

Electronic Report to the Board

Secretariat's Recommendations on Funding from the COVID-19 Response Mechanism

GF/B45/ER04

Board Decision

Purpose of the paper: This document proposes the following decision point:

GF/B45/EDP04: Approval of the Secretariat's Recommendation on Funding from the 2021 COVID-19 Response Mechanism¹

Document Classification: Internal.

Document Circulation: Board Members, Alternate Board Members, Constituency Focal Points and Committee Members.

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¹ The Secretariat recommends the approval of funding from the 2021 COVID-19 Response Mechanism for Uganda, up to an amount of US\$126,862,493.

Decision

Decision Point: GF/B45/EDP04: Approval of the Secretariat's Recommendation on Funding from the COVID-19 Response Mechanism

The Board:

1. Notes its decision in GF/B44/EDP18, which requires the Secretariat to recommend to the Board, for its approval, any COVID-19 Response Mechanism ("C19RM") awards exceeding USD 35 million, as measured in aggregate by country (not including any funding awarded for COVID-19 commodities through fast-track investments or C19RM funding awarded in 2020);
2. Approves the funding recommended for each country, as listed in Table 1 of GF/B44/ER04; and
3. Delegates to the Secretariat authority to redistribute the overall upper-ceiling of funding available for each country among its constituent grants in accordance with the previously approved principles under GF/B44/EDP18.

This decision does not raise new, material budgetary implications for operating expenses.

Executive Summary

Context and Input Received

Secretariat's Recommendation on Funding from the COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM)

The Secretariat recommends the approval of 2021 funding from C19RM for Uganda, up to an amount of US\$126,862,493.

The country awards in Table 1 are recommended by the Secretariat following internal review processes, which included input from a COVID-19 technical advisory group of relevant ACT-Accelerator partners (CTAG) and GAC Partners. The due diligence was part of the review process and included extended exchanges between the Secretariat, Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) and in-country partners.

For each country funding request, the Secretariat reviewed: (i) the strategic focus of the investment; (ii) alignment with WHO technical guidance, the C19RM Technical Information Note, the National Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 and guidance from partners on alignment with the HIV, TB and malaria mitigation plans in the country; (iii) linkages with underlying grants and service disruption for HIV, TB and malaria; (iv) alignment with principles of stakeholder and community engagement, gender equity and human rights; (v) availability of appropriate procurement channels (global availability and sourcing implication of the health products requested to be procured), especially related to supply-side aspects, including the availability of scarce products; (vi) the strategic focus and technical soundness of the request and expected outcomes; (vii) the feasibility and assumptions of proposed activities and the associated budget, including performance and absorption of C19RM 2020 awards; (viii) complementarity/potential duplication with other available sources of funding; (ix) residual risks, including associated fiduciary risks related to implementation arrangements and/or interventions, and mitigating and assurance measures to ensure that funds are used for intended purposes; and (x) value for money.

A list of documents per country to substantiate the Board decision is provided below.

- C19RM Funding Request;
- C19RM budget (as revised based on final recommendation for the Board approval, if applicable);
- List of health products (as revised, based on final recommendation for the Board approval, if applicable);
- National Strategic Preparedness and Response Plan for COVID-19 and budget; and
- Other essential support documents of the C19RM Funding Request:
 - Quantification or needs assessment for COVID-19 health products;
 - COVID-19 National Testing Strategy (where available);
 - C19RM Health Product Management Template (HPMT);
 - C19RM Funding Landscape Table;
 - HIV, TB and malaria program mitigation plans (where relevant);
 - Civil Society suggestions for inclusion in the C19RM Full Funding Request.

All relevant documents supporting the Secretariat's recommendation to the Board have been made available on the Governance Extranet and are accessible through [this link](#).

Input Sought

The Board is requested to review the Secretariat recommendation and approve, on a 'no objection' basis, decision point GF/B45/EDP04.

Table 1: Secretariat's Recommendation on Funding from C19RM²

Please note that each country name is [linked](#) to the extranet site where relevant supporting documents are available for review.

| Country/ Multicountry | Grant name | Currency | C19RM 2020 carry-over amount ³ | Previously approved C19RM 2021 award ⁴ | <u>C19RM 2021 recommended amount for Board approval</u> | Total C19RM 2021 funding | % of 2020-2022 allocation | Total C19RM 2021 funding including 2020 carry-over | C19RM 2021 Unfunded Demand |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------|---|---|---|--------------------------|---------------------------|--|----------------------------|
| Uganda | UGA-C-TASO | US\$ | 199,205 | 0 | 6,604,236 | 126,862,493 | 21.91% | 134,642,193 | 337,921,514 |
| | UGA-H-MOPPED | US\$ | 7,580,494 | 0 | 120,258,258 | | | | |

² The C19RM Investment Committee recommends C19RM Full Funding Requests awards of more than US\$35 million to the Global Fund Board for approval. This amount, measured in aggregate per country, does not include any funding awarded through the C19RM Fast-track process or through C19RM in 2020. The C19RM Investment Committee may also recommend awards under US\$35 million to the Global Fund Board for approval where it determines that the non-health product components of an award are of a nature and scale which raise significant concerns about risk and complexity.

³ Estimated funds remaining from C19RM 2020 awards previously approved by the C19RM Investment Committee and carried over to this new award.

⁴ This includes Secretariat approved Fast-track and Full Funding Request awards, as well as awards previously approved by the Board.

Summary of the Secretariat's Funding Recommendations

In this report, the Secretariat presents a detailed outline of the proposed C19RM 2021 investments in Uganda, for the Board approval. This is to provide the Board with visibility and insights into the refined and expanded Secretariat-led review process and due diligence applied to C19RM 2021 investments, as well as the approach to C19RM Investment Committee consideration of GAC/CTAG partner review outcomes. Given the anticipated increase in the volume of requests in the later C19RM submission windows, future reports will be further streamlined and focused around essential information required for Board decision-making in order to facilitate speed and agility, balanced against risk considerations.

Uganda: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (UGA-H-MOFPD) and The AIDS Support Organization (UGA-C-TASO)

1.1 Background and context

Uganda recorded its first case of COVID-19 on 21 March 2020. By 14 June 2021, Uganda reported 63,099 COVID-19 cases and 434 deaths with Kampala and Wakiso districts reporting the highest number of COVID-19 cases. Since late May 2021, Uganda has faced a sharp increase in reported COVID-19 cases and already faced a new wave of the pandemic with the presence of Alpha, Beta and Delta COVID-19 new variants. In response to the unprecedented situation, Uganda is stepping up its response according to its 2020 National COVID-19 Preparedness and Response Plan (NSPRP) aiming at containing the epidemic through prevention and control measures to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 in health facilities, institutions and community levels.

The overall goal of this C19RM funding is to contribute to the national response to control COVID-19 by reducing transmission, morbidity and mortality and to minimize the health, social and economic disruption resulting from the pandemic. The funding will contribute to strengthening Uganda's health systems including laboratory, and surveillance systems and will support developing capacity for early detection, confirmation, referral and case management. Investments will support raising public awareness on the risk factors for transmission, prevention and control of COVID-19 and promote infection prevention and control practices. The investments also aim to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the overall health system, and specifically on HIV, TB and malaria, to sustain the gains made to date, ensure continuity of services and maintain quality of care.

COVID-19 impact on HIV, TB and malaria programs. In addition to the high morbidity and mortality due to COVID-19, Uganda has faced significant health services delivery disruptions causing excess morbidity and mortality, including from HIV, TB and malaria. During the lockdown period in April 2020, treatment coverage of TB dropped by around 48 percent and overall, there was a 60 percent decrease in the number of GeneXpert TB tests in 2020. There are also concerns that TB patients may be less likely to report symptoms for fear of being suspected of COVID-19 or contracting COVID-19 from health facilities during TB consultations. Moreover, a 136 percent increase of TB was observed among health care workers in the third quarter of 2020. Disruption of HIV services affected a substantial number of people living with HIV with dire consequences, particularly on adherence to HIV treatment, with 11,019 additional HIV-related deaths reported in 2020. In addition, HIV services observed stopping of anti-retroviral treatment (ART) and increased loss to follow up of people on ART. COVID-19 has also adversely affected malaria service delivery as universal restrictions and lock downs had negative effects on implementation of malaria interventions and care-seeking. In this regard, adaptations, to include COVID-19 preventative measures, were applied to the roll out of operations to implement the 2020 universal long-lasting insecticidal nets campaign.

C19RM 2020 Awards. Under the Global Fund's C19RM 2020 awards, Uganda received US\$51,935,105 and utilized country grant savings totaling US\$10,510,356 to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on the fights against

fight HIV, TB and malaria and initiate urgent improvements in health and community systems. The C19RM 2020 award was primarily invested in procurement of essential COVID-19 diagnostic tests as well as personal protective equipment (PPEs) for COVID-19 related service delivery, routine service provision at health facilities (including for HIV, TB and malaria) as well as for community interventions, including gender-based violence (GBV) interventions. In addition, it financed oxygen equipment, cold chain systems / lab freezers, and related procurement and supply chain management costs. US\$54,665,761 (87 percent) of the C19RM 2020 award will be spent by the end of June 2021 and an estimated US\$7,779,700 will be integrated into C19RM 2021 investments to cover continuing activities in the third and fourth quarters of 2021 and the first quarter of 2022.

1.2 Strategic focus and prioritization of C19RM 2021

Uganda's C19RM 2021 full funding request highlights critical interventions and procurement of COVID-19 health products as essential components of the national response to COVID-19 at all levels including community level. These interventions will contribute to efforts to curb the increasing spread of the COVID-19 pandemic epidemic and to mitigate disruptions of HIV, TB and malaria programs, including for communities and key populations. The Secretariat recommends the following activities to be prioritized for immediate award in line with the three reporting categories as outlined below:

a. Mitigating the impact of COVID-19 on HIV, TB and malaria programs:

- Investments in bi-directional TB and COVID-19 activities, including training health workers to screen for both diseases at entry to health facilities, as well as facilitation of both COVID-19 and TB screening, sample collection, contact tracing and medicine home delivery to TB survivors and community health workers. Investments also include the scale-up of community interventions initiated by the National Tuberculosis and Leprosy Programme/ Ministry of Health to reinforce community awareness, screening, testing and treatment of TB.
- Investments in HIV mitigation activities and increasing access to services for people living with HIV; including activities to improve the coordination of HIV treatment and care interventions and supporting the engagement and empowerment of civil society organizations (CSOs) in integrated HIV and COVID-19 care and treatment.
- C19RM 2021 funding will also complement the existing resources through the underlying Global Fund 2021-2023 grants as well as domestic and the US President's Emergency Plan for Aid Relief (PEPFAR) resources and contribute to ensuring the continuity of service provision in the context of COVID19. This includes prioritized community outreach interventions that will contribute to sustained scaled-up of access to health services by key and vulnerable populations.
- Provision of PPE is prioritized as an important mitigation action with special reference to malaria case management and vector control measures at health facilities and at the community level, including with respect to integrated Community Case Management (iCCM).

b. Reinforcing the COVID-19 national response:

- Improved coordination of the COVID-19 response at the national, district and community levels: Support activities for operational oversight by the Incident Management Team (IMT) at central level, as well as district level task forces (DTF) to enhance coordination of COVID-19 response at all levels, the including national, district and community levels, and with civil society organizations (CSOs) and community members.
- Expanded COVID-19 testing capacity at health facilities and community level: C19RM funding will significantly contribute to diagnosis of COVID-19 cases by procuring laboratory commodities for COVID-19 diagnostics and testing through the Global Fund's pooled procurement mechanism (PPM). Relevant commodities include PCR reagents and SARS-CoV-2 Ag RDTs, sample collection materials and consumables, SARS-CoV-2 molecular testing platforms and molecular assays, genomic sequencing reagents and related sample collection materials. Given the rising cases of COVID-19 in

Uganda, community testing has been highlighted and prioritized with additional Ag RDT to be procured urgently.

- Protecting the health workforce and infection prevention/control: As part of the national plan for infection prevention and control and protection of the health workforce, PPE will be procured through the PPM and distributed among frontline health providers in routine health care service provision, COVID-19 service delivery, as well as in HIV/TB/malaria service provision. Part of the allocation for PPE will be provided at the country level through the civil society Principal Recipient for use in community interventions including for iCCM.
- Expansion of the country's oxygen supply systems: Building on the 2020 C19RM award, this new funding will contribute to the expansion of the country's oxygen generation capacity, operationalization of the oxygen distribution system, as well as improvement of the oxygen delivery platforms. Investments will consist of installing additional regional oxygen plants, procuring oxygen plant maintenance contracts, recruiting and training additional plant operators, procuring a standby generator for oxygen plants at regional referral hospitals and oxygen cylinder transport trucks and installation of manifold system and piping.

c. Urgent improvement to health and community systems:

- Investments aim to strengthen health systems, including laboratory and infection surveillance systems and health care waste management systems at regional and district levels to respond to the growing risk and spread of COVID-19. This includes expansion of COVID-19 testing capacity using Ag RDTs and PCR to regional referral hospitals, health facilities and at points of entry.
- This funding will enable improvement of Uganda's health care waste management systems and implementation strategy and installation of the waste management facility, including procurement and operationalization of incinerators, minimizing healthcare associated infections, environment degradation and development and spread of pathogens.
- Responding to and preventing GBV: This funding also focuses on GBV care, support and referrals in order to respond to the heightened GBV during COVID-19-related lockdowns and restrictions.
- Community system strengthening: Investments cover the provision of community level preventive and diagnostic interventions as well as facilitating community-led monitoring of access to essential health services by community members, as well as continued strengthening of the safety and security of key populations (KP) health and community set-ups. Funding will also provide emergency support for affected community members.

Funding landscape and sustainability of health system. Uganda's National COVID-19 Resurgence Plan (June 2021 – June 2022) has a funding need of US\$600,535,742, out of which funding commitments of up to US\$185,734,992 have been made by the US Government and World Bank among others for the year 2021. Funding gaps are addressed by prioritizing interventions and allocating resources accordingly, which is referenced in the NSPRP (March 2020 - June 2021). In 2021-2023 the Global Fund investment seeks to consolidate the achievements from the implementation of this plan working closely with the national authorities and supported by development partners and key stakeholders. Achievement of long-term sustainability of Uganda's COVID-19 response, health and development programs will allow the country to maintain progress and continue to expand services after Global Fund C19RM support ends, in line with Uganda's health priorities.

Implementation arrangements. Under the C19RM 2020, the funds awarded to Uganda were incorporated under the UGA-H-MoFPED grant with implementation by the Ministry of Health and The AIDS Support Organization (TASO). In the proposed C19RM 2021 award, the approach will build on lessons learned to further expand and ensure adequate implementation of community and civil society organization interventions. In accordance with the national COVID-19 response structure, the Government of Uganda's IMT will oversee the prioritized activities carried out by designated units and sub-recipients. Uganda did not submit a fast-track funding request.

C19RM Assurance and Risk Mitigation. Proposed assurance activities include LFA follow-up of the implementation and maintenance of oxygen supply systems; review and follow-up of the implementation of health care waste management systems, including a costed implementation strategy; procurement review at pre-award stage for locally sourced health products and related services; and LFA spot checks to be conducted after 6 to 12 months of implementation to review efficiency of controls and the flow of commodities from central level to health facilities. In addition, the LFA will, through regular progress update/disbursement request reviews, provides further assurance on in-country expenditures and fixed assets procured under C19RM and leverage internal audit reviews for additional preventive controls. As part of the monitoring quality assurance mechanism of absorption of CR19RM funds, the Principal Recipients have been requested to develop work-plans for CR19RM activities based on the master implementation plan. At the end of each quarter, the Local Fund Agent (LFA) shall review the work plan and determine the progress of implementation.

1.3 GAC and CTAG Partner Review

- GAC and CTAG partners found the Uganda request sound and aligned to the NSPRP and WHO guidance. Partners also commended the involvement of civil society organizations, communities as well as the national COVID-19 coordinating body in the preparation of the request.
- Partners recommended dedicating more resources for mitigation activities to address disruption to TB services, noting that most of the TB funding is in the above base allocation. Accordingly, the Secretariat prioritized the critical interventions for TB mitigation actions, including community awareness, screening and treatment (CAST) campaigns and strengthen capacity of health workers to screen for both COVID-19 and TB at entry to health facilities.
- Partners also highlighted the impact of COVID-19 on adherence and people living with HIV who are lost to follow-up as an emerging issue. The Secretariat clarified that, in addition to prioritized activities to be funded under C19RM, resources within the 2021-2023 HIV grant as well as HIV mitigation actions carried over from the C19RM 2020 award will effectively complement the existing resources from the Government of Uganda and PEPFAR to ensure retention of people living with HIV in adherence to antiretroviral therapy.
- Partners asked about the coordination with other donors and other sources of funding. The Secretariat provided assurance that technical and development partners including the US government agencies and other donors significantly contributed to the preparation of the country's C19RM request. GIZ technical team also contributed through the mock review of the funding application.
- In alignment with partners' inputs on the budget allocated to addressing the impact of COVID-19 on human rights and maintaining access to services for KP, increased investment in KP community/outreach programs were prioritized for immediate award from the above base allocation request. In addition, while partners appreciated the focus on GBV care, support and referrals, they also underlined the need to invest in GBV prevention, and to incorporate more integrated TB/COVID-19 community, rights and gender interventions. The Secretariat confirmed that funding requested to address GBV prioritized in the base allocation is to complement and extend resources made available through the 2021-2023 grants which include GBV Prevention interventions throughout 2021-2023.
- Partners sought clarification on the quantification of PPE and recommended that PPE selected comply with WHO guidelines. Partners also noted that the quantification of diagnostic tests requested could be adjusted considering the ongoing surge of the COVID-19 pandemic in the country. Accordingly, the Secretariat review teams ensured alignment with WHO guidelines regarding rational use of COVID-19 PPE and prioritized additional Ag RDT kits for the COVID-19 testing strategy for immediate award, with the aim of strengthening the national response to a current sharp increase in new COVID-19 cases.

1.4 C19RM Investment Committee review and recommendation

- The C19RM Investment Committee confirmed that the Uganda C19RM 2021 full funding request was endorsed by all CCM members and by the national COVID-19 response coordinating body (IMT). In addition, the funding request development process was carried out in an inclusive and transparent manner including constituencies from civil society (people living with HIV as well as people affected by Malaria and TB), key affected populations, government ministries/agencies, and health development partners.
- The C19RM Investment Committee acknowledged the rapidly evolving situation of COVID-19 in Uganda and endorsed the recommended prioritization of key activities from the above base allocation, including integrated TB/COVID-19 interventions, additional investments in the national testing strategy, and PPE for routine service delivery.
- Based on GAC and CTAG as well as Secretariat reviews, the C19RM Investment Committee considered the proposed expansion of oxygen activities appropriate, recognizing that these investments will contribute to health outcomes beyond the COVID-19 pandemic. Specifically, the expansion of pressure swing adsorption (PSA) services was deemed sound considering the existing infrastructure in Uganda.
- The C19RM Investment Committee further recognized the full funding request investments in CRG activities as relatively strong and that the impacts of COVID-19 on GBV and human rights, and on access to services are effectively reflected. The importance of community actors and organizations in effective responses to COVID-19 and in mitigating disruption to HIV, TB and malaria services is well described and investments across a range of interventions have been prioritized, in line with the activities highlighted by civil society organizations in the supporting documents.

Table 2: Budget distribution by priority area

| Country/ Multi- country | Mitigate COVID-19 impact on HIV, TB and malaria programs | | Reinforce COVID-19 national response | | Urgent improvement to health and community systems | | | | Total |
|-------------------------------|--|------|--------------------------------------|-------|--|------|------------------|-------|------------------|
| | | | | | Community, Rights and Gender | | RSSH Investments | | |
| | Amount | % | Amount | % | Amount | % | Amount | % | Amount |
| Uganda | US\$10,584,560 | 8.3% | US\$92,740,167 | 73.1% | US\$5,327,156 | 4.2% | US\$18,210,610 | 14.4% | US\$ 126,862,493 |

Table 3: COVID-19 Health Product Categories distribution by investment type

| Country ⁵ | Diagnostics RDT | Diagnostics PCR | PPE | Therapeutics O2 | Therapeutics other | Other |
|----------------------|-----------------|-----------------|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|----------------|
| Uganda | US\$ 19,171,921 | US\$ 9,795,351 | US\$42,053,767 | US\$ 5,492,808 | US\$ 7,479,299 | US\$ 1,262,230 |

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⁵ Excluding roll-over amounts from C19RM awards in 2020.

Annex 1 – Past Decisions

Pursuant to the Governance Plan for Impact as approved at the 32nd Board Meeting,⁶ the following summary of relevant past decision points is submitted to contextualize the decision point proposed in this paper.

| Relevant past Decision Point | Summary and Impact |
|---|--|
| Decision Point: GF/B44/EDP18: Second Extension of C19RM Timeline and Operational Flexibility for COVID-19 March 2021⁷ | The Board approved a further extension of the timelines for the receipt, award, and use of funds for the Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism based on further modifications proposed by the Secretariat |
| Decision Point: GF/B43/EDP12: Extension of C19RM Timeline and Operational Flexibility for COVID-19 September 2020⁸ | The Board approved an extension of the time limit for the award of funds from the Global Fund COVID-19 Response Mechanism |
| GF/B42/EDP11: Additional Support for Country Responses to COVID-19 April 2020⁹ | The Board approved operational flexibilities and additional support to countries, including the COVID-19 Response Mechanism, to enable the Global Fund and countries to effectively respond to the negative impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. |

⁶ <https://www.theglobalfund.org/board-decisions/b32-dp05/>

⁷ <https://www.theglobalfund.org/board-decisions/b44-edp18/>

⁸ <https://www.theglobalfund.org/board-decisions/b43-edp12/>

⁹ <https://www.theglobalfund.org/board-decisions/b42-edp11/>