

Civil Society & Communities Town Hall

Wednesday, December 14, 2022

9-10pm WIB (Jakarta); 5-6pm EAT (Nairobi); 2-3pm BST (London); 8-9am ET (New York); 8-9am CT (Mexico City)

NOTES AND READOUT

Interim Civil Society Board Member **Elisha Dunn-Georgiou**, Global Health Council held a Civil Society & Communities Town Hall on Wednesday, Dec. 14, 2022. The Townhall provided a readout from the December Pandemic Fund Governing Board Meeting and discussion on a future permanent structure for civil society engagement.

Updates from Pandemic Fund Governing Board Meeting

- The Pandemic Fund Governing Board met from Dec. 12-13 to review and discuss recommendations from the three working groups (1) Results Framework 2) Co-Financing and 3) First Call for Proposals) and advance next steps to issue a First Call for Proposals.

Board Updates

- Co-Chair, Daniel Ngamije, Health Minister of Rwanda, has stepped down and Board Chair Chatib Basri, former Minister for Finance of Indonesia, will act as sole Chair until the Board resets in May.
- Joy St. John, Executive Director of Caribbean Public Health Agency (CARPHA), was elected to Co-Chair the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) in partnership with the current Chair, Mike Ryan, Executive Director, WHO Health Emergencies Programme.
 - During the Board Meeting Joy made strong interventions to promote equity and justice.
- Netherlands, France, and India (current G20 Chair) joined the Governing Board as members of current donor constituencies.
- The Board shared a [website](#) that can be used as a tool to view contributions, commitments, and cash transfers for the Pandemic Fund. This is still being updated.
- Board Members discussed the Board reset in May (co-investor, civil society, and non-sovereign board seats change in May 2023), and how this should be considered with the timeline for the First Call for Proposals. The Secretariat indicated that the timing of the reset can be subject to change, and it was well noted that many urged for some milestones to be completed under the current Board term. Additionally, it was flagged that onboarding will be needed to get new Board Members up-to-speed, and that co-investor and civil society Board Members need to think about starting processes to self-select replacements.

Results Framework Working Group

- Board Members agreed with the approaches outlined in the Results Framework white paper, including its recommendation that the Technical Advisory Panel (TAP) engage in its development and finalization. A forthcoming Results Framework will constitute a Results Framework for the full Fund, not for the First Call for Proposals only. More work is needed to develop and refine.
- Agreed the Results Framework will be shared with the TAP for review on Jan. 16 and then shared with the Board for approval on Jan. 20.

Co-Financing Working Group

- Board Members agreed with approaches outlined by the Co-Financing Working Group:
 - High-level principles on co-financing include:
 - Clear expectations for co-financing and co-investment laid out in call for proposals;
 - Encouragement for domestic resource mobilization;

- Scoring criteria (with flexibility/ phased expectations based on income level) and,
 - Possibility for interest rate and loan buy-down.
- Country ownership principles proposed include engagement across all of society in proposal development and transparency in decision-making and spending (key pushes from civil society Board Members).
- A formal co-financing policy is still needed and will be advanced.
- The Board stressed that co-financing and investment need to be additive and co-investment principles are not just money — but also policy change, implementation, and other resources.

First Call for Proposals Working Group

- Board Members broadly agreed with the approach outlined by the First Call for Proposals Working Group.
- The timeline to issue the call for proposals is currently set for the end of Jan. 2023.
 - Once the TAP is fully in place there may be some adjustment to timelines.
 - TAP has not yet been selected/set. Chairs will review and select members.
- A cap of US\$420 million was proposed for the First Call for Proposals. Some considered this too high. There will be more discussion on what will be allocated and this will be based on proposals submitted.
- Three priorities proposed for the first call of proposals:
 - 1) Surveillance
 - 2) Laboratory Capacity
 - 3) Human Resources/workforce
- Two approaches were provided to the Board for the proposal development process. Option B was selected with some modifications needed.
 - A) Implementing Entities (IEs) lead, building regional/group of country proposals
 - B) Countries lead, and self-identify Implementing Entities to work with
- To help promote successful, funded applications, and prevent undue burden on countries, the call for proposal process will ask for submission of an expression of interest concept note first. These will then be reviewed to advance selected candidates to submit a more formal application.
- IEs will play a strong role working with countries to create and steward applications and it will remain important for civil society to engage at the country level to shape proposals. IEs can not just apply on their own.
- Civil society Board members were successful in advancing priorities on broad stakeholder inclusion and engagement in the development of proposals. This will need to be finalized via scoring criteria and the proposal form.
 - Canada, Guyana, and civil society also pushed for prioritizing gender equality and human rights in the proposal process.

Next Steps & Timeline

- The Secretariat will take December and early January to consolidate recommendations from all three working groups and advance a First Call for Proposals package.
- There will likely be a Board Meeting in Jan.2023 to review the first call for proposal documents.
- First Call for Proposals tentatively targeted to be released January 31.

Mechanisms to Engage Civil Society & Communities

- **Long-term civil society & community engagement structure:** If you are interested in engaging in developing recommendations on a long-term civil society & community engagement structure, please email Courtenay Howe (courtenay@stopaids.org.uk)

- **Call to CSOs:** If you have any good examples of frameworks to share with the Board, please kindly send to the CSO Representatives or Courtenay Howe

Resources

- This [website](#) helps track civil society engagement on the Pandemic Fund to date.

Feedback welcomed: pandemicfund-CSC@pandemicactionnetwork.org

Annex: Questions & Comments

Funding

Question: Why is the EC pledge not listed in the tracker?

Response: There are only 11/25 signed agreements, and only six pledges in the bank so far. EC has not yet signed their agreement. The disparity of signed agreements might impact what's listed in the commitment tracker. Additionally, some commitments are not one year commitments, they are planned to be paid out over several years.

Question: Is there clear information about the ceiling of funding per proposal and funding per thematic area?

First Call for Proposals

Question: Are there any other propositions to use funding beyond cash on hand for the First Call for Proposals beyond US\$420 million?

Answer: Many board members felt US\$420 million was too much and preferred something around US\$300 million. They are considering this a base vs. a cap. We acknowledge that civil society commented that a higher amount is preferred, but we really need to see a fundraising plan from the Secretariat to be more clear about cash in hand or what will be coming.

Question: Is the First Call for Proposals open for all geographies?

Answer: The First Call for Proposals is open to LMICs that meet criteria of the International Development Association (IDA) and the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development (IBRD). If countries are eligible for World Bank funding then they are eligible to apply.

Question: Will second or third calls for proposals rotate thematic areas?

Answer: This is still open for discussion. Seems like we're heading towards more open and broad calls going forward, but nothing is set yet.

Question: Are there other types of frameworks that will be discussed for framing country proposals beyond National Action Plans for Health Security (NAPS)?

Answer: No, not yet. Joint External Evaluations (JEEs) and NAPS are probably not the best and only markers to use, and there is not yet clarity across countries on how civil society has been engaged in developing these to-date. There also has not yet been discussion to align with the Pandemic Accord — noting these processes are on different timelines. Open to suggestions on other frameworks to put forward (Universal Health Protection Review (UHPR), etc.)

Question: Is it decided — or just likely — that country proposals will be eligible for the First Call for Proposals? Isn't it quite different from the initial documents from Board meetings which insisted the Fund act as an intermediary fund, so not funding countries directly? What is the rationale behind this shift?

Answer: Countries will lead the proposal process, based on country-defined priorities, but funding will still flow through Implementing Entities. Countries will not be funded directly.

Question: Is there a prioritization framework set up? US\$420 million for lab capacity, surveillance, and healthcare workforce is quite small and makes it inevitable that some countries that need the funding will be left out. This means either a prioritization or opportunity cost framework would be necessary.

Answer: Formalizing prioritization for applications and scoring criteria will be fleshed out in the first call for proposal documents. There are ideas on the table in white papers, but nothing is finalized, even though there is broad consensus around certain points. The scoring for prioritizing proposals has not been developed. The TAP is not yet in place and it is their responsibility to develop and vet the technical criteria along with the governing board.

Comment: Some have discussed a two-three month window for countries to develop their proposals. I think we are underestimating the time it might take to get this national proposal design process underway, especially if we are expecting it to be undertaken in an inclusive and transparent manner, in different contexts. That process should ideally be underway already, if we want proposals submitted by sometime mid next year.

Response: The window for countries to develop proposals will be three-four months.

Question: What national mechanisms are in place to ensure good governance and management of the funds? Is there a link to the Global Fund Coordinating Mechanisms/CCMs?

Question: Can you say a bit more on the criteria that was discussed for the prioritization for choosing the call for proposals? Are there ways of balancing geographic parity? What evidence will be informing the TAP?

Question: In terms of surveillance, labs and workforce, will the call for proposals also include the animal health workforce, and surveillance for zoonotic disease in animals? Or is it mostly human health focused?

Question: Gender, equity, and human rights was mentioned as a cross-cutting criteria for this first call. Has there been any more clarity around alignment with other key established frameworks that will guide this (eg, HEPR, IHR benchmarks, Pandemic Accord down the line, etc)?

Implementing Entities

Question: Regarding IE selection by countries, what is the proposal for who will make these decisions and what criteria will it be based on?

Answer: We are still a little unclear on how this will occur at this time.

Question: Does the country select the IE or does the IE initiate discussion with the country?

Answer: Those details at the country level have not been clarified. The expression of interest will be the catalyst for these conversations. There must be one lead IE, but other IEs can participate as part of the proposal. There will need to be some stipulation on IEs collecting overhead if multiple IEs are engaged to promote more funding to implement.

Question: Are there options for direct support to governments without IEs in the middle with future calls?

Question: What is the follow up regarding a framework for IE selection? This seems like an opportunity to demand multi-stakeholder collaboration, including independent civil society involvement, based on relevant criteria such as a strong PPPR track record.

Localization

Question: Any prospect for localization of funding from the Pandemic Fund and applying as a consortium?

Answer: Localization of funding will depend on country proposals, and where funding is sought to support at the country level. The Board discussed grounding country proposals in National Action Plans (NAPs) for Health Security, so making sure there is civil society and community engagement in the development of NAPs will be important to ensure community-level priorities are identified, supported, and funded.

Question: Will support be given to grassroots organizations, and if a group of organizations come together as a consortium can they be funded?

Answer: All proposals will need to be led by countries and IEs.

Comment: Agree that grassroots and communities should be involved. Civil society and community partners could be engaged in proposals, but they cannot lead at this point. The burden to make that happen will be on civil society at the country level to make connections and build relationships with IEs and government officials who will be developing the proposal process. There is not an existing platform for civil society to organize, but platforms used for other organizations might be a good place to start.

Question: Pandemics like COVID-19 and Ebola have taught us a lesson, many international staff and organizations could not travel to affected areas, proving the essential nature of local frontline organizations and opening space for them to demonstrate their leadership. Is there any consideration for localization of funding to cover the local ground?

Question: Is it possible to share country leads and contact information so that grassroots organizations can engage directly?

Comment: I propose regional and national focal points are appointed. Power can be given to national focal points to appoint subnational and local focal points.

TAP

Question: Mike Ryan will be TAP Chair — who is Vice Chair? It would also be helpful to get a sense of direction particularly around UHPR.

Answer: Dr. Joy St John is vice chair and there has not been clarity or alignment on those other topics at this time.

Question: Do we know the timeline for recruitment for TAP members will be?

Answer: Applications for the TAP have been submitted (200+). The Chairs need to review the applications and select final candidates. The TAP should be in place by mid-January.

Question: Do we know how many civil society & community reps are on the TAP?

Answer: Not at this time.

Civil Society Engagement

Question: Are you pushing to make civil society and community engagement mandatory in funding proposals? If not, why? If yes, how optimistic are you that you are going to win this?

Question: I am concerned national proposals will go on without involving CSOs, what is the advocacy or directive in terms of CSO engagement by the committee?

Response: Civil Society Board Members have been successful in making sure proposals include the submission of evidence on how civil society was included to identify priorities to feed into the proposal. It is still to be determined how this will manifest in scoring criteria or proposal forms.

- Civil society representatives on the governing board have been pushing for demonstration of meaningful inclusion of civil society and communities in the development of proposals to be part of the scoring criteria for the first call proposals. But it will require us all to hold the IEs and governments accountable to make this a reality.
- Localization, grassroots, and subnational civil society input is going to be critical and supportive of accountability. I will flag the elephant in the room that was briefly mentioned, which is the Fundraising Strategy. Over time I do think that donors will become skeptical and head shy if questions of community involvement and the local outcomes do not speak to the value of the investments. This message is not really a statement of value, since I think everyone is very aware of this, but it would be in the self-interest of the Fund to address this early on. We are therefore seeking support from the Global Fund and EANNASO, etc. to support CSOs skills on accountability monitoring, effective programming etc.

General Priorities and Considerations for the Fund

- Ensure funding goes to grassroots organizations as they are doing the work.
- Look at the model used with tuberculosis (TB), giving resources to small organizations. With this model we have seen small organizations grow and be able to do things at the national level.
- Demanding achievement of outcomes on the funding, looking for outputs or outcomes? The Fund should also make a difference in ensuring results achieved and value for money allotted.

Discussion: Long Term Civil Society Engagement Structure

Guiding Questions: What should a long-term structure for meaningful civil society engagement with the Pandemic Fund look like? What are successful models to review and build on? What is needed to stand-up and action a long-term mechanism?

Responses:

- We are looking at other processes, including the Global Fund, UHC 2030, and GAVI. Some early priorities include civil society focal points, funding. \Grassroots civil society organizations need more engagement and background on the Fund so they can successfully engage and participate. More awareness and engagement is needed.
- Community representatives need to be enmeshed in the communities vs. representatives in governance structure representing more global perspectives.
- A mechanism is needed to ensure representatives are accountable to the grassroots organizations.
- The civil society representatives should ask for a priorities document that is signed off by CSOs as part of the annexes to demonstrate that there were engagements that are not tokenistic.