

2010

The Pacific Response Fund Annual Work Plan

Public Health Division - HIV and STIs
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Section One: Introduction

The major factors influencing transmission of HIV in the Pacific Island region include a youthful mobile population, high rates of other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), gender issues underlying risk and vulnerability, and socio-cultural and religious norms that impact upon the spread of HIV and pose barriers to HIV prevention strategies. In most Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs) in the last five years, concerns about the spread and impact of HIV and STIs are increasingly expressed. Among the main reasons for this growth in concern is that:

- the HIV epidemic is rapidly expanding in Papua New Guinea, clearly demonstrating to leaders that it is no longer a distant prospect and that the Pacific is vulnerable;
- behavioural and sero-surveillance surveys indicate high rates of STIs and low condom use in the countries surveyed;
- more HIV-positive cases among Pacific Islanders are being reported; and
- a range of development agencies have made resources available to support projects and development of country-level strategies and HIV responses, including the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID), Asian Development Bank (ADB), New Zealand Agency for International Development (NZAID), Global Fund to fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), the Government of France, the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) and co-sponsor agencies and other multilaterals. The multi-country Global Fund Round 7 process was successful and establishment of a multi-donor initiative, the *Pacific HIV&STI Response Fund*, led by AusAID and NZAID.

As a multi-donor pool funding mechanism, the Pacific Island HIV and STI Response Fund 2009 – 2013 (Response Fund) supports implementation of national and regional HIV strategic plans. The governments of Australia and New Zealand have contributed to the Response Fund.

The Response Fund aims to contribute to the Pacific Regional HIV and STI Strategy goal, which is to

reduce the spread and impact of HIV and other STIs, while embracing people infected and affected by HIV in Pacific communities.

It also builds on previous support provided through the HIV/AIDS Pacific Regional Initiative and the Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project (PRHP). The PRHP was implemented by IDSS Ltd and Burnet Institute in conjunction with the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), through what is known as the Franco-Australian initiative from 2004-2008.

PRSIP takes into account the need to build the capacity of a regional organisation (SPC) in its role of supporting Pacific Island Countries and Territories (PICTs) to implement their responses to HIV and STIs, and recognises the presence of other donors in the region. Within this context, a multi-donor funding facility that aims to work in partnership with PICTs, regional agencies such as SPC, multilateral agencies such as UNAIDS and other donors is considered more appropriate than the stand alone project previously supported by AusAID.

The Response Fund design was developed after extensive consultation with national, regional, and international implementing agencies.

The 2010 annual plan, the second annual plan for the Response Fund, aims to:

- review and endorse the Pacific HIV & STI Response Fund Operating Procedures;
- review the progress of the proposed PRSIP II governance and coordination mechanism which attempts to highlight the need to strengthen the Regional Strategy Working Group and coordination body;
- implement the recommendations of the Independent Grants Assessment Panel Stream IV – Competitive Grant, deliberated on and endorsed projects to receive funding under the Competitive Grants Stream IV Round 2;
- review and implement the findings and recommendations of PRSIP I Evaluation and the AIDS Commission Report;
- review the Financial Anti-Fraud Policy draft document;
- review the continuing work on the M&E framework for the Response Fund and its alignment with the PRSIP II M&E Framework and the finalisation of the Response Fund Monitoring and Evaluation Framework;

- finalise the LOAs for approved PRSIP Support grants and Competitive grants;
- On-going technical support to PICT governments in the development of their Stream I NSP Support Grants;
- Establish and support of CDOs in Samoa, the Marshall Islands and Fiji, as well as evaluate the CDO programmes in selected countries;
- Provide technical support to establish Stream III (Community Action Grants);
- Provide on-going support for Stream VII (Rapid Response Grants) and existing PRHP grants;
- Further refinement and strengthening of financial and monitoring mechanisms within SPC, including monitoring and reporting of disbursement rates;
- Mapping of Response Fund Projects, budgets and actual expenditure in PRSIP II framework;
- Audit of Response Fund programme and Pacific Regional HIV Project on-going grants; and
- Enhanced grant management role of SPC through the broader development of the PHD grant management unit.

Methodology and Process of Planning the Annual Plan

This plan is a continuation of the planned activities provide in the Response Fund first annual work plan. The plan has also been informed by the lessons learned from PRHP, the midterm review of PRSIP, the Commission on AIDS in the Pacific Report and an awareness of emerging issues for the HIV and STI response in the Pacific region.

The PRSIP II framework has been used as the basis for the Annual Plan Implementation Schedule. This will allow Response Fund activities to be consolidated and reported to PICT leaders and regional partners as part of the implementation of the Regional Strategy for HIV and STIs 2009-2013 at future forums and meetings

The Annual Plan is structured as follows:

- Section One: Introduction to the Response Fund and Pacific HIV and STI Context
- Section Two: 2010 Operating Context

- Section Three: Proposed Strategies for 2010 by PRSIP Themes
- Section Four: Risk Management Strategies
- Section Five: 2010 Summary Budget.

Pacific Island HIV & STI Response Fund 2009 – 2013

This initiative acknowledges the importance of harmonising responses to HIV and STIs in the Pacific region in a way that is consistent with the Rome and Paris Declarations, and the Pacific Aid Effectiveness Principles, as adopted by the Pacific Islands Forum (PIF). The proposed approach recognises that an effective response to HIV and STIs in the Pacific region requires capacity building at regional, national (both government and civil society) and community levels. Capacity building includes training, technical support, organisational systems strengthening as well as financial resources.

Capacity building support will be provided by regional technical agencies such as SPC, WHO, UNAIDS, other sources such as the UN Technical Support Facility and Australian based agencies participating in the HIV Workforce Capacity Building Consortium. Decisions on the most appropriate form and provider of capacity building will be determined at a country level, and be supported through the national and regional funding allocations.

The Response Fund will provide funding streams that support national and regional implementation (both government and non government), as well as support the governance, administration and monitoring and evaluation of the Response Fund. The allocation for evaluation will include evaluation of programmes funded under the Response Fund, as periodic e reviews of the Response Fund.

The Response Fund is overseen by a Fund Committee that was established in October 2008. The Committee is responsible for ensuring that interventions are evidence based and that funds are used appropriately and effectively.

SPC has responsibility for managing the processes associated with the Response Fund, and providing secretariat services to the Fund Committee.

The Response Fund has been allocated to six funding streams. The funding streams are as follows:

Funding Stream I – National Strategic Plan Support Grants

Allocation to governments: An allocation to Pacific Island Forum Country Governments to assist them to

implement their national HIV & STI strategies.

Funding Stream II – Capacity Building Organisations Grants

Allocation for Capacity Building Organisations (CDO): an allocation for each country where there is an appropriate CDO that can provide capacity development support and efficient administration of grants.

Funding Stream III – Community Action Grants

Allocation of small grants to community based organisations. Where there is a CDO funded from Funding Stream II, the CDO will be responsible for the distribution and management and monitoring of these grants.

Funding Stream IV - Competitive Grants

Allocation for competitive grants: competitive pool of funds providing grants to civil society in all PICTs.

Funding Stream V – PRSIP Support Grants

Allocation for implementation of high priority activities identified in PRSIP: an allocation to Pacific regional agencies and multilateral agencies

Funding Stream VII – Rapid Response Grants

Allocation for contingency for specific, potential urgent functions: a small allocation for either health or organisational related functions. This Funding Stream is also able to respond rapidly to promote and support innovative ideas both nationally and regionally.

Often in the past, the only activities in the national capacity development plans developed at the annual PRHP NAC-CDO workshops that were eventually implemented were those funded through PRHP Funds. Consequently, most countries were unable to use their national capacity development plans to direct the support of other regional partners, who tended to support only their own programmes. It is critical for the promotion of country ownership that other agencies, particularly UN Regional agencies, but also donors and SPC, acknowledge the agendas and priorities already laid out by the individual countries, either through their strategic plans or the annual implementation or capacity

development plans. This approach has been adopted as an integral approach of PRSIP II with the intention that national priorities informing regional initiatives to ensure PRSIP II becomes much more relevant to and demand driven by the countries.

Section Two: 2010 Operating Context

Programme Management

From October 2008 SPC has recruited key positions for the management of the Response Fund. This includes the PRSIP Coordination team based in Suva. This team includes the Coordinator –PRSIP, the Finance Planning and Development Officer, the M&E Officer –PRSIP and the Systems and Information Officer.

To manage the country level programming two teams were established to serve the countries in the south Pacific from Suva and the countries in the northern Pacific from Pohnpei. The Southern National Response Team has now been established in Suva and consists of two Programme Development Officers, a Finance Development Officer and a Project Assistant. The Northern National Response Team consists of a Coordinator, a Programme Development Officer, and a Finance Development Officer. During 2010, it is expected that the position of the Prevention Advisor will be recruited and aligned to the restructure of the SPC Public Health Division (PHD).

Separate Trust Accounts has been established in Suva for the operation of the Pacific Response Fund and on-going Pacific Regional HIV Project with ANZ Bank. The rationale was based on the PRHP's previous experience of running Trust Accounts for AusAID grants programs, which allows for a more efficient operational context and accountability. Trust accounts will also be set up for the CDO and Community Action Grants Program in country in each PICs. This system has been developed to maximise both the ease of operation and accountability, but more importantly to ensure the safety of funds in a volatile political and economic environment.

SPC made efforts to harmonize the accounting systems with that of Response Fund reporting requirements. The SPC is the Principle Recipient of the Global Fund since 2003. From the beginning of its operation, the Global Fund has been a specific 'project' within the SPC financial system, and has benefited from specific software configurations (a specific company in the financial system) and specific software

package (PIMS) due to the special requirements that were not similar to the classical SPC financial reporting requirements. There are now several 'projects' within SPC, such as "Response Fund" funded by AUSAID and NZAID. All these 'projects' have more or less the same requirements in terms of financial management and a need exists for SPC to integrate the accounting systems for the efficient and effective management of these 'projects'.

In 2009, SPC developed a system called *Project Ledger* that meets the reporting requirements of Response Fund. In 2010, it is expected that Response Fund will utilize this system for all of its financial reports. Training and skills transfer for Response Fund finance team based in Suva and Pohnpei will be undertaken throughout 2010 and 2011.

Following the finalization of the Response Fund M&E framework, the *Windows SharePoint Server* site for Public Health Division Noumea will be utilised to store grants related information, as it is able to provide multi-site access to SPC staff in all offices, and will enable SPC to quickly produce information about Recipient Project Details, Acquittals and Reports. These lists use a Sub Recipient Code from the SPC *Navision* accounting system to produce a common link, not only between these tables but also to the SPC Accounting system.

A new file structure will also be implemented by June 2010 to support Response Fund project, this will enable all documents regarding each individual sub recipient to be stored by country, grant stream, then project, with sub folders for financial information, yearly reports and communications.

Another utility that will be produced and will be of use to this project is a *Monitoring and Evaluation Indicator Database* that utilises a simple table structure and *Jet Reports* to produce reports in Excel. This enables data entry and verification, and support the desegregation of indicator data by country, year, gender, age etc... Once data has been obtained and entered, it can be reported in preformatted Excel worksheets that simplify the work of staff needing to utilise the data.

Following the CDO/NAC workshop in June 2010, the Response Fund team from the northern Pacific will have the opportunity to meet with Suva-based Response Fund team to clarify grants policies and procedures; financial protocols such as *Project Ledger*, *Navision*; receive training on work planning; databases and other data management systems, have specific discussions on on-going PRHP projects and other follow-up as required to ensure data/information from Pohnpei is consistent with Suva data/information.

During 2010, the Public Health Division will undergo a restructuring process, of which, the former HIV and STI section will be included. The review of job descriptions and organizational structure will take place throughout 2010. The Grants Management Unit at SPC will commence implementation mid-2010. Further clarifications regarding the Unit and the process of implementation should become clearer throughout 2010.

Section Three: Strategies for 2010

Theme 1: Prevention Programmes

Objective: To support national and regional efforts to prevent the spread and minimise the impact of HIV and other STIs on individuals, families and communities.

Outcome 1.1 People in PICTs (including members of key populations) have the information, behaviours and skills to help prevent the transmission of HIV and other STIs

Planned Activities:

Improved Service Delivery

The work supported by the Response Fund in the areas of Strategic Health Communication (SHC) will focus on the development of a campaign to support Chlamydia testing and treatment, and the development of communication plans that target vulnerable groups. Evidence to inform these key activities (which includes materials and products) are informed from the Second Generation Surveillance (SGS) and other evaluation findings. The standardization of the SHC approach in the region is a key area of focus for the SHC Technical Working Group and this group will meet throughout 2010 to coordinate their technical assistance to country and develop harmonized approaches.

Through the Response Fund PRSIP support grant, the SPC Adolescent Health and Development Programme will focus on providing Family Life Education in Fiji, Kiribati and Vanuatu through production of IEC/BCC materials and School-based Peer Education where selected students will undergo PE training to enable them deliver PE sessions for peer/students in the school setting.

Stepping Stones training will be conducted in Chuuk, FSM in February 2010 and; in March 2010 the Stepping Stones and M&E Training for Stepping Stones Chuukese facilitators will be conducted in Guam

to provide support for planning and integration of Stepping Stones activities into Response Fund competitive grant implemented by Guahan project.

Outcome 1.2 Parent to Child Transmission of HIV other STIs in PICTs is prevented

Planned Activities:

Grant recipients are currently reviewing the Global WHO/UNICEF Strategy recommendations and modifying these recommendations for the Pacific context. Technical assistance is provided to countries to implement these strategies over the lifetime of PRSIP II.

Theme 2: Diagnosis, Counselling and Testing

Objective: To increase the early detection of HIV and other STIs to reduce further infections and facilitate timely treatment.

Outcome 2.1 People in PICTs have access to effective prevention counselling in relation to HIV and other STIs, including voluntary and confidential counselling and testing for HIV (VCCT)

Planned Activities:

The HIV Task Force will continue to meet in 2010 and will attempt to address the complex technical issues regarding validation of HIV rapid test for the region. Validation will contribute to improve quality patient care since countries will be able to have HIV screening and confirmation available at the national level.

Outcome 2.2 National and regional laboratory services in PICTs have improved capacity to provide testing and treatment monitoring in relation to HIV and other STIs

Planned Activities:

The overall approach to support laboratory development in the Pacific will be through the provision of training, mentorship and the procurement of laboratory equipment. A Laboratory Coordinator for STI testing at Mataika House will be recruited by OSSHHM and funded by PRSIP Support grant. Training for the lab technologist will be conducted in Kiribati, Samoa, Tuvalu, Vanuatu, and Cook Islands, with additional training dependent upon country requests and needs. This will be assessed as the year progresses. The training will focus on improving the quality of specimen referral, testing for Chlamydia and gonorrhoea, HIV and CD4 count.

Procurement for CD4 machine (PIMA) will be arranged for Fiji. This will allow Fiji to have a simple and efficient technology for CD4 count to use for HIV monitoring in several countries in the next few months. The Treatment, Clinical PRSIP support grant also provides financial resources for maintenance of BD probe machine used for Chlamydia and gonorrhoea testing. To ensure quality assurance for the STI testing, it is planned to arrange specimens for chlamydia from some selected countries (Cook Islands, Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, RMI, Samoa, and Tonga) to be send to NRL conduct external quality assurance (EQA). The allocation will use to cover shipment and testing cost.

Continued support for VCCT

VCCT is a critical strategy in HIV prevention and care, providing benefits to those who test HIV positive and those who test HIV negative. For VCCT services to be effective in the Pacific quality testing and counselling services must be put in place and the client communities must perceive these services as being beneficial.

In 2010, through on-going PRHP grants and Response Fund grants to the Fiji based Pacific Counselling and Social Services (PC&SS), SPC and the Response Fund will continue to support voluntary counselling and testing services in the Pacific. This will include support for the model partnership that PC&SS has developed with Government of Fiji to provide services to antenatal women, as well as provide training to counsellors throughout the Pacific region.

Theme 3: Systems and Services for HIV

Objective: To strengthen the capacity of PICTs to provide an adequately resourced continuum of treatment, care and support for people living with and affected by HIV and other STIs.

Outcome 3.1 People living with HIV in PICTs have access to evidence-based treatment, care and support

Planned Activities:

The main focus in this thematic area is to have a strong programme to increase access to HIV and STI treatment and care. This will also focus on integration of HIV & STI into broader Sexual and Reproductive Health approaches. The PRSIP support grant awarded to Treatment, Clinical Support Cluster, SPC HIV Section will support the in country training cost for HIV core team in some selected countries (Fiji and

Palau) as well as professional development of medical practitioners to improve their HIV treatment and care skills.

Outcome 3.2 People in PICTs have access to evidence-based services for the detection and management of other STIs

Planned Activities:

Comprehensive STI case management training will be provided in Palau and Solomon Islands. Similar training is planned for Tokelau and Fiji in the latter half of 2010. Much of the Response Fund work will focus on strengthening the implementation and monitoring capacity of Fiji Pharmaceutical Services. An assessment on procurement system will be undertaken and the implementation of quality control testing for Fiji Pharmaceutical Services (FPBS) is planned.

The region has progressively focused on improving its STI response, including the expansion of the Chlamydia Working Group into an STI working group. STI management is a key strategy in HIV as STIs increase individual's susceptibility to HIV. The STI working meets regularly via telephone conference or face-to-face meetings and will continue to do so in 2010. The group addresses various technical issues related to STIs such as testing, drug procurement and usage for STIs, treatment guidelines, essential drugs lists etc.

To respond to the epidemic of Chlamydia in the Region, the group is in the process of developing a policy document and recommendation for effective STI control in the Pacific Region. The policy will provide guidance to the countries on the direction of STI control. The package should be ready and be implemented in 2010. The implementation will be delivered in conjunction with the prevention activities that are funded from Response Fund to countries. A *Comprehensive STI Training Package*, STI case definitions and a minimum package for STI reporting has been developed and is in use in most countries in the Region and the Response Fund will continue to support the technical assistance required to ensure these tools and guidelines are fully implemented.

Theme 4: Leadership and the Enabling Environment

Objective: To achieve commitment and engagement from leaders in key sectors to address the challenges of HIV and other STIs

Outcome 4.3 PLHIV are engaged and involved in the all aspects of the response to the HIV epidemic in the Pacific

Planned Activities:

The Global Fund Round 7 made funds available to the government of Kiribati for the provision of HIV and STI clinic facilities. There are five clinics to be constructed and or renovated at various locations on South Tarawa. The on-going PRHP grants for Kiribati Continuum of Care program contributes towards the renovation of one clinic and provides funding for the establishment and operation of an HIV counselling services by the Kiribati Family Health Association. In 2010, the Kiribati Continuum of Care program grant will provide financial support for civil society organizations to participate in national strategic plan development; for the development of a network of HIV positive people and support establishment of antenatal counselling and HIV testing services. Activities are planned to build livelihood skills; train AIDS ambassadors in public speaking and presentation skills; emergency support for HIV positive people and build on Stepping Stones pilot through country and regional level training, follow up and support for facilitators. This grant will also provide funding to civil society organizations employing people living with HIV and training to support strengthening of STI and HIV surveillance and data management.

SPC support to improving gender equality and equity in the coming year will include the integration of gender-equality objectives and expected outcomes into any future revisions or updates of the Pacific Regional HIV Strategy and supporting the development and implementation of gender checklists and tools for reviewing both project proposals and National Strategic Plans.

Theme 5: Strategic Information and Communication

Objective: To strengthen planning, monitoring, evaluation, surveillance, research and information sharing at the national and regional levels

Outcome 5.1 PICTs have improved capacity to monitor, conduct research into and report on the HIV epidemic and other STIs in the Pacific

Planned Activities:

Increased surveillance and research capacity is crucial to inform programme development and

planning. While there has been a growing emphasis in this area in the region, in 2010 there is a need to further communicate research findings, including Second Generation Surveillance (SGS) and other research to all stakeholders and both national and regional levels.

The Response Fund will support various M&E activities in 2010. One of the key activities will be the development of a standardized M&E training curriculum, for use at the national and regional levels. Regional partners providing TA, as well as national counterparts to conduct M&E trainings will use this curriculum. Response Fund will also support the development of UNGASS reports in both the Federated States of Micronesia and Palau. These reports will be used at the national, regional and international levels to report on the country status and progress. M&E training will be conducted in Tonga during this period. A significant amount of technical assistance will be dedicated to conducting and/or supporting evaluations of specific grants, organizations or CDOs during 2010. Although the majority of the evaluations will focus on the PRHP grants, many of the grant recipients will take part in the evaluation process, be trained in evaluation and the findings of the evaluations will inform their current Response Fund funded projects.

The integration of sexual and reproductive health and HIV will be reported through indicators developed in the Response Fund M&E framework. The approach to review grants and their alignment is through a review of approved proposals being funded through the Response Fund Streams IV and V.

Theme 6: Governance and Coordination

Objective: To attain good governance and effective coordination of regional and national HIV & STI responses

Outcome 6.1 PICTs have improved capacity to plan, fund, manage, implement and monitor their multisectoral response to the HIV epidemic and other STIs, in accordance with the "Three Ones" principles

Planned Activities:

National Strategic Plans

The outcomes of the sub-regional forums in October and November 2008 clearly revealed the need to

strengthen the strategies frameworks of each country in order to prepare PICs for future funding rounds through the Global Fund, as well as the Response Fund and to assist in a more effective implementation and evaluation of the Response Fund. Burnet Institute Pacific has taking a lead role to establish regional planning team consisting of participants from SPC HIV & STI Section, UNAIDS, UNFPA, UNICEF and WHO. In consultation with NACs (or their equivalent), strategic planning workshops will be conducted in Kiribati, Solomon Islands, Federated States of Micronesia (FSM) to review. In the smaller countries, assistance will be given to develop work-plans as part of an overall health plan rather than a standalone NSP.

The focus of major activities are to assess strategic planning capacity and training needs, assist participating PICs to evaluate existing National Strategic Plans and compile situational assessments, review the HIV strategic planning workshop materials used in the past; and finalise and produce copies of the revised strategic planning manual and associated training materials for distribution to PICs partner. SPC Response Fund Northern Pacific team will assist in determining the need for implementing a planning approach and materials linking NSP development to PIHACAN process for the USA-affiliated countries.

Strengthening National Coordination Mechanisms

The Response Fund team will continue to provide capacity-building support to strengthen NCMs. This work will specifically focus on:

- The capacities of NCM member organisations and government agencies to address any gaps in necessary expertise;
- Supporting NCMs to take an active role in monitoring their National Strategic Plan for HIV and STIs;
- Supporting the NCMs to take an active role in overseeing the Community Action Grant Funding Stream in country including appraisal, approval and on-going monitoring of reports and financial acquittals;
- Improving coordination and linkages with CDOs if they exist;
- Assisting in strengthening mechanisms that allow NCMs to determine priorities and align financial and technical resource available through the Response Fund and other funding sources;

- Creating an enabling environment that provides demand driven technical support and institutional capacity building using the full range of sources of technical assistance, including national and regional institutions, NGOs, UN partners and SPC; and
- Facilitating access to Response Fund support through relevant funding streams.

Identify Capacity Development Organisations

By end of 2009, CDOs were established in seven countries. In this annual plan period, technical assistance will be provided to establish NAC and finalize CDO selection in Marshall Islands and FSM and establish CDO in Fiji. Technical assistance and mentoring in the areas of relevant training and HIV/AIDS project design, management, implementation and monitoring and evaluation will be provided to Samoa upon Samoa NAC endorsement to re-engage the CDO program.

Conduct Annual Meeting of CDO/NAC

To ensure that programme planning and reporting on national responses to HIV & STIs are effectively coordinated between government, civil society organizations, and technical agencies, the annual meeting of CDO/NAC will be held in June 2010 in Suva. Representatives from the National AIDS Committees (or equivalent) and representatives from the Capacity Development Organizations supported through the Response Fund will be invited from Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu. Regional partners receiving funding from the response fund will also be invited during sessions on review of country plans.

The objectives of the meeting are:

1. To provide progress on the implementation of the national responses to HIV & STIs and the Response Fund;
2. To identify challenges and constraints to implementation and rectify them through a revised action plan;
3. To revise national plans of action and identify joint-activities with regional partners; and
4. To train participants on Response Fund M&E framework.

During this workshop SPC technical staff members funded by the Global Fund and ADB will assist the

Response Fund to update on the epidemiological data and key challenges; new strategic approach to STI prevention and control for the Pacific; HIV case management and Continuum of Care in the Pacific and HSC in support of the STI comprehensive approach and principles. An M&E consultant will also train participants on the Response Fund M&E framework, showing the linkages between projects, national, Response Fund and PRSIP M&E and providing training on Response Fund reporting tools.

Appraisal of grant application (Rapid Response & Community Action Grant)

The initial vetting process will be undertaken by Response Fund team for Rapid Response Grant applications and the SPC HIV and STI Section Head will review the proposals for adherence to the guidelines on eligibility and seek clarification where necessary. The Fund Committee Chairperson will then consider the proposal for funding.

The CDOs and NACs will receive training on assessing Community Action Grants applications against essential criteria during in-country visits by SPC. The Response Fund team will provide technical assistance during vetting process to assess whether the project design has an appropriate response within the national HIV/AIDS strategic plan or shows an innovative response. Grant applications will follow the project proposal process and be vetted by the NAC or its equivalent before submission to SPC for release of funds. Applications for Community Action Grants from Vanuatu are expected to be received in January 2010 and from other PICs from June 2010 onwards with the approval and disbursement commencing in July 2010. Ongoing support for proposal development for the CAG Programs will be provided by the CDO in country whereas in countries without CDOs, SPC will continue to provide training in Project Design Management and proposal writing.

On-going technical support

SPC will provide on-going technical support to the contracted grantees as part of the capacity development program. To assist the partners to prepare for the implementation of projects, the Response Fund team will conduct:

- CDO/NAC meeting in June 2010
- Five-day training in project design management, proposal writing and Most Signification Change

workshops in Cook Islands, Fiji, FSM, Kiribati, RMI, Solomon Islands and Tuvalu

- Monitoring and evaluation workshops in Tonga and Guam
- Behaviour Change Communication training in FSM
- Financial Management training in Cook Islands, Kiribati, Samoa, Tonga and Tuvalu
- Stepping Stones training in partnership with Foundation of the Peoples of the South Pacific in Fiji, FSM, Tonga and Vanuatu

The CDOs will become the main source of support to Community Action Grant partners supplement by SPC staff where required. With the support from SPC staff, CDOs will also provide technical support in areas such as counselling, peer education, and behaviour change communication. On-going capacity development support will be provided by in-country visits, email and telephone to all grants holders by SPC over the course of 2010.

Grant Evaluations

In this annual plan period, five country/program evaluations will be conducted in order to assist SPC and the grant implementers to learn about how well the projects are performing, its effectiveness and efficiency, as well as the outcomes of the project, drawing on from its past performance, lessons learned and practical recommendations for follow-up actions. The evaluations will be conducted for:

- Fiji Network for Positive People funded by Response Fund
- Pacific Counselling funded by Global fund and Response Fund
- Niue Country Evaluation funded by Global Fund
- Wan SmolBag funded by Response Fund
- Palau Ministry of Health – evaluation of the PRHP programs

Review funded project progress and financial reports

The grant scheme guidelines and the contracted Letter of Agreements clearly state the financial and narrative reporting requirements and due dates of reports is annexed as schedule in the letter of agreements with the grantees. Within this annual plan period it is expected that grant reports will be received from all grant streams. The project progress and financial reports for Community Action Grant will be reviewed and complied by in-country CDOs before its submission to SPC. The CDOs will monitor progress and performance of the in-country CAG program. The reports will also be used to guide on-

going technical support based on the quality of reports and issues raised within them.

Outcome 6.2 Pacific Regional Strategy implementation and monitoring is effective, efficient, timely and based on the best available evidence

Planned Activities:

Submit six-monthly progress reports

Progress reports describing the implementation progress for Response Fund Grants Scheme will be provided to the donors on six-monthly basis and also presented in the Response Fund Committee meeting. These reports will cover the progress achieved and identify constraints and where possible appropriate mitigation to overcome these challenges. The two progress reports for 2010 will be submitted in April and August respectively.

Outcome 6.3 Regional Partnerships and Networks are established and supportive of the response to the HIV epidemic in the Pacific

Planned Activities:

Gender

SPC through the PRSIP Support Grant to Human Development Programme continues to support improving gender equality and equity and has planned to integrate Gender dimension into regional and national HIV and STI response strategies and plans. The following activities will be carried out in 2010:

- Gender audit of PRSIP II
- Desk review of gender and HIV situation in country in Tonga, Kiribati and Marshall Islands
- Conduct gender analysis of national response plans in Tonga, Kiribati and Marshall Islands
- Conduct gender awareness training for stakeholder group
- National stakeholder workshop to present findings and identify interventions to improve plans
- Share experience at 10th Conference of Pacific Women (or other suitable regional event)

PIJAAG Summit

The Pacific Islands Jurisdictions AIDS Action Group (PIJAAG) is a network of US-affiliated states working in HIV and STIs. This conference is held every two years in order for countries and technical partners to meet to discuss technical and programmatic issues. Attendance at PIJAAG Summit by technical partners will provide the opportunity to:

- Meet with US Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and Capacity Building Assistance providers to improve and streamline technical assistance to the Northern Pacific between SPC and US-based technical assistance providers;
- Discussions with CDC to resolve on-going issues with separate HIV and STI reporting mechanisms and requirements, harmonizing support to national strategic planning processes, promote Stepping Stones and MSIP condom social marketing project as innovative projects for the Northern Pacific, discuss National Reference Laboratory HIV Rapid Testing Phase I findings and proposed algorithms with CDC for Northern Pacific countries, and harmonization of funding support to HIV and STI response;
- Presentations by SPC staff – Dr Alan, Tim Bryar, Mary Enciso, Kamma Blair, Emi Chutaro and Semenson Ehpel on technical and programmatic issues.

Outcome 6.4 Financial resources for PRSIP are mobilised, allocated and monitored

Planned Activities:

Conduct Pacific Response Fund Committee meetings

Two face-to-face Pacific Response Fund Committee meetings are proposed to be held in June and October in Nadi. The PRFC meetings will be scheduled to follow Global Fund PIRM-CCM meetings.

The contract of the Chair for the Response Fund Committee will end in June 2010 and further decisions of Chairmanship will be made in the 4th Response Fund Committee meeting.

Annual Audited Financial Statements

SPC manages the Response Fund monies in accordance with the organizational financial management operational procedures and as per the Exchange of Letters between the SPC and the donors, SPC is required to submit annual audited financial statements to the donors and Fund Committee. The

appointed external auditors of SPC will undertake audit of both the Pacific Response Fund and on-going Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project in May 2010. The annual audited financial statements will be provided to the donors in July and to the Fund Committee in the November 2010 meeting.

Programme Management

Funding Stream I – NSP Support Grants – the basis for countries drawing down on these grants in a fully costed bi-annual plan based on priorities in their respective the NSP. The initial drafts of these plans were developed during the sub regional planning workshops held in Suva and Pohnpei in 2008, with an update of these plans scheduled for 2010.

It is expected that these grants will provide assistance to overall health systems strengthening by paying for key positions as required and ensuring funding goes through the usual government funding mechanisms so a parallel system of funds disbursement is not established. Funds will be disbursed in six monthly tranches and will require six monthly activity and financial reporting. An evaluation of this process may be part of a mid-term review.

Funding Stream II – CDO Grants – In 2010 SPC will continue to support the CDO programme established under PRHP as a conduit for financial and capacity building resources at the country level. Existing CDOs in Tonga, Tuvalu, the Solomon Islands and Vanuatu will continue to be supported. A review of CDO programmes in Vanuatu and Solomon Islands will be undertaken by the PRSIP team as part of their on-going M&E function in 2010.

The CDO programme will be re-established in 2010 for Fiji and Samoa following their closure during PRHP. The re-establishment of the CDOs in this country will be based on PRHP's experience of a greater involvement in the selection of the organisation and coordinator being required. SPC will work with these countries to facilitate this process of selection. CDO Coordinators will work closely with National HIV Coordinators in countries where there are HIV Coordinators supported by the Global Fund Round 7, with the possibility of the TOR for CDO Coordinators being reviewed to reflect this partnership. SPC will also establish the CDO programme in the northern Pacific in the Marshall Islands. SPC will again play a much greater role on the selection of the organization and coordinator to ensure success of the programme.

Funding Stream III – Community Action Grants - The Community Action Grants Funding Stream will be determined by the establishment or re-establishment of CDOs. The CDOs will act as the administrator of

the small grants in country on behalf of the NCMs. Disbursement of funds to Vanuatu CDO in 2010 and the other disbursements for the Grants will be dependent upon the utilization of outstanding PRHP NAC grants. The slow uptake of the CDO grants will continually be monitored in 2010, with updates provided in both the progress reports and to the Response Fund Committee. These issues will also be raised at the CDO/NAC grant meeting in 2010.

Funding Stream IV – Competitive Grants – In the October 2009 meeting the Fund Committee endorsed the recommendations of the Independent Grants Assessment Panel for Competitive Grants Stream IV Round 2. On-going support to the projects will be provided by the respective sub regional teams and other SPC technical expertise as required. It is expected that the implementation work plan, budget and LOAs for both rounds will be finalised for by August 2010 and all Competitive Grant projects to receive their first tranche of funding by September 2010.

Funding Stream V – PRSIP Support Grants – The remaining LOAs for WHO, SPC Adolescent Health and Development, PPAPD, ILO and SPC Human Development Programme will be finalized by July 2010 and it is expected that the first tranche of funding to these organizations will be disbursed shortly afterwards. Projects that received their first disbursement will be receiving second and third disbursements upon reporting satisfactorily. On-going support to this regional funding stream will be provided by the SPC PRSIP team.

Funding Stream VII – Rapid Response Grants – Rapid Response grant applications will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis and approved by the Response Fund Committee Chairperson. All potential grant applicants will be encouraged to use the other funding streams first.

On-going Pacific Regional HIV/AIDS Project - SPC has also taken on the responsibility for the management of on-going grants funded by PRHP. It is managed and reported under a separate EOL with AusAID and is an integral part of the work of the two sub-regional teams. The completion of all the on-going grants novated is expected to be by 31 December 2010. During 2010, the Response Fund team will be identifying the non-performing grants and liaising with AusAID for reprogramming of the unspent funds.

Section Four: Risk Management Strategies

The following risks were identified in the Exchange of Letters between SPC and AusAID. For 2010, these risks remain relevant. A number of risks outlined below have the potential to impact on the successful outcomes of the Pacific Islands HIV and STI Response Fund. The Risk Management Matrix will be updated in the January – June 2010 Response Fund Progress Report.

| Risks | Mitigation Strategy |
|--|--|
| a) Lack of national ownership and commitment to planning, implementing and reporting on their HIV and STI activities supported by the Response Fund. | Maintain regular coordination with major stakeholders and projects working on HIV issues at national and regional level. Provide technical assistance to implement capacity development plan of countries. Advocacy to all partners to use NSPs in supporting the activities at national level |
| b) Poor reporting and compliance with monitoring and evaluation measures by civil society agencies and regional partners. | Review of M&E Officer –PR SIP job description which will include a review and clarification of provision of technical assistance to civil society and regional partners |
| c) Lack of coordination and harmonization with activities supported by other key partners such as the Global Fund and UN agencies. | Establish resource and activity tracking system to map resources allocations against PR SIP II framework and communicate with partners. Strengthening of technical working groups and clarification of their relationship to the Regional Strategy Working Group. |
| d) Slow implementation of Fund activities caused by inadequacies within SPC systems e.g. human resource, ITC etc... | Establishment of country teams and work plans across the SPC Public Health Division and strengthening of the Grants Management Unit. |
| e) Lack of clarity about roles and responsibilities between SPC and Response Fund Committee. | Strengthening the leadership capacity of both the SPC and the Response Fund Committee members. |

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>f) Potential for conflict of interest between SPC role as Grant Manager and Grant implementer.</p> | <p>Clarification of the roles and responsibilities of the Grants Management Unit and technical staff based at SPC. Clarification of roles and oversight by the Response Fund Committee on the roles of SPC as a Grant implementer for increased transparency and accountability.</p> |
|---|--|

Section Five: 2010 Budget Summary

| Stream No. | Stream Type | Total Project Budget | Disbursement /Expenditure to date 31.12.2009 | 2010 - Projected Grant Disbursement and Expenditure | | Total Projected disbursement/ Expenditure 2010 | Budget Remaining | % spent of Budget |
|--------------|--|----------------------|--|---|--------------------|--|---------------------|-------------------|
| | | | | Jan-Jun | Jul-Dec | | | |
| 01 | National allocation for Forum Island Countries | \$4,245,000 | \$242,971 | 285,800 | 480,000 | \$765,800 | \$3,236,229 | 24% |
| 02 | Capacity Development Organizations | \$1,500,000 | \$57,984 | 235,500 | 350,600 | \$586,100 | \$855,916 | 43% |
| 03 | Community Action Grants | \$1,410,000 | \$0 | 69,500 | 180,600 | \$250,100 | \$1,159,900 | 18% |
| 04 | Competitive Grants | \$4,627,000 | \$443,236 | 258,903 | 850,000 | \$1,108,903 | \$3,074,861 | 34% |
| 05 | Regional Priorities | \$7,050,200 | \$1,070,989 | 980,000 | 1,350,000 | \$2,330,000 | \$3,649,211 | 48% |
| 06 | Allocation to support programs | \$800,000 | \$25,348 | 22,000 | 93,000 | \$115,000 | \$659,652 | 18% |
| 07 | Rapid Response | \$975,342 | \$78,097 | 38,750 | 30,900 | \$69,650 | \$827,595 | 15% |
| 08 | Operational Support Costs | \$11,922,458 | \$682,642 | 950,000 | 1,250,000 | \$2,200,000 | \$9,039,816 | 24% |
| 09 | Capacity Development Support | \$800,000 | \$17,715 | 78,500 | 126,500 | \$205,000 | \$577,285 | 28% |
| 10 | Fund Committee Costs | \$1,500,000 | \$110,214 | 145,800 | 154,200 | \$300,000 | \$1,089,786 | 27% |
| Total | | \$34,830,000 | \$2,729,196 | \$3,064,753 | \$4,865,800 | \$7,930,553 | \$24,170,251 | 31% |

Notes:

- All figures are in Australian Dollars

- Operational Support Costs grant allocation over life of the project = Initial allocation of \$11,250,000 plus increase in management fee of \$672,458

The projected funding commitment for years 2011 to 2013 will be reported in the January to June 2010 progress report upon receiving the remaining implementation plans and budgets for the streams National Strategic Plans, Community Action Grants and Competitive Grants.

The likely funding required for 2010:

| | AUD |
|--|---------------------|
| a) Total amount transferred by AusAID and NZAID into SPC Trust Account during project as at 31 st December 2009 | 4,732,841.75 |
| b) Total amounts SPC has disbursed to grant beneficiaries during project as at 31 st December 2009 | 1,893,277.60 |
| c) Total amounts SPC has disbursed for the management of Response Fund during project as at 31 st December 2009 | 835,919.67 |
| Balance as at 31st December 2009 | 2,003,644.48 |
| Less Projected Disbursement and Expenditure 2010 | 7,930,553.00 |
| Funds required 2010 | 5,926,908.52 |

Commitments by donors for the year 2010:

| | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. AusAID (a) for the year 2009/10 \$5.4 million and (b) for the year 2010/11 \$5.4 million | A\$ 10.8 million |
| 2. NZAID: for the year 2010 | NZ\$ 1.5 million |