

Continued Need for Meaningful Engagement of Key Populations in the PEPFAR 2015 Country Operational Plan Process

April 2015

The Global Forum on MSM & HIV (MSMGF) continues to work with the U.S. Office of the Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) and global civil society organizations to monitor the meaningful engagement of in-country key populations in the PEPFAR Country Operational Plan (COP) 2015 process. **We would like to bring to your attention several opportunities to communicate your experiences and concerns to OGAC and the PEPFAR country teams**, including through our participation with OGAC leadership and PEPFAR country teams in “regional COP review” meetings (scheduled to be held in Atlanta in April, Frankfurt in May, and Windhoek and Dar es Salaam in June). We also emphasize that OGAC has informed us that, even for civil society representatives in countries that have already submitted their COPs, **it is not too late to submit your comments and feedback to inform the finalization of the COPs.**

Our goal in this process is to ensure that PEPFAR takes seriously the concerns and needs of key populations, *including allocating sufficient funding for key populations programming in all PEPFAR recipient countries*. Final approved PEPFAR COP 2015 submissions will determine the specific allocation of funds in PEPFAR recipient countries in the 2016-2017 fiscal year (April 2016-March 2017). As we presented in our [March community update](#), OGAC has issued **new PEPFAR COP process requirements** that mandate a more meaningful engagement of PEPFAR country teams with civil society representatives of key populations in the PEPFAR COP 2015 process.

These new requirements include: 1) Development of a civil society COP engagement plan; 2) Convening of engagement meetings between PEPFAR teams and civil society organizations; 3) Soliciting by PEPFAR teams of written feedback from civil society; and 4) Providing written feedback to civil society. The guidance stresses that civil society consultations should occur through **a formal structure on a quarterly basis**, that a diverse range of civil society organizations including representatives of key populations should be included, and that PEPFAR teams are required to submit civil society recommendations and country team feedback as part of their COP submission.

We have already documented numerous instances of PEPFAR country teams failing to follow the letter and spirit of the new requirements, including: 1) Holding large meetings with civil society groups in general rather than with key populations advocates in particular; 2) Providing limited and insufficient data on key populations; 3) Providing insufficient time to review data; 4) Providing little advance notice of consultations; 5) Failing to provide written feedback on recommendations made by civil society representatives of key populations; and 6) Failing to provide final copies of COP submissions to civil society representatives of key populations.

For those who are engaged in the PEPFAR COP 2015 process as in-country civil society representatives, we have prepared the following checklist of key questions to assist you in tracking the adherence of PEPFAR country teams to the new requirements:

- 1.) Have you and/or other in-country key populations advocates had meetings with the [PEPFAR country team](#) to discuss the PEPFAR COP?
 - a. If yes, was it a meeting specific to key populations advocates or was it a larger meeting including other civil society groups?
- 2.) Were you able to submit MSM programming recommendations to PEPFAR?
 - a. If yes, did PEPFAR provide written feedback to your programming recommendations?
 - i. If yes, were you satisfied with the quality of this feedback?
- 3.) Has PEPFAR provided relevant country data (or regional/global data, such as from [UNAIDS Gap Report](#), [WHO Consolidated Guidelines](#), SWIT, Lancet series, IAS white paper and ethics paper, etc.) regarding key populations?
 - a. If yes, were the data sufficient or were there gaps in the data?
- 4.) Has there been discussion with PEPFAR of aligning key populations programming with other major donor and key stakeholder processes, including the Global Fund country dialogue process?
- 5.) (For countries with April 3rd COP submission deadlines) Have you received a final copy of the COP submitted by the PEPFAR team to OGAC on April 3rd?
- 6.) Have you been satisfied with the quality of your engagement with the PEPFAR country team, or are there additional comments/considerations you would like submitted to the PEPFAR team and to OGAC?

In addition, we would greatly value receiving any relevant documents or correspondence you have had with PEPFAR country teams (e.g. meeting notes, programming recommendations, email correspondence, written feedback from the PEPFAR team, key populations data provided by the PEPFAR team). These will help reinforce our ongoing advocacy efforts at local, regional, and global levels.

Please communicate your responses and any questions/concerns you may have to Nadia Rafif, Senior Policy Advisor, at nrafif@msmgf.org. We thank you kindly for your much-appreciated engagement with this critical process.

Kind regards,

The MSMGF