

## PERFORMANCE AT A GLANCE

# The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

AUGUST 2022



## OVERVIEW

**For the Global Fund 2020 and 2021 were pivotal years.** Perhaps at no other time has the Global Fund faced as many daunting challenges as since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. The first human cases of COVID-19 were detected in December 2019, and by March 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) had declared a pandemic. Not only did the Global Fund have to contend with its own operational challenges, such as remote work and travel shutdowns, it also had to grapple with sustaining, if not increasing, gains in the fight against HIV, tuberculosis (TB) and malaria. The Global Fund's decision not to revise downwards its targets for HIV, TB, and malaria testifies to its commitment to the three diseases. Further, it bore the responsibility of providing approximately USD 4.2 billion in COVID-19 grants to countries in need. That it was able to do so, while ensuring alignment with country-led processes, is a testament to its agility, responsiveness, and diligence.

**In November 2021, the Global Fund Board approved a new strategy for 2023-28.** While leaving the Fund's mandate fundamentally unchanged (the primary goal is still to end AIDS, TB and malaria), the strategy for 2023-28 has introduced new contributory and evolving objectives and places clear emphasis on a people-centred approach. These new developments will require the organisation to revisit some facets of its business model – such as staff qualifications, internal structure, and operating guidelines – to ensure that it remains fit for purpose. The findings of the MOPAN assessment are intended to contribute to that discussion.

**As the global health landscape continues to evolve, so does the Global Fund.** Since it was founded 20 years ago, it has tirelessly sought ways to improve its performance and mature as an organisation, while remaining focused on its core mandate of fighting the three devastating infectious diseases. However, as an organisation designed to address three specific diseases, it has had to strike a balance between that primary goal and contributing to universal health coverage (UHC). UHC has become an increasingly pressing issue in light of the United Nation's 2019 political declaration on UHC and the failings in health systems exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“*The Global Fund generates a tremendous amount of data, information, lessons learned and best practices, and there are obvious benefits to the global health community in sharing and learning from its efforts.*”

**Against that background, the Global Fund has remained committed to its partnerships while forging new ones** – it is, for example, a founding partner with WHO of the Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator (ACTA). Other long-time partners, such as the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS (UNAIDS), are also reviewing and revising their strategies. Furthermore, in its 2023-28 strategy the Global Fund is strengthening its commitment to building resilient, sustainable systems for health (RSSH) and seeking to hasten the shift away from siloed interventions towards integrated, people-centred models that will help countries progress towards delivering UHC.

**The Global Fund boasts strengths that can serve as examples for other organisations – such as operational effectiveness, inclusivity and, in particular, partnership.**<sup>1</sup> Partnership is one of the Global Fund's four core principles. At the country level, it manifests itself in the commitment to ensuring that funding requests are led by in-country stakeholders and involve a broad range of stakeholders throughout the country dialogue process. Indeed, while the Global Fund may set general parameters for the grants that it funds, its partner countries ultimately drive decisions. Such an approach requires the Global Fund to continually assess whether its internal- and external-facing operations are fit for purpose and whether it is well placed to respond to the particular stressors and challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic.

**Finally, it should be noted that the Global Fund's principle of inclusive partnerships is both ground-breaking and atypical.** Examples are the composition of its Board, the Partnership Forum, the country coordinating mechanisms (CCMs) at country level, and its insistence that the populations it serves have a seat at the table in all discussions. While upholding and implementing the partnership principle can be challenging, it has nevertheless advanced how development work is done, empowered communities and civil society and, it could be argued, more broadly influenced the countries in which it has funded grants.

**The Global Fund's continued success, which includes overcoming COVID-19 challenges, is critical for all global health stakeholders.** The Global Fund has been, and still is, one of the largest funders of global health. It accounts for approximately:

- 25% of all international financing for HIV programmes (10% of available resources);
- 77% of all international financing for tuberculosis (12% of available resources);
- and 56% of all international financing for malaria programmes (39% of available resources).

That it has been able to mobilise and manage such levels of funding, while significantly raising the profile of communities and civil society and its ability to participate in decision-making processes, makes it a vital organisation in the global health architecture, especially with respect to the three diseases. Its success – and, by the same token, its lack thereof – has implications for all vested stakeholders across the global health landscape, as well as those interested in the advent of more transparent, inclusive and democratic societies. Also crucial is the Global Fund's ability not only to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on its on-going programmes, but to ensure that health systems are better prepared to manage the next pandemic. As part of the global COVID-19 response, it approved more than USD 4 billion in grant support to low- and middle-income countries for:

- reinforcing their national COVID-19 responses;
- mitigating COVID's impact on HIV, TB and malaria programmes;
- (perhaps most importantly) making improvements to health and community systems to help fight COVID-19, HIV, TB and malaria.

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1. Partnership, country-ownership, performance-based funding, transparency.

Because it had pre-existing grants in more than 100 countries, it was able to quickly reprogramme some of that funding or provide additional financing through its implementing partners (principal recipients). It was thus able to deliver the rapid response that is so important during the early stages of a pandemic. While the full impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the coverage of HIV, TB, and malaria treatment and prevention is still to be determined, some initial results have shown that, for the first time in the Global Fund's history, key programmatic results across the three diseases declined. Of course, the easy choice would have been for it to revise its targets for the three diseases downward. However, that would have called into question its commitment to the people it serves – the poor, the vulnerable, marginalised populations, and those without access to health care, all disproportionately affected by COVID-19. Instead, it has drawn on its partnerships to bolster its responses and showed both flexibility and resolve in addressing the short-term challenge of COVID-19, while staying true to its long-term goal of ending the HIV, TB, and malaria epidemics.

**Alongside the areas in which the Global Fund performs well, there are others that it needs to strengthen.** Despite being strategic objectives in its 2017-22 Strategy, the building of resilient and sustainable systems for health (Strategic Objective 2) and promoting and protecting human rights and gender equality (Strategic Objective 3) underperformed in comparison to the other two strategic objectives. As noted above, the global health landscape has evolved to focus on UHC and underpinning those efforts is the need for resilient and sustainable systems for health. For most of the assessment period, which includes the Global Fund's 2017-22 Strategy, its Strategic Objective 2 “Build Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health” did not have the same results as, for example, Strategic Objective 1 “Maximise Impact Against HIV, TB, and Malaria” nor Strategic Objective 4 “Mobilise Increased Resources”. While this may be due in part to country counterparts not prioritising RSSH within their funding requests, it does call into question it being a co-equal Strategic Objective. Indeed, within the new strategy (2023-28), RSSH is now a mutually reinforcing contributory objective to the overall goal of ending AIDS, TB, and malaria with a change in wording to “Maximising People-centred Integrated Systems for Health to Deliver Impact, Resilience and Sustainability”. Similarly, the results for Strategic Objective 3 (Promote and Protect Human Rights and Gender Equality) as part of the 2017-22 Strategy are mixed, and it too is now a mutually reinforcing contributory objective (Maximising Health Equity, Gender Equality and Human Rights).

**Further work is needed to fully embed a culture of learning.** While the Global Fund has recently taken steps to strengthen its approach to learning, particularly learning from evaluations, it endorsed those steps only at the end of the assessment period. For example, there was neither an overarching monitoring and evaluation (M&E) framework nor an evaluation strategy, even though M&E documents were being developed during the assessment and its independent evaluation structure and function were undergoing revision. Of special concern is how evaluation results are shared, not only within the Global Fund Secretariat, but also proactively with external partners, particularly at the country level. The Global Fund generates a tremendous amount of data, information, lessons learned and best practices, and there are obvious benefits to the global health community in sharing and learning from its efforts.

## LOOKING AHEAD

As it looks to its future, the Global Fund will need to remain agile and responsive. Its work will involve strengthening and accelerating the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and addressing possible epidemiological, environmental and financial transformations in implementing countries. To date, it has demonstrated its agility and responsiveness. Accordingly, as new challenges emerge, it must remain prepared to evolve its strategic objectives, operating model and, perhaps, its core principles.

The Global Fund continued to evolve and mature during the 2017-21 assessment period. It has consistently reviewed its internal structures to ensure that they are fit for purpose when faced with new situations and challenges, which was of particular importance during the COVID-19 pandemic. There is still room for improvement, however, especially when it comes to learning more effectively from the findings which its programmes generate, and how it can help its partners do so. Nevertheless, it appears to be on a steady upward curve in meeting its own goals and objectives and contributing to improvements in the global health landscape.

Of note is that in November 2021 the Global Fund's Board approved a new strategy for 2023-28. Although it does not significantly deviate from the previous strategy, it places greater emphasis on a people-centred approach and incorporates new areas of concern, such as pandemic preparedness and response (PPR) and environmental sustainability and climate change (ESCC). It has also begun strengthening its monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) systems by moving forward with the development of an overarching M&E framework. While these moves came at the end of the assessment period, MOPAN recognises them here for their potential to further improve the five performance areas which were part of the assessment. It will be of great interest in the next MOPAN assessment to examine how those recent developments have shaped the Global Fund's journey.

### Strengths and areas for improvement

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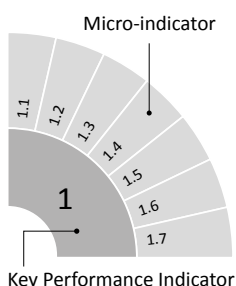
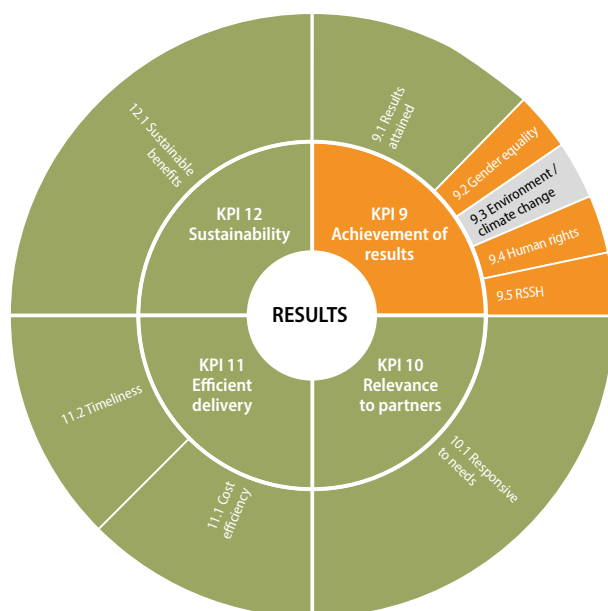
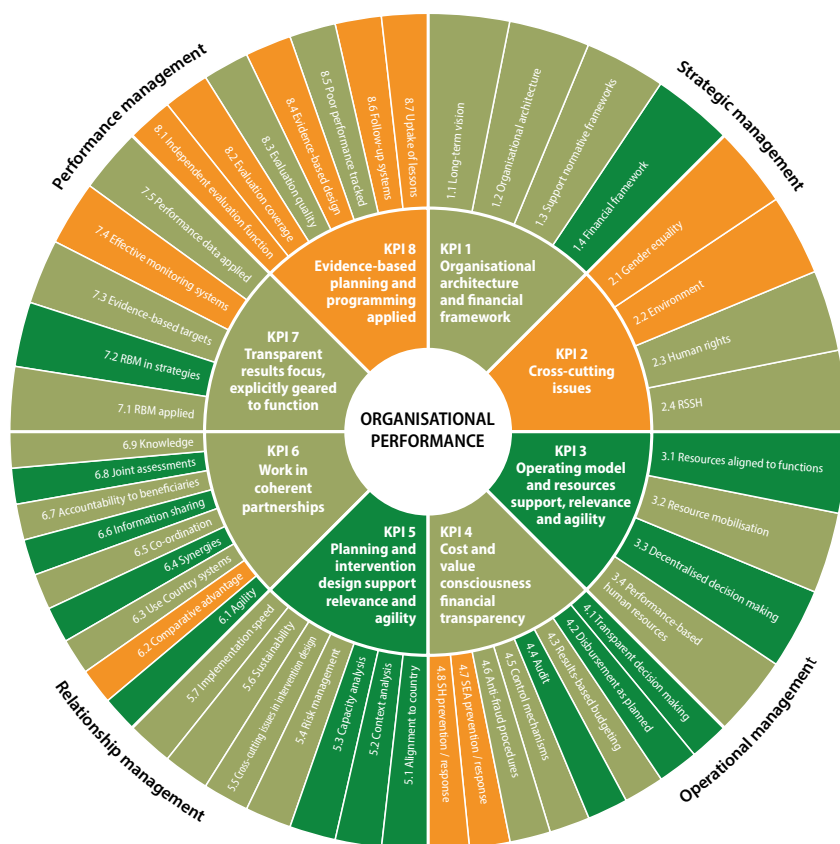
#### Main strengths

- A culture of continual reflection to ensure that its operational model evolves and remains fit for purpose.
- Agility of response, particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Inclusive partnerships at all levels.
- Strong alignment with country strategic plans and priorities.
- Financial frameworks and processes (such as allocations, portfolio optimisation, and efficiency measures) ensure good use of resources.

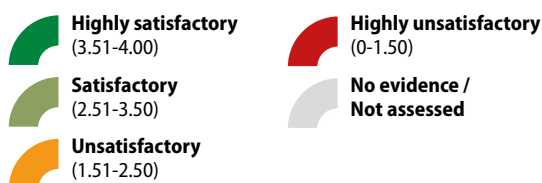
#### Main areas for improvement

- Define more fully its role within the context of UHC and health systems strengthening.
- Address cross-cutting issues such as human rights, gender equality, and environmental sustainability and climate change.
- Strengthen its ability to be a learning organisation and share the knowledge it acquires with all stakeholders.
- Negotiate the limits of country ownership and achieving both its vision and contributing to global targets and goals.
- Take an organisational approach to the protection from sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and sexual harassment (SH) that treats them as related but separate issues requiring distinct capacities, resources and mechanisms.

## PERFORMANCE RATING SUMMARY FOR THE GLOBAL FUND



### How to read these charts



### MISSION AND MANDATE

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (or, the Global Fund) was created in 2002 to raise, manage and invest the world's money in response to three of the deadliest infectious diseases. Its vision, as stated in its 2017-22 Strategy, is: "A world free of the burden of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria with better health for all," and its mission is to attract, leverage and invest additional resources to end the epidemics of HIV, TB and malaria and to support attainment of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

### GOVERNANCE

The Global Fund is overseen by its Board, which embodies its partnership approach to global health. The 20 voting members equally represent implementers and donors; NGOs, communities affected by the three diseases, the private sector, and private foundations are also represented.

### STRUCTURE

All staff are based at the Secretariat in Geneva, Switzerland. The Global Fund does not have offices in the countries to which it awards its grants. Rather, it relies on a number of in-country partners (primarily principal recipients, country coordinating mechanisms, and local fund agents) to ensure the successful implementation and oversight of activities. It has approximately 700 full-time employees, short-term and temporary staff, and contractors and consultants.

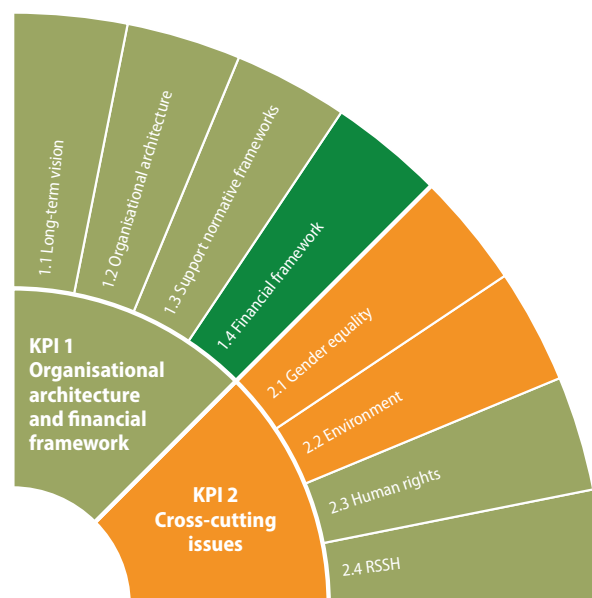
### FINANCE

As an international financing organisation, and one of the largest funders of global health, the Global Fund mobilises and invests more than USD 4 billion a year through its grants to support programmes developed and run by local counterparts. Since its creation in April 2022, it has disbursed more than USD 54.2 billion in the fight against HIV, TB, and malaria and for programmes to strengthen systems for health across more than 155 countries, including regional grants. In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, it has approved more than USD 4 billion to support 108 countries and multi-country programmes.

## KEY FINDINGS BY PERFORMANCE AREA

**STRATEGIC MANAGEMENT: a fluid approach, significant recent developments, with a need to ensure equal prioritisation amongst all higher-level objectives.**

The Global Fund continues to evolve its strategy, organisational architecture, and supporting systems to deliver its vision. In November 2021, the Global Fund published its new Strategy 2023-28. It further emphasises certain principles, such as a people-centred approach, and makes the significant addition of PPR to its objectives. Both its current and forthcoming strategies clearly position the Global Fund within the global health landscape, but only with the development of its new strategy has it clearly articulated its comparative advantages. Interviewed stakeholders recognise them as being the Global Fund's inclusivity (particularly how it includes communities), its focus on results, and adaptability.



The Global Fund's organisational architecture and operational model support implementation and account for results, although there is room for improvement. Particular concerns are that:

- objectives such as human rights and gender (HRG) and RSSH have been under-staffed at Secretariat level;
- staff capacity to better engage with country stakeholders has not been sufficiently built;
- even though country teams form the basic organisational unit for managing grants, there are notable limitations for internal collaboration across divisions and departments given the complexity of the grants and limited bandwidth of staff to fully engage with all of the differentiated countries (High Impact versus Core versus Focus), that ESCC issues are only addressed explicitly in the new strategy, despite previous efforts in this area.

The Global Fund intends to contribute to both the wider global development agenda and disease-specific objectives. Linkage to global commitments, such as the SDGs, has not, however, been plain to see during the 2017-22 strategy period. The Global Fund is developing an M&E framework, which should afford a better overview of contributions. Its financial framework is also evolving. It now uses a holistic approach to programming and operational expenditure budgets, though results are still to be fully evaluated.

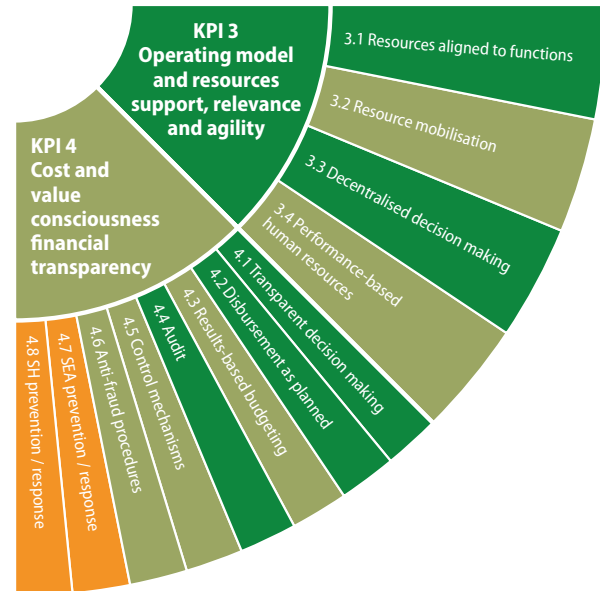
**OPERATIONAL MANAGEMENT: fit for purpose, responsive to emerging challenges, some areas still a work in progress.**

The Global Fund has developed processes to ensure that its organisational structure remains fit for purpose and supports its strategy. For example, the new Strategic Workforce Planning Initiative, the introduction of 360degree feedback, and internal restructuring have made it more responsive to emerging needs, such as those stemming from COVID-19. However, challenges remain in managing poor staff performance and ensuring that top talent is promoted.

The Global Fund has a robust and increasingly diverse resource mobilisation strategy, implemented through its replenishment cycles and domestic resourcing policies. Its funding model uses transparent criteria that factor in a country's income level and disease burden to ensure that allocations have the greatest impact and respond to countries' needs. The Global Fund's control framework yielded a grant absorption rate of 81%, exceeding its 75% target for 2018-20, and the portfolio optimisation process it has introduced reallocates underutilised funds to grants with higher absorption. It also introduced the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM) in response to the pandemic. The Office of Inspector General (OIG) is responsible for providing assurance of the Global Fund's internal controls. However, nearly one-third of agreed management actions (AMAs) were long overdue (more than six months) for resolution by the Secretariat in November 2021. A factor that contributed to the backlog was the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, the percentage of long overdue AMAs was much lower, at 8.7%, two years earlier, in November 2019, before the onset of the pandemic.

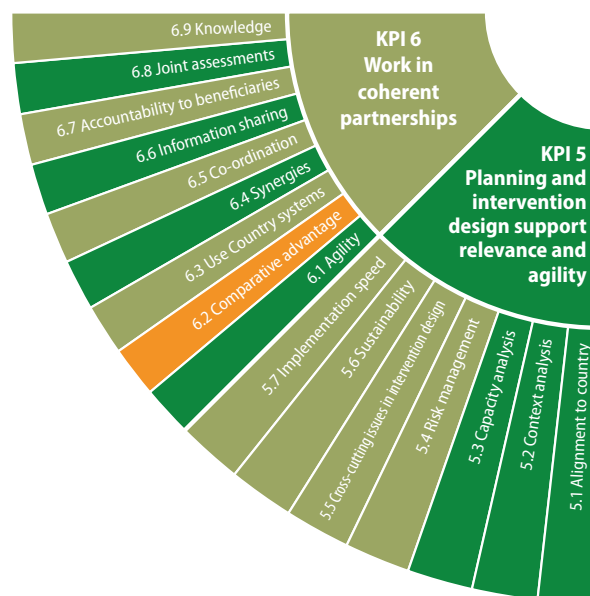
Although the Global Fund has an anti-corruption and fraud policy, and functioning whistle-blower mechanisms, its Board has raised concerns over delay in the policy's implementation. Its roll-out has begun and is scheduled for completion in 2024.

As for sexual exploitation, abuse and harassment (SEAH), the Global Fund adopted a victim/survivor-centred approach in July 2021, almost three years after having committed to the outcomes of the 2018 London summit. It is too early, however, to assess how effectively it has been applied. The organisation offers regular training on related topics, and its codes of conduct contain explicit SEAH-related prohibitions and are aligned with international best practice. Although the Secretariat is putting in place dedicated SEAH resources and structures, measures need strengthening at the country level, especially embedding prevention in programmes. SEA and sexual harassment (SH) are often conflated in Global Fund's strategic documents, making it hard to distinguish between the approaches to preventing and responding to each.



**RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT: a robust core principle which requires vigilance to ensure it remains relevant and applicable.**

Partnership is a core founding principle of the Global Fund and guides its operations and interactions. The organisation interacts with international partners at the global level, and with in-country stakeholders through CCMs whose inclusivity is one of the distinguishing features of the organisation. The Global Fund has committed to joint planning, programming and budget transparency. When a country submits a funding request and designs interventions (the Global Fund, in general, neither develops country strategies nor designs interventions), the potential implementing country is required to consult with partners and build upon existing programming and national plans. The process of ensuring alignment between Global Fund objectives and country priorities is robust and involves reviews by CCMs, implementing partners, Secretariat country teams, and independent technical experts.



There are a few areas which the Global Fund could strengthen to ensure that its partnership model remains fit for purpose. For example, it should seize opportunities to widen South-South cooperation beyond grant activities. Although there were two South-South strategic initiatives (SIs) during the 2017/19 and 2020/22 funding periods, they were comparatively small.

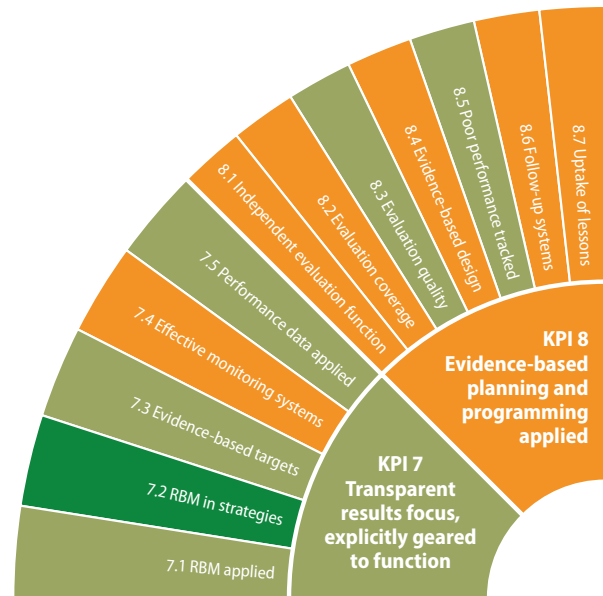
Furthermore, while stakeholders acknowledge that the Global Fund abides by the principle of accountability, few documents unequivocally state that it is accountable to its beneficiaries (e.g. implementing countries and end-users of supported programmes). It should consider clearly stating its accountability to beneficiaries.

Finally, the Global Fund has strong processes in place for identifying, assessing and reporting on risks (it reports 22 types of risks to its Board). It has recently updated its Risk Appetite Framework, allowing to take on increased levels of risk in the context of COVID-19 in pursuit of its strategic goals and targets.



### PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT: an area for improvement with efforts to strengthen it already underway.

The Global Fund is a performance-based organisation. Accordingly, it defines results to guide its operations, including funding decisions; although there have been, at times, challenges in implementing some of those decisions. It has invested in improving the quality and availability of data, and shifted its focus from project-level goals to higher-level results. The Global Fund holds itself clearly accountable for key performance indicators (KPIs), including at country level through grant-specific performance frameworks. However, existing tools are not fully effective in measuring all outcomes (particularly RSSH), as may not emerge within the time span of a three-year grant. Reporting processes ensure that most data is available for corporate reporting and planning, though limitations in the design of some performance data have led to poor operational uptake and use. While performance data informs decisions to adjust interventions, it is not clear whether they are used consistently as it is ultimately the responsibility of country stakeholders to follow up on actions and on country teams (CTs) to feed lessons into the next funding cycle.

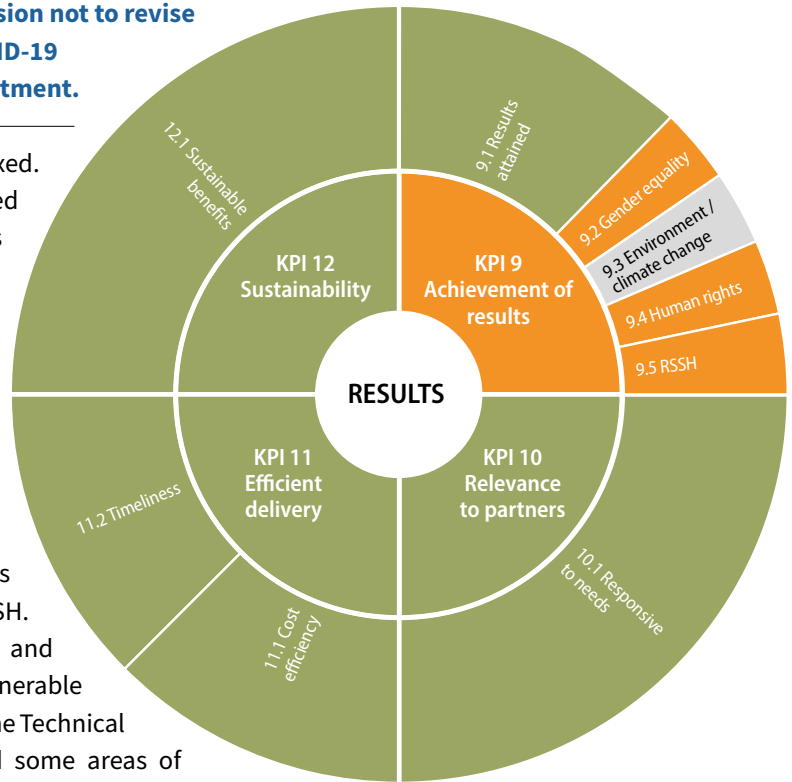


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To address challenges in the current evaluation framework, the November 2021 Board meeting approved a new evaluation model with the intent of contributing to better integrate M&E mechanisms. The Global Fund also needs to strengthen its organisational culture of learning from evaluations. To that end, it should add a mechanism for distilling and disseminating lessons learned which goes beyond the publication of evaluations and management responses, and which particularly improves information sharing with in-country partners.

**RESULTS are generally on track, and the decision not to revise targets downwards when faced with the COVID-19 pandemic attests to the Global Fund’s commitment.**

Progress across Global Fund KPIs has been mixed. Only Strategic Objective 4 (Mobilise Increased Resources) was consistently on track across all KPIs. The decision not to revise targets downwards in response to COVID-19 attests to the Global Fund’s commitment to the three diseases. However, it has led to shortfalls between results and targets, with Strategic Objective 1 (Maximise Impact against HIV, TB and Malaria) particularly affected. The Global Fund has also had issues with meeting KPI targets in gender equality and women’s empowerment, human rights, and RSSH. Moreover, when it comes to programming and the corresponding KPI results for key and vulnerable populations (KVPs), reviews commissioned by the Technical Evaluation Reference Group (TERG) identified some areas of concern, such as the lack of well-targeted interventions and the need to involve KVPs more closely in implementation.



Monitoring data for the efficient delivery of results are positive for both resource and cost-efficiency. Implementation is timely, although some inefficiencies in grant development processes, misalignment of budgets and timelines, and weak coordination between and within grants can still lead to delays. There has been notable progress towards financial sustainability through increased domestic resource mobilisation, though less in ensuring commitment and capacity for programmatic sustainability. Although the Global Fund has supported transition-readiness (i.e. the transition from Global Fund to domestic financing) in some countries, they still struggle in planning for long-term sustainability.

## ABOUT THIS ASSESSMENT

This was the second MOPAN assessment of the Global Fund. The first was conducted in the 2015-16 Assessment Cycle and published in 2017. France, the Republic of Korea and the United States championed this second assessment on behalf of MOPAN. It covers the period from 2017 to December 2021, though limited evidence from outside that time range may have been used. It relies on three lines of evidence: a document review; interviews with staff at headquarter and country or regional level, and with members of the Global Fund Board; and an online partner survey.<sup>1</sup>

## METHODOLOGY APPLIED IN THIS ASSESSMENT

The MOPAN 3.1 methodology employed in this assessment uses a framework of 12 key performance indicators (KPIs) and associated micro-indicators (MIs). It comprises standards that characterise an effective multilateral organisation. As part of MOPAN's efforts to ensure its assessments remain relevant to stakeholders and aligned with international best practice, the MOPAN methodology is always evolving. More details are available in the MOPAN 3.1 Methodology Manual.<sup>2</sup>

The Global Fund is a financing institution, rather than a programme-focused agency. Accordingly, MOPAN adapted its assessment framework, adjusting, excluding or interpreting a number of indicators. This assessment primarily covers the Global Fund Secretariat. However, some parts of the assessment framework also apply to the Global Fund's partners (recipients, sub-recipients, country coordinating mechanisms, etc.), especially with regard to accountability to beneficiaries and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse. Further information about how MOPAN applied its methodology to the Global Fund is available in Chapter 4 of the full report.

## ABOUT MOPAN

The Multilateral Organisation Performance Assessment Network (MOPAN) is a network of 21 members<sup>3</sup> that share a common interest in assessing the effectiveness of the major multilateral organisations they fund, including UN agencies, international financial institutions and vertical funds.

The Network generates, collects, analyses and presents relevant and credible information on the organisational and development effectiveness of the organisations it assesses. This knowledge base contributes to organisational learning among the organisations, their direct clients and partners, and other stakeholders. Network members and other stakeholders use the reports for their own accountability needs and as a source of input for strategic decision making.

1. The online survey was conducted among a sample of the Global Fund's partners that work with the organisation in 13 implementing countries (Bangladesh, Burundi, Côte d'Ivoire, Gambia, Nepal, Paraguay, Philippines, South Africa, Sudan, Tanzania, Ukraine, Viet Nam and Zimbabwe), in one multi-country grant (Multi-Country Grant South-Eastern Asia [MCG-AFAO]), and globally.

2. Available at [www.mopanonline.org](http://www.mopanonline.org).

3. As at 1 August 2022: Australia, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Korea, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Norway, Qatar, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom and the United States; the European Union and Türkiye are observers.