



APMG's team-based approach to support for Global fund projects

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Maximising the quality and effectiveness of Global Fund projects requires a complex mix of design, drafting, negotiation and implementation skills that rarely reside in a single person.

APMG has been supporting the design, evaluation and implementation of Global Fund projects for several years and has developed a team-based support model that has proven very effective.

Elements of the model:

Design: To support the design and proposal drafting process, APMG puts together a small team of people with complementary skills to work on the design and application. Field work is generally carried out by consultants with specific skills in programme design and preferably with local language skills. The focus of this part of the work is to determine, in consultation with country-level stakeholders, the most appropriate set of HIV prevention and care interventions for the setting within the parameters of Global Fund funding guidelines. The design team is backed up by a consultant with specific skills in fitting this design into the Global Fund's proposal format, and a Director with experience as a HIV Expert on the Technical Review Panel (Rounds 4-6). APMG's use of Skype and file-sharing technologies means that these personnel are in daily contact with the design team so that new data collected by the design team can be swiftly entered into proposal form, indicators, budgets and workplan.

This team-based approach makes best use of the range of the skills available in the APMG group, allowing us to work with several countries at the same time.

Evaluation: APMG has also applied this model to the review of Global Fund projects in several regions. APMG works with Principal Recipients and other stakeholders to design a review process, then fields regional consultants (with local language preferably) to carry out the desk review, stakeholder interviews and site visits. These consultants are backed up the APMG team, which also provides input to the desk review and assists regional consultants in an appreciative inquiry-based evaluation process that focuses on successes, significant changes and opportunities for expansion of successful approaches.

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APMG has applied this model to the Rolling Continuation Channel proposal process, assisting countries to continue the effective work that they have commenced under Global Fund projects.

Implementation support: APMG has provided start-up and ongoing support to several Principal Recipients to assist them to respond to the LFA recommendations at the signing stage and to strengthen their internal systems so that they can successfully implement and report on their projects.

This involves working alongside the PR in a long-term capacity development role. Again, APMG puts together a small team of people with complementary technical assistance (TA) skills to carry out this support, with at least some of the team members with local language skills. The focus of the initial work is on a systems review that identifies strengths and weaknesses in the internal management systems of the implementing agency and assists the PR to prioritise which areas require immediate attention, assign tasks, responsibilities and deadlines in a clear TA workplan. This requires a range of skills in the APMG team – financial management, procurement and supply, governance, grant-making and supervision of implementing partners, monitoring and evaluation, quality management and so on. APMG works with the PR to develop a flexible annual plan for this capacity development. The primary aim of this longitudinal support is to assist the PR to reach a point where it no longer requires intensive assistance and has the skills and systems to manage the project effectively.

This process has also been used in several cases where Global Fund projects have, for a range of reasons, failed to meet expectations and targets. Obviously, APMG prefers to be brought in as early as possible in this process to avoid the stalling of projects.

Contracting Mechanism:

It is APMG's view that the current system of contracting individual consultants for fly-in/fly-out visits is not sufficient for this complex environment. It is rare that a single consultant has all the skills required for these tasks and the short-term nature of their involvement leaves little room for skills transfer and strengthening of local responses. It also restricts the pool of available talent to those willing or able to travel for considerable periods.

APMG prefers a team-based approach and a single contract, so that we can mobilize the most appropriate people for the task and guarantee the quality of the final product. We also prefer the development of long-term supportive relationships that allow the APMG team to work with the PR over time. This promotes attention to the many problems that emerge in the implementation process as and when they emerge.

If you are interested in more information on APMG's approach to supporting Global Fund projects, please contact Dave Burrows (dave@aidspromote.com) or Lou McCallum (lou@aidspromote.com).