



# Navigating the Global Fund Allocation Cycle 2020-2022

## Guide for W4GF Advocates

### Purpose of this guidance

This document is for W4GF Advocates and other gender equality activists who intend to influence their countries' funding requests for the Global Fund's 2020–2022 allocation to ensure gender-transformative programming. It summarises the most important structures, issues and approaches to ensure that proposals and final budgets and programmes are gender responsive. The guidance is in three parts:

### Section 1: What to know in advance

Overview of key processes, definitions and structures. This section discusses the following:

- 1.1 Country dialogue
- 1.2 Allocation letter
- 1.3 Prioritized Above Allocation Request (PAAR)
- 1.4 The five types of funding requests
- 1.5 The three windows in 2020 (when proposals can be submitted)
- 1.6 The review process for funding requests

#### Box 1. Key resources

#### Box 2. The importance and use of National Strategic Plans (NSPs)

### Section 2: Where and how to be involved

Suggestions and observations about how, when and where W4GF Advocates might engage meaningfully in the process. This section discusses the following:

- 2.1 Prioritizing planning
- 2.2 Applying for Technical Assistance (TA)
- 2.3 Gathering quality data and evidence
- 2.4 Requesting the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) schedule of meetings
- 2.5 Developing a strategy for inclusion
- 2.6 Understanding the application information and guidance
- 2.7 Reviewing the allocation letter and identifying priority areas
- 2.8 Formally reporting priority recommendations to the CCM and other stakeholders
- 2.9 Requesting a formal process to select Principal Recipients (PRs) and Sub-Recipients (SRs)

#### Box 3. What does it mean to 'meaningfully engage'?

#### Box 4: What are focused application requirements?

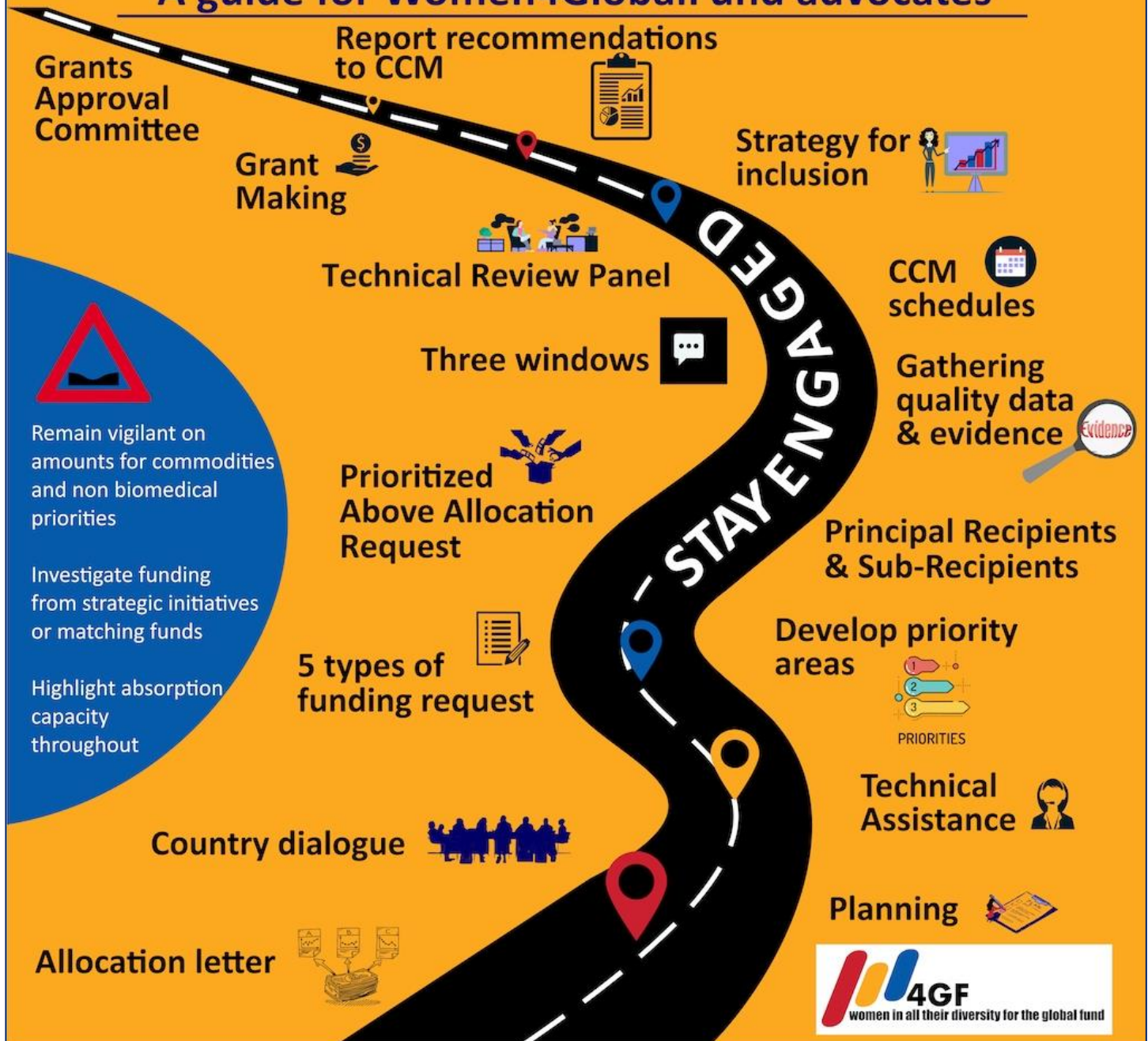
#### Box 5: The Principal Recipients and Sub-recipients

### Section 3: Additional suggestions and observations

Other issues Advocates might consider to influence Global Fund programmes. This section discusses the following:

- 3.1 Remaining engaged to the very end of the application process
- 3.2 Proportion of funding request allocated to commodities
- 3.3 Potential value and limits of catalytic investments, including matching funds
- 3.4 Absorption capacity

# Navigating the Global Fund allocation cycle 2020-2022: A guide for Women4GlobalFund advocates



## 1. What to Know in Advance: Processes, Definitions and Structures

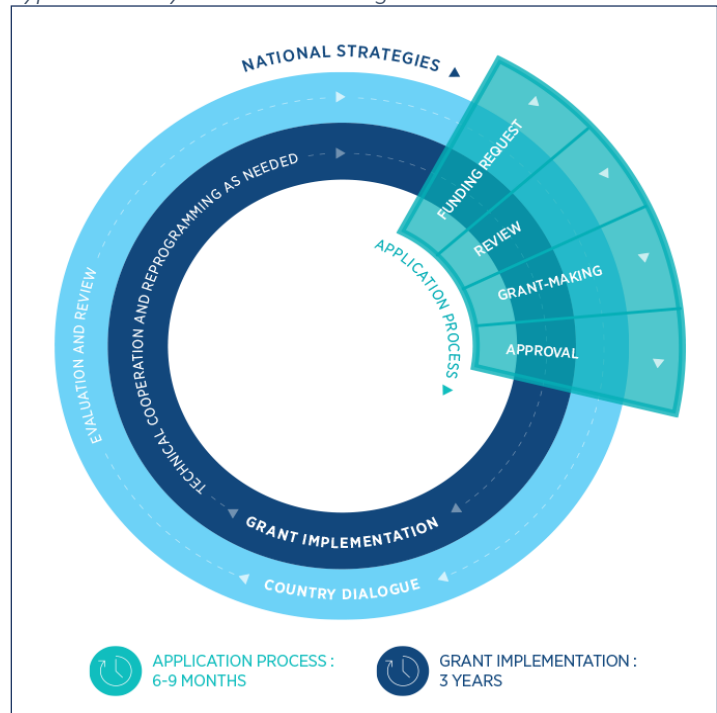
Figure 1 provides a visual overview of the entire Global Fund funding cycle, structure and system over the course of a typical three-year grant. Take note of two important messages from this graphic:

- The application process is only a small part of a much longer and involved process of implementing a grant over three or more years.
- Global Fund grants and programmes are not supposed to lead or control national strategies on HIV, TB or malaria, but instead should follow and support them.

Listed below are some of concepts, terms, structures, and approaches that all Advocates should understand before participating in the funding request process.

**1.1 Country dialogue.** The **country dialogue** is a **top priority** for all W4GF Advocates and a key place to start talking about gender-transformative programming. It is a forum for all stakeholders in a country, including civil society and community groups, to discuss and make decisions on national HIV, TB and malaria programming. The process is organized and run at the country level by national partners.

Figure 1. The funding cycle and application process for a typical three-year Global Fund grant



The country dialogue is a critical part of how a country decides what should be in all Global Fund supported programmes and services. The country dialogue is *not* a formal Global Fund structure. The Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) – a Global Fund structure – oversees the country dialogue process, but the CCM's leadership is not mandatory.

Two things to keep in mind about the country dialogue:

- it is supposed to be ongoing and continuous throughout the

### The country dialogue is a top priority!





grant implementation, not just during the application period; and

- it should be inclusive, with women's and human rights advocates involved and engaged throughout.

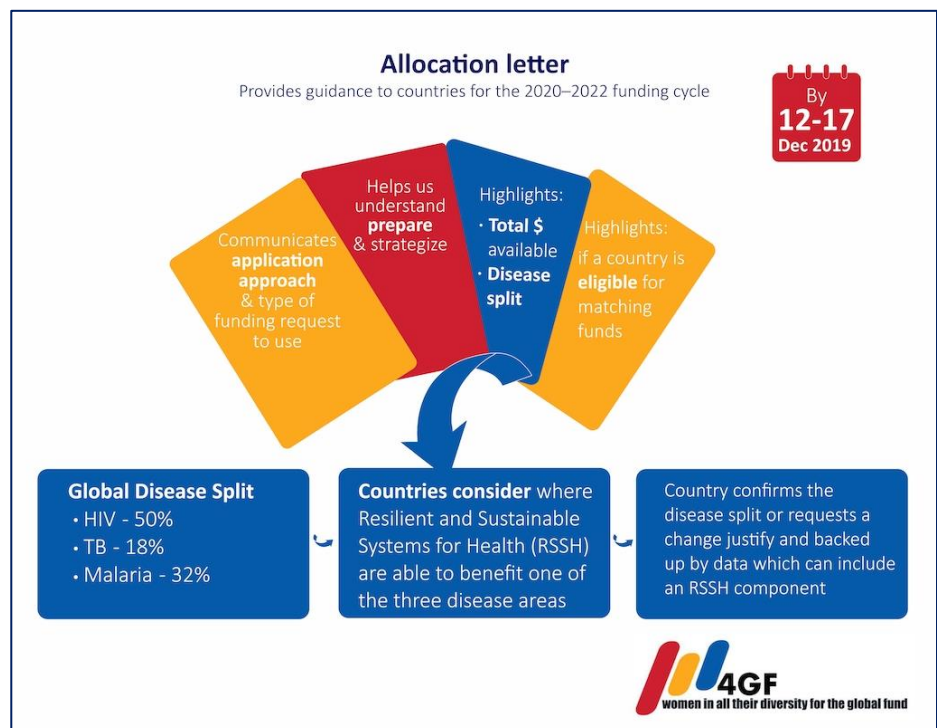
The Global Fund tries to ensure that CCMs include a wide range of people involved in developing and drafting each funding request and requires that CCMs demonstrate a transparent and inclusive dialogue leading up to the funding request submission. For example, CCMs must prove there has been and will continue to be substantial engagement and input from a wide range of stakeholders. **This means that the Global Fund is saying that all W4GF Advocates and their allies must have an opportunity to be involved in country dialogues whenever and however they can.**

**1.2 Allocation letter.** The Global Fund funding request process formally starts when national CCMs receive an allocation letter from the Secretariat. Countries will receive these letters by **17 December 2019** (although some will receive them a bit earlier). This letter provides the main framework from which the country can prepare a proposal the 2020–2022 funding cycle. It is important to know what is in this letter so that you can be well prepared and able to make strategic inputs.

The allocation letter includes essential information on the **indicative allocation amounts** of the disease components. This is the Global Fund's way of saying two things:

- **here is the total amount of funding your country can apply for in this funding cycle, and**
- **here is the amount your country can apply for in each of the disease components (HIV, TB and malaria) for which it is eligible to receive funding.**

The CCM will need to decide between keeping the indicative split on the three diseases proposed by the Global Fund or proposing changes. Before agreeing on a split, the CCM shall consider investment in resilient and sustainable systems for health (RSSH) which may advance all of the disease components, driving efficiencies in the 3 diseases and the broader health system. The CCM will need to decide between keeping the indicative split on the three diseases proposed by the Global Fund or proposing changes. Any disease split changes need to be justified, and ideally be data-based (e.g., using programmatic gap table or another tool).



The Global Fund's global disease split is HIV: 50%, TB: 18% and malaria: 32% but component amounts are recommended locally based on the allocation formula which is based on the disease burden, ability to pay as well as factors like absorption and regional strategies. Many of the requirements and specifications in allocation letters to countries will be based on this top-level (global), disease-split policy.

Some allocations will also reverse historic imbalances. This can mean, for example, that if a country has not done well enough on malaria the allocation letter will direct the country to that area of work.

**1.3 Prioritized Above Allocation Request (PAAR).** Each CCM is now required to submit a Prioritized Above Allocation Request (PAAR) along with its standard funding request. A PAAR is a list of costed requests that the country would like to have funded through its Global Fund grant but which cannot fit within the indicative allocation amounts set by the Global Fund in the allocation letter. The interventions and activities in each country's PAAR will be evaluated by the TRP and if recommended added to a broader grouping of unfunded opportunities that could be funded from any Global Fund reserves and savings and that can then be integrated into the main Global Fund grant programme. Over 1.2 Billion in 'unfunded quality demand' was funded in 2017-2019.

The PAAR requirement opens up additional opportunities. Even if key priorities are not included in the indicative amount, Advocates have another entry point through which 'extra' or 'left out' activities and interventions might eventually be funded. Throughout the proposal-development process, W4GF Advocates should regularly aim to identify and advocate for additional priority interventions to be added to their country's PAAR list.

Please note that the likelihood of PAAR items being eventually funded depends to a significant extent on the potential impact, ideally justified with data – so being really precise in these requests will have an impact.

#### Box 1. Key resources

The Global Fund Secretariat has been preparing a wide range of documents related to the 2020–2022 funding cycle and making them available on its [website](#). It will continue adding new documents throughout the funding cycle, including after allocation letters have been sent out. All W4GF Advocates who are engaging in Global Fund processes at country level are encouraged to review these important guidance documents:

- Check if your country is [eligible](#), although this does not guarantee funding. Eligibility is based on income level and disease burden.
- [Community Guides to the Global Fund](#)
- The Global Fund [Applicants' Handbook](#) and [Modular Framework Handbook](#)
- The Global Fund [Q and A on the allocation cycle 2020–2022](#)
- Essential Global Fund Information Notes and Technical Briefs are [available on the Global Fund website](#)



**1.4 The five types of funding requests.** The Global Fund ‘invites’ a country to use a specific funding request format based on: portfolio categorization (focused, core, high impact); national program performance and performance of the current grants; the quality and thoroughness of existing national strategic plans (NSPs); and projections regarding future eligibility. Based on these considerations, the Global Fund has prepared five types of funding requests for the 2020–2022 funding cycle. Your country will be asked to fill out one of the following five types of funding requests:

- **Program continuation:** enables well-performing programmes that require no significant changes to continue implementation with minimal disruption
- **Tailored for focused portfolios:** application is streamlined and designed to meet the needs of countries with smaller funding amounts and disease burdens, and to ensure targeted investments have the greatest impact
- **Tailored for NSPs:** documentation requirements rely primarily on suitable National Strategic Plans (NSPs) referenced in place of the funding request narrative [See Box 2 below]
- **Tailored for transition:** suitable for countries approaching transition from Global Fund financing, and thus for building sustainable programmes with decreasing Global Fund support
- **Full review:** applications are a comprehensive review of strategic priorities and programming in higher-burden countries

#### Box 2. The importance and use of National Strategic Plans (NSPs)

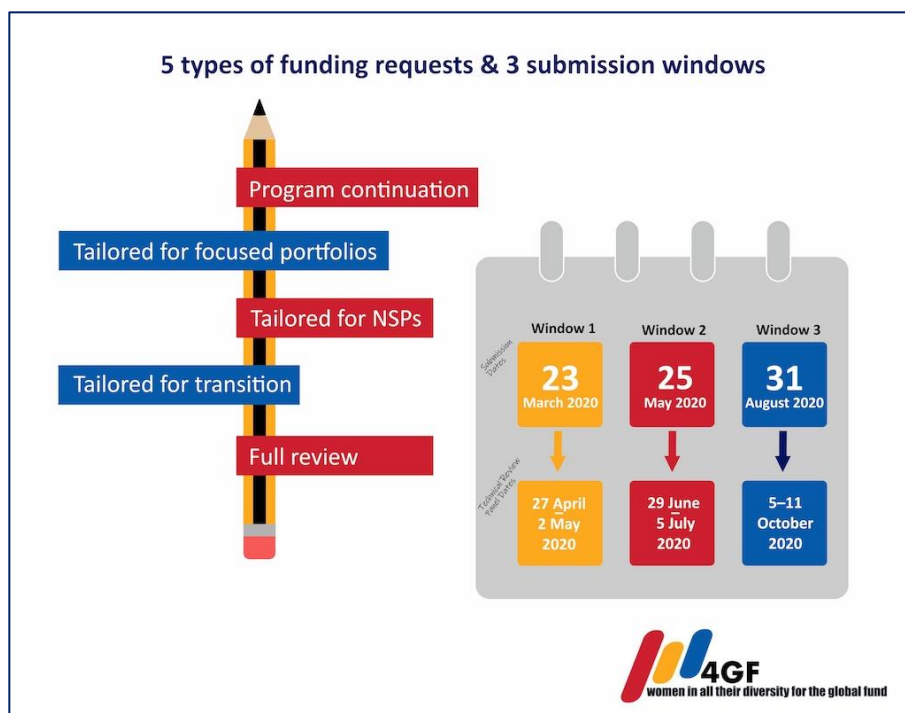
Most countries have NSPs that outline comprehensive responses to HIV, TB and malaria. In an effort to improve alignment and boost efficiency, the Global Fund wants to link its grants more closely to NSPs. This is why the Global Fund will use robust NSPs as the basis for as many proposals as possible. Countries that have high-quality NSPs (as judged by the Global Fund Secretariat) will be invited to submit a ‘tailored for NSPs’ funding request, as noted above. This approach means that countries do not need to draft as much new narrative when responding to questions. Instead, they are only required to refer to the specific section of the NSP where relevant information for each question can be found.

This closer NSP alignment can be either an opportunity or challenge for W4GF Advocates, depending on their knowledge and understanding of their country’s existing plans. To ensure that they can engage effectively, **W4GF Advocates are strongly encouraged to influence and know as much as possible about their countries’ NSPs in advance of the country dialogue and proposal-writing process.**

#### 1.5 The three windows in 2020: when your country submits its funding request.

The Global Fund has specified the deadlines for when proposals can be submitted for the 2020–2022 allocation period. The three dates, referred to as ‘windows’, are listed in the table below, along with information on when the Technical Review Panel (TRP) will meet to review all funding requests submitted. [The TRP is explained further below.] Most countries with grants ending in 2020 should try to submit in the first two windows to ensure no gaps in implementation are created.

It is important to know when your country will apply because W4GF Advocates can use that information to ‘plan backwards’ (see Section 2.1 below)



once it is determined which window their country will use. You are encouraged to find ways to influence discussions in the country dialogue and within the CCM so that the earliest possible window is selected.

## 1.6 The review process for funding requests

Figure 2 provides an overview of the key steps in the application process for the 2020–2022 funding cycle. The process is mostly the same as in the previous cycle.

The **Technical Review Panel (TRP)** and the **Grant Approvals Committee (GAC)** are the two main Global Fund structures involved in reviewing, assessing and making key decisions on all

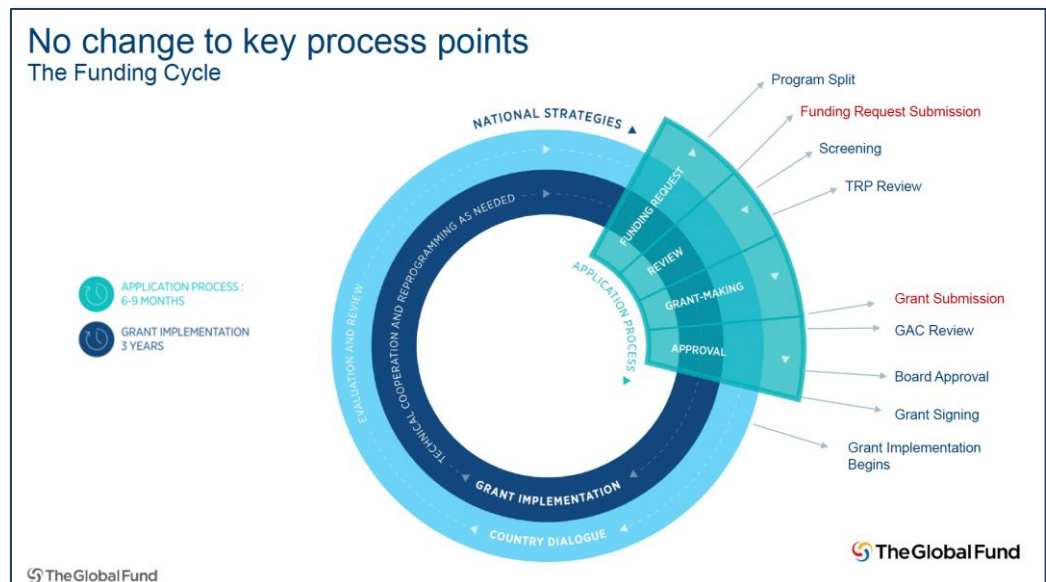
funding requests. The TRP, an independent body of technical experts, sees each proposal first and considers the quality and potential effectiveness of the proposal as a whole as well as its activities. It also considers whether the funding request reflects the country's NSP and addresses several key priorities, including gender, human rights, and community systems strengthening (CSS). These are also priorities for W4GF. The TRP often recommends changes to proposals, and it might ask a country to resubmit its proposal before it is satisfied that it is technically sound. To ensure there are no gaps in service delivery it is recommended that applicants plan ample time for 'iteration' when choosing which window to apply in.

Most grants then move on to grant-making. The GAC, which consists of people from the Global Fund Secretariat and technical partners, reviews the proposals again at this stage. This committee looks at things such as whether the proposed budget can accommodate the specified activities (i.e., can they be realistically funded?).

During the grant-making phase, the CCM and the Global Fund work with the Principal Recipient (PR) to develop detailed budgets and work plans. Once completed, the grant documentation undergoes a final review by the GAC. Grant-making is where interventions approved by the TRP are translated into implementation ready grants. After a funding request is finalised (based on the GAC's final comments), it is submitted to the Global Fund Board for approval and on to implementation.

The CCM interacts directly with the TRP, GAC and all other Global Fund structures during the overall allocation process. This is why it is helpful to make connections with CCM members, especially civil society and community members, so that they have the most up-to-date information on the status of funding requests as a whole as well as individual activities and interventions.

Figure 2. Key steps along the application process for the 2020–2022 funding cycle





## 2. Suggestions for How, When and Where to Meaningfully Engage as W4GF Advocates

Section 2 provides additional observations and guidance around how you can ‘meaningfully engage’ in your country’s funding request process, with actions, steps and focus areas that can help to get your priorities recognized and represented throughout the overall process. Many actions should be done before the allocation letter arrives or as soon as you have information on when the proposal-writing process will begin, who has been invited to be on the writing team, and how the writing process is being organized and run.

**2.1 Prioritizing planning.** Planning is a cornerstone of being able to engage meaningfully. As indicated in Figure 1 above, the application process is only a small part of the overall Global Fund grant cycle and programming. But Figure 1 also aims to show how important it is for you and your allies to make **early planning** a general overarching priority and principle in all they do in their Global Fund work.

The Global Fund Secretariat encourages all country-level partners to ‘**plan backwards**’. Under that approach, an initial priority is to determine when the grant agreement is likely to be signed, which is the final step in the overall application process. Working backwards toward the present from that future date, you and your colleagues would then try to realistically consider when, where and how key steps should be taken to get your interests and priorities recognized and responded to. This ‘plan backwards’ suggestion is intended to refer to engagement in country dialogue processes as well as taking initial steps as you and other Advocates coordinate and collaborate before the formal application processes begin. If you do this, you will likely feel more confident about influencing the process once it starts.<sup>1</sup>

The allocation letter will not go out on one date (unlike the last cycle), but it is expected that the majority of countries will receive the letters between 12–17 December. A few countries may exceptionally receive their letters earlier than that, and a few will be later than that.

**Before the allocation letters arrive in mid-December, you should start planning with other Advocates, including adolescent girls and young women about what your priorities are and who might do what as part of a coordinated, collaborative approach.**

W4GF has prepared a [sample letter](#) that you can adapt and use to invite women to a planning meeting. At this stage we advise that you only invite women from communities. You might consider inviting representatives from technical partners if you have an excellent relationship with them and you know they will support the process.

Once you have come together as a group you can start to plan your engagement. If you are not able to be involved yourself in the country dialogue and beyond, try connecting to others who will be involved – and then channel your advocacy through them so that they can tell you what is happening and take your ideas and priorities to the table.

### Box 3. What does it mean to ‘meaningfully engage’?

Meaningful engagement is a term often used to refer to the ability of people, networks and groups from civil society and communities to do the following:

- be represented and included in all structures and process;
- participate in ways that ensure their voices are heard and listened to; and
- be able to influence discussions and decisions.

The Global Fund has clearly signaled that it wants and expects women’s groups and networks, people living with and affected by HIV, TB and malaria, people from key populations, and others from local and national communities to have the space and ability to be involved in this extensive manner. Engaging regularly and ‘meaningfully’ is the only way that W4GF Advocates can be sure that their content and priorities are introduced and potentially reflected in funding requests and eventual grant agreements.

<sup>1</sup> It is impossible to know in advance the exact date that any grant agreement will be signed, but you can estimate the date based on the timing of the current grant. The Global Fund Secretariat observes that on average it takes **eight months from submission of funding request to Board approval**. Your ability to ‘plan backwards’ will also be made easier after the CCM announces which window it will use as its target deadline for proposal submission. Depending on current grant timing, this may be in 2020 or in 2021.



Work together with your group to clarify what you know and do not know, and **work to agree who can best represent you** in specific activities such as:



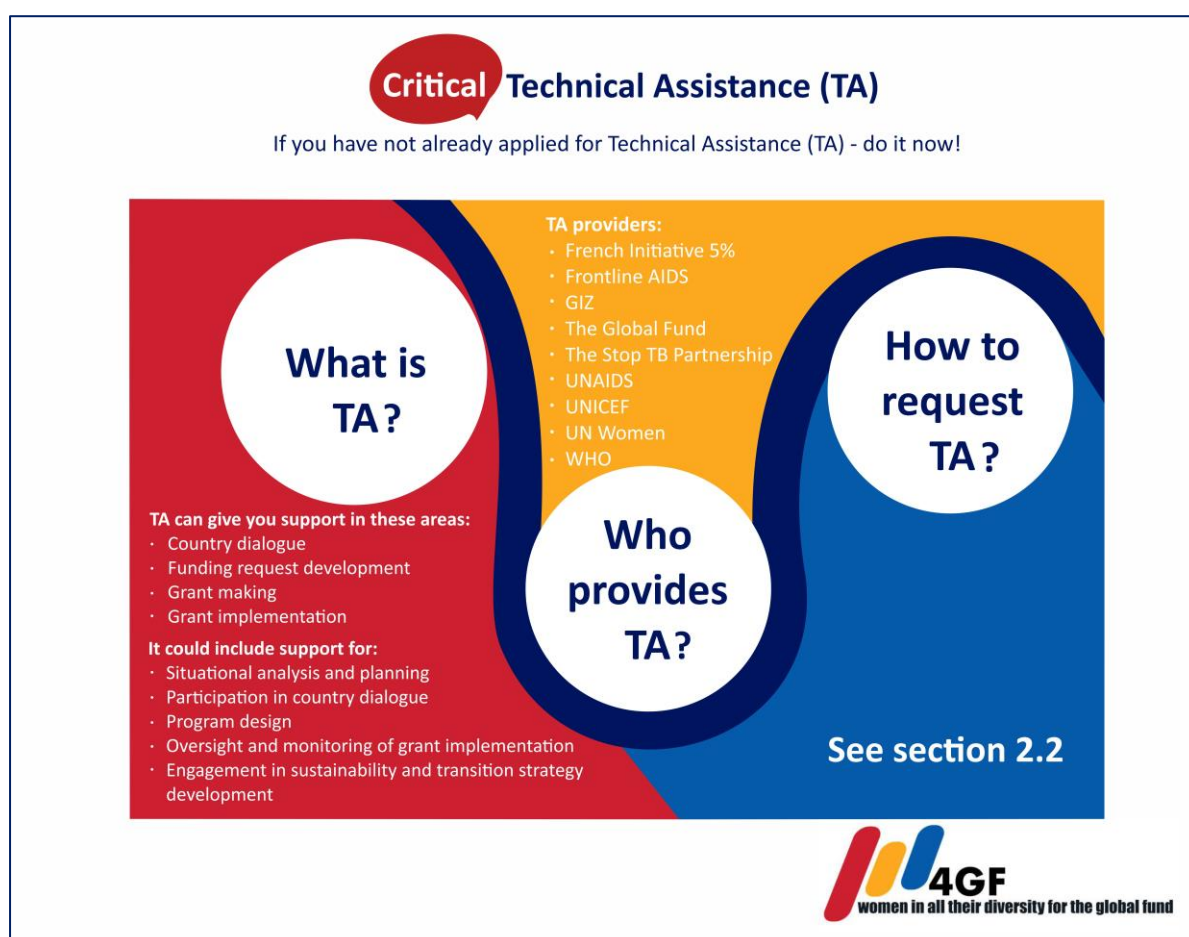
- **Proposal writing and analysis.** Here are some suggestions for how to be involved in and influence this critical step in the overall funding cycle process:
  - Develop a **good relationship with the lead consultant and lobby** for the ability to input directly into the funding request.
  - Get access to **electronic versions of drafts and make direct track changes** to add text or comments.
  - If you are on the writing team, **organise daily briefs with other women and allies** engaged in the overall process.
  - **Make use of all opportunities.** For example, lobby other CCM representatives and other development partners like UNAIDS, WHO, PEPFAR, the Global Fund country team and other allies when you have the opportunity and need – and get them to support your asks.
- **Expertise and experience on specific priorities and needs of adolescent girls and young women, women from key populations, and gender equity** – such as gender-based violence or cervical cancer. All of these are areas that are likely to be high priorities that you would want to advocate for.
- **Financing and budgeting.** There is no point in putting forward ideas for programmes and services if they cannot be costed. This is a really important part of the process, so you will need to find allies who are strong at this if you are not.
- **Monitoring and evaluation**
- **Specific working groups** that are developed as the writing process begins

**2.2 Applying for Technical Assistance (TA).** TA can be a key part of your efforts to be broadly inclusive and representative, including by being a source of financial assistance to support the participation of a diverse group of women (including adolescent girls and young women). *Applying for TA as soon as possible – now, if you have not already done so* – is essential to be sure the support you need can be available when you need it.

There are several sources of Global Fund–specific TA, including the Global Fund’s Community, Rights and Gender department (CRG) and funds managed by the French and German governments – [French Initiative 5%](#) and [GIZ](#) BACKUP (a German bilateral development agency).

If you would like to know more about how to apply for TA from the Global Fund’s CRG, more information can be accessed through the CRG [Technical Assistance Programme webpage](#). Important documents are:

- CRG Technical Assistance Programme [List of Providers](#)
- CRG Technical Assistance Programme Frequently Asked Questions, available in six different languages: [\[Arabic\]](#), [\[English\]](#), [\[Spanish\]](#), [\[French\]](#), [\[Portuguese\]](#) and [\[Russian\]](#)
- CRG Technical Assistance Programme Request Form, available in six different languages: [\[Arabic\]](#), [\[English\]](#), [\[Spanish\]](#), [\[French\]](#), [\[Portuguese\]](#) and [\[Russian\]](#)
- Requests should be submitted using the form and should be sent via email to: [crgta@theglobalfund.org](mailto:crgta@theglobalfund.org)



In addition, TA is available from UN and technical partners including WHO, UNICEF, UNAIDS, UN Women, the [Stop TB Partnership](#) and RBM End Malaria Partnership as well as larger NGOs such as [Frontline AIDS](#) (formerly known as the International HIV/AIDS Alliance).

The types of TA you might need could include a range of financial and logistical support services, such as covering transport costs for Advocates or training and awareness sessions involving people with expertise in Global Fund

proposal writing. There might not be enough time to get a full HIV, malaria or [TB gender assessment](#) completed before the application process begins. However, a TA provider might be able to support the services of a **gender consultant** who knows how Global Fund processes work and can help to identify where to find the best entry points for your priority interests, activities and interventions. The consultant can also support women to develop the key recommendations.

**2.3 Gathering quality data and evidence.** This is an activity that you should consider a priority from the very beginning of your involvement and engagement in all Global Fund work. Good data can have a major influence on what gets included and funded in a Global Fund grant, because the Global Fund has said it emphasizes the importance of data and evidence in all its decision-making processes. This can include data about services that communities want and need but are not able to access wither because they are not available or they are poorly provided.

For such reasons, you will want to be ready with relevant data during the proposal-writing process, and they should be confident about both the sources of the data and your ability to explain and defend the data. Therefore, you should start doing the following even before your country receives its allocation letter:

- look out for and familiarizing yourself with data that can support the priority issues and interventions that you want funded;
- identify where you should go to get the best quality data and who might help you find it, if you do not know yourself; and
- identify allies in civil society or other sectors in your country and share data among them.

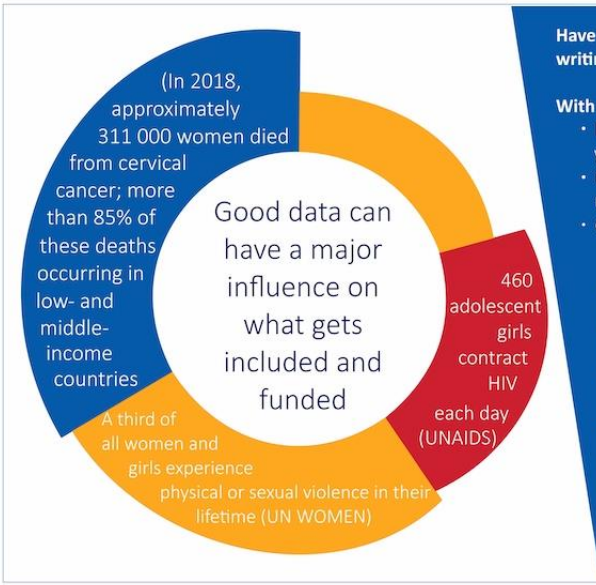
Remember that allies in other agencies, including technical partners, might share your interests and commitments to gender equity so there may be possibilities to work well together at this stage.

Making progress in all of these areas can increase the chances that what you want to get in a Global Fund grant is more likely to be included in the proposal your CCM submits. For the 2020–2022 funding cycle, the Global Fund has

introduced a new tool that is likely to support your data-gathering efforts. For each country, the Secretariat has created **Essential Data Tables for each country** that aim to gather all country-relevant data in one place. The Secretariat will update these tables periodically – they are accessible [here](#).

### Gathering quality data and evidence

THIS IS A TOP PRIORITY to make your case



**See section 2.3**


**Have data & evidence ready for the proposal-writing to defend your request**

**With the allocation letter do the following:**

- looking out for data to make the case for your priority interventions
- identify the best quality data and who might have it
- connect with allies for support

Work with **allies** from agencies and technical partners, who share your interest & commitment to gender equity

The Global Fund has a new tool that supports data-gathering. The **Essential Data Table** are publicly available on the Global Fund Website.



**2.4 Requesting the CCM schedule of meetings** to plan your strategic and systematic engagement through to grant-making. This can sometimes be a challenge, but it can be important to keep asking for the CCM Secretariat who is responsible for arranging most meetings throughout the application process. **Request information about when meetings will take place before the allocation letters are received.** Civil society and community representatives on the CCM can be useful entry points to request a schedule and receive feedback and decisions. This will include developing a strategy around participation and advocacy during the overall country dialogue process, drafting of the funding request, and throughout the grant-making phase.

**2.5 Develop a strategy for inclusion,** based on what you learn about the process. To support this process, you can reach out to the technical partners in your country such as UNAIDS, UNDP and UN Women, whose role it is to convene civil society and communities. Some donors will share your commitment to gender equity and they may help you to get engaged. A strategy of how you will engage is important because there are sometimes limits on the number of people who can be involved in the application writing process. Jointly work out how to ensure you are meaningfully represented in every major step and process. Advocate for one woman from your community to represent you in the funding request writing team and ensure they are supported and able to consult with you along the way. And make sure that she is really well informed and engages effectively so that she becomes indispensable to the process.

This is a long and demanding process, so it is smart to have a plan that allows for rotation during the funding request development and all follow-up parts of the overall application process. Ensure that women in all their diversity, including from key populations, as well as adolescent girls and young women are represented and present throughout.

**2.6 Understanding the application information and guidance.** Documents and other materials about the application process for the 2020–2022 funding cycle are already available on the Global Fund [website](#) (see Box 1). To be prepared, look at this material as soon as possible – ideally, before the allocation letters are received. Especially important are the Global Fund’s [Applicants’ Handbook](#) and [Modular Framework Handbook](#). The modular handbook provides guidance to countries on potential interventions in specific areas. The framework can help you decide where to prioritise attention to get what you want in the funding request.

For example, if your country is going to apply for catalytic funding for work with adolescent girls and young women, then you should use the interventions as a guide and assess if they align with your national priorities. You also need to be aware of other areas that you want to advocate for, and where they sit within the framework. This becomes important later on in the process: working groups will focus on specific modules that countries will use to complete the applications so you should be prepared to engage with them.

#### Box 4: What are focused application requirements?

Another thing to keep in mind are the application focus requirements, which affect how the allocation needs to be focused, depending on the country’s income level. This is key to sustainability and transition readiness, because they ensure that funding requests for countries at different income levels are strategically focused on the most relevant and impactful interventions as countries progress along the development continuum. The application focus requirements emphasize that:

- all funding requests must consider evidence-based interventions that respond to the epidemiological context;
- position programs to maximize impact against HIV, TB and malaria; and
- contribute towards building resilient and sustainable systems for health.

Application focus requirements are differentiated along the development continuum by low-income, lower-middle income, and upper-middle income.

Another new question is that Global Fund funding requests - in the implementation section – now ask role community-based organizations play in implementation. This question about how communities will be engaged over the course of the grant programme offers another opportunity for having your priorities reflected and funded.



Highlight this mandatory question throughout all stages of the application process, starting with proposal writing, and remind other people involved in the application process that the TRP (in particular) will be looking closely at this question area.



## 2.7 Reviewing the allocation letter and identifying priority areas

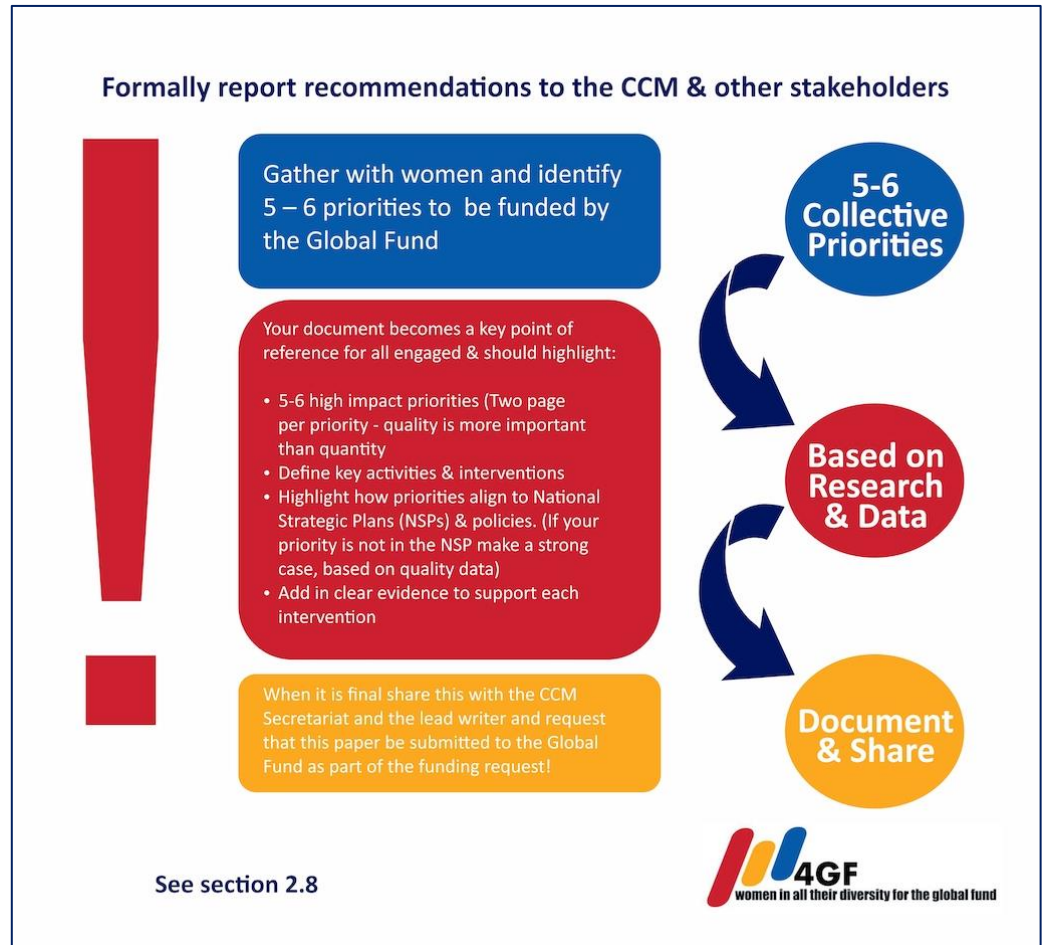
Request that civil society CCM representatives share the allocation letter with you. After you receive the letter:

- **Work as a group to understand everything in the letter**, including how catalytic funding (e.g., matching funds) applies to your country.
- **Gather together women in all their diversity, including from key populations and adolescent girls and young women to identify key priority areas** to advocate for. This should be done before the country dialogue process begins.

**2.8 Formally reporting priority recommendations to the CCM, and other stakeholders.** This includes civil society members representing you on the writing team, and other key stakeholders with influence, including those from technical partners and donors that you know have a commitment to gender equity. The document you prepare will become a key point of reference for all women engaged (including adolescent girls and young women), and for the writing team. For each priority area, you should discuss the following:

- **What the priority area is, as clearly and concretely as possible.** Be specific when listing activities and interventions within the priority area, because such information can also be useful for costing and budgeting purposes.

- **How the priority area aligns with NSPs or national policies.** Note: Although the Global Fund advises that funding requests should be aligned with NSPs, you might discover that one or more of your priorities are not addressed in these plans and policies. You can still keep them in



your recommendation list. However, you will need to make a strong case, ideally one based on quality data or that links to global guidance supporting the priority area (e.g., for integrating cervical cancer services for women with or at risk of HIV).

The following are other important considerations for the priority recommendations report:

- **Try to limit the number of priorities and the length of your overall report.** This will increase the likelihood that each priority will be reviewed and considered seriously by all involved in the writing process. Quality is more important than quantity. Do not provide a laundry list; instead, take time to think of the **five key priorities that will have high impact for your country**. You should devote no more than two pages maximum to each priority area.
- **Identify evidence to support each priority intervention.** Relevant data presented in a clear, direct way can increase the likelihood you will get what you want and need. (*See Section 2.3 above for additional reflections about the importance of data.*) It might be useful to look at examples of what other women have done in regard to identifying and describing priority interventions. Women in Zimbabwe put together a paper ahead of their country dialogue in 2017. They rallied around the key issues discussed in the paper, which also was attached to the country's application to the CCM as a formal document. [You can use that paper as a template for you to follow.](#)

**2.9. Requesting a formal process to select Principal Recipients (PRs) and Sub-Recipients (SRs)** and demand a clear conflict of interest (Col) policy. These requests should be made to the CCM, which makes the final decisions in such areas. Documenting and monitoring these processes is important to avoid situations such as CCM members being selected as SRs, which calls into question their ability to provide oversight to PRs. Conflicts of interest of this sort can disadvantage community-based groups by denying them a fair and equal opportunity to be grantees. The Global Fund Secretariat provides guidance in these areas in [Guidelines on implementers of Global Fund grants](#) (2015) and the [Operational Policy Manual](#) (2019). Civil society groups in some countries are advocating for a quota system as one strategy to ensure that at minimum some SR are from civil society and community-based organisations

#### Box 5: Principal Recipients and Sub-recipients

**Principal Recipients (PRs)** are selected by the country's CCM and are responsible for implementing grants. They also select and coordinate other, smaller organizations, known as **Sub-recipients (SRs)** or even **Sub-Sub-recipients (SSRs)**, to create a cascade to smaller organizations, and for programs that can reach populations or groups that may not be otherwise easily reached by a government.

PRs take on the financial as well as the programmatic responsibilities of the grant. They are assessed by the Global Fund's Local Fund Agent in that country for their financial, managerial and programmatic capacities. Once selected, PRs sign a grant agreement with the Global Fund.

#### TAKE AWAY ACTIONS

- Find out what is happening when and plan backwards! Before the allocation letter arrives by 17 December, start planning with other advocates, including adolescent girls and young women, about what your priorities are and who might do what?
- Apply for TA now if you have not already done so
- Gather as a group to understand everything in the allocation letter once you have it and start to focus on your top 5 priorities and reach out to allies and agencies to support you
- Continue to advocate for accountability throughout the process.

### 3. Additional Suggestions and Observations

This section highlights other issues that W4GF Advocates should consider in the process.

#### 3.1 Remaining engaged to the very end of the application process.

Do not assume that your priorities will remain in a proposal to the very end even if they are included in earlier drafts. There is often a huge difference between what is in an initial funding request and what is included in the grant agreement signed at the end of the application process. For example, a survey of a previous funding cycle's results in several African countries found a decline of nearly 40% between the amount of funding relevant for adolescents and young people specified for key modules in the initial proposal and what was eventually funded.<sup>2</sup>

Even if you get some or all of your priorities into the funding request, that is no guarantee that they will still be there when the grant agreement is signed. **You need to remain active and vigilant and monitor the whole application process**, including reviewing the responses from the TRP and GAC and the follow-up to those responses. This can be difficult because it is hard to sustain engagement and CCMs often start to have more closed discussions to prepare and submit revisions. It is important to insist that all these actions be fully inclusive, including by working through the civil society and community members, and other key allies, on the CCM.

#### 3.2 Proportion of funding requests allocated to communities

Carefully consider the proportion of your country's funding request that is allocated to buying medicines and other commodities – and try to make the case for ensuring that this is correctly balanced. Antiretroviral drugs (ARVs), medicines for TB and malaria, and diagnostic commodities (e.g., HIV testing kits) often make up a huge share (sometimes as much or more than 70%) of a country's Global Fund programme budget. In many cases, this means there is limited and insufficient funding available for many W4GF Advocates' priorities, including critical prevention interventions and other important services for underserved communities such as key populations and highly vulnerable adolescent girls and young women.

If this is situation in your country, you and your allies are encouraged to make the case in the country dialogue and other processes for increased efforts to have more drugs and other commodities covered by domestic resources (e.g., national budgets) or other external donors. If successful, this could free up more space for the Global Fund to support activities and interventions that are far less likely to be funded domestically, such as those that focus on criminalized or stigmatized key populations. The extra space also could be used to provide funding for gender-transformative programming.

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<sup>2</sup> ICASO and EANNASO. A Quarter for Prevention? Global Fund Investments in HIV Prevention Interventions in Generalized African Epidemics. Discussion Paper, June 2017. Available [here](#). This document includes a review of funding granted for some key prevention modules across 15 African countries. For adolescents and young people, the amount went down 38% between the funding request and grant.



### 3.3 Potential value and limits of catalytic investments, including matching funds

Keep in mind the potential value and limits of catalytic investments as shown in Figure 3, and act when you see likely opportunities. For the 2020–2022 funding cycle, the Global Fund is reserving around US\$900 million for catalytic investments, a series of funding streams outside of the main country-specific allocation amounts. Matching funds and strategic initiatives are the two largest components. It might be possible, for example, for you to get some of your priority activities and interventions funded through one or more of the different **strategic initiative areas**.

Investigate whether and how funding from one or more strategic initiative or via the matching funds (if your country is eligible) might be useful for your priorities. This will be highlighted in the allocation letter! It is important to recognize that **requests for matching funds are no longer due at a different time than the main application**. They are now incorporated into the core funding requests, with specific conditions of matching funds (including in regard to eligibility) mentioned in the allocation letter.

Across the entire catalytic investments funding stream, your success could depend to a large extent on your ability to show that your proposed interventions would be ‘catalytic’ in nature, and not just expanding on activities already contained in the allocation request. In some cases, interventions that aim to be gender-transformative, such as social norm change and economic empowerment, can be highly catalytic.

**3.4 Absorption capacity.** This term is used throughout the Global Fund world to refer to countries’ ability to successfully spend the money provided over the course of a grant. Countries that do not use all funds allocated to them, or which use them in improper or non-transparent ways, are asked to return the money to the Global Fund. This is a serious concern for all stakeholders, and in particular people whose health and well-being rely on Global Fund programmes. Insufficient absorption capacity could mean that some or many key interventions for gender, human rights and communities might not be implemented fully, are implemented poorly, or are not implemented at all. The consequences for clients and community groups could be devastating in both the short and long runs.

**Highlight the issue of absorption capacity whenever relevant throughout the grant application process.** Try to find ways to hold decision-makers accountable to their claims that the country can effectively and efficiently use all the funding for the intended purposes. Advocates should be especially demanding in countries that have experienced challenges with absorption capacity in previous grants.

**3.5 Put in place a process to monitor implementation and hold the CCM to account for action against your priorities.** At the outset it will be helpful to decide, including with other members of the community, how you will hold national authorities accountable for delivering Global Fund supported programme. Consider whether you will use community-based monitoring approaches, and if so agree on a common framework that tracks what is most important.

Figure 3. Global Fund catalytic investments

Catalytic Investment
<b>HIV</b>
AGYW
Scaling-up Community-Led Key Population Programs
Key Populations and Sustainability
Differentiated HIV Service Delivery
TB Preventive Treatment for PLHIV
Condom Programming
<b>TB</b>
Finding Missing People with TB, including drug-resistant TB and preventive therapy
Targeted TA for innovative approaches for finding missing people with TB
TB Multi-Country Approaches
<b>Malaria</b>
Addressing Drug Resistance in the Greater Mekong Sub-Region
Accelerated Introduction of New Nets
Malaria Elimination in Southern Africa
Regional Coordination and Targeted TA for Implementation and Elimination
Malaria Elimination 2025 Initiative
RT,S Vaccine
<b>RSSH and Cross-Cutting</b>
Data
Community, Rights and Gender
Human Rights
Emergency Fund
TERG Independent Evaluation
Sustainability, Transition, and Efficiency
PSM Transformation
Service Delivery Innovations
Accelerated Introduction of Innovations
CCM Evolution
Innovative Finance



## 4. ACRONYMS

AGYW	adolescent girls and young women
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CSS	community systems strengthening
GAC	Grant Approvals Committee
NSP	National Strategic Plan
PAAR	Prioritized Above Allocation Request
PR	Principal Recipient
RSSH	Resilient and sustainable systems for health
SR	Sub-recipient
SSRs	Sub-sub recipients
TA	technical assistance
TRP	Technical Review Panel

***Women4GlobalFund (W4GF)** is a dynamic and global platform of women and gender equality advocates who share a deep commitment to ensuring that Global Fund programmes are gender-transformative to meet the rights and specific needs of women and girls in all their diversity. For more information, contact Sophie Dilmitis, Global Coordinator, Women4GlobalFund (W4GF) – [sophie@women4gf.org](mailto:sophie@women4gf.org), [www.women4gf.org](http://www.women4gf.org) or <https://www.facebook.com/women4globalfund/>*