

Developing a successful GFATM regional proposal to strengthen community responses to HIV among MSM and TG in South Asia

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Issues:

Community-led proposals to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB and Malaria have a very poor record of approval, and funds are often dominated by governments and large international organizations. In addition, there is a strong preference for single-country proposals, though many advocacy and capacity issues can be more effectively addressed through a regional approach. Finally, males-who-have-sex-with-males (MSM), and male to female transgenders (TG) in South Asia face an urgent need of HIV information and prevention services that has to date not been comprehensively addressed by existing interventions in national programmes.



MSM and TG community based organizations will be supported to provide outreach services on HIV-related issues to their communities

Description:

A multi-country proposal that had been rejected during Round 7 was revised and strengthened through the efforts of Naz Foundation International (NFI) in partnership with United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and Populations Services International (PSI). Over the formulation process, country level partners and stakeholders were consulted to ensure synergies between the regional proposal and national responses. The proposal aims to 1) improve the delivery of HIV related services; 2) improve the policy environment; and 3) improve strategic knowledge on MSM and TG in seven South Asian countries (India, Nepal, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, Bhutan and Afghanistan). The US approximately USD 47 million regional proposal was submitted and approved for Round 9.

Why a multi-country approach was proposed for undertaking this work:

1. It can be more **effective** because of the many similarities across the countries chosen, in relation to the risks and vulnerability of MSM and TG to HIV, including sexual and gender identities, social norms, stigma and discrimination, and restrictive legislation and law enforcement, which enable the knowledge, skills and resources developed in one country to better inform work to address HIV risk and vulnerability for MSM and TG in the other countries in the proposal
2. It can be more **efficient** because human, financial, and other resources can be shared across a number of countries, and the learning, skills and resources required in each country can be more easily accessed from a centralised resource
3. It can be more **economical** because of the need for fewer resources, as resources can be shared across countries, and from economies of scale gained from the combined procurement of commodities (condoms, lubricants, HIV-testing kits, and sexually transmitted infection drug treatments), that will be used to develop MSM, TG, and HIV-related community based services in Afghanistan and Pakistan.

Proposal name:

Reducing the impact of HIV on men who have sex with men¹ and transgender populations² in South Asia³

1. This term was used to encompass both men and boys, and those who have an identity which recognises their same-sex behaviour or not.
2. This term was used to describe those whose original given identity was male, but now exhibit a range of what are traditionally thought of as female characteristics, and who may identify with this, and who have sex with males, or sometimes other male to female transgendered people.
3. The term South Asia was used for the proposal to represent the seven countries included in the proposal: Afghanistan, Bangladesh, Bhutan, India, Nepal, Pakistan and Sri Lanka.

Proposal goal:

To reduce the impact of HIV and AIDS on men who have sex with men (MSM), and transgender populations (TG), in South Asia

Proposal objectives:

1. To improve the delivery of HIV related services for MSM and TG in South Asia
2. To improve the policy environment with regards MSM, TG, and HIV-related issues in South Asia
3. To improve strategic knowledge on MSM, TG, and HIV-related issues in South Asia

Total funds requested over the proposal term (USD):

Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
8,553,295	10,107,480	9,403,554	9,317,111	9,620,817	47,002,257

Lessons Learned:

1. Successful regional proposals require sustained and intense advocacy, planning and leveraging the comparative advantages of partners and stakeholders (and in the case of Global Fund proposals, Country Coordinating Mechanism members) and ensuring they remained informed and supportive of the proposal.
2. Community-led proposals are possible, but are at an inherent disadvantage of often not having access to information, data and other resources. It is therefore necessary to maintain strong partnerships with government, donors and United Nations agencies.
3. Funding is essential for the process of drafting such a proposal - consider it an investment.



A central resource on MSM, TG, and HIV-related issues will be developed

Meetings held between proposal development partners:

- First partner meeting, held in Delhi, India, 8-9 February 2008
- Second partner meeting, held in Kathmandu, 4-5 March 2008
- Third partner meeting, held in Dhaka, Bangladesh, 29-30 March 2008
- Fourth partner meeting, held in Lucknow, India, 12-14 April 2008
- Fifth partner meeting, held in Delhi, India, 11-12 March 2009

Country level endorsement:

The proposal was endorsed by all of the country Global Fund to Fight AIDS, TB, and Malaria Country Coordinating Mechanisms, or for Bhutan, their Partnership Coordinating Mechanism on the following dates:

- Afghanistan on the 10th May 2009
- Bangladesh on the 11th May 2009
- Sri Lanka on the 18th May 2009
- Pakistan on the 20th May 2009
- Nepal on the 20th May 2009
- India on the 25th May 2009
- Bhutan on the 26th May 2009



MSM and TG drop-in centres will be supported

Next steps:

The proposal partners will work with national partners to successfully implement the proposal and strengthen national responses.

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