



World Bank Global
HIV/AIDS Program

HIV/AIDS M&E - *Getting Results*

These reports describe activities, challenges and lessons learned during the Global AIDS Monitoring and Evaluation Team's (GAMET) work with countries and other partners.

New Approaches to the “Third One” in a Changing M&E Landscape

The GAMET Team

Summary This note summarizes recent progress and challenges in meeting the “Third One” – One national Monitoring and Evaluation System – and analyzes their implications for future M&E support to countries by development partners.

Background

International commitment to HIV and AIDS has grown rapidly in recent years, stimulated by the leadership of the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and its co-sponsors. There are a range of new support mechanisms, including the World Bank’s Multi-Country AIDS Program (MAP), Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM) and United States’ President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR). Global HIV/AIDS spending grew from around US\$300 million in 1996 to US\$8.3 billion in 2005. Many governments signed the formal global commitments of the United Nations General Assembly Special Session (UNGASS) and High Level Meeting on AIDS, promising a coordinated, enhanced response, with accountability for progress, and to strive towards universal access to prevention, treatment and care. The critical need to ensure that available resources are used effectively, to have a greater impact, places unprecedented responsibility on monitoring and evaluation (M&E). We all support the “Three Ones” – but to what extent is expressed commitment to *one national M&E system* reflected in donors’ actions?

Recent progress in M&E for HIV and AIDS

Since 2001, notable progress has been made in several areas:

- The rapid growth in resources for HIV/AIDS has been accompanied by **increased recognition of the importance of, and investment in M&E systems**. In many countries, resources are no longer a major

constraint to the development of functioning M&E systems.

- **International efforts to harmonize and align support for M&E systems**, encapsulated in “The Three Ones”, **have gathered pace**. There is broad consensus about the importance of harmonization, the elements of an effective M&E system, and the need to effectively coordinate financing and technical assistance. In some countries, M&E teams and development partners have developed a “road map” to assure that all partners “on the ground” work together to support implementation of a national M&E system.
- **The key steps towards an effective M&E system are well defined and widely accepted**. These steps include: (1) develop an M&E framework, with key indicators, aligned to a National Strategy; (2) prepare a detailed M&E operational plan and budget, with clear implementation procedures; (3) develop and maintain a functioning M&E system, with a functioning data base populated by epidemiological and programmatic data.
- **Essential documentation** has been developed, including M&E indicator guides, country operational manuals, illustrative country plans and budgets, and toolkits, including a road map for effective partner coordination and implementation of M&E systems.
- **Field-based technical experts** have been mobilized. To address an early need, in 2001 the Global Monitoring and Evaluation Team (GAMET) was set up by UNAIDS, based at the World Bank. GAMET recruited a team of 15 regionally based long-term M&E consultants, who provide intensive technical assistance upon

request. In 2005, UNAIDS and the United States Government (USG) recruited the first of what has grown to approximately 40 country-based M&E advisors. Other UN and bilateral agencies have also financed M&E advisors in several countries. In addition, UNAIDS has established several regional technical resource centers. As a result, field-based M&E technical assistance is now widely available.

- **There are many M&E training courses.** Major international partners, including the World Bank/GAMET, UNAIDS, the USG, MEASURE and Family Health International (FHI) support M&E training. A growing number of universities in Africa, Asia, Eastern Europe and Latin America offer regional M&E training courses.
- **Many countries have made important progress towards functioning M&E systems.** They have formed M&E units and appointed M&E staff, developed and implemented M&E plans and budgets and begun populating their data bases with epidemiological and programmatic data. This progress is reflected in more comprehensive and accurate UNGASS reporting in 2006.

Challenges remain

Despite major progress, important challenges remain:

National Monitoring and Evaluation Strategies are not always aligned to a national HIV and AIDS strategy. Because so many national strategies lack a focus on “results” and sometimes lack grounding in epidemiology, the M&E partner community has developed separate strategies that are often de-linked from national HIV/AIDS policies and plans.

A significant number of countries still do not have a funded, functioning M&E system which has been developed through partner coordination, despite increased financing and technical assistance. This is the case in many fragile states, and countries situated in regions with less access to technical assistance, including parts of Central and West Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa and the Pacific. Such countries will require continued and intensified technical and financial support from major international partners, particularly UNAIDS and its GAMET partner which have the capacity to deploy their assistance broadly and flexibly, in response to need.

In some countries, donors are as equally concerned with ensuring that they receive reports on how their own funding is being used, as with harmonizing and aligning their support to help implement a national M&E system that would track the national response.

Intergovernmental issues remain a significant challenge, as increasingly countries are asking for technical assistance to support **sub-national and community-based M&E programs.** Making certain that these systems are aligned to support decision making at all levels of government is no small task.

Much of the M&E effort to date has been to strengthen the “M” side—that is, improvements in surveillance, routine health and non-health monitoring frameworks, and monitoring frameworks that aim to track the UNGASS indicators and indicators related to individual donor programs. **Scant funding, and little focus has been given to improving the “E” in M&E – evaluation** to support a learning agenda on what is working and what is not working, and to assess whether changes expected from program and policy interventions, are actually happening. It is the E of the M&E system that can assess whether programs and interventions are achieving their intended aims, and provide a basis for decision making that is truly evidence based. For example, many countries need to better understand how to reach or scale-up prevention programs for vulnerable groups, such as sex workers and clients, or injecting drug users. Other countries face slow uptake of VCT or ART. In many cases, evaluation can identify and help to overcome barriers to effective implementation.

Data are not being synthesized and analyzed.

Many countries are now collecting epidemiological and programmatic data, but lack the key feature of a robust “E” system -- being able to synthesize and analyze data. There is an urgent need for intensified technical assistance to enable countries to synthesize and analyze their data so they can better understand their epidemic trends and drivers. Such syntheses are not exclusively epidemiological or programmatic; they analyze epidemiological and programmatic data together, to draw conclusions about the state of the epidemic and the adequacy of the programmatic response.

Data are not being used to support policy, program and strategic management. Countries have access to a growing amount of data, but there is little indication that these data are being widely disseminated and used to make strategic or tactical changes or to improve performance. There is therefore a growing need for technical assistance to assist countries to use M&E data to improve performance and decision making. Reasons why data are not being used in different countries include lack of analytical capacity at various levels of government, lack of dissemination of the information to key stakeholders, and lack of incentives to use data for improving performance of government and donor programs. Each country requires an assessment of why data are not being used, as a first step towards promoting data use.

Changing needs for M&E assistance

In this evolving M&E landscape, country requests and needs for international technical assistance are changing and becoming more differentiated. There are countries that still need help in developing M&E frameworks, plans and systems, but many countries now have the basics in place, and need help in new areas, especially related to data analysis, use and dissemination.

New places to help develop M&E systems

Country level demand to develop national M&E frameworks and plans will come from less likely places. Many countries, particularly in Eastern and Southern Africa, South and South-East Asia, have adequate access to country level assistance to develop national M&E frameworks and operational plans, through GAMET, UNAIDS and USG M&E specialists and UNAIDS technical resource centers. Many countries also have greater internal capacity to develop and manage their own M&E frameworks and plans. However, country-level technical assistance is uneven elsewhere. Future requests for international assistance to develop M&E frameworks and plans are more likely to emerge in regions with less access to technical assistance, including parts of Central and West Africa, Central Asia, the Middle East and North Africa and the Pacific.

Countries with M&E systems in place have changing, more specific TA needs

There is a clear evolution in the nature of country requests for M&E assistance. Countries that have

completed their M&E frameworks and plans and have increasingly functional M&E systems are making **more specific, sophisticated and differentiated requests for M&E assistance.** Illustrative recent examples include requests for assistance to restructure the M&E function in Ethiopia, to support an epidemiological and programmatic synthesis in West Africa, to cost the national M&E plan in Swaziland, to undertake cost-effectiveness work in China and to develop an impact evaluation strategy for ART in selected African countries.

Many countries have moved from general requests for technical assistance to develop their national M&E systems to a growing interest in data use, in four main areas: strategic planning, program management, specific problem solving and analysis, and evaluation.

Countries are rapidly coming to understand that strategic planning must be supported by sound M&E Frameworks. Most countries still need help to align M&E frameworks to national planning efforts and to ensure that strategies are supported by funded, integrated monitoring and evaluation systems. Thus requests from Tanzania, Madagascar, and Barbados to support national strategic planning also include requests for support from M&E specialists to help ensure that strategies are “results focused”.

AIDS programs want M&E to better support program management and improvement.

HIV/AIDS M&E systems have been developed mostly by HIV/AIDS technical specialists, with limited management expertise. AIDS programs increasingly recognize that they are not making adequate use of M&E data to manage and improve their programs, and that they require technical assistance from M&E specialists with expertise in management and who understand government processes. For example, India’s national AIDS authority has asked for help to develop a “dashboard” that will assist them to monitor program performance on a quarterly basis. And countries are also starting to ask for help in extending their national M&E systems to sub-national levels, to be able to better track the use of

resources and program implementation within provinces, regions and districts.

Problem-orientated M&E. National AIDS authorities also increasingly request M&E technical assistance to address specific interpretation and implementation challenges. For example, Ethiopia recently requested technical assistance to interpret its epidemic in light of recent population-based surveys that suggest that HIV prevalence may be lower than initially believed. Afghanistan requested assistance to develop better estimates of the size of its injecting drug use community and the extent of HIV infection among injecting drug users.

There is growing interest in evaluating operations, effectiveness, cost-effectiveness and impact. Many countries are confronted by knowledge gaps that cannot be addressed through ongoing surveillance or program monitoring, but which require specific and targeted evaluations. In addition, there is growing national and international need – and pressure – to establish the effectiveness of specific interventions and implementation options and to evaluate the impact of entire programs. This is giving rise to markedly more interest in the contribution that evaluation makes to an overall M&E system, and increasing emphasis on operational, effectiveness and impact evaluation. For example, strengthening the ability to assess outcome and impact achievement is a central feature of technical assistance to India's national AIDS authority. In China, Indonesia, and Vietnam, cost-effectiveness studies form an important element of national M&E systems. Countries need support to develop concrete plans for relevant evaluation and to feed back the results into planning efforts.

Responding to the changing M&E landscape - implications for M&E Assistance

The international M&E landscape has changed more rapidly and fundamentally than generally recognized. The changes described above have considerable implications for international technical assistance in M&E. In response to the changing landscape and country needs, the M&E community is beginning to reappraise TA aims, methods and capacities.

Initially, given the need to build national systems, development partners fielded teams of generalists, with skills and experience in national systems development.

These skills are still needed – but mostly in a different group of countries that have yet to develop national systems, frameworks and plans. Some redeployment of existing field-based advisors may be needed, as well as a shift in the focus and skill mix of teams that continue to provide assistance to countries with national M&E systems already in place.

Counties which have established M&E systems are increasingly asking international partners to provide a wider and more differentiated range of technical expertise, including specialists with very specific skills for particular assignments. It might be constructive for the Monitoring and Evaluation Reference Group (MERG) to discuss how best to meet the increasing country needs and requests for assistance in synthesizing, analyzing and using M&E data; using data to influence government processes and to manage programs; answering specific questions about program performance; evaluating specific aspects and the overall impact of programs; and reporting on the results achieved at local, subnational and national levels.

Development partners providing technical assistance need to build more flexibility into their present business model which emphasizes long-term deployment of M&E generalists, to ensure that the existing teams can better meet changing country needs, and to enable rapid but careful recruitment of high-quality short-term specialists with skills that precisely match a specific assignment or problem.

Partners can put their often-expressed commitment to the Three Ones into practice, by working together with countries to develop an M&E Road Map that charts the work that needs to be done in detail, and delineates responsibility for doing the work and for providing the needed resources.

Increasingly, the goal of M&E assistance will be to support improvements in national policies, strategies and programs. The focus will be not just on systems for collecting data, but on synthesizing, analyzing and using data to help make better decisions and improve programs.

For more information, or feed-back, please contact:

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