UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour

Summary & Rationale

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Introduction and background

National AIDS programmes are receiving increasing amounts of international finance to scale up their responses to the epidemic. However, national capacities to implement large-scale prevention and treatment programmes remain low, requiring the provision of a significant amount of technical support[1] by the UN system and others. Unfortunately, the amount of technical support provided is not sufficient, the quality of support is variable, it is sometimes supply-driven and inappropriate, and a lack of harmonization among providers has seen the creation of a wide variety of approaches, each with a separate management and accountability system. As a result, national partners are not only being denied an adequate level of support, the support that is provided is disorganized and subject to high transaction costs. There is duplication in some areas, and gaps in others. For example, a country seeking technical support for HIV prevention education for youth might approach four Cosponsors with a mandate in that area. National governance systems are often frustrated by the confusion, and technical support providers are not held accountable for poor performance.

Lack of clarity in the UNAIDS technical support division of labour can be attributed to a number of factors. First, the exceptional urgency to provide technical support in the face of rapidly expanding and evolving epidemics accounts for a certain amount of poor coordination. Second, the need and demand for UNAIDS technical support has escalated rapidly in line with each successive round of finance made available to countries from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria, yet this work has not been explicitly financed (the so-called 'unfunded mandate'). Third, the growth in the number of UNAIDS Cosponsors (and other partners) providing technical support has compounded the challenge of coordination. Fourth, individual Cosponsors are leveraging resources in an increasingly competitive environment, resulting in significant mandate creep. Although individually well intentioned, the collective technical support response of UNAIDS has been sub-optimal.

The result is an implementation crisis—available resources are not being used, and the epidemic continues to outpace the response. There is growing international recognition of this crisis, and donors are expressing increasing interest in providing additional funding to the UN system to play a stronger and better coordinated technical support role. Donors have made clear, however, that increased financing is contingent upon the UN system improving its ability to plan and coordinate the provision of quality technical support, as well as take greater responsibility for its delivery. All successful alliances develop explicit divisions of labour in order to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of their collective response. UNAIDS should be no exception.

UNAIDS division of labour: a new dawn

In its 14 June report, the Global Task Team on Improving AIDS Coordination Among Multilateral Institutions and International Donors called on the UNAIDS Secretariat to lead a process with UNAIDS Cosponsors to clarify and cost a UN system division of labour for technical support to assist countries to implement their annual priority AIDS action plans[2].

UNAIDS Cosponsors have embraced this recommendation as it provides an opportunity to develop a significantly different approach to the division of labour at a time when failure to do so would be particularly detrimental. Although national partners value the high-quality technical support that

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[1] In this document the term "technical support" encompasses both short-term technical assistance and longer-term capacity-building assistance.
[2] Final report available at http://www.unaids.org/NetTools/Misc/DocInfo.aspx?LANG=en&href=http%3a%2f%2fgva-doc-owl%2fWEBcontent%2fDocuments%2fpub%2fPublications%2fIRC-pub06%2fJC1125-GlobalTaskTeamReport_en%26%2346%3bpdf

UNAIDS can provide, they increasingly have a wider range of suppliers to choose from. In this competitive environment, it is therefore critical that a rational division of labour among UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors emerges to encourage further specialization and clearer differentiation. Following the endorsement of the Global Task Team recommendations by the UNAIDS Programme Coordinating Board in June 2005, the executive leadership decided that, in light of the urgency of addressing the division of labour issue, the Secretariat and Cosponsor Global Coordinators on HIV/AIDS and Focal Points should begin work even in the absence of formal direction from their individual governing bodies.

The proposed approach is unique in two important respects. First, it is underpinned by a common analysis of implementation bottlenecks and of the comparative advantages of each of the UNAIDS organizations. This enables UNAIDS to deliver, for the first time, a unitary, unified and consolidated UNAIDS-sourced technical support plan. The plan addresses implementation blockages based on the comparative advantages of the Cosponsors and a rational division of labour. This is in contrast to the presentation of piecemeal, parallel and sometimes competitive appeals of the past. Second, a novel approach has been developed to ensure accountability for the sourcing and management of technical support which involves the identification of Lead Organizations for each technical support area.

The new approach to the technical-support division of labour complements a number of other initiatives underway to reinforce the rational division of labour within UNAIDS at global and country levels. These include the ongoing review of the Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations as well as the strengthening of the Unified Budget and Workplan.

The Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan

An interagency working group was convened to agree a division of labour. The group agreed on 17 broad areas of UNAIDS technical support and identified a 'Lead Organization' and 'Main Partners' in each of these areas. Each of the UNAIDS organizations leads in at least one technical area. This information is presented in a Technical Support Division of Labour matrix (see Table below). The 17 technical support areas are grouped around three thematic headings:

1. Strategic planning, governance and financial management;

2. Scaling up interventions; and

3. M&E, strategic information, knowledge sharing and accountability.

UNAIDS Secretariat and Cosponsors were tasked with using this framework to develop a Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan for AIDS (2006-2007)[3]. This will become an iterative process undertaken by the Global Joint Problem-Solving and Implementation Support Team (GIST).

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[3] UNAIDS Consolidated Technical Support Plan - Contributing To Unblocking Implementation Barriers At The Country Level: The Unfunded Mandate Of The UN System.
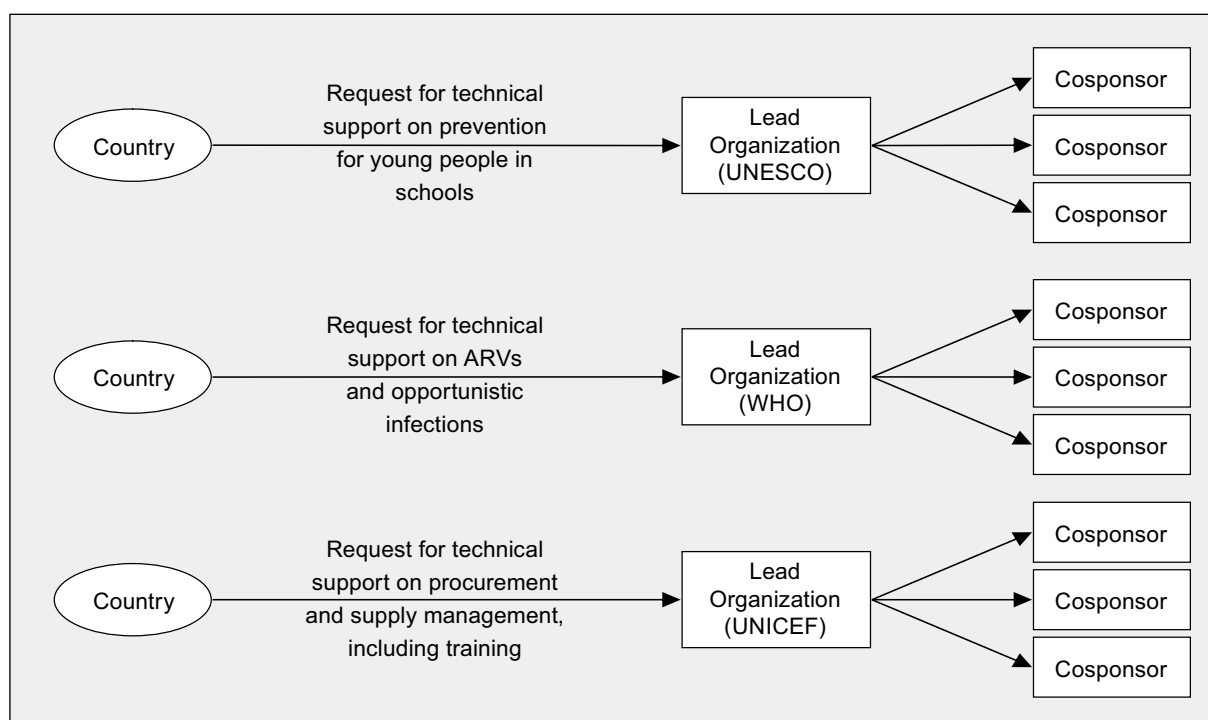
Technical support areas	Lead Organizations	Main Partners
1. STRATEGIC PLANNING, GOVERNANCE AND FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT		
HIV/AIDS, development, governance and mainstreaming, including instruments such as PRSPs, and enabling legislation, human rights and gender	UNDP	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO, World Bank, UNFPA; UNHCR
Support to strategic, prioritized and costed national plans; financial management; human resources; capacity and infrastructure development; impact alleviation and sectoral work	World Bank	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNDP, UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO
Procurement and supply management, including training	UNICEF	UNDP, UNFPA, WHO, World Bank
HIV/AIDS workplace policy and programmes, private-sector mobilization	ILO	UNESCO, UNDP
2. SCALING UP INTERVENTIONS		
Prevention		
Prevention of HIV transmission in healthcare settings, blood safety, counselling and testing, sexually-transmitted infection diagnosis and treatment, and linkage of HIV prevention with AIDS treatment services	WHO	UNICEF, UNFPA, ILO
Provision of information and education, condom programming, prevention for young people outside schools and prevention efforts targeting vulnerable groups (except injecting drug users, prisoners and refugee populations)	UNFPA	ILO, UNAIDS Secretariat, UNESCO, UNICEF, UNODC, WHO
Prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT)	UNICEF, WHO	UNFPA, WFP
Prevention for young people in education institutions	UNESCO	ILO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WHO, WFP
Prevention of transmission of HIV among injecting drug users and in prisons	UNODC	UNDP, UNICEF, WHO, ILO
Overall policy, monitoring and coordination on prevention	UNAIDS Secretariat	All Cosponsors
Treatment, care and support		
Antiretroviral treatment and monitoring, prophylaxis and treatment for opportunistic infections (adults and children)	WHO	UNICEF
Care and support for people living with HIV, orphans and vulnerable children, and affected households.	UNICEF	WFP, WHO, ILO
Dietary/nutrition support	WFP	UNESCO, UNICEF, WHO
Addressing HIV in emergency, reconstruction and security settings		
Strengthening HIV/AIDS response in context of security, uniformed services and humanitarian crises	UNAIDS Secretariat	UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNFPA
Addressing HIV among displaced populations (refugees and IDPs)	UNHCR	UNESCO, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO, UNDP
3. MONITORING AND EVALUATION, STRATEGIC INFORMATION, KNOWLEDGE SHARING AND ACCOUNTABILITY		
Strategic information, knowledge sharing and accountability, coordination of national efforts, partnership building, advocacy, and monitoring and evaluation, including estimation of national prevalence and projection of demographic impact	UNAIDS Secretariat	ILO, UNDP, UNESCO, UNFPA, UNHCR, UNICEF, UNODC, WFP, WHO, World Bank
Establishment and implementation of surveillance for HIV, through sentinel/population-based surveys	WHO	UNAIDS Secretariat

Lead Organization concept

Critical to the implementation of the Division of Labour is the Lead Organization concept. The Lead Organization—either a Cosponsor or the Secretariat—serves as a single entry point for government and other relevant country-level stakeholders requiring support within a particular UNAIDS technical support area. The Lead Organization is primarily responsible for coordinating the provision and/or facilitation of this technical support, as identified in the Technical Support Division of Labour matrix above. The Main Partners in the matrix are the other members of the UNAIDS family providing technical support within the area.

Upon receipt of a technical support request, the Lead Organization must inform the Chair of the UN Theme Group on HIV/AIDS and the UNAIDS Country Coordinator, and rapidly consult with the concerned Main Partners to determine the optimal provider(s) and financing of the support (see three illustrative examples in Figure 1).

Figure 1: Lead Organization's Role

The Lead Organization also plays a proactive leadership role by taking a lead in global policy discussions regarding the technical support area, establishing global and regional support mechanisms for the delivery of country-level support, identifying gaps in the provision of support at country level, advising country-level stakeholders, and stimulating demand.

If it is determined that UNAIDS does not have capacity available to fully respond to the request in a timely manner, the Lead Organization, in consultation with Main Partners, is responsible for facilitating provision of the support through other means, such as knowledge hubs, UNAIDS Technical Support Facilities and other technical support networks.

Additionally, the Lead Organization acts as a liaison between UNAIDS and other providers of technical support in its area, as well as between UN Theme Groups and global support mechanisms, such as the newly established Global Joint Problem-Solving and Implementation Team (GIST).

Should a UNAIDS Cosponsor or the Secretariat receive a request for technical support in an area where it is not the Lead Organization, it should refer the client to the appropriate Lead Organization for follow-up. If the recipient of the request is a Main Partner in the technical support area, it should be invited to join initial discussions between the Lead Organization and the client.

It is important to stress that the Lead Organization plays a brokering role, and should not be viewed as sole provider of UN technical support in its area. Similarly, the Lead Organization is not responsible for managing the financing for technical support provided by a Main Partner. In other words, the relationship between the Lead Organization and its Main Partners is not hierarchical and does not represent an additional layer of bureaucracy[4]. The overarching goal is to improve the quality of UN technical support, requiring both the Lead Organization and its Main Partners to focus on rapidly providing a service and achieving a concrete result, as opposed to focusing on the process as a vehicle to increase an individual agency's ability to leverage resources.

In the event of disputes among a Lead Organization and its Main Partners, or complaints by country-level stakeholders regarding the support being provided in a particular area, the issue should be raised within the UN Theme Group. In the event that a solution cannot be found, the issue can be forwarded by the Lead Organization, a Main Partner or a country-level stakeholder to the GIST for consideration.

Alternate lead organizations

If a Lead Organization does not have an in-country presence, or if a Lead Organization fails to adequately play its role, the UN Theme Group will select an alternate Lead Organization from among the Main Partners in the technical support area. This decision will be formally reported to the national AIDS coordinating authority, major country-level stakeholders and the UNAIDS Secretariat.

Due process, reporting and accountability

The Lead Organization is primarily accountable for ensuring that country-level stakeholders receive high-quality, technical support within its area, either through services provided by UNAIDS or facilitated through an outside provider. Procedures currently being developed by the UNAIDS Technical Support Facilities will be adopted to ensure quality assurance with respect to the identification, selection, management and review of technical support delivered.

The provider of technical support will be required to report in a timely manner to the Lead Organization on its activities according to a standardized format. The Lead Organization is responsible for: (a) compiling data on technical support requests and the technical support provided and/or facilitated by it and its Main Partners; and (b) submitting regular, results-oriented summary reports to the UN Theme Group Chair and the UNAIDS Country Coordinator. The summary report will include information on expenditures and performance, in terms of results and outcomes, based on indicators identified during planning.

Progress on the implementation of the UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour approach will be reported quarterly by UN Theme Groups to UNAIDS Regional Support Teams (RSTs). Each RST will compile the Theme Group reports to update the UN agencies' Regional Directors on progress made concerning the UN technical support plan implementation. The RSTs will also consolidate the reports and submit six-monthly report to the UNAIDS Secretariat, which will provide global-level reports to the UNAIDS Committee of Cosponsoring Organizations.

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[4] The Lead Organization concept will, however, replace the notion of 'convening' and 'coordinating' organization concepts which do not connate the same level of accountability.

Next steps

1. Secretariat to present the UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour and Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan for AIDS to 3rd Global Fund Replenishment Conference 5-7 September, London.

2. Cosponsors to share the UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour and Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan for AIDS with governing bodies for information (and regional bodies where appropriate—e.g., WHO).

3. Secretariat to disseminate the UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour and Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan for AIDS through UN system with explanatory note to Resident Coordinators, Theme Group Chairs, UNAIDS Country Coordinators encouraging them to organize local consultations with national counterparts.

4. Secretariat to disseminate the UNAIDS Technical Support Division of Labour and Consolidated UN Technical Support Plan for AIDS to national authorities with explanatory note to Departments of Foreign Affairs and chairpersons of national AIDS coordinating authorities and Country Coordinating Mechanisms.

5. The development of a dissemination strategy to other relevant parties, such regional bodies (e.g. SADC and EU), who may not be covered above.