



# safe abortion action fund (SAAF)

## What is the Safe Abortion Action Fund?

The Safe Abortion Action Fund (SAAF) is a targeted reserve of resources to enable the implementation of programmes and initiatives to increase access to safe abortion services within a comprehensive package of reproductive health services, with particular regard for the needs of marginalized and vulnerable women.

The UK Government initiated SAAF in February 2006 in response to a major new service and advocacy initiative for safe abortion developed by the International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF). The UK's Department for International Development (DFID) elected IPPF to administer the Safe Abortion Action Fund on behalf of civil society groups and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) worldwide to support a range of work on unsafe abortion.

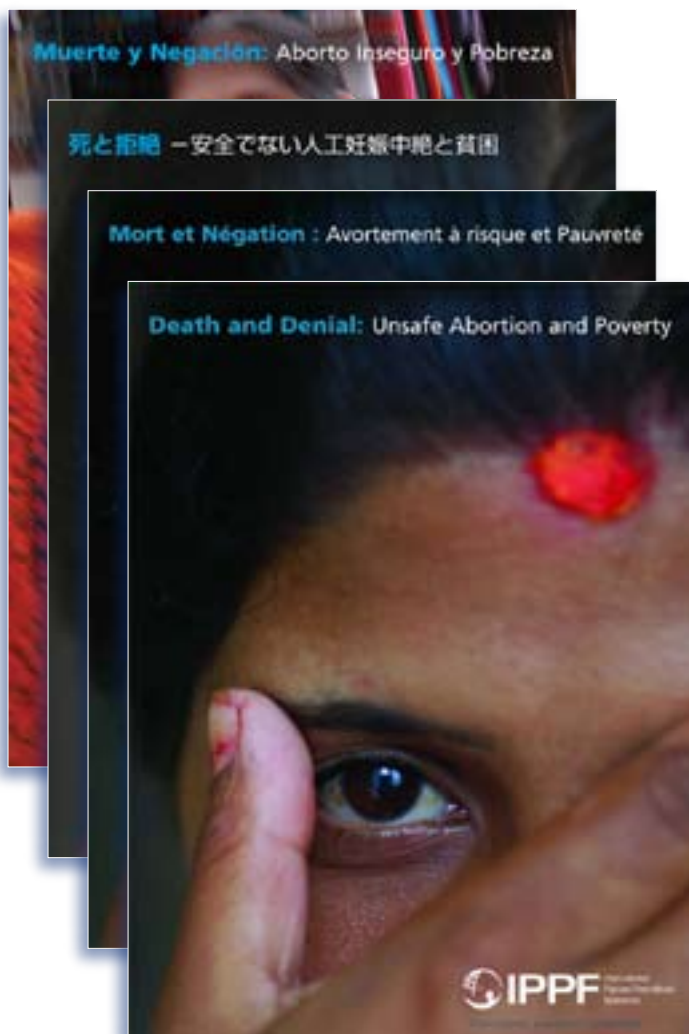
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## Unsafe abortion around the world

Each year, an estimated 19 million women and girls, faced with unintended or unwanted pregnancies, risk the deadly consequences of unsafe abortion. Nearly 70,000 of these women and girls will die, and hundreds of thousands of others will be left with debilitating and/or lifelong injuries as a result. Over 96 per cent of these women will come from the world's poorest nations.

Out of the more than 500,000 annual maternal deaths, 13 per cent are due to complications from unsafe abortions, with the toll rising to as high as 50 per cent in some developing countries. World leaders have expressed their commitment to women's rights and maternal

health; significantly, they reaffirmed their commitment to the Millennium Development Goals, including the goal of reducing the number of maternal deaths and improving women's health, during last September's United Nations World Summit. However, funding for work in this area is far behind projected estimates needed to make significant headway, and the Global Gag Rule – the US policy that denies reproductive health moneys to foreign non-governmental organizations that support, provide or refer for abortions – has resulted in substantial losses for organizations working in sexual and reproductive health and rights. This has meant that reproductive health services and work to prevent unsafe abortion has been cut back.



## IPPF's work in safe abortion

Since 2004, IPPF has developed a new strategic operational plan on abortion. IPPF researched extensively to learn precisely what abortion-related activities are taking place in Member Associations across the Federation, what the greatest gaps in abortion-related services are and where these services are needed most. In addition to increasing abortion-related services among its own Member Associations, IPPF felt that it was vitally important to raise global awareness of the state of and consequences of unsafe abortion.

In February 2006, IPPF launched a new report on the state of unsafe abortion worldwide, entitled 'Death and Denial: Unsafe Abortion and Poverty'. In this report, IPPF demonstrates that unsafe abortion is one of the most neglected public health and human rights issues facing women throughout the developing world. This preventable human tragedy is an epidemic, one which highlights the failure of national governments and the international community to address a public health issue that perpetuates a great social injustice and that sets poorer nations apart from the richer ones.

After reviewing the extent and consequences of unsafe abortion, and the need for action highlighted in 'Death and Denial', the UK's Department for International Development (DFID) asked IPPF to consider taking on a leadership role in overseeing a key mechanism to help support work to tackle unsafe abortion. The result is the Safe Abortion Action Fund, set up with an initial £3 million contribution from DFID. IPPF has since received pledges of funding from the governments of Denmark (DKK9 million), Norway (NOK10 million) and Sweden (SEK10 million).

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## Purpose of the Safe Abortion Action Fund

The purpose of the Safe Abortion Action Fund is to attract, manage and disburse resources to non-governmental organizations (NGOs) working in any area along the abortion continuum. This new fund will make a sustainable and significant contribution to the reduction of morbidity and mortality associated with unsafe abortions across the world and, more specifically, in developing countries where the burden is greatest and the need most dire. The Fund will help ensure the successful achievement of the Millennium Development Goal on maternal health, including an internationally agreed target on reducing the number of maternal deaths in the world's poorest countries by 2015.

## Key principles of operation

Following are the key principles of operation for the Fund:

- IPPF, on behalf of non-governmental organizations worldwide, including its own Member Associations, will hold overall responsibility for the operational management of the Fund.
- It is a financial instrument, not an implementing body.
- It is project driven and will give preference to specific in-country initiatives.
- It will evaluate proposals through an independent review process based on the most appropriate technical standards that take into account local realities.
- It will ensure that funding decisions are reached as a result of a transparent and consultative process; the final decision on funding projects will be made by the SAAF Board.
- It will operate in a transparent and consultative manner at all times, and will remain open to scrutiny.
- The Fund will seek to establish a simplified, rapid and innovative process with efficient and effective disbursement mechanisms, minimizing transaction costs and operating in a transparent manner based on clearly-defined responsibilities.

## Poverty focus

The Safe Abortion Action Fund will support projects initiated by non-governmental organizations in a range of locations based on the need of the population, as such it is envisaged that a large proportion of these will be in the developing world. Priority will be given to applications from organizations working within poor communities where the need for improved services is the greatest.

## Funding levels

The Safe Abortion Action Fund will provide grants of up to a maximum of US\$350,000 for a maximum of two years. This should cover all costs, including a maximum of ten per cent for overhead costs. This approach will be kept under review depending on the size of the fund.

## Eligibility criteria

Applications for funding must aim to improve the quality of and access to safe abortion services. The following are objectives that projects should aim to achieve, however we do not expect each project to meet all of the following criteria.

- 1 Only proposals from the DAC list of ODA-recipient countries<sup>1</sup> will be considered.
- 2 Projects should aim to assist the poorest and most vulnerable groups.
- 3 The fund will only support in-country initiatives submitted by non-governmental organizations.
- 4 The proposal must address one of three thematic areas: advocacy, operations research or service delivery.
- 5 The organization must demonstrate its commitment to improving access to safe abortion.

## Framework for management, operation and administration

IPPF will hold overall responsibility for operational management of the Fund. This includes collection and management of funds, disbursement of funds to non-governmental organizations, financial reporting to stakeholders and independent audits.

All administration, processing, selection and management of applications to SAAF will be done by a management group composed of the Fund Support Team, the Technical Review Panel and the SAAF Board. The Fund Support Team shall be provided by IPPF and will oversee the selection procedure, serving as the main point of contact for all non-governmental organizations as well as for the Technical Review Panel and SAAF Board. To ensure that funding decisions are reached through a transparent and consultative process, all applications will be assessed for technical merit, feasibility and potential by the Technical Review Panel. The Technical Review Panel is an independent group of technical experts in sexual and reproductive health, none of whom must be or have any affiliation with any group who are interested in applying for funding through SAAF. The SAAF Board will then review all proposals along with the Technical Review Panel's recommendations and will make the final decisions on funding.

## Timeframe

The following table gives the operating timeframe and application deadline for SAAF:

Action	Timing
Applications must be received by	30 October 2006
Review of proposals and short-listing	November – December
First SAAF Board meeting	Mid-December 2006
Notification of awards and start of the first round of projects	January 2007 onwards

## For more information

For details on the Safe Abortion Action Fund, please consult the 'Safe Abortion Action Fund Application Guidelines'. This document and the SAAF Application Form are available from IPPF and can be accessed on our web site at [www.ippf.org](http://www.ippf.org) or by writing to [saaf@ippf.org](mailto:saaf@ippf.org).

<sup>1</sup> See the OECD web site at: <http://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/43/51/35832713.pdf> for a complete list. Alternatively, consult Annex 1 of the Safe Abortion Action Fund Application Guidelines