



FACT SHEET

THE GLOBAL IMPLEMENTATION SUPPORT TEAM (GIST)

Coordinating UN action and provision of technical support for accelerating HIV/AIDS responses in countries

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THE CHALLENGE

The substantial increase in financial resources available for the global response to HIV/AIDS provides a unique opportunity to accelerate country responses to the epidemic. However, many countries face tremendous difficulties in effectively absorbing large-scale grants made available by funding bodies such as the Global Fund and World Bank. The global community has a key role to play in ensuring that rapid and adequate technical support is provided to those countries facing such difficulties in order to help strengthen capacity and improve implementation of HIV/AIDS programs. Sharing this responsibility among all groups in the international community requires a greater level of commitment and coordination.

THE RESPONSE

In March 2005, the Global Task Team (GTT), made up of 25 recipient and donor governments, UN agencies, inter-governmental organizations and civil society groups, called upon the multilateral system to improve the institutional architecture of the global response to HIV/AIDS. One set of recommendations focused on the way in which UN

agencies interact with each other and with countries. As a result, in July 2005, the UN-AIDS Secretariat, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, UNDP, the World Bank and the Global Fund Secretariat established a Global Implementation Support team (GIST). In July 2006, the Programme Coordination Board (PCB) recommended "*the further involvement of other development partners, such as bilaterals and NGOs, where necessary.*" In November 2006 the first meeting of the expanded GIST was held, which included donor and civil society representatives. The GIST functions as a forum for UN technical agencies and major funding entities such as the Global Fund and World Bank to mobilize and harmonize a rapid response for the effective use of resources to "make the money work" in countries.

THE ROLE OF GIST

The GIST centers on country-driven problem solving to unblock obstacles to accelerated grant implementation. Its member organizations meet on a monthly basis to review immediate and medium-term technical support needs, take decisions on joint and coordinated technical support to be provided,

evaluate progress and assess performance of such support, and look at ways to improve interaction between GIST member organizations and countries.

GIST Mission Statement:

To improve: (1) the alignment of financial donors and providers of technical support; and (2) coordination of technical support to address implementation bottlenecks and help "make the money work" at the country level.

Examples of GIST action include:

- ▶ generating in-country dialogue among partners to address technical assistance needs (Bolivia, Comoros, Guinea Bissau, Niger, Nigeria, Ecuador, Nepal);
- ▶ preventing stock-out of antiretroviral drugs (Niger), accelerating approval of antiretroviral treatment protocols (Guinea Bissau), strengthening the capacity of pharmaceutical services and quality assurance for HIV serology (Niger), and facilitating procurement and supply management (Bolivia, Niger);
- ▶ resolution of governance and management problems related to CCM and Principal Recipient functioning and coordination between Global Fund and World Bank programmes, including streamlining financial management to avoid duplication of efforts and to make best use of available funding (Ukraine, Guinea Bissau, Benin, Caribbean, Niger, Bolivia);
- ▶ facilitating monitoring and evaluation, data analysis and other technical support to meet Phase 2 conditionalities of

Global Fund grants (Lesotho, Nigeria, Honduras)

Despite the relatively short experience of the GIST, results obtained thus far clearly indicate that a shared understanding and concerted action through a joint and harmonized approach among various partners can help more rapidly identify and address bottlenecks to "making the money work" for countries.

GIST Strategic Objectives:

- ▶ Act as a global interface / coordination mechanism between the UN and other technical support partners and the largest financing actors;
- ▶ Support coordination, brokering, quality assurance and, on an exceptional basis, provision, of technical assistance at country level in consultation with donors and civil society;
- ▶ Facilitate strategic dialogue on systemic and cross-cutting global issues that affect implementation at country-level;
- ▶ Ensure diagnosis and analysis of, and information sharing on, systemic implementation bottlenecks and capacity gaps through a consultative process with country and regional structures;
- ▶ Serve as an interface to bring information on systemic country implementation bottlenecks and technical support issues to the attention of global policy fora to inform discussions on the architecture of international cooperation; and
- ▶ Strengthen communication and accountability among participating agencies.

