Principles for technical support

Principles for all

1. Recognize that requests for technical support are not an admission of failure or poor performance but rather that technical support is a valuable and measurable investment in countries' national, regional and local HIV responses, bringing added value to programme implementation.
2. Recognize that technical support needs are both organizational (including issues of governance, leadership and management) and thematic (including provision of HIV prevention, treatment, care and support programmes).
3. Recognize that technical support aims to build long-term, sustainable capacity and as such is not a one-off event but rather is a continuing, cyclical process, requiring long-term and flexible investment, while recognizing the need for one-off support in specific instances.
4. Recognize that the provision of technical support must not only be timely but also forward looking, anticipating future technical support needs, and that the time of both technical support users and providers is itself a resource that when well invested will contribute to building long-term, sustainable capacity.
5. Recognize that technical support should be provided in keeping with the cultural context, particularly in terms of language issues, and the HIV epidemic itself and should evolve in relation to the growth of countries, organizations and communities.
6. Recognize that supporting horizontal learning processes such as South–South cooperation, organizational twinning and peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, based on learning from experience, provides a foundation for real independence, inner confidence and sustainable capacity development. Horizontal learning can be supported as both a method and a methodology.
7. Recognize that responding to HIV is an indigenous, locally driven process, requiring support for epidemiologically informed, evidence-informed and locally developed solutions, which can be supported by linking local processes to wider learning bilaterally, regionally and internationally.
8. Affirm that national dialogue, leadership and commitment are crucial to ensuring that the demand and supply of technical support are coordinated and harmonized at all steps of the process, including identifying[1] and prioritizing technical support needs; identifying collective strengths; developing appropriate terms of reference; planning and budgeting for technical support activities; implementing, monitoring and evaluating technical support; following up recommendations; and strengthening the provision of future technical support.
9. Commit to involve people living with HIV and women, young people, sexual minorities and other key populations at higher risk in identifying technical support needs and involve them as technical support providers by providing resources and supporting sustained efforts to build the capacities of these individuals and their organizations as technical support providers.
10. Recognize that all parties are mutually accountable for ensuring that the provision of technical support is inclusive, transparent and cost effective.
11. Commit to collect and make publicly available, in easily understandable formats, complete data on technical support expenditure and outcomes, in accordance with the policies and operating rules of technical support funders and providers, and those of donors concerning the publication of information.
12. Reaffirm commitment to the "Three Ones" principles,[2] the Declaration adopted at the High-Level Forum on Harmonization in Rome, Italy (February 2003) and the *Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness: Ownership, Harmonisation, Alignment, Results and Mutual Accountability* (March 2005) by providing and implementing technical support in line with them.
13. Recognize that technical support often involves extensive and expensive travel and endeavour to reduce this through measures such as using consultants from the country or region, telephone conferencing, video links and other means.

Roles and responsibilities of technical support providers

1. Assist technical support users, through a process of dialogue, to determine their own capacity-building requirements and technical support needs, including developing terms of reference and performance indicators, respecting users' priorities and aligning technical support with organizational and national AIDS plans and cycles.
2. Assist governments and partners to develop and implement the country's national AIDS plan.
3. Support proactive planning and budgeting for technical support, including through providing untied grants so as to allow users to fund their self-identified priorities.
4. Maximize the use of country-level procurement, financial management and reporting systems.
5. Ensure that technical support is of high quality, delivered by well-trained and professional providers and, where possible, by local technical experts. Where this is less feasible, make every effort to use external experts in a manner that builds in-country expertise.
6. Review technical support policies and procedures and align them with the principles above.
7. Invest in their own capacity development in an array of skills—including clinical, epidemiological, monitoring and evaluation, management and social planning and research, and community engagement—so that technical support is needs led and priority driven, culturally appropriate, coordinated, monitored and of high quality.
8. Ensure confidentiality and respect for the client (technical support requester), regardless of the funding source.
9. As part of the preparatory process, carry out a quick but comprehensive situation assessment to ensure that there is no duplication of the work of other donors or in-country efforts.
10. Commit to building and transferring technical skills rather than simply carrying out a defined piece of work.
11. Support local research institutes and other local institutions to build in-country technical capacity.

Roles and responsibilities of technical support users

1. Assume responsibility for:
   - defining the areas they seek to strengthen, their own capacity development needs in line with their organization's strategic plan and country's national AIDS plan;
   - drawing up plans for how to meet these needs, in collaboration with technical support providers, identifying what support, if any, they need from providers, including for identifying technical support needs.
2. Plan for technical support by developing procedures and mechanisms such as terms of reference, selection and performance criteria, deliverables, steering committees, etc. to facilitate the timely and effective implementation of technical support.
3. Actively promote and support the use of local technical support providers, particularly people living with HIV and representatives of key populations at higher risk, including by prioritizing their capacity-building.
4. Where reasonable, foster competitive tender processes for technical support.
5. Provide opportunities and incentives for organizational staff of technical support users to build their capacity and use the skills gained.
6. Document and make available, where appropriate, the results of technical support to the local communities in which the support is provided.
7. Follow up and implement recommendations resulting from technical support as appropriate.
8. Review technical support policies and procedures and align them with the principles above.
9. Assign a technical support focal point, who ensures that the technical support team has access to the people, space and leadership support needed to assist with change.
10. Assess, articulate and cost capacity-building needs and anticipated technical support activities in funding proposals.
11. Provide feedback to technical support providers on whether the support provided has met expectations and how it may be improved in the future.

[1] Correct identification implies identifying modest technical support needs based on local capacities and capabilities, which if met will allow technical support users to make incremental development advances.

[2] The "Three Ones" call on international and national partners to align their efforts around one agreed AIDS action framework, coordinated by one national AIDS coordinating authority with a broad-based multisectoral mandate and monitored through one agreed national monitoring and evaluation system.