratic Republic of Congo HIV, Kazakhstan TB, Eurasian Harm Reduction Network (EHRN) HIV, Regional Elimination Initiative in Mesoamerica and Hispaniola malaria, and Regional Artemisinin Initiative malaria

funding that was estimated to be available for this pool of concept notes and formalized a recommendation to the Grants Approval Committee;

- a final plenary, for TRP discussion of the overall review process, consistency between findings; and to capture lessons learned and make recommendations on the new funding model moving forward;
- general debrief with the Secretariat and technical partners;
- debrief session with Secretariat Country Teams on individual recommendations; and
- providing recommendations to the Grants Approval Committee in the form of the individual TRP Review Forms and the TRP's recommendation on incentive funding available for this pool of concept notes.

Early Engagement

2.9 For the first time, the TRP was involved in 'early engagement' with applicants prior to the submission of concept notes. The objective of this 'early engagement', in particular in light of the short timelines, was to provide applicants with an early technical steer and flag major programmatic and technical issues. In addition this process allowed the TRP to become familiar with existing background documentation and the general focus of the funding request.

2.10 This engagement was facilitated through the Secretariat and differed for each applicant. There was no direct contact with applicants, rather this engagement was through the Global Fund Country Teams as part of the country dialogue.

2.11 Since early engagement was meant to be responsive to the applicants' needs, the TRP reviewed different types of documentation – based on where the applicant was in the concept note development process. This engagement provided opportunity for the TRP to provide feedback on elements and the strategic direction of the funding request also with the objective of reducing the number of clarifications that are often required after a technical review. It was also clearly noted to applicants that early TRP feedback did not substitute for the subsequent TRP review of the concept note and supporting documents, nor did it in any way constitute a promise of funding.

2.12 Overall it was felt that early engagement with applicants was useful for the subsequent TRP review, and that there was added value of having the same TRP members involved in early engagement and the review of the same concept note. Early engagement also emphasized the TRP's openness to engage and discuss issues with technical partners and Secretariat disease advisors where misinterpretations or disagreements arose.

2.13 The TRP did, however, note a number of challenges with regards to the process:

- i. Some of the comments provided to applicants were not taken into consideration⁹, which meant that the same issues were included by the TRP as clarifications to applicants following the concept note review.
- ii. Confidentiality was not always maintained during this process. One of the tenets of the TRP as an independent body is the confidentiality regarding which TRP members review which funding requests. This is particularly important as TRP recommendations are made by the whole panel of members during plenary sessions, and are not based solely on the views of the TRP members that reviewed the concept note.
- iii. Due to the short timeline for 'early engagement' there was limited time to allow for wide consultation among TRP members.

⁹ The TRP notes that this may have been a consequence of the short timeframe between early engagement and the concept note submission for this first wave of early applicants.

2.14 The TRP is open to continue to pilot the early engagement approach with the next set of early applicants before a decision is made on whether or not it should continue in the full roll out of the new funding model.

Assuming early engagement is continued, the TRP notes that further thought, including clearly defining the rules of engagement and expected outcomes, is required, as well as further analysis of level of effort of the TRP and Access to Funding in order to scale up such a mechanism during the full implementation of the new funding model in 2014. In addition there should be greater time available between early engagement and the submission of the concept note, which would likely improve the quality of the documentation submitted.

Technical Partner Briefings

2.15 Prior to commencing the TRP review meeting, there were briefings and discussions with technical partners for HIV, tuberculosis and malaria¹⁰. These sessions provided updates on the latest developments in the global policies and strategies for the three diseases as well as any major technical developments. Technical partners also provided background information on specific concept notes based on their involvement in the concept note development process.

2.16 Immediately following the TRP review meeting, on 22 April, the TRP held a post-review briefing session with technical partners through the WHO/UNAIDS Joint Working Group which provided key findings, recommendations and lessons learned.

Secretariat country contextual information

2.17 Building on the experiences and lessons learned from the Transitional Funding Mechanism, the Secretariat provided specific Country Team Input which included their analysis of the concept note and included, where relevant, supplementary information that was not available in the concept note but was relevant to the context. This information was complemented by in-person Country Team presentations. The written input and presentations were very useful in the decision-making process and in some cases provided key information which was missing from the concept note.

2.18 Based on this first experience, the TRP will provide more guidance to the Country Team on the most helpful type of information and analysis to highlight in the presentations.

2.19 For the first time, immediately following the review meeting, the TRP presented the final outcomes to Country Teams with a particular focus on reviewing the technical weaknesses and request for clarifications. The aim of the process was not to change or negotiate clarifications but rather to ensure that the clarifications delegated to the Secretariat were clear and feasible.

2.20 Based on the systematic engagement of Country Teams, and their role as stewards of the process of moving from the concept note through grant-making and then continuing to support grant implementation, the TRP purposefully delegated more actions to the Secretariat for follow-up than had typically been done during Rounds-based reviews.

2.21 The TRP also acknowledges that Country Teams and technical partners will face huge demands in (i) scaling up support for concept note development in the full implementation of the new funding model; (ii) stewarding the requested clarifications and translating the outcomes into disbursement ready grants; and (iii) managing “incentive” funding and “unfunded quality demand”.

Funding Recommendations

2.22 In the Rounds-based system, applications not recommended for funding by the TRP would need to wait for a year or more before being reviewed again as a resubmission in the

¹⁰ Roll Back Malaria, Stop TB, WHO and UNAIDS

next ‘call for proposals’. The process for concept note review in the new funding model ensures opportunities for iterations to ensure timely and successful outcomes.

2.23 For the first wave of early applicants, the TRP aligned the recommendation categories with the new funding model. The TRP agreed on the following recommendation categories:

- **Category 1:** Concept note is technically sound with or without issues to be clarified by the Secretariat and is recommended to proceed to grant-making
- **Category 2:** Concept note is technically sound with issues to be clarified by the TRP, with or without issues to be clarified by the Secretariat, and is recommended to proceed to grant-making
- **Category 3:** Concept note is on the right track but the TRP has significant concerns with the current concept note. A revised concept note needs to be submitted, within the clear parameters set out in the TRP Review Form, and reviewed by the TRP.

2.24 The TRP made recommendations on the technical quality of the “indicative” and the “above indicative” funding requests including its recommendations on prioritization. These outcomes are captured in the individual TRP Review Forms.

2.25 The TRP was also asked to provide its recommendations on awarding incentive funding across the five concept notes reviewed. This recommendation was provided separately to the Grant Approvals Committee (GAC) and is not disclosed in the individual TRP Review Forms in recognition that the Secretariat will determine the final upper-ceiling for grant-making for each applicant, including the awarding of any incentive funding¹¹.

PART 3: LESSONS LEARNED, OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

3.1 This section documents the lessons learned by the TRP during their review and provides recommendations to the Global Fund Board and the Secretariat. For ease of reference, all recommendations are presented in **bold** text.

3.2 The TRP acknowledges that the lessons learned as described below are based on a small and particular sample of concept notes¹², which limited the TRP’s ability to draw general lessons learned. It is for this reason that the **TRP strongly recommends that the Secretariat continue to gather lessons throughout 2014, which can be used to modify and refine the new funding model in order to streamline processes and maximize investments.** The TRP reiterates its willingness to engage in as many opportunities as possible during the transition to maximize learnings and to identify areas where TRP involvement can bring the most added value, noting that TRP involvement in the full roll-out could decrease over time.

3.3 Nevertheless, the TRP believes that there are important messages in the recommendations presented below, which can be taken into consideration for the next wave of applicants in the transition, and to be considered by the Board before the full implementation of the new funding model in early 2014.

Concept note

3.4 The TRP believes that, overall, the concept note provided the right level of detail in terms of a strategic view of the funding request, when accompanied by mandatory attachments and relevant annexes.

¹¹ GF/B27/DP7, Annex 1, paragraph 9.

¹² -In addition to having only one malaria and one tuberculosis proposal, the TRP notes that the selection of PRs was also limited with two United Nations Agencies (Myanmar and Zimbabwe) being selected; two International NGOs (Myanmar and El Salvador) and one government agency (Ministry of Health, El Salvador).

3.5 Given the level of information on the interventions, targets and budget provided in the concept note, the TRP based its assessments on the assumption that the Secretariat would apply further scrutiny during the grant-making process. The TRP made funding recommendations subject to the clarifications/adjustments requested, as well as scrutiny of detailed information on interventions, activities, targets and budgets during grant making to ensure cost effectiveness and value for money.

3.6 The TRP also notes that the level of budgetary information and the way that information was presented in the modular template made it difficult for the TRP to undertake the level of budget scrutiny that occurred in the past. This seems to be an appropriate change with further scrutiny of budgets taking place during the grant-making process. However, the TRP was not able to give a firm financial figure for the indicative amount, and it was even more difficult to do so for the above indicative amounts.

3.7 While the TRP was able to prioritize interventions within a concept note, it was not able to assign firm cost ranges to the interventions as they were prioritized. During grant-making there may be economies identified in the indicative request that would allow priorities identified in the above indicative request to be funded from the indicative amount. The individual TRP review forms provide guidance in this prioritization. The lack of a firm cost estimate of interventions makes it even more difficult to rank interventions across concept notes and/or across countries.

With regards to the information provided in the concept note and its quality, the TRP recommends that:

- **guidance be provided to applicants on how to provide references to annexes, in order to facilitate use of these important annexes by the reviewers, and how to avoid inconsistencies of information between different annexes (or explain such inconsistencies);**
- **the overall funding landscape (not just Global Fund investments) should be clearly described in the narrative of the concept note or in the Country Team memorandum, in addition to the financial information provided;**
- **an additional narrative question on health systems and community systems strengthening be included in the concept note;**
- **In order to better understand the foundation on which funding requests are being formulated and what impact it could achieve, the TRP recommends that the concept note elicit information regarding the overall Global Fund investments in a country, as well as the existing health and community system constraints (if any) and what actions are being undertaken (even if these are not financed by the Global Fund); and**
- **guidance on health systems and community systems, as well as on human rights and gender programming, ideally be developed for next wave of early applicants, and if not definitely before the full roll-out, and be made publically available on the website.**

In order to provide a more accurate record of the concept note that was finally recommended, the TRP recommends that concept notes be updated to incorporate clarifications delegated to the Secretariat and the TRP before being made publically available on the Global Fund web site. The TRP recognizes that this may require some additional effort on the behalf of the applicants – however it will avoid having original concept notes in the public domain that are significantly different from what has been agreed to through the clarification process.

Impacts of New Funding Model

3.8 While the TRP appreciates the new approaches being undertaken in the new funding model, in particular the increased dialogue and more systematic engagement with the Secretariat, there are some features of the new funding model which require more discussion on how best to operationalize them in order to mitigate any unintended consequences.

The presentation of “indicative” and “above indicative” in a funding request

3.9 The TRP recognizes the objectives of requiring an “above indicative” budget to motivate the full expression of demand from applicants, to incentivize high-impact, well-performing programs, and to favor ambitious requests, as outlined in the Board’s decision in November 2012¹³.

3.10 Applications will be reviewed during a specific “TRP window” depending on the timing of the submission of the concept note. Each window will have (i) an amount of incentive funding based on the number of countries being reviewed in a given window, with available incentive funding increased when there are many countries in the same window or countries with a large amount of indicative funding; (ii) interventions competing within a disease; and (iii) interventions competing across diseases and countries. The TRP fears that this may replicate, albeit in a different form, the “hit-or-miss” aspect that was criticized in the rounds-based system.

3.11 The TRP anticipates that applicants could soon see these anomalies and this will result in applicants waiting for a window that has a large amount of incentive funding, versus submitting a funding request when it is most aligned to their own country cycles and needs.

The TRP recommends that prior to the full roll-out that SIIC and the Board engage in discussions with the Secretariat on how best to operationalize these funding streams to ensure any unintended negative consequences are managed to minimize the burden on applicants, technical partners and the Secretariat.

3.12 The TRP found that with the existing budget information presented in the modular template, it was difficult to segregate out “indicative” and “above indicative,” potentially requiring countries to submit multiple budgets.

3.13 This issue became particularly challenging when the TRP had to determine the recommended level of “incentive funding”; a large portion of the TRP’s time and effort in reviewing the concept note was dedicated to guiding the prioritization of the “above indicative” funding request.

The TRP recommends that there be clearer articulation of “indicative” and “above indicative” funding requests in the narrative of concept notes in the future.

Unfunded Quality Demand

3.14 The TRP understands that in asking applicants to express their full demand, quality demand will most likely exceed available resources. Any unmet quality demand will be kept on a register by the Secretariat for future funding should additional resources become available. However, the TRP would like to stress the need for applicants to see the added value of the effort required to present their full expression of demand, far beyond what is required of them to submit a funding request for the incentive funding that is potentially available. If applicants are not seeing such value added, it is quite possible that they will stop making the effort to express full demand, potentially undermining the purpose for which the Board introduced this provision.

3.15 While this design feature could help leverage additional resources from within and outside a country, an applicant’s expectations that unfunded quality demand may be funded

¹³ Board decision point: GF/B28/DP4.

by the Global Fund in the future could have the opposite effect, dampening efforts to mobilize resources to fund the same interventions from domestic and other donor resources.

3.16 The TRP is concerned that the “shelf-life” of unfunded quality demand could be quite short because of changing epidemiology, changing funding and program landscape and adjustments in global guidance. Therefore triggers to validate the continued of unfunded quality demand before adding it into a grant in the event of new funding need to be determined. The prioritization of this demand in the event that new Global Fund resources are available also needs to be addressed.

With regards to unfunded quality demand, the TRP recommends that the Global Fund develop a strategy to help leverage other donor and domestic resources. This would help mitigate any potential unintended negative consequences.

The TRP recommends that the Secretariat, as part of its continued work on operationalizing unfunded quality demand, clearly identify a mechanism on how to validate its relevance prior to being awarded to existing grants. In particular there should be a mechanism for ensuring that the interventions that have been registered as unfunded quality demand are still technically relevant and based on the new resources available and are correctly prioritized given the specific country context and the way it has evolved since the concept note was originally submitted.

“Disease split”

3.17 As only Myanmar has been allocated funding for more than one disease as an early applicant in the transition, the TRP was unable to draw out many observations or recommendations on the disease split; and will not have another opportunity to review this until the full-roll out. The TRP notes that this country had difficulties in discussing a potential re-allocation of the disease split of the indicative funding that had been communicated during country dialogue.

3.18 For those applicants that submitted only one disease, it was difficult for the TRP to appreciate a view of the overall Global Fund investment. Furthermore, health and community systems strengthening interventions received relatively little attention by all applicants.

Implications of new technical guidance on strategic investment

3.19 The TRP recognizes that new technical guidance will continue to be issued and that this will have an implication on funding requests. While some of the new technical guidance will not have significant financial impacts on Global Fund grants, there are some which may have major financial implications associated with applicants’ implementation of new technical guidance.

3.20 The TRP reviewed one such funding request to implement new ARV treatment guidelines which will be rolled out in mid-2013. The new guidelines will recommend initiating treatment at a 500 CD4 count instead of the current recommendation of 350 CD4 count. The implementation of these new guidelines (which also foresees other significant changes) will have a substantial impact on current coverage rates and the amount of resources needed. The TRP therefore sees a need for consistent guidance on how to invest Global Fund resources for this highly desirable change, without undermining other aspects of control of the three diseases and HCSS, nor creating inequities.

It is expected that an increasing number of countries will choose to transition to or implement new technical guidance that becomes available. The TRP notes that as there will continue to be high-cost new technologies or guidance issued

in the future, the Board should discuss the impact of the financial and larger policy implications of implementing new guidance.

Monitoring Scale up and Making Course Correction

3.21 The TRP notes that there were a number of ambitious concept notes requesting significant scale-up, which was laudable; however, feasibility to implement these ambitious programs was less clear.

The TRP stresses the importance for countries to maintain and improve the quality of current interventions while scaling up. Furthermore the TRP recommends that there be a mechanism for an annual check-in on progress in scale-up and where applicable that there be an adjustment of financing in cases where scale-up is not being achieved or is being achieved more rapidly (recognizing that the upper-ceiling cannot be increased).

Most-at-risk populations

3.22 The TRP notes that, in general, concept notes lacked reliable and appropriate size estimates for most-at-risk populations (MARPs). This was particularly evident in HIV concept notes.

The TRP, recognizing that this is essential information for quality concept notes, recommends that there be more serious investment and monitoring by the Global Fund and partners in the area of reliable and appropriate size estimates for MARPs.

The TRP also recommends that funding and monitoring should ensure simplified baseline programmatic size estimates, based on mappings, with confirmatory, more mathematically-based size estimates through behavioral surveillance surveys.

3.23 In addition, the TRP noted that there was some evidence that most-at-risk populations and human rights were relegated to the “above indicative” funding requests.

Secretariat policy advocacy engagement

3.24 The TRP noted two cases where human rights policy changes were cited as critical enabling factors; however progress from prior Global Fund investments and investments requested were minimal.

3.25 The TRP notes that there was one case where prior Government commitments to cover recurrent human resource costs had not been met, representing a large share of the indicative request, and also included in the above indicative request.

3.26 These cases seem to illustrate opportunities that have been under-utilized for leveraging the Global Fund’s major influence to advance policy issues that are critical for program success and sustainability.

The TRP recommends that the Secretariat develop a proactive and structured strategy to work with countries and partners to promote progress in human rights and broader policy issues (for example countries taking over recurring financial commitments).

The TRP recommends that the Global Fund and technical partners emphasize that quality programming for most-at-risk populations and addressing human rights barriers to accessing services are essential to effective programs. As such, these interventions should not receive secondary priority and should be included, as appropriate, in the ‘indicative’ funding request.

Role of the Secretariat and the TRP

3.27 The TRP as an independent technical body of the Global Fund reports directly to the Board through the SIIC. As part of its review of concept notes the TRP has been asked to prioritize elements within concept notes and make a recommendation on technical soundness and strategic focus.

3.28 In the past the TRP reported its funding recommendations directly to the Board and in the new funding model the TRP will be providing its funding recommendations to the Grant Approvals Committee (GAC) who will be making a determination on final upper-ceilings for grant-making, including the awarding of any incentive funding. This provision of making funding recommendations to the Secretariat should not be seen as the TRP reporting to the Secretariat. Clarity regarding the role of the TRP as an independent technical panel and the GAC as a funding body is essential.

The TRP recommends that clear written guidance be developed which articulates the steps and roles and responsibilities throughout the concept note development and grant-making process to ensure consistent messaging regarding roles and responsibilities of the Secretariat, applicants, technical partners, the TRP and the GAC. This guidance should also articulate how changes in grant-making which affect the original scope and scale of the concept note will be dealt with, and when applicable, this will be referred back to the TRP. The TRP recommends that the documentation which accompanies the request for approval to the Board of disbursement-ready grants is transparent and ensures that the original TRP recommendation is visible.

3.29 In the case that there is a discrepancy between the TRP's recommendation and the decision of the GAC, **the TRP recommends that there be a mechanism to revert back to the TRP before any final decision is made (and communication to applicants) in order to ensure consistent messaging.**

Reporting and TRP Support

3.30 Building on the positive experiences of TFM and this first review of early applicants, the TRP will continue the practice of reporting out to the Secretariat and partners directly after TRP reviews, and the one-on-one debriefings with county teams.

3.31 As the TRP will continue the learning process throughout the rest of 2013 and into 2014 as it relates to the new funding model, **the TRP recommends that that it signal to the SIIC issues that it feels require discussion or decision by the SIIC or the full Board.**

3.32 In order to ensure the full Board has the chance to engage with the TRP, **the TRP recommends that it systematically present an update of TRP business in the pre-meeting sessions of Board Meetings.**

3.33 It is critical that the TRP continues to receive the exceptionally professional support it receives from the Access to Funding team as its secretariat. This will be paramount if the TRP is to fulfill its role and meet the new demands on the Panel under the new funding model.