

SUPPORTING NATIONAL HIV/AIDS RESPONSES



An Implementation Approach

The Answer Lies Within

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UNDP's support to National HIV/AIDS responses, is aimed at enabling people to envision a better future for themselves, their organizations and their countries. This innovative approach results in people making a shift in their response by taking responsibility, making informed decisions, changing their personal and professional behaviour, and collective strategies, giving way to a more holistic response to the epidemic.

CONTENTS

Preface	3
1. INTRODUCTION	4
1.1 Challenges	4
1.2 Purpose of Document	5
2. GENERATING EFFECTIVE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS RESPONSES	6
2.1 HIV as a Complex Planning Issue	6
2.2 Challenges of Partnerships	6
2.3 Harmonizing Stakeholders Response	7
2.4 Ensuring Continuum of Planning and Implementation	8
2.5 Integrating HIV/AIDS into National Development Policies	8
3. ENSURING A STRATEGIC APPROACH	9
3.1 Planning for Implementation	10
3.2 Guiding Principles for a Holistic and Strategic Approach	10
4. REVISITING STRATEGIC PLANNING	11
4.1 Situation and Response Analysis	12
4.2 Outcome of National HIV/AIDS Assessments	12
4.3 Formulation of a National Strategic Framework	13
4.4 National Strategic Framework: Expected Outcome	13
4.5 Transforming National Strategic Frameworks	14
5. MAKING THE STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK WORK	16
5.1 Sector Responses	16
5.2 Sector Outcomes	17
5.3 Decentralized Planning and Implementation	17
5.4 Local Outcomes	18
5.5 Coordinating National Responses	18
5.6 Resource Management	18
5.7 Expected Outcomes of Resource Management	20
5.8 Supporting National Implementation	20
6. MONITORING AND EVALUATION AND HIV/AIDS STRATEGIC INFORMATION MANAGEMENT	22
6.1 Expected Outcomes	22
6.2 Support for Monitoring and Evaluation	23
Bibliography	24
Annex 1: Draft List of Core UNGASS Indicators	25
Annex 2: Deepening Understanding: Aligning Value and Action	27
Annex 3: UNGASS Checklist	28
Annex 4: Checklist for Mainstreaming HIV/AIDS into Development Instruments	30

LIST OF ACRONYMS

ADF	African Development Forum
AIDS	Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
BDP	Bureau for Development Policy
CBO	Community Based Organization
CSO	Civil Society Organization
DRI	District Response Initiative
FHI	Family Health International
HIV	Human Immune Virus
IPAA	International Partnership Against AIDS in Africa
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MTP	Medium-Term Plan
NAC	National AIDS Commission
NEPAD	New Partnership for Africa's Development
NGO	Non-Governmental Organization
NSF	National Strategic Framework
NSP	National Strategic Plan
RA	Response Analysis
SA	Situation Analysis
SPP	Strategic Planning Process
TOR	Terms of Reference
UN	United Nations
UNAIDS	United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNGASS	United Nations General Assembly Special Session
UNICEF	United Nations Children Fund
USAID	United State Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

With 42 million people infected worldwide, HIV/AIDS is one of the world's most serious development crises. Still viewed by many policy makers as a health issue, the epidemic remains the economic, social and development challenge of highest priority. Thus, responding to HIV/AIDS is becoming an integral part of the development planning process in both high and low prevalence countries.

This document has been developed through a consultative process initiated in July 2002 by UNDP's Expert Meeting in Dakar. The years of planning and implementation experiences of experts were captured, debated and synthesized.

UNDP believes that it is essential to develop mechanisms that bring in the voice and concerns of people into the development response. The commitment is to help countries implement strategic, multi-sectoral and multilevel responses to HIV/AIDS, employing holistic methodologies that address the root causes fuelling the epidemic.

As a UNAIDS co-sponsor, UNDP's mandate is to ensure that national planning and associated delivery systems for the HIV/AIDS response address existing gaps, bring in the required policy shifts and use methodologies that produce results. Distinct from the roles of other UNAIDS co-sponsors and other UN agencies, UNDP focuses on approaches aimed at creating an enabling policy, legislative and resource environment, essential for an effective and truly multi-sectoral response to the epidemic. UNDP is uniquely placed to operationalize a set of synergistic approaches using multiple entry points – individuals, systems and society. UNDP is also uniquely placed to integrate strategies and approaches that are mutually reinforcing such as HIV/AIDS and governance and HIV/AIDS and development. Transformative methodologies and implementation of breakthrough initiatives are needed and will be used to address the individual, social and economic causes of the epidemic as well as the institutional inertia often encountered in governments and agencies.

As part of UNDP's Convening Role within UNAIDS, this document has been circulated among co-sponsors and partners dedicated to expanding the horizons of creating an extraordinary development response worldwide for the epidemic.

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1 INTRODUCTION

HIV/AIDS multi-sectoral strategic planning has been promoted and successfully undertaken in a number of countries. In most cases, the planning process results in the design and completion of national strategic frameworks (NSF) or plans. While such frameworks continue to provide valuable strategic orientation, they have often not served the intended purpose of guiding successful and well-coordinated implementation at national, provincial, regional, district, constituency and community levels.

To date, the transformation of strategic frameworks into effective and coordinated action remains a major concern for most governments and their partners. The broad diversity of actors, the numerous sectors involved and the variety of components of the response illustrate the complexity of implementation and coordination. To achieve a strategic multi-sectoral response, it is important to develop a strategic framework and management approach consistent with national policies, priorities and local experiences.

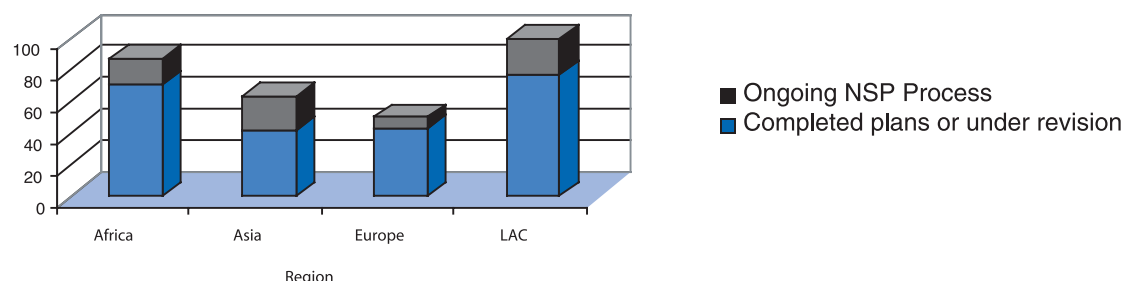
1.1 Challenges

The challenges related to the planning processes and implementation require continued elaboration. However, a review of recent experiences in many countries has shown these common challenges:

- Ensuring appropriate and sustained national leadership to manage the planning and implementation process;
- Obtaining broader ownership of the national strategic framework by country actors;
- Acquiring both national and international capacity to closely support the process over the medium term;
- Involving key sectors and representatives of decentralized institutions, including traditional authority in all stages of the process;
- Developing practical partnerships between the government, civil society organizations, the private sector and communities in the design and implementation of the national response;
- Inability of certain development partners to adopt national priorities for their support programmes; and
- Clearer definition of roles, responsibilities and accountabilities of those charged with planning and implementing the response.

Fig. 1 National Strategic Planning

Source: UNAIDS 2002



These challenges notwithstanding, strategic planning remains an essential process to develop relevant and innovative responses to HIV/AIDS within continuously changing environments. About 40 countries in Africa and many in the Latin America and Caribbean region (LAC) have undertaken a strategic planning process (see Fig. 1). While the lessons have clearly highlighted some process issues, they have generated approaches, which can guide a new vision and inspire a new way of planning that allows weaknesses to be turned into strengths and opportunities. A new approach must facilitate the planning process and strategic management of national response, take community concerns into account, ensure more active involvement of non-health sectors and create a more conducive environment for the implementation of strategic frameworks. Most importantly, a commitment to doing things differently must improve the quality of life of people infected and/or affected by HIV/AIDS.

Purpose of Document

1.2

This document is primarily intended for use by national HIV/AIDS coordination and management bodies responsible for strategic planning and management of national HIV/AIDS responses. It serves as a complement to existing tools and the UNAIDS guides to the strategic planning process for national responses.

The main purpose of this document is to:

1. Introduce transformative methodologies aimed at promoting a deeper understanding of the complexity of the epidemic in order to ignite hope, foster transformation and produce results.
2. Strengthen the process of strategic planning so that it is made more viable and is effectively geared to support a continuum of planning, implementation, evaluation and assessment of national responses.

It is intended for use both in the context of technical assistance and in country situations where substantial strategic planning and management expertise already exist. A planned Web-based version will enable users to link to other tools and guides. This document recognises that governments will require different technical inputs and that each country will be at a different stage of implementation of the national HIV/AIDS response.

This document attempts to address the complexity of HIV/AIDS through a more holistic framework of analysis, which must include a heightened understanding of individual values and behaviour, as well as collective culture and norms. How these work within complex systems and structures is an important underpinning of the guide. It provides a new global context and an understanding of the need for a strategic management approach. It revisits situation and response analyses and the need to adopt methodologies that foster a deeper understanding of the epidemic. It also provides processes for moving from planning to implementation with the full participation of individuals, communities, districts and public/private sector organizations. Finally, it emphasizes the importance of addressing monitoring and evaluation (M&E), self-reflection and reviews, and strategic information management as an integral aspect of the national response.

2 GENERATING EFFECTIVE NATIONAL HIV/AIDS RESPONSES

Strategic planning for HIV/AIDS is a continuous process that must contribute to reaffirming national leadership and strengthening partnerships at all levels. It must create suitable conditions for the implementation of the national strategic framework. To achieve these conditions, the management of the planning process itself must be both strategic and should be the responsibility of government and national stakeholders.

2.1 HIV/AIDS as a Complex Planning Issue

Strategic planning for HIV/AIDS is based on a number of principles and strengths, and requires sufficient preparation to create the favourable conditions for optimal operation. Since the introduction of the four UNAIDS Strategic Planning Modules, strategic planning processes undertaken in numerous countries have generated new knowledge and a deeper understanding of what is needed for more innovative national responses. The planning and implementation challenges listed below have provided inspiration for a new vision to addressing the complexities of HIV/AIDS:

- Achieving the correct balance between participation by key stakeholders and technical needs;
- Selection of appropriate tools and the linking of planning and implementation stages;
- Translating the strategic framework into action at all levels and estimating implementation costs;
- Monitoring and evaluation of activities at all levels, including the selection of indicators; and
- Facilitating and supporting the implementation process from national level to community level

To respond effectively to the epidemic, a deeper understanding of the issues around its spread and impact on individuals, communities, institutions and society is necessary. Additionally, a methodology that awakens hope and new possibilities in individuals is crucial if the epidemic is to be reversed.

A “recast” strategic approach to planning and implementation must go beyond the usual technical exercises to become an empowering and transformative process energizing the individual, communities, structures and systems (See Annex 2).

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