



FACT SHEET:

VIRTUAL COUNTRY OPERATIONAL PLAN (COP) 2021

INCREASING KEY POPULATIONS' KNOWLEDGE ON, AND PARTICIPATION IN, PEPFAR COUNTRY PROCESSES IN ASIA REGION*

This Fact Sheet is based on the Updated Country/Regional Operational Plan 2021 Virtual Meeting Handbook (as of 18 March 2021)

**The countries in Asia Region are:*

Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Tajikistan, Thailand

About this Fact Sheet

PEPFAR has called for direct participation of civil society representatives in the COP 2021 processes, where it has explicitly identified civil society as one of the stakeholders who should be engaged in the in-country strategic meetings (Phase 1) and planning meetings (Phase 2).

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, new processes are being adapted to continue streamline Country Operational Plans (COP) 2021. Most of the engagements for COP21 will be through virtual platforms.

This Fact Sheet is one of the first summarized information about the PEPFAR Country Operational Plan that is developed with the primary purposes of enhancing understanding of key populations and affected communities, and assisting in making their engagements more meaningful.

The fact sheet is based on the updated COP virtual handbook. In addition to visual presentation of the COP process, this guide also contains tips and suggestions to the key population and their communities on how they can effectively engage with their respective country processes. This material is also linked to APCOM's online resources which the communities can use as examples or guides in tailoring their engagements.

The COP 2021 and ROP 2021 presents a significant opportunity for civil society organisations and key populations to be meaningfully involved in all phases of COP/ROP 2021. The key populations must ensure that a seat or seats is dedicated to civil society representative/s in the country planning processes. This Fact Sheet also serves as a guide to inform the key populations and communities on how to make their participation more meaningful.

APCOM develops this Fact Sheet for country-level community-based organisations (CBOs), key populations and their communities in the Asia Region to guide their active engagements in the COP 2021 processes. Through this Fact Sheet, the key populations and communities we work with will increase their understanding on the PEPFAR funding cycle and annual processes. By identifying the processes within the COP 2021, we are able to identify strategic entry points to present the priorities and service needs of the key populations.

Acknowledgement

APCOM extends sincere gratitude to our community partners in the countries. Without your trust and confidence in the work that we do, we are not able to continue to provide useful resources and technical assistance. We acknowledge the contributions and inputs of our key populations and community partners into this Fact Sheet.

As a Regional Network, APCOM's work includes not only advocacy for community engagements in national forums for the design and financing of HIV programs, but also ensuring that key populations and communities are able to participate and contribute to these forums. One way to make this participation a reality is to make accessible to country partners useful resources and strategic information.



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A Understanding PEPFAR and COP/ROP

What is PEPFAR?

The U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) is a United States initiative to address the global HIV/AIDS epidemic managed by the U.S. Department of State's Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and Health Diplomacy (S/GAC). PEPFAR leverages partnerships with governments, multilateral institutions, private sector, civil society organizations (CSOs), and communities to ensure the key populations can access high quality, non-discriminatory HIV prevention and treatment services. This includes the developing the annual Country/Regional Operating Plans (COP/ROP), the participation of civil society and key populations, to ensure meaningful engagement and to maximize program impact.

What is the COP/ROP Process?

The purpose of the COP/ROP process is to review, in a transparent process, policy requirements, key activities, data and progress to reach HIV epidemic control to develop a joint strategic plan for PEPFAR's investment. The process allows PEPFAR country and headquarter teams, governments, private sector partners, and CSOs to convene and collaboratively respond to COP/ROP21 proposals and agree on critical solutions and effective means to advance each country's ability to sustain epidemic control.

Key outputs include a joint plan with partner level budgets, targets, and management solutions.

The COP/ROP serves as:

- A tool for allocation and tracking of budgets and targets;
- An annual strategic plan for U.S. government-funded global HIV/AIDS activities; and
- A coordination platform with the Global Fund to avoid duplication.

The PEPFAR Country Coordination Units

PEPFAR utilizes these organizational structures related to specific planning processes for the COP/ROP:

[Bilateral Programs](#) are single Operating Units (OUs) in specific countries that complete a COP. Countries that have bilateral programs are mainly from Africa, with Viet Nam the only country from Asia and the Pacific.

[Regional Platforms](#) are an organizational structure in PEPFAR that plan financial and technical resources currently being implemented in the region into one Regional Operational Plan (ROP). The Regional Platform in Asia include:

- *Cambodia, India, Indonesia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyz Republic, Laos, Myanmar (Burma), Nepal, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Republic of Tajikistan, Thailand*

B Understanding how the CSOs can engage in the COP/ROP Process?

The full participation of community stakeholders and civil society in every stage of PEPFAR programming and planning, from advocacy to service delivery, is critical to the success and sustainability of PEPFAR and the global effort to combat HIV. As PEPFAR continues to scale innovative, evidence-based approaches, OU teams are expected to ensure engagement with CSOs in the planning, implementation, and scaling and evaluation of these newer approaches, such as index testing services and recency testing.

The community stakeholders and CSOs engaged in the COP process must reflect the HIV disease burden of the country and the full range of populations affected by HIV in the country, including youth, gay men and other men who have sex with men, sex workers, transgender persons, prisoners and other people in enclosed settings, and people who inject drugs. These include a wide range of civil society actors at the national, district, and local levels from organizations representing people living with HIV (PLHIV) to faith-based organizations and community associations.

In addition to engaging implementing partners, PEPFAR OU teams are required to engage smaller, local, KP-led civil society organizations, youth-led or youth-serving organizations, and community groups to gather community input and feedback.

As PEPFAR teams are required to proactively solicit input from civil society regarding their goals, priorities, targets, and budgets in drafting their COP, particular attention will be given to engage civil society and activist groups that are not funded directly by PEPFAR. Civil society partners are thus invited to share candid feedback to improve PEPFAR programming without fear of losing access to PEPFAR processes or resources.

In 2021, external partners, including CSOs, will be invited to participate throughout the in-country COP preparation process, during COP21 Meetings, and as COPs are being finalized. These include the In-Country Strategic Planning Meetings, COP21 Planning Meetings, and Approval Meetings.



Understanding the COP/ROP Processes

The COP/ROP Process begins with PEPFAR's release of the COP/ROP Guidance for the given fiscal year. For COP 2021, the Planning Level Letters including relevant tools were released starting 17 December 2020. The released Guidance tools are as follows:

- December 17, 2020 - COP21 Strategic Direction Summary (SDS) Template
- January 6, 2021- DataPack, Funding Allocation Strategy Tool (FAST) and Commodities Supply Planning Tool
- January 13, 2021- Table 6 Excel Workbook with SRE Tool, and Resource Alignment Funding Landscape Table

You may check the tools and Planning Level Letters through www.state.gov/pepfar/.

COP/ROP 2021 – COVID-Streamlined Process

April 2021

May 2021

01 - 14 April 2021

15 - 29 April 2021

03 - 21 May 2021

PHASE 1: PREPARATION

- Virtual strategic meetings with partners continue
- Tools preparation
- Agenda setting for the planning meetings

PHASE 2: PLANNING

- Virtual planning meetings
- Reflections on agendas, priorities, and other keys areas for review

PHASE 3: COMPLETION

- Completed streamlined tools and submission of COP/ROP
- Out brief and approval meetings with all stakeholders

01 - 14 APRIL 2021

PHASE 1

PREPARATION

01 - 14 April 2021

Virtual In-Country Strategic Meetings / Consultation

All PEPFAR Programs are expected to host Virtual Meetings with local key stakeholders;

Key Stakeholders include governments, multilateral organisations, other bilateral donors, the private sector, CSOs, and faith-based organisations;

these virtual meetings will analyse new data, discuss previous year's performance, modification to improve performance, and reach consensus on the proposed COP21 direction

DATE: (Dates vary per country)

SUBMISSION

PEPFAR Teams will submit targets, budgets, and non-service delivery activities with SRE tool for review.

PEPFAR HQ will review these tools and provide feedback prior to COP21 meetings

DATE: (Dates vary per country)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

IMPORTANT:

- Before the In-Country Meetings, **KP communities should agree on the process in selecting a representative to sit in processes;**
- In most countries in Asia Region, KP communities do not have a selection process in appointing their representative;
- **One KP representative must be a PLHIV and one KP must represent the key populations community;**
- In selecting your representatives, it is good to consider if they are well-versed on the current needs of KP in country;



WHAT CAN THE KP COMMUNITY DO TO ENGAGE IN THIS PHASE?

- Gather information about how KPs are experiencing PEPFAR Programs in your country;
- Using this information, develop specific and measurable ASKS on behalf of your community to bring to COP/ROP Process
(For suggestions on ASKS, see Notes Box 1 below)
- Develop recommendations on site level or non-service delivery activities that should not continue
- Provide recommendations for COP21 focus, based on analysis of Q4 results and program performance, including initial findings from community-led monitoring activities
(For suggestions on Recommendations, see Notes Box 2 below)

Notes Box

1

On 02-03 Feb 2021, APCOM hosted a Regional Pre-COP CSO Townhall. The discussions on COP/ROP Priorities revolved around these 3 main themes:

1. Level of Investments
 2. KP- / CBO-led Service Delivery
 3. Organisational Capacity Building
- You may use these information to develop your ASKS at country level.

[\[Link to be updated\]](#)

Notes Box

2

Recommend for KP-led CBOs to implement Community-Based Monitoring (1) to assess the quality, affordability and accessibility of PEPFAR programs to KP, and (2) collect target data about KP-specific treatment or care services

[\[You can access APCOM Regional CBM Guide here\]](#)

This part is reserved for you to document your experience in the COP process. In documenting your engagements, focus on the quality of your participation, level of contributions, and responsiveness of PEPFAR Country team.

What are your recommendations to improve this phase for the next COP?
a. for the community
b. for PEPFAR

What are other resources you need to effectively engage in this phase?

15 - 29 APRIL 2021

PHASE 2

PLANNING

15 - 29 April 2021

Virtual COP Planning Meetings

This will provide an opportunity for stakeholders including CSOs to provide input on the COP21 vision including technical priorities, fiscal data, budget earmarks and categories, and alignment of tools

It will also allow stakeholders to participate in the performance and technical review of FY20-FY21 Q1 results and tool

DATE: (Dates vary per country)

COP Global / Regional Townhalls

In addition to country engagement, PEPFAR will organize two townhalls during the planning phase;

The townhalls will organise discussions with Government Officials, global and local stakeholders, including communities, CSOs, multilateral partners, and private sector partners.

DATE: (Dates vary per country)

OPPORTUNITIES FOR COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENTS

IMPORTANT:

- Ahead of the Virtual COP Meetings, **KP communities should convene to organise and consolidate all of the ASKS.**
- Consolidating the ASKS in one document will be useful as there is only one reference document for your country level advocacies and engagements
- As the COP Planning Meetings are VIRTUAL, **you/your community needs a stable internet connection** for successful engagements;
- If you or your KP representative do not have access to stable internet, you may:
 - a. Contact your PEPFAR Country office for technical assistance
 - b. Contact APCOM for technical support for virtual engagements

WHAT CAN THE KP COMMUNITY DO TO ENGAGE IN THIS PHASE?

- Participate in S/GAC pre-meeting webinar for stakeholders
- During the COP Planning Meeting, Stakeholders will also have the opportunity to provide reflections on shared work with PEPFAR and proposed COP21 plan; identifying technical and programmatic strengths and areas requiring additional discussion.
- Include initial findings from community-led monitoring activities
- Identify entry points for involvement such as suggesting discussion points during the meeting
(See Notes Box 3 below)

Reach out to us in APCOM to confirm the date and time of COP Townhall or Regional consultation on ROP21. You may reach us through: apcom@apcom.org or programmes@apcom.org

WHAT CAN THE KP COMMUNITY DO TO ENGAGE IN THIS PHASE?

- Contact your respective KP representatives to learn more about communities' participation from previous Townhalls;
- Document the needs and/or priorities of your key population in terms of HIV services;
(See Notes Box 4 below)

Notes Box

3

HIGHLIGHT SUSTAINABILITY

A 2016 Journal Article listed 6 points which provide a clearer picture of SUSTAINABILITY in the HIV Response:

1. Financial Sustainability
2. Programmatic Sustainability
3. Political Sustainability
4. Structural Sustainability
5. Epidemiological Sustainability
6. Human Rights.

[\[You can access description of these 6 points here\]](#)

Notes Box

4

APCOM co-organised Regional CSO Townhall in Asia last 02 and 03 February.

To prepare the communities for the Townhall, APCOM developed this resource guide. Sets of sample questions were provided for communities to use in engaging during the virtual meeting.

[\[Access the document here\]](#)

This part is reserved for you to document your experience in the COP process. In documenting your engagements, focus on the quality of your participation, level of contributions, and responsiveness of PEPFAR Country team.

What are your recommendations to improve this phase for the next COP?

- a. for the community
- b. for PEPFAR

What are other resources you need to effectively engage in this phase?

03 - 21 MAY 2021

**PHASE
3**

COMPLETION

03 - 21 May 2021

**Final
COP/ROP 21
Submission
Due**

Country team submits all final COP elements (including mission letter, approval memo, SDS and tools) to S/GAC

The submission date is approximately 7 days prior to the approval meeting

DATE: (Dates vary per country)

**COP/ROP 21
Virtual
Approval
Meetings**

Country Team selects a date between 03 May and 21 May to brief Chair/PPM, partner government leadership, multilateral and private sector stakeholders, and CSOs, reviewing updates after Planning Meeting

Country Tetam presents proposed COP/ROP 21 to Acting U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator and other S/GAC and Agency HQ leadership based upon their requested meeting date

DATE: (Dates vary per country)

**OPPORTUNITIES
FOR COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENTS**

WHAT CAN THE KP COMMUNITY DO TO ENGAGE IN THIS PHASE?

Before the COP final document is submitted to HQ, there may be windows for revisions and negotiations on the draft COP.

If able to review the draft, KP communities should ensure that KP priorities and needs are reflected in the budget

Actively request for updates from your PEPFAR country team/

WHAT CAN THE KP COMMUNITY DO TO ENGAGE IN THIS PHASE?

Actively participate in COP/ROP 21 virtual approval meetings to ensure presented strategies and approaches are aligned with COP/ROP 21 Planning Meeting agreements

This part is reserved for you to document your experience in the COP process. In documenting your engagements, focus on the quality of your participation, level of contributions, and responsiveness of PEPFAR Country team.

What are your recommendations to improve this phase for the next COP?
a. for the community
b. for PEPFAR

What are other resources you need to effectively engage in this phase?



Innovative approaches to KP-led sustainability

COP21 introduces an optional focus on models and approaches to support the sustainability of KP-led CSOs, expanding the options available to strengthen and support the long-term viability and strength of these organizations. This effort does not substitute for PEPFAR supported KP or community service delivery. It is rather an opportunity to promote innovative models and a longer-term strategic approach to supporting KP-led service delivery.

PEPFAR suggests two specific options and one blended pathway for CSOs to acquire financial support.

1.

Acquiring direct grants and contracts from public, including government and non-government, or private institutions or organizations, including donors

For CSOs that are able to acquire grants and contracts, several structural elements are essential for their viability, including:

- professional management, grants support, contracting, financial and monitoring staff; payroll
- capacity to successfully submit grant applications; and
- close collaborations and communications with grant organizations.

In addition, having an enabling environment to realize these elements are necessary. These include:

- government and donor laws and policies that support social contracting (or public financing of civil society service delivery);
- CSO and KP CSO formation, capacity, and ongoing operations;
- protections for KPs to access and use services; and
- capable government contract management office.

2.

Self-financing' services using proceeds from the sales of products or services, including direct services, to clients, customers, or external organizations or institutions

The primary condition of this option is the ability of the CSOs to raise capital for direct delivery of services, either within or outside contractual arrangements, and having a diversified portfolio of products and services.

For 'Self-Financing' CSOs, the following elements are important:

- professional finance, management, operations, and accounting staff;
- business marketing and sales;
- strategic planning;
- open market opportunities to acquire capital and investments;
- regulatory compliance mechanisms; and
- protections for KPs to access and use services.

Some environmental factors are also crucial to the success of CSO self-financing, including:

- a level field for competition; and
- non-discriminatory practices.

3.

A blended pathway uses a mix of the direct grants acquisition and self-financing approaches

A blend of both Options 1 and 2 is likely a better option to ensure sustainability of financing for CSOs. However, challenges will exist in ensuring the organization has sufficient capacity to effectively manage and account for both types of financing approaches.

While financing is frequently the focus of sustainability efforts, organizational and performance management and accountability are essential to the success of an organization. Underlying these is the need to establish a responsive and enabling legal/policy environment to allow for the establishment and effective management of KP CSOs without barriers to resources or limits on access by clients.

Several other formidable challenges that KP CSOs face related to sustainability include:

- Challenges in diversifying the HIV services offered to fully meet the needs of KPs.
- Inadequate capacity to develop business plans for sustainability.
- Lack of access to capital on preferential terms.
- Failure to fully integrate into national health systems and insurance schemes, thereby limiting their ability to sustain themselves and provide diverse and quality services.
- Difficulty accessing quality assurance and accreditation processes and tools due to the nature of funding and targeted service delivery
- National policies and practices that do not support key population programming and/or legal, functioning, and transparent social contracting mechanism.



Leveraging Innovative Financing Mechanisms

KP CSO sustainability is often highly dependent on donors for a reliable and long-term source of financial support. However, an overreliance on donor sources are likely to lead to numerous challenges. While donor assistance is expected to be available in the short term, it is likely that donors will reduce their levels of investments in the HIV response in the coming years. At the same time, as country incomes grow, donors will expect countries to take on more of the financing responsibilities. Additionally, with the emergence of other health demands or crises, such as the COVID-19 pandemic, funds may be shifted to address these acute needs and donor and local resources may be less available to support KP CSOs delivering HIV services.

The goal of ensuring a more sustainable KP CSO response is to shift from overreliance on donor sources to primarily local public and private sources for the financial and managerial resources necessary for KP CSO operations.

PEPFAR recommends two alternative financing mechanisms, (1) social enterprises and (2) blended financial facility.

Social Enterprises

Social enterprises tap into a community's ability and willingness to pay for services. They can be between those that purely do HIV prevention and treatment services for members of a distinct community group to organizations that fund HIV services by providing other goods and services for non-community members. Like any private business, social enterprises require starting capital in the form of shared community funds, donor grants, outside debt finance, or equity investments.

If a CSO wants to become a social enterprise, it will need professional management, including financial, marketing, and legal expertise. To help facilitate CSOs to become social enterprises, CSOs can considering reaching out to PEPFAR teams to support market analyses, willingness to pay studies, business and strategic planning, and capacity building to CSO staff on financial and strategic management and marketing. These interventions can also be paired with innovative financing that help CSOs access low-interest loans to secure needed capital to build out new service lines or revenue generating ventures.

Blended Financing Facility

This option reinforces the ability to leverage market-based solutions to support services for KP populations, as well as ensure KP CSO sustainability. For this, CSOs can consider seeking PEPFAR support to implement a Blended Finance Model (BFM). A BFM is a single organizational entity created to facilitate the distribution of KP funding to local KP CSOs service providers. The entity combines grant and loan components to use donor investments to attract investments from the market in order to design solutions for market failures. For example, in India, an investment of \$5 million from donors has led to a commitment of \$150 million from various lenders.

Equity. Dignity. Social Justice.



We are united in advocating for issues around HIV and those that advance the rights, health and well being of people of diverse sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression and sex characteristics.

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