
Supporting Community Action on AIDS in India

National Civil Society Consultation on the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

**27th April to 29th April 2005
New Delhi, India**

Recommendations for Strengthening Civil Society Involvement

Executive Summary

Approximately 40 civil society representatives from across India participated in a consultation to review the Global Fund in India, particularly in relation to the processes for involving civil society in the decision-making, proposal development and implementation.

Concern was raised over the level of participation of civil society in the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), with weak representation and a lack of communication/consultation by and to civil society organisations in India. Participants also expressed serious concerns over delays in implementation of Global Fund grants, lack of information available on progress and the lack of oversight and monitoring role of the CCM. Finally, concerns were raised over the proposal development process, with a lack of information, support for civil society and strategic coordination of the proposal.

A series of recommendations were made, summarised as:

1. CCM representation and communication: the participants called for a new selection process for civil society representatives, in line with the new Global Fund requirements, and identified processes for selection and communication.
2. Oversight of grant implementation: the participants called for greater capacity of the CCM to monitor grantees and to respond to problems identified, to increase transparency and to use civil society organisations as disbursement agents.
3. Proposal Development: the participants identified a more effective and inclusive process, calling for greater transparency, information, consultation and support to civil society to participate in proposal development, better linked to a strategic national plan.

A working group was formed to prepare an action plan to concretise the recommendations, provide momentum and identify resources to take the process forward.

“The consultation process was very good and included sound technical inputs leading to a rich and insightful discussion which stimulated both the heart and mind. There’s a shared desire to strengthen civil society participation without a personalised agenda. Through active dialogue we need to work out how we can interface and move forward.” Dr. Vijay Arul Das, (Christian Medical Association of India).

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Acronyms:

CCM:	Country Coordinating Mechanism
GFATM:	Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
NACO:	National AIDS Control Organization
CS:	Civil Society
CBOs:	Community Based Organizations
EC:	Electoral College
SR:	Sub-Recipient
SACS:	State AIDS Control Society
PR:	Principal Recipient
FF:	Freedom Foundation
PDS:	Proposal Development Sounding Board

I. Background to Consultation

The Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) finances programmes that focus on the creation, development and expansion of partnerships among all relevant stakeholders, including governments, civil society, multi-lateral and bi-lateral agencies, and the private sector. The GFATM also aims to strengthen the participation of communities and people, particularly those affected by AIDS, TB and Malaria, within these partnerships. An essential element of the Global Fund framework is to encourage transparency and accountability of decision-making and actions of all development partners including civil society organizations involved in Global Fund to strengthen existing co-ordination mechanisms, and promoting new and innovative partnerships.

Therefore, a variety of actors, each with unique skills, background and experience must be involved from the development of proposals, to the allocation and utilisation of Global Fund financial resources. To achieve this, the Global Fund requires grant proposals to be coordinated among a broad range of stakeholders through a Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM). In turn, the CCM is expected to oversee the implementation of approved proposals, but experiences from many countries have demonstrated the challenges and gaps that exist.

To strengthen Indian civil society's understanding of the Global Fund, and to identify the gaps and develop recommendations for civil society involvement in the CCM, the India HIV/AIDS Alliance hosted the '**National Civil Society Consultation on the Global Fund**' from 27-29th April 2005 in New Delhi. This meeting was kindly supported by the Johnson & Johnson family of companies. The objectives of the consultation were to:

- Provide an overview of the Global Fund and the CCM;
- Provide an overview of the Global Fund grants awarded and implementation in India;
- Review existing Global Fund processes in relation to civil society in India; and,
- Identify the gaps and develop recommendations for civil society and the CCM.

Approximately 40 civil society representatives from across India participated in the consultation. Participants from HIV high, moderate and vulnerable States were selected to represent NGOs, faith based organisations and the private sector. Dr. Ajay Khera, Joint Director of the National AIDS Control Organisation (NACO), and Dr. Ruben F. del Prado, UNAIDS Deputy Country Director, also participated in the consultation. Support was provided to the Alliance India facilitation team by Anjali Gopalan, Executive Director of Naz Foundation (India).

The expected outcomes of the meeting were to:

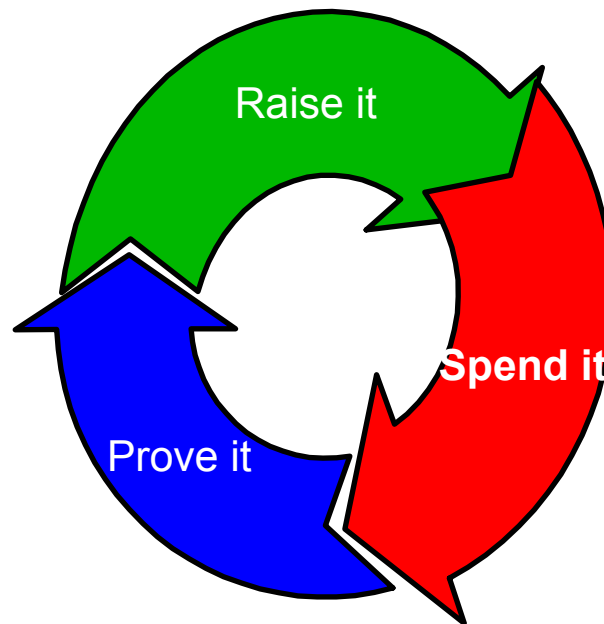
- Develop a shared understanding on the purpose of the Global Fund.
- Review the current processes of the CCM and the involvement of civil society and recommend a selection, consultation and communication process.
- Identify gaps and areas of future work to strengthen civil society participation in CCM.
- Contribute to the process of developing governance tools for effective participation of the CSO in CCM and proposal development process for grants.
- Identify implementation gaps.
- Identify the next steps.

II. Civil Society involvement in the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM)

a. Overview of the Global Fund

A thorough overview of the Global Fund framework and the associated mechanisms - key priorities, resources, timelines, and processes - were presented, emphasising the fact that the Global Fund is a **financing institution, not an implementing agency**. The mandate of the Global Fund to **raise and disburse additional resources** encourages the use of existing standards and processes and promotes the rapid release of funds, **relying on local stakeholders at the country level to implement programmes and manage grants**. Critically, the model relies on the monitoring and

evaluation of programmes to make decisions on future funding that is based on performance and accountability.



According to its framework, the Global Fund finances programmes that reflect national ownership, which respect country driven formulation and implementation processes that build on, complement and coordinate with existing regional and national programmes. The Country Coordinating Mechanism is central to the Global Fund's commitment to **local ownership** and **participatory decision-making**. These country-level partnerships develop and submit grant proposals to the Global Fund, which are based on needs at the national level. After grant approval, the CCM is designated to oversee the progress of project(s) and utilization of Global Fund resources.

The CCM also aims to function as a national consensus group to promote true partnerships in the development and implementation of Global Fund supported programmes that are **fully transparent** throughout the decision making process. In principle, the CCM is to be as **inclusive** as possible, promoting gender balance and representation at the highest level across various sectors. In addition, the CCM is to ensure that all members of the CCM are treated as equal partners, and all relevant actors are involved in the CCM decision making processes by operating in a transparency manner. The CCM is also responsible for ensuring that information related to the Global Fund, such as calls for proposals, decisions taken by the CCM and detailed information on approved proposals for funding, is widely disseminated to all interested parties within the country.

b. The Country Coordinating Mechanism: the Indian Experience

"When we hear about India getting grants, no one really knows exactly what the process is, how the money is received, where it sits and how it is utilized." Anandi Yuvaraj, India HIV/AIDS Alliance

The present scenario in India is in stark contrast to the above guidelines. The Department of Economic Affairs, on behalf of the Government of India, is the main Principal Recipient. Furthermore, because of slow disbursement at country level, there is a large difference between approved and disbursed funding. The total funds approved for 4 round of proposal for a two years period is US\$ 107 Million but the amount disbursed till dates is only US\$ 12.4 Million¹

The **composition of the CCM** in India is far from inclusive with current representation of the 33 CCM members as follows:

- 15 government officials

¹ Based on data available in the GFATM website at the time of the consultation in April 2005.

- 5 NGO representatives
- 3 private sector representatives
- 1 representative each from a PLHA network, foundation and an independent individual.
- 2 bilateral representatives; and,
- 5 multilateral representatives

In regards to gender balance, there are only 5 women representatives. Overall, civil society participation in the CCM has been far less effective and meaningful than what has been the role of civil society representatives and their participation at GFATM board level where they are much more vocal and play a very crucial role in shaping the policies for GFATM.

In order to provide a catalyst for group discussion, the following **challenges related to the CCM** in India were identified:

- Roles and operating methods are not clearly defined and understood by CCM members.
- Dominated by the government while civil society remains underrepresented.
- Members who are supposed to represent NGOs were not chosen by the NGO sector and are not true representatives.
- Limited meaningful involvement of CCM members in the decision making process, which are made in advance by the CCM chair and a few others.
- Lack of access to sufficient funds, resources or expertise to operate effectively.
- Information is not shared within and outside the CCM.
- CCM chair can also serve as Principal Recipient giving rise to a conflict of interest.
- Members do not know whether the project funded through the Global Fund grant is being implemented effectively and this may be due to poor Monitoring and Evaluation.

The participants also expressed their particular concern about the lack of representatives from marginalised groups to ensure their voices are heard in CCM process. It was also discussed that CCM is supposed to be a unified agency at the national level; however, the reality is that in India, the CCM remains subservient to NACO. The CCM were not meant to be new entities but national level organisations building on existing coordination mechanisms.

Other concerns voiced by the participants included:

- Conflict between the 'Three Ones' (one national HIV/AIDS framework, one coordinating authority and one country-level monitoring and evaluation system) and CCM: with the added complication that the CCM is the only national level organisation that addresses multiple diseases.
- Creation of a single National Coordinating Mechanism may give rise to an instrument that is too large or too bureaucratic, which would mitigate its functionality and reduce the voice and power of civil society. This also risks perpetuating the power imbalances that have characterised the CCM and other multi-sectoral bodies.
- Role of civil society has been reduced to that of a watchdog.
- Assigning responsibility for the under performance in terms of grants and disbursement: Global Fund and PR are accountable but along with them the CCM is also accountable because of the role it plays in overseeing the proposals, approval and implementation. Finally there is a conflict of interest even in supervising and oversight role of the CCM, as the Chair is the PR, which needs to be resolved.
- Ensuring that civil society proposals do not get edged out by the government proposals, as the government currently dominates CCM membership.
- Participants also discussed the need to strengthen NGO involvement in proposal development, highlighting that of 107 proposals, only 48 were short-listed to be integrated into the national proposal. In Round 4, it was decided by the CCM that a NGO consortium would incorporate and take into account the 48 short-listed proposals at the time of implementation of the approved grant by GFATM.
- CCM has assumed the role of a proposal clearinghouse, with the need to improve strategising at the national level for proposal development and implementation.

c. CCM Guidelines and Selection Process

“The Global Fund recognizes the importance of national contexts, customs, and traditions, and therefore does not intend to prescribe specific CCM compositions. However, in accordance with its guiding principles, the Global Fund expects CCMs to be broadly representative of all national stakeholders in the fight against the three diseases. In particular, the Global Fund encourages CCM to aim at a gender balanced composition. The CCM should be as inclusive as possible and seek representation in the highest possible level of various sectors.” Global Fund CCM guidelines.

Kieran Daly, Senior Policy Advisor at the HIV/AIDS Alliance, presented key CCM guidelines related to civil society representation, funding for CCMs and offered examples of selection and communication processes, which again highlighted the importance of inclusive partnerships, transparency and accountability within the CCM. There has been a significant shift in the way some governments and international institutions recognize and act upon the expertise, knowledge and skills that NGOs offer. However, although civil society is active within the Global Fund, engagement is minimal within the CCM and there are many institutions that continue to ignore the rich diversity and resources of civil society.

The majority of CCMs have no established criteria for membership and after four rounds of funding involving the majority CCMs around the world, representations of persons living with the three diseases remains marginal. Few CCMs have instituted a formal process for selection and/or election of their members, with government officials often controlling the selection of NGO representatives.

New Global Fund CCM guidelines (April 2005):

“CCM members representing the non government sectors must be selected/elected by their own sector(s) based on a documented, transparent process developed within each sector”.

This raises issues not only of representation, but also of transparency, accountability, due process and independence. Achieving true representation can be difficult in a country, such as India, where there are multiple organisations and networks representing the same stakeholder group, and in a situation where there are only a handful of seats reserved for NGOs.

Although the Global Fund CCM guidelines state that CCM members should hold regular consultations with their constituencies to ensure that their views and concerns are expressed, the reality is that these consultations often do not happen, and are not independently and professionally facilitated. Constituency consultations are hindered by a lack of time, limited resources, poor communication and work overload.

A new policy of the Global Fund emphasises the reliance on ‘country partners’(Development partners) to provide support for establishment of a Secretariat for CCM, but where it is not available, the Global Fund approves use of funds under a set of terms and conditions. The new policy is a shift in terms of officially allowing and actually using the grant money to facilitate CCM functioning in terms of covering costs for CCM meetings, and constituency consultations and processes to promote stakeholder participation. Essentially, the new policy provides a new opening for CS to involve themselves in consultation and communication with the CCM.

The following were recommendations for improving the selection and representation process of the CCM:

- Clearly defining the parameters of the selection criteria and process for constituting selection committee as well as for the CCM member.
- Establishing a clear mandate for the length of term, performance evaluation and accountability.
- Explore the possibility of learning from global level experiences and best practice examples of other countries.

d. Exploring the Strengths and Weaknesses of the CCM in India

Despite the fact that the CCM guidelines describe several specific roles for the CCM in India, stakeholders have reported confusion about the role of the CCM, both within and outside the CCM. While there was initial clarity around the purpose of the CCM, there is uncertainty about its subsequent functions, about the relationship between the CCM and Global Fund, and the lack of access to information about the Global Fund. The Global Fund is being sold as an ‘extremely transparent process’, and then there is the CS, CBOs, CCMs etc. who have no idea about how to go about things. This issue

has to be addressed immediately, since everyone has a right to know the process. When people don't know what is going on at different levels, this raises doubts about the alleged transparency.

To take forward these issues, the participants were divided into three working groups, two groups looking at representation/selection processes, and one on consultation/communication processes. These discussions are outlined below.

Groups 1 & 2: Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of Current Civil Society Representation in the CCM and Selection Process

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Geographical representation 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No transparency in selection • Not true representation of all sectors • Appointment through nomination rather than selection • CCM dominated by government members • Not adequately inclusive of vulnerable groups (women, People Living with AIDS, TB and Malaria, MSM, etc.) who are not truly represented • Lack of understanding of how many organisations being represented have actual linkages with affected communities. • Limited representation of NGOs and affected communities • Respective constituencies do not have confidence in their CCM representatives • Level of participation within the CCM is uncertain. Often, there is no genuine involvement of CCM members in the CCM decision making process. Decision making is generally dominated by the government or the multi-lateral and bi-lateral donor agencies. • Need to clarify the extent to which the CCM integrates and builds on existing coordination mechanisms
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>1. Recommendations for Civil Society: “CCM guidelines should be treated like a bible, for example, in the case of the requirement that members representing the non-government sectors must be selected by their own sectors is mandatory, not optional.”</p> <p>a. Civil Society Representation on the CCM</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Call for a new selection and election process of civil society representatives (as required in the new CCM guidelines) - Civil Society to develop and recommend a documented transparent process including clear criteria and guidelines - The CCM members representing civil society must be selected/elected by their own sector, based on such a documented transparent process. - Civil society organisation must possess the capacity and resources can facilitate the process. <p>b. Proposed CCM Selection Process Constitution of an electoral college, which would be a virtual group of organisations and individuals including grassroots organisations and people from the affected communities, with no upper limit of size. The Electoral College would either directly select representatives, or select a selection Committee who could properly review the candidates and ensure balance of representatives (gender, marginalised/vulnerable populations, geographical spread etc).</p>	

Electoral College (EC):

- No upper size limit
- Criteria for membership to include knowledge about the Global Fund, experience on working on AIDS, TB, and/or Malaria, and computer and internet connectivity is preferable
- A maximum of two representations from each organization.

Selection committee to be nominated by EC.

- Members of the selection committee could be drawn from the current or former NGO CCM members, representatives of communities living with AIDS, TB and Malaria, vulnerable population (e.g. sex workers, MSM and rural populations), NGO networks working on the issues of AIDS, TB and Malaria, and faith based organizations and women representatives.
- Open call for nominations (in line with criteria below)

Selection criteria for CCM representatives:

- Understanding of Global Fund processes
- Ability to strengthen the CCM understanding of civil society in India
- Should not be receiving, or in the process of applying for, Global Fund grants
- Should not be a member of the selection committee or facilitating organization
- Capacity to communicate and network effectively with communication linkages
- Capacity to commit time and access resources to fulfil role.
- Experience of working with government agencies, the UN and bilateral agencies
- Gender sensitivity and sensitivity towards alternate sexuality
- Ensure geographical and gender balance in final selection.
- Members from marginalised and affected communities would be actively encouraged to participate.

2. Recommendations for the CCM:

- a. Review current functioning of CCM through a sub-committee and make the necessary changes in structure and function
- b. Effective communication between CCM and national network of NGOs
- c. Develop a clear process for selection
- d. Develop clear guidelines of responsibilities of CCM members

Group 3: Perceived Strengths and Weaknesses of the Current Consultation/Communication Process among CSOs, between CSOs and CCM and Recommendations for Actions and Roles.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co- chair is from an organisation of people living with HIV • Gradual increase in participation • NGO is a Sub-Recipient (SR) • Government successful in receiving funds under each round • Extensive directory of civil society is in place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roles and responsibilities, and operating methods of CCM are not clearly defined and understood by CCM members as well as outsiders. • Inadequate attention to procedures for meeting notification, impeding participation. Many times, CCM members are not given prior information and meetings are held impromptu. • Members of the CCM sometime send their representatives to CCM meetings but often it was found that their participation was not effective, which reflects the half-hearted commitment on their part towards the CCM. Presently, most CS members in the CCM are from Delhi and there is inadequate representation from other states. • Inadequate representation of People Living with AIDS, TB and Malaria, women and marginalized communities. • Imbalance in disbursement of grants, with some receiving far less than others.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication within the CCM is extremely weak and communication channels are ineffective, which negatively affects accountability. “I will communicate with those who I feel accountable to”. • Most CCM members are not involved in choosing the CCM chair and vice-chair, with no communication when they are chosen. The selection process is often government-led, and lacks transparency and involvement of all CCM members. • Lack of adequate resources, and often, the CCM does not have access to sufficient funds, practical resources or expertise to operate effectively. • The CCM has a large unmet need with respect to financial and technical support including operational support (support for day to day operations), technical support (assistance to CCM as a whole), and capacity building (training to enable individual members of the CCM to function more effectively on the CCM). • Members represent themselves rather than representing the interest of the constituencies. • The SACS was not given any orientation about CCM and Global Fund mechanism and functioning when the SACS were asked to coordinate the Round 5 proposal development process. It was recommended that the SACS could be supported to facilitate CCM processes at the State level. • SACS does not incorporate TB and Malaria, and appointing SACS as a facilitator would mean making the whole process HIV centric. This was discussed in view of round 5 proposal development. • CCM members group together and become sub recipients, which raises questions about issues of consultation and accountability to the groups they represent in CCM.
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Recommendations

For the CCM

1. Establish a Secretariat to coordinate and conduct the administrative work associated with managing a CCM.
2. CCM to ensure two-way communication between CCM and civil society, promoting avenues for open dialogue.
3. Develop a clear communication strategy to inform and engage civil society, and to reach out to government, policy makers, donors, other civil society organisations
4. Channels of communication: Existing mechanisms like website, newsletter and other forms of electronic media should be used to disseminate information to civil society and communities
5. Media outreach is immense and regional and state media can be used as communication tools
6. Similar to NACO being accountable to the CCM at national level, there should be a body at the regional level that the SACS are accountable to.
7. Ensure that the Global Fund process does not become HIV centric.

For Civil Society

8. A separate secretariat of civil society CCM members should be entrusted to communicate priorities to civil society
9. Civil society representatives must be able to dedicate adequate time to communicate and consult.

10. CCM members should collaborate with resource rich NGOs. Subsequently, such NGOs can co-finance activities that would assist in active involvement of civil society in the Global Fund process.
11. Encourage civil society to start regional networks that can ensure accountability, increase awareness about respective constituencies, facilitate selection of representatives, conduct regional workshops for civil society, and disseminate information.
12. Membership in the CCM is looked at as a path to access Global Fund money. Efforts should be made to include neutral partners in the CCM, people who have large networks already in place, to disseminate and communicate essential information on various issues like the proposal development process, access to resources, monitoring and evaluation reports, etc.
13. Information that is to be communicated should include what is relevant to the constituency.

Ashok Rau from the Freedom Foundation, an NGO PR and former CCM member, informed the group that processes are already in motion for establishing the Secretariat and funds are already being sought.

“The essential question in the light of the above discussions is - how inclusive are these processes and why do people not know about what is going on?”

e. CCM Decision Making and Implementation Oversight Role

The participants raised the issue that if the CCM is to operate as a national consensus group, all members need to have a voice in the decisions made by the CCM. Having an equal vote may not, however, ensure full participation. CCM members have to feel confident about speaking out and about expressing a different view to that of other CCM members. This, however, is not always the case, particularly among non-government members of the CCM. To promote full participation, the CCM should make a concerted effort to ensure that all CCM members engage in discussions, which may involve exploring issues of stigma and discrimination and other barriers, with respect to representatives of people living with the diseases and marginalized populations.

The Global Fund is currently developing indicators and guidelines to assist the CCM in formally evaluating the level and scope of participation of non-government members. The need for the CCM to develop tools to monitor grants and ensure effective communication has also been made mandatory. There is also an emphasis on developing and implementing criteria for PR and SR nomination. Other issues addressed by the new guidelines include conducting a periodic review of programmes, and disseminating the review to all stakeholders; based on the reviews and feedback from Local Fund Agents², the CCM should decide on continuing the funding; developing activities, and field visits to ensure the greater participation of civil society and facilitation of technical assistance through partners; and, ensuring coordination and harmonisation of programme.

The original thinking was that the organisation implementing the grant should be a part of the CCM. However, conflicts of interests are emerging and there is a need to harmonize coordination and implementation of players at different levels. The CCM Guidelines recommend that PRs and Chairs or Vice Chairs of CCMs not be the same entity. If this occurs the CCM must have a written plan in place to mitigate against this inherent conflict of interest. India can think of developing best practice models by encouraging more CS PR partners as in the case of Round 4 where there were two PRs – one government and one NGO.

Kieran Daly, Senior Policy Advisor, HIV/AIDS Alliance, while addressing the issues related to PR and disbursement highlighted the following emerging trends as good practices. These include:

- Global Fund is actively advocating for multiple PRs since the Global Fund has found that NGO PRs are outperforming government PRs.
- Disbursement continues to be a major issue in many countries. Internationally, activists act as pressure groups on disbursement rates and there are opportunities in India for civil society to become more engaged in monitoring performance.
- The Global Fund has ‘scorecards’, which contain information on the achievement of targets and contextual arrangements for those grants which have been extended into Phase 2 which can be used to monitor performance.

² **Local Fund Agent (LFA):** Independent organizations hired by the Global Fund Secretariat to assess the PR's capacity to administer funds and provide ongoing oversight and verification of reported data on financial and programmatic progress

The participants expressed that it is essential that the CCM in India needs to assume a monitoring role, for which the involvement of civil society and CCM members in monitoring the grants should be explored.

“The Global Fund is an important funding mechanism and its focus is on scaling up the effective interventions. The CCM is an important advocate for getting funding from Global Fund. There should be a national AIDS accounting system which tracks what happens with the money, where it comes from, where it goes and how it is spent.” Dr. Ruben F. del Prado, Deputy Country Director, UNAIDS

Recommendations on Oversight and Monitoring

- Apply international examples of good practice of countries with effective and transparent system in place from which India could learn.
- CCM should strengthen its monitoring and oversight roles, develop tools and procedures for grant oversight.
- Civil society representatives should have a clear role in monitoring the Global fund Grants.
- Clear criteria should be established and implemented for PR and SR nomination.
- PR and CCM should communicate progress on an ongoing basis, with grant flow and disbursement more transparent
- CCM should address delay in disbursement of funds from PR to Sub-PR
- Implementation capacity gaps should be identified and accordingly, the capacity of the agencies should be enhanced by facilitation of technical assistance and programming expertise from all sectors
- Advocate with the PR to scale up the programmes based on the information available with regard to grant performance.
- Health care facilities and health infrastructure should be utilized to optimum level

The importance of this monitoring was highlighted by the fact that the Global Fund is a performance based system, therefore, where organisations underperform, there is pressure that the funding will not be extended. As a Board member of Global Fund, Anandi Yuvaraj can work as a channel to get India specific implementation issues addressed at the Global Fund level.

III. Civil Society involvement in Proposal Development

“When we talk of country level proposal development – what processes are in place? Firstly, the past experience shows that those NGOs who have received grants had access to inside information in order to move their projects forward; they had contacts in CCM or were involved in the CCM. In Round 4 many proposals extensively worked on by smaller NGOs were not even included. The NGOs get dissuaded in the process because they have to go through the government. Secondly, NGOs are developing proposals in a vacuum. They have no access to the information on national scenario and priorities. NGOs need to demand specific guidelines for proposal development from NACO, which at present does not extend any assistance or help to NGOs, as a result of which NGOs are forced to work without any guidance. Timelines are unacceptable. Without resources all ideas about bringing in changes look like wishful thinking.” – Subhshree Raghavan, SAATHII

a. Experiences of a Sub-Recipient: Ashok Rau, Freedom Foundation

The Freedom Foundation (FF) was the SR of Round-2 and Round-4 of the Global Fund. The steps undertaken by FF included:

- Studying the character, aims, goals and objectives of GFATM
- Forming a consortium/coalition.
- Identifying a lead partner with close linkages to NACO and SACS with financial and management capacity and flexibility
- Delivering a proposal presentation to NACO and CCM.

Based on experience, particularly those experienced in long approval delays, errors in approved proposal, delays in seeking clarifications, and time taken in negotiations, the following suggestions were identified:

- Access to “corridors of power” is important
- Realising the realities of responsibilities as PR (e.g. financial management capacity, technical expertise, consultant base, etc.
- In instances of conflict of interest, it is important for the organisation to take the driving seat, weighing the decision carefully.
- Commitment is essential.
- Develop a sustainable model, which moves on its own after the initial momentum (e.g. proposal development).
- Ensure that the proposal is thoroughly inclusive enough because once the proposal is approved changes are not possible. The scope for change is in programming / partners depending on disbursement of money and capacity of SR to do so effectively.
- Ensure that the proposal is self sustainable, prompting organisations to explore partnerships with private companies.

b. Proposal Development: Sharing good practices, Lessons from the Philippines

In Round 3, the Philippines adopted a successful structured and inclusive process which continued for over two months. During this process, a Proposal Development Sounding Board (PDS) was set-up, comprised of relevant stakeholders to ensure a consultative and inclusive process. Analysis matrices were developed and applied to a proposal ‘write-shop’ and a writing team was formed. Proposals were developed with technical inputs from the PDS board. It was after this that the CCM approved the proposal concept.

The major lessons of Philippines experience include:

- Allow adequate time for consultation with all the stakeholders, factoring and planning for approval and gathering relevant data.
- Collaboration and participation of stakeholders from all sectors is crucial.
- Develop transparent methodologies and tools to identify priority focus, strategic approach and geographical areas. These tools help negotiation as they provide evidence.
- The focus should be on specific and achievable objectives.

c. Strengthening Strategies for Proposal Development in India

The participants were divided into two groups and were asked to identify the existing strengths and weaknesses of the proposal development process in India and identify recommendations for future proposal rounds.

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centralized and unified process under the leadership of the government. • Government’s access to information translates into well-articulated priorities. • NACO and the government have access to experts and technicians required for developing proposals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of transparency: often proposals are made on behalf of the civil society by the government. • Short turn around time for proposals. • Too many gatekeepers. • SACS’s capacity is limited and its role and functioning is unclear: SACS is supposed to be an NGO, but effectively it functions like the government. • Lack of structured approach. • No information/clarity on the process, timeframe and prioritisation at national and State level. • Tokenistic approach. • Absence of a unified platform and collective process to work together.
<p><u>Recommendations</u></p> <p>A key issues that participants identified was the need for the proposal development not only look at the Global Fund process, but to fit within an overall strategy to approach other funding agencies and organisations.</p> <p><i>Suggestions for a more effective proposal development process</i></p>	

1. Identify of key priorities in consultation with civil society at least six months in advance.
2. Early advertisement and/or web-based invitation for proposal with a minimum three-month turnaround period.
3. Establishment of a consortium for proposal development: selected NGOs with the capacity and resources to facilitate a consultation process with a wider network of organisations to:
 - Mobilize a critical mass of NGOs for a formal consortium
 - Identify a larger number of grassroots implementing NGOs
 - Develop a consortium proposal through due consultation
 - Proposal to clearly mention the PR and SR
4. Submit proposal to CCM and CCM to acknowledge receipt.
5. Select a small committee to represent the consortium to:
 - Follow-up with CCM
 - Respond to queries
 - Provide any need-based support to CCM
 - Lobby with CCM
6. CCM to take the lead in harmonizing multiple proposals in consultation with civil society organisations.
7. Fund flow should be directly to the civil society organisation, not through the government.
8. Rejected proposals/NGOs should be sent a written rejection with reasons for rejection.
9. CCM should plan resources to undertake effective communication.

What needs to be done

- **Transparency:** Ensuring transparency at all levels of country level proposal submission by holding active consultations with civil society during proposal preparation and review
- **NGO Consortium:** A few resource-rich NGOs can facilitate consultation process with a wider network of civil society organisation to mobilise a critical mass of NGOs to participate in a formal consortium, identify implementing grass routes NGOs, and develop a consortium proposal through a series of consultations. Small committee should be formed to represent the consortium on follow-up with CCM.
- **Technical and financial resources:** Various consortiums should be provided technical and financial resources to prepare proposals by actively involving bilateral partners, internal NGOs and larger NGOs. States should be provided dedicated financial and technical resources to facilitate consultation with the civil society and to assist in preparing the application in close consultation with civil society.
- **Early consultations:** The process of identifying key priorities for proposal development should be accomplished in consultation with civil society at the country and State level at least six months in advance.
- **Communication of priorities:** Identified priorities should be clearly communicated, utilising an effective mechanism to facilitate communications.
- **Communicating reasons for rejection:** In case of rejection, the reasons should be communicated clearly. In case the CCM does not consider the proposal in a timely manner, proposals can be submitted directly to the Global Fund. However, documented reasons are required for submitting such non-CCM proposals directly to the Global Fund, with civil society organizations making use of this provision.
- **Training SACS on the Global Fund:** To increase SACS' understanding about the Global Fund proposal preparation processes, training should be provided to inform them of the guidelines and developing proposals.
- **Greater co-ordination with SACS:** There should be ongoing communication with SACS and civil society on all aspects of the Global Fund in India.

Immediate Action Points

- Form a coalition for facilitating a larger civil society proposal for Round 6.
- Develop strategies for advocacy and communication in order to streamline the prioritisation process at the State and national level, involving multi-lateral stakeholders.
- Develop and revamp the existing structures.
- The present group develops a proposal, identifies priorities in the next three months, raises resources and develops a concept note based on the priorities identified.

IV. Next Steps

“I am very much convinced about the concerns that have been raised. I will try to put them before the higher authorities in NACO and see that they are addressed.” Dr. Ajay Khera, Joint Director of NACO

The consultation focused on finding solutions to the problems identified, and so consequently the participants have called for a series of changes and recommended improvements. The involvement of Dr Ajay Khera of NACO in the latter part of the consultation was an extremely useful step in developing a more effective engagement between civil society and the government in trying to resolve these issues.

The participants recognised that for these recommendations to be taken up, and for greater support for action, they needed to mobilise more civil society organisations. Further work is required on how and who takes the recommendations forward (allocating tasks and responsibilities) and timelines; and how to develop a communication strategy; what kind of communication, content, processes, timelines and resources.

A working group of thirteen of the civil society participants was formed at the end of the consultation, agreeing to prepare an action plan to concretise the recommendations, provide momentum and identify resources to take the process forward.

Annexure:**List of Participants:**

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