

Experiences in the **Development of**

Community Engagement Strategic Initiative
Technical Assistance Requests
in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022



Experiences in the Development of Community Engagement Strategic Initiative Technical Assistance Requests in Latin America and the Caribbean in 2022 is a document prepared the Latin America and the Caribbean Regional Platform for Support, Coordination and Communication of Civil Society and Communities (LAC Platform)

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Regional Support, Communication and Coordination Platform for Latin America and the Caribbean (LAC Platform) is an initiative promoted by Via Libre with financial support from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (Global Fund).

The Platform is part of several interventions of the Global Fund to support and strengthen community and civil society participation at all levels within their processes. It is a component of the Strategic Initiative for Community Engagement (EI CP).

Acronyms

ACOBCS	Colombian Association of Community-Based Health Organizations
CBO	Community-Based Organization
CCM	Country Coordinating Mechanism
CE SI	Community Engagement Strategic Initiative
CLM	Community-Led Monitoring
CSG	Coordination and Support Group
CSO	Civil Society Organization
EJF	Elton John Foundation
FSW	Female Sexual Workers
GF	The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria
GIZ	German Agency for International Cooperation
HR	Human Rights
KP	Key Population
LAC	Latin America and the Caribbean
LGBTIQ+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Intersex, Queer, Asexual and Other
MOH	Ministry of Health
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
NMSP	National Multisectoral Strategic Plan
NSWP	Global Network of Sex Work Projects
OSF	Open Society Foundation
PLHIV	People Living with HIV
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TA	Technical Assistance
TB	Tuberculosis
TRP	Technical Review Panel
TW	Transexual Women

1. Introduction

The Latin America and Caribbean Regional Platform (Vía Libre/LAC Platform) is part of the Community Engagement Strategic Initiative (CE SI) of the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GF). Hosted by the Peruvian organization Via Libre, the platform aims to strengthen the meaningful engagement and inclusion of communities and key populations (KPs) in GF processes.

This document has been prepared as part of the activities that support the goal of improving communities' access to Technical Assistance (TA) through information-sharing, linkage to appropriate providers, support developing requests, and strengthening TA provider capacity and coordination.

The CE SI short-term TA program for civil society and community organizations aims to increase their meaningful engagement in national processes related to GF grants. It has three areas of work:



Situational analysis and needs assessment



Engagement in country dialogue



Support to design and implementation arrangements

Between February and September 2022, six requests for the short-term TA program were submitted from LAC countries (Bolivia, Colombia, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guyana, and Venezuela) and approved. Three of these requests focused on improving community engagement in the national response, two on enhancing community engagement in GF processes, and one on laws criminalizing KPs.

This paper aims to document and disseminate lessons learned from the process of developing short-term TA requests, focusing on identifying recommendations for future requests. This document is for CSO and KP representatives interested in submitting TA requests to the CE SI, the Via Libre/LAC Platform team and CCM members (especially those representing CSOs and KPs), as it aims to provide guidance and improve the application process.

2. Objectives

This analysis aims to document and examine the GF's CE SI Short-Term TA Program request development processes in six LAC countries. The specific objectives of the study are:

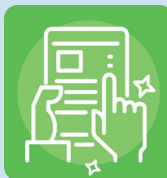
- **To analyze short-term TA** requests from six countries in the region.
- To describe **the areas and needs** communities intend to address through the **GF's CE SI Short-Term TA Program**.
- **To collect the applicants' experience** regarding the support provided by the [Vía Libre / LAC Platform](#) during the development of the CE SI Short-Term TA Program request.
- **To make recommendations** to improve the TA request development and implementation processes.



3. Methodology



A document review focused on the TA requests and the CE SI guidelines.



Applicants were provided with an open-ended questionnaire to document the processes.



Interviews were conducted with the Vía Libre/ LAC Platform team in charge of supporting the organizations in the TA request development process.



The information from these sources was systematized and analyzed to meet the objectives.

4. Outcomes



The approved submissions from the six countries were analyzed separately. These analyses were compared with the GF and CE SI guidelines, with the applicants' responses to open-ended questionnaires, and with the reports of the LAC Platform consultants involved in developing the requests. The outcomes are described in the same order as the TA request form.

Enhanced Engagement of Female Sex Workers in Bolivia

Profile of the Technical Assistance applicant organization

Red de mujeres trabajadoras sexuales de Cobija, (Cobija Female Sex Workers Network) is an organization comprising 20 women that was formed in response to violations of their rights by authorities and healthcare services in the Bolivian Amazon. It promotes access to healthcare, HIV prevention, and advocacy for the recognition of sex work and collaborates with other organizations of female sex workers (FSWs) at the national level.

In the past, they included shelters and *pulperías* (small cooperatives) for FSWs in their C19RM 2.0 funding request. They have received support from the C19RM and the ALEP regional project, both of which are initiatives of the GF.



Background and rationale for requesting Technical Assistance.

- Although their leaders are recognized in various provinces, the organization and linkages of FSWs in the country are still incipient, which hinders their effective engagement.
- Although sex work is not criminalized in Bolivia, it is not regulated. The government requires FSWs to have health cards but does not provide them with social protection.
- FSW organizations are fragmented. This situation is fueled by pimps and criminal organizations that profit from trafficking and undermining FSWs.
- There is an urgent need to build linkages to win the rights of FSWs and engage them in the decision-making processes. There is a growing awareness that a united voice and a national movement would be more powerful in influencing decision-making.
- FSWs face barriers to effective engagement in the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM). According to the leaders, these barriers are due to the double discrimination they face for being women and engaging in sex work.
- FSWs are represented as vulnerable populations, along with transgender women (TM) and men who have sex with men (MSM). Such a secondary role weakens the visibility of their needs.
- In the case of GF grants, organizations or networks with greater organizational capacity have more effective engagement, especially in country dialogues. FSW organizations lack this capacity, as evidenced by the C19RM-2.0 (2021) social dialogues, which revealed the weaknesses of this constituency and the lack of coordination.
- The request aimed to enhance the engagement of FSWs in GF processes and policy-making in the country by strengthening their leadership and movement.



CE SI area(s) of Technical Assistance selected in the request

Two of the CE SI areas of Technical Assistance were selected by the applicants:

Engagement in country dialogue processes

- Engagement planning of communities in GF processes.

Supporting design and implementation arrangements

- Mapping of civil society and community organizations and activities to strengthen community systems.
- Refining or validating tools that support community engagement in GF-related processes.
- Workshop(s) to enhance knowledge of civil society and communities on the GF.

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The main objective of the application is to strengthen the meaningful engagement of FSWs community representatives and organizations in the GF processes in Bolivia. To achieve this objective, it was necessary to:

- Enhance the understanding of the GF funding model and its principles of enhanced community engagement among FSW organizations in Bolivia.
- Identify the priority needs of FSWs in the context of the HIV response and develop an agenda to be used as an advocacy tool to visibilize the identified needs.
- Establish a mechanism to engage Bolivian FSWs in the GF processes and promote the engagement and accountability of their representatives in the CCM.

Intended approach (strategies and activities)

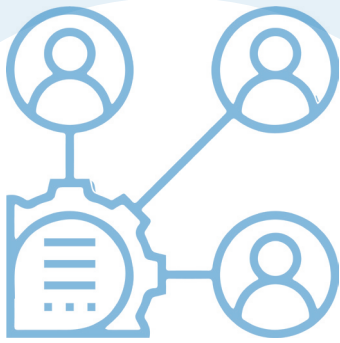
The activities to achieve the objectives were organized as follows:



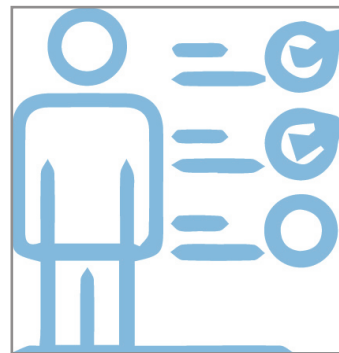
Update the mapping of FSW leaders and organizations in Bolivia, focusing particularly on the provinces most affected by HIV.



Develop a methodological guide to the GF funding model, its principles for meaningful community engagement, and specific guidance for FSW engagement.



Conduct a meeting to assess
the needs of the FSWs;
Design the workshop methodology.



Strengthen the capacity of FSW leaders and
organizations in the GF funding model, its principles
for meaningful community engagement, and specific
guidance for FSW engagement through a
face-to-face workshop and
a virtual follow-up.



Create a roadmap to consolidate
the engagement of FSWs
in GF processes.

Expected key outcomes and/or deliverables

- Updated document on FSW leaders and organizations at the national level.
- Guidance on the GF model, coordination methodology and advocacy plan.
- FSWs will have developed their capacity in the GF funding model and its principles for meaningful community engagement.
- Assessment of FSW's needs in the HIV response context.

A timeline of one and a half months was set for developing the deliverables and achieving the TA outcomes.

Profile of the consultant(s)

The following criteria were defined for the selection of the consultant(s):

- Spanish language proficiency.
- Knowledge of the Bolivian context and the HIV response situation in the country.
- Familiarity with the dynamics of CSO working on HIV in Bolivia, particularly those working with key populations.



Coordination with other stakeholders

The Technical Secretariat and the Chair of the CCM reviewed the application and provided some input. The application was also sent to the GF country team for review.

LAC Platform support

Challenges

Both the applicants and the LAC Platform team identified several challenges in developing the TA request:

- Lack of expertise in problem analysis and development of TA requests by FSW leaders.
- Communication-related difficulties (lack of internet access and knowledge of communication platforms). Applicants were more accustomed to face-to-face meetings than virtual meetings.
- Lack of clarity about their TA needs.
- All of the above issues are related to the high vulnerability, poverty and lack of access to formal education of FSWs.

Factors that facilitated the development of the TA request

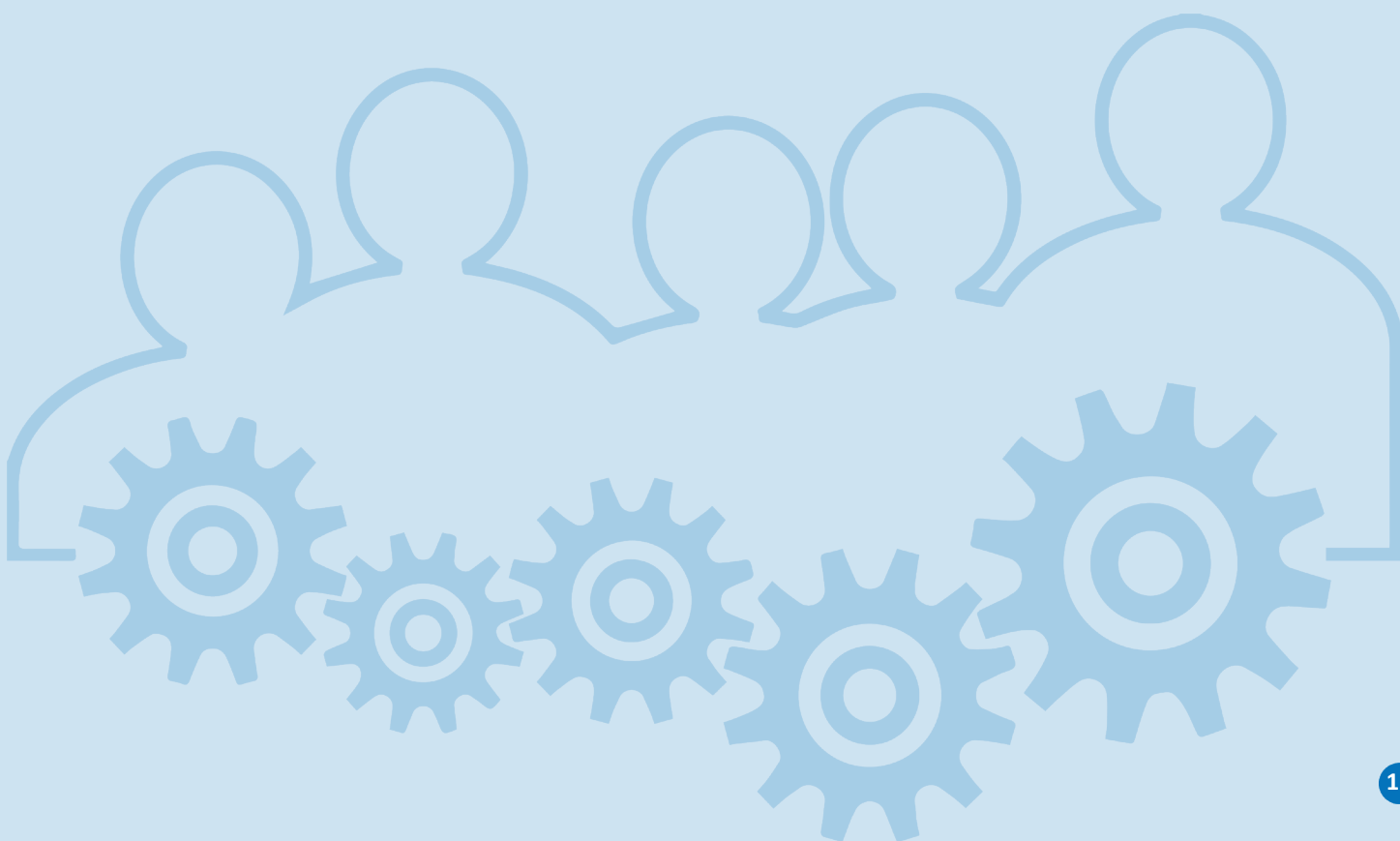
- The support of the [LAC Platform](#) and other stakeholders in developing the TA request.
- The leader's attitude, motivation and persistence made it possible to submit the request.
- Stakeholders such as the [Global Network of Sex Work Projects \(NSWP\)](#) and [PLAPERTS](#) also provided support.

Successful experience

During the development of the application, a linkage was formed with the [Plataforma Latinoamericana de Personas que Ejercen el Trabajo Sexual \(PLAPERTS, Latin American Platform of Sex Workers\)](#). This coordination allowed the platform to learn about short-term TA, which will likely lead to the development of TA applications by FSWs in other countries in the region.

Recommendations

- Epidemiological data on HIV and sex work should be included in the background and rationale.
- Coherence between activities and deliverables should be improved. For example, developing a roadmap to enhance FSW engagement in the GF process is mentioned as an activity, but no related deliverable is mentioned.
- Outcomes should always have a verifiable deliverable, such as a document, a list of participants, a process report, guidance, etc.
- The profile of the consultant(s) should include expertise working with FSWs.
- Given the number of FSW needs, the possibility of linking this TA process to the long-term strategic TA initiative (perhaps through the NSWP) should be explored..
- The TA process should be documented as a case study by the LAC Platform so that the experience and lessons learned from this process can be shared with other regional FSW organizations.
- There should be a focus on promoting short-term TA services for FSW organizations in countries in the region where GF grants are implemented. FSWs are one of the groups least engaged in these processes.



Toward Public Funding for **Community-Based Organizations** in **Colombia**

Profile of the Technical Assistance applicant organization

Red Somos is a community-based organization (CBO) that promotes the recognition of sexual and gender diversity, sexual health and community empowerment through community services, research and advocacy. It works with vulnerable populations, LGBTIQ+, PLHIV, migrants, refugees and returnees. It is part of the **Colombian Association of Health CBOs (ACOBSCS)**, which provides community-based healthcare services and promotes the technical strengthening of its organizations to provide quality and relevant community healthcare services. This association includes **179 CBOs** that offer community healthcare services, visibilizing the community as an integrating ally in the health system, optimizing access and opportunities for prevention, health promotion and early detection.



Background and rationale for requesting Technical Assistance.

In May 2022, [Red Somos](#), on behalf of ACOBCS and with the support of the [LAC Platform](#), prepared a TA request to the CE SI to continue a previous process for the licensing and registering CBOs as primary healthcare providers in the Colombian health system. Previous steps included strengthening CBOs in prevention and diagnosis, drafting an ordinance for their licensing, and identifying community service packages. This new request focuses on covering aspects not covered in the previous request related to costing and alignment with the health system, and registering CBOs as service providers.

The needs assessment and discussion included the following points:

- GF grants have strengthened capacities in prevention, testing and community engagement in the HIV/AIDS response.
- There are still difficulties in linking the community response as service providers to the health system under the public funding regime. This issue was highlighted in the 2019 Transition Assessment.
- The **2021 HIV Clinical Practice Guidelines** focus on combination prevention and authorize services to be provided through companies that manage health insurance plans. This is an opportunity for CBOs to be contracted.
- The Ministry of Health (MOH) is considering the registration or licensing of CBOs as a viable option. To move forward with this recognition, they have accepted the drafted ordinance resulting from a previous TA supported by the CE SI.
- Continuity is needed to gather more evidence to increase the visibility of CBO needs and to create the conditions to meet the technical, legal and administrative requirements for licensing (registration as a service provider). These requirements will ensure the quality and safety of community health interventions within the legal framework.
- A list of services provided by CBOs within the health system was documented in a TA with Backup Salud GIZ in 2019.
- It is essential to cost community interventions, analyze the requirements for licensing of CBOs as healthcare providers, and ensure their recognition and engagement within the health system.

Key and vulnerable population communities that will benefit from this TA

The TA intends to benefit: MSM, sex workers, migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, people living with HIV, and adolescent girls and young women.

CE SI area(s) of Technical Assistance selected in the request:

Applicants selected two CE SI areas of TA:

Situational analysis and needs assessment

- Program reviews to ensure community perspectives inform service delivery.

Supporting design and implementation arrangements

- Mapping of civil society and community organizations and activities to strengthen community systems.

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The request intends to further advance the sustainability of the national HIV/AIDS response and the implementation of the Sustainability, Transition and Co-financing Policy by licensing the services provided by the **ACOBES-affiliated CBOs**, in accordance with the existing regulations and the functioning of the health system in the country. To achieve this objective, it is necessary to:

- Develop a proposal for the licensing of CBOs as healthcare providers.
- Design an advocacy plan for the health system to register CBOs and provide economic recognition (social contracting) in the insurance system.
- Mobilize for the inclusion of community services in healthcare service plans.

Intended Approach o (Strategies and Activities)

Activities to achieve the goals were organized into four phases:

FIRST PHASE:

Develop a proposal for licensing CBOs as healthcare providers. To achieve this, it will be necessary to:

- Create a guide that maps and links CBO services, licensing requirements, and standards the health system sets.
- Describe the services CBOs provide and identify those that, according to the guide, can be recognized under the current regulations.
- Elaborate a list of CBOs by category to identify three CBOs to conduct an on-site review of conditions.

SECOND PHASE:

On-site review of three ACOBS-affiliated CBOs to determine the general conditions for their recognition as healthcare providers in the health system.

- Review the service portfolio to identify the delivery methodology, installed healthcare capabilities, and scope of services.
- Review the regulatory requirements each service must meet to be recognized within the healthcare service delivery models.
- Prepare a model guide that identifies the services of the CBOs and, according to their service and care conditions, the regulatory requirements that must be individually met for their recognition as healthcare service providers.

3 THIRD PHASE:

Develop a proposal for a community registration system that includes registration requirements and can be adopted by the MOH:

- Conduct an analysis of the state of community registration with the MOH, focusing on regulatory opportunities.
- Review community registry experiences in the country as a basis for informing the registry.
- Determine minimum requirements for community registration of CBOs.

4 PHASE FOUR:

Strengthen advocacy to achieve linkage of CBOs as community health providers:

- Organize a national workshop to present final documents and training on community licensing and registration.
- Develop an advocacy and mobilization plan for community health registration with the Ministry of Health and regional offices.
- Coordinate a technical working table with MOH to present outcomes and the work plan.

Expected key outcomes and/or deliverables

- Model guide that identifies the services of the CBOs and the regulatory requirements for their recognition as healthcare service providers.
- Verification report of CBOs in three cities to determine the general conditions for their recognition as healthcare providers in the health system.
- Document that identifies the minimum requirements for community registration of CBOs.
- Virtual validation report of the proposed model for community registration and licensing.
- Advocacy and mobilization plan for community health registration and licensing of some services.

A timeline of three months was set for developing the deliverables and achieving the TA outcomes.

Profile of the consultant(s)

The following criteria were defined for the selection of the consultant(s):

- Spanish language proficiency.
- Extensive knowledge of the Colombian health system, including **providing community healthcare services**.
- **Expertise in delivering** community healthcare services as a health professional in CBOs.
- Knowledge of licensing standards and the 3100 Licensing Resolution from a community perspective.
- Experience with **ACOBCS** and the CBO registration process mobilized in the MOH in Colombia.
- Expertise in developing **advocacy plans** and technical roundtables with high-level individuals.



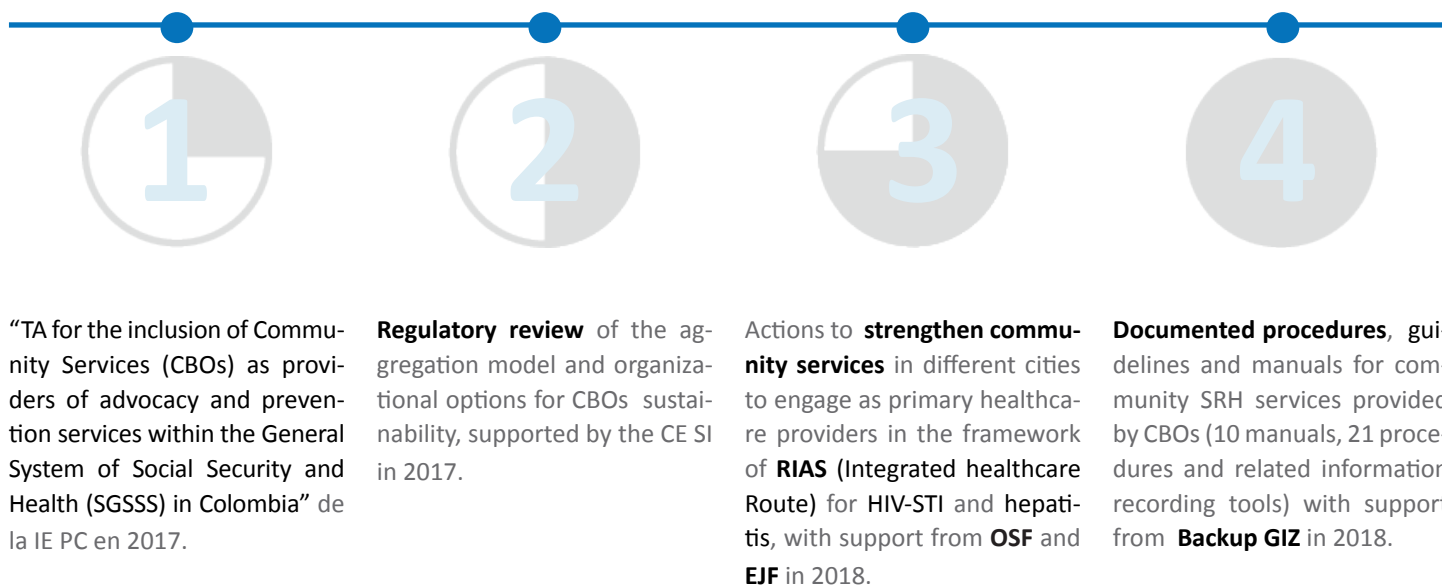
Coordination with other stakeholders

The development of the request was coordinated with the CCM Chair, who also represents the MOH, and the GF's Transition and Sustainability Specialist.

Submission of the TA request to other providers

The present request continues a process of technical strengthening of CBOs providing community-based services in SRH-HIV started in 2016. The process had previously received technical support from CE SI, the Open Society Foundation (OSF), the Elton John Foundation (EJF), and GIZ, each with complementary interventions in different components of this strengthening process.

This process received various technical support:



LAC Platform support

Challenges





Applicants identified the following challenges:

- Poor synthesis skills for drafting applications.
- The current government's health system reforms are a challenge for the implementation of this TA. It is important to contextualize that there has been a change of government during the process, and consequently, a health system reform is being proposed.
- The requesting organization may have unrealistic expectations regarding the scope of the TA.

Factors that facilitated the development of the TA request

- This application was previously prepared and submitted to the CE SI. The support was aimed at updating it.
- The LAC Platform supported completing the application and giving technical and contextual guidance.
- Expertise in the development and implementation of previous TA processes.
- This application continues a broader process seeking public funding for CBO's response.

Recommendations

-  Outcomes should always have a verifiable deliverable, such as a document, a list of participants, a process report, guidances, etc.
-  In the case of expected outcomes, these should include targets, such as the number of people trained or the number of organizations strengthened.
-  In Colombia, a health system reform is currently being proposed under a primary care model. It is recommended to wait for the changes in the health system before starting the TA.
-  Members of other ACOBCS-affiliated CBOs should have a greater engagement in needs assessment and the development of the application.

Exploratory Study on the Situation of Migrants and HIV in Ecuador

Profile of the Technical Assistance applicant organization

Corporación Kimirina is a community organization specialized in responding to the HIV epidemic. It has combined technical knowledge, transparent management and political commitment to achieve a just and equitable society in which people who are vulnerable due to stigma and discrimination or who are traditionally excluded play a central role in decisions for action. Experienced in care, prevention, research, human rights of vulnerable populations and political advocacy, this organization works with the support of international cooperation agencies, including the GF, of which it has been PR and SR.



Membre de la Coalition Internationale Side 



Background and rationale for requesting Technical Assistance.

The TA request addresses the recommendations of the GF Technical Review Panel (TRP) to generate evidence on the needs of the Venezuelan migrant population, the subject of interventions in the new funding request. The needs assessment considered the following elements:

- Ecuador is one of the region's primary transit and destination countries for Venezuelan migrants and refugees. In 2021, it was one of the main destinations for permanent settlement, a situation exacerbated by the COVID-19 health crisis and border closures.
- In 2022, there were an estimated 803,000 Venezuelan migrants, 551,000 at destination and 252,000 in transit.
- People in mobility situations are affected by socio-cultural, economic and political factors that increase the risk of infection: family separation, disruption of social and cultural norms, language barriers, poverty, substandard living conditions, labor exploitation and sexual violence.
- Isolation, stress, and barriers to accessing SRH rights and services, can lead to casual or paid unprotected sex, which increases risk.
- There is insufficient access to prevention information, services and tools, partly due to fear of stigma.
- Ecuador lacks information on HIV prevalence among mobile populations, characteristics of people at risk of HIV, and access to prevention and care services.
- The GF recommended that the CCM define a clear strategy for the prevention, diagnosis and treatment of HIV and other STIs for the migrant population, as well as alternatives for the information and epidemiological characterization of HIV in this population.
- It is necessary to develop a study of HIV behavior and prevalence. This requires a TA to carry out a qualitative approach to recover information on the social dynamics and vulnerability of the mobile population.
- This study will contribute to developing a research protocol that will quantify the magnitude of the problem, providing the necessary information for advocacy in healthcare services to improve access and quality of care and the development of programs from civil society.

Key and vulnerable population communities that will benefit from this TA

The TA intends to benefit: MSM, sex workers, transgender people, migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, and people living with HIV.

CE SI area(s) of Technical Assistance selected in the request:

Applicants selected one CE SI area of TA:

Situational analysis and needs assessment

- CRG-related assessments to inform decision-making.
- Program reviews to ensure community perspectives inform service delivery.

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The main objective of the application is to support the collection of preliminary information to determine the conceptual and operational framework for the HIV prevalence study, which will use the *Respondent-Driven Sampling*, methodology designed for the study of hard-to-reach populations. To achieve this objective, it will be necessary to:

- Develop a methodological design for the qualitative study.
- Collect information according to the variables previously identified: social dynamics of the mobile population, acceptance of the study: interest, possible reasons for refusal to participate, and information to define logistical aspects of the study.
- Systematize the data and information collected and make recommendations.

Intended approach (strategies and activities)

To achieve the objectives, the following activities were organized:



Validation of the methodology
by the Ethics Committee.



Design of interview and focus
group guides.



Conducting interviews
and focus groups.



Report writing.

Expected key outcomes and/or deliverables

- Designed and approved research protocol, including the design of guides and interviews.
- Conducted interviews and focus groups.
- Results report.

A timeline of three months was set for developing the deliverables and achieving the TA outcomes.

Profile of the consultant(s)

The following criteria were defined for the selection of the consultant(s):

- Spanish language proficiency.
- Knowledge of the Ecuadorian and migration context.



Coordination with other stakeholders

The development of the request was coordinated with the Global Fund's portfolio manager.

LAC Platform support

Challenges

- When the recommendations of the GF TRP prompt TA requests, organizations perceive these aids as additional work or do not see them as valuable, which may affect the motivation of their members to develop them.
- Lack of knowledge about the TA request development and approval process.

Factors that facilitated the development of the TA request

- The approval of the TA was facilitated by the fact that it was formulated in response to a recommendation from the GF's TRP.
- The LAC Platform supported the completion of the application.

Recommendations



Include the exploratory nature in the design of the qualitative study.



In a qualitative design, it is not appropriate to talk about variables, so it is suggested to change this to 'categories of analysis.'



The tasks and activities should be consistent with the key outcomes, so it is suggested:

- The first activity and key outcome should be the development of a qualitative research protocol.
- When it is submitted to the ethics committee, the interview and focus group guides should already be designed and included in the protocol.
- Before writing the report, there should be a phase of systematization and analysis of the information, which should result in a deliverable, for example, an analysis matrix of the qualitative information.



Including experience designing and conducting qualitative exploratory study protocols in the consultant's profile is important.



It is recommended that the outcomes be published and shared with stakeholders in the region working with the migrant population.

Enhancing Community Engagement in the National HIV Response in **El Salvador**

Profile of the Technical Assistance applicant organization

Colectivo Alejandría is a CSO that supports the national HIV response with KPs, promoting access to education, work and health, free from stigma and discrimination. Its mission is to advocate for improved access to education and vocational training for KPs and to strengthen the national HIV response. It is part of the CCM representing MSM and transgender people and has been SR of the GF. It engages in decision-making spaces in the national context, such as the Gender Identity Law Roundtable, the Salvadoran LGBTI Federation, the LGBTI Human Rights Roundtable, and the Justice and Public Security Roundtable for developing the Protocol for LGBTI Victims. This organization was selected by the CSOs and KPs of El Salvador to submit the TA request.



Background and Rationale for Requesting Technical Assistance.

The request for TA arose from the need to enhance the engagement of CSOs and KPs in the implementation of the National Multisectoral Strategic Plan (NMSP) for HIV and its link to the GF grant. The needs assessment and discussion included the following elements:

- The development of the NMSP for HIV 2022 - 2026, which includes the engagement of CSOs and KPs, is an opportunity for this constituency to engage effectively in the national response.
- CSOs and KPs have had limited engagement in the implementation and monitoring processes of previous NMSPs for HIV.
- Progress in national HIV and TB responses and effective engagement of CSOs and KPs resulted from implementing GF-supported grants.
- Sustaining and scaling up this progress, with the effective engagement of CSOs and KPs, is critical to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly those related to ending the AIDS epidemic, TB, malaria and other communicable diseases by 2030 and reducing inequalities.

Key and Vulnerable Population Communities that Will Benefit from This TA

The TA intends to benefit: MSM, sex workers, transgender people, people living with HIV, people in prisons and other closed settings, and adolescent girls and young women.

CE SI area(s) of Technical Assistance selected in the request:

La solicitud seleccionó una de las áreas de AT de la IE PC:

Applicants selected one CE SI area of TA:

- Coordinating input into key GF-related documents (e.g., NSP or funding request)
- Caucusing and collective strategizing for coordinated community-led advocacy

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

In response to this need, the intended objective is to enhance the engagement and involvement of CSOs and KVPs in the HIV response in El Salvador, through a community-led monitoring (CLM) strategy, during the implementation of the **2022-2026 NMSP for HIV-STI**, with a focus on those actions related to the current GF grant in the country. To achieve this objective, applicants intend to:

- Improve understanding among CSOs and KPs of the relevance of linkages between the GF HIV grant and the NMSP for HIV 2022-2026.
- Develop a CLM strategy for the NMSP for HIV 2022-2026 in El Salvador.
- Develop a communication strategy to improve the understanding of the involvement and engagement of CSOs and KPs in the national HIV response as defined in the NMP for HIV 2022-2026.

These goals became the specific objectives of the TA request.

Intended Approach (Strategies and Activities)

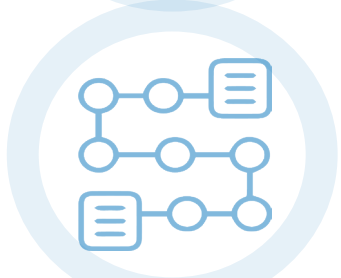
The activities to achieve the objectives were:



Identification of the key indicators in which civil society has a role to play in the implementation and monitoring of the NMP 2022 and those activities related to the current GF HIV grant.



Training of CSOs and KPs on using strategic information in the context of the CLM approach.



Development of a work plan on CLM for the NMP 2022-2026, focusing on activities related to CSOs, KPs and the current GF grant.



Preparation of a simplified document on the NMSP 2022-2026 scope for CSOs and KPs.



Webinar with CSO to inform on the content of the simplified NMSP 2022-2026 document and its monitoring plan.



Development of a communication strategy for the simplified NMSP 2022-2026 document and its monitoring plan.

Expected key outcomes and/or deliverables

The following expected deliverables will be the product of the processes described above:

- Document identifying civil society indicators.
- Training on the use of strategic information.
- CLM work plan for the NMP 2022-2026.
- Simplified information document on the NMSP 2022-2026 and its monitoring plan.
- Strategy for disseminating the simplified information document on the NMP 2022-2026 and its monitoring plan.
- Conducting an informative webinar.

A timeline of two months was set for developing the deliverables and achieving the TA outcomes.

Profile of the consultant(s)

The following criteria were defined for the selection of the consultant(s):

- Idioma español.
- Spanish language proficiency.
- Knowledge of the Salvadoran context and the state of the HIV response in the country.
- Understanding of the dynamics of CSOs working on HIV in El Salvador.
- Knowledge of GF grants in El Salvador.
- Understanding of the HIV response in El Salvador.
- Familiarity with the NMSP.



Coordination with other stakeholders

The development of the request was coordinated with the CCM Technical Secretariat and the head of the National AIDS Program of the Ministry of Health, who is also the PR for the grant.

Challenges

- When organizations receive a recommendation from the CCM to request TA, they have already planned program activities, so developing a TA request and providing administrative and logistical support for its implementation requires additional time.
- It is difficult for CSOs and communities, including representatives of this constituency who are part of the CCM, to identify TA needs.

Factors that facilitated the development of the TA request

- The CCM Secretariat and the HIV Program were actively engaged throughout the process, from the selection of the organization to the completion of the request form.
- The LAC Platform supported the completion of the request form.
- There was previous experience in the development and implementation of TA processes.

Recommendations



Closer contact with CSO representatives and CCM KPs in the development of the request. Improve consistency between the TA needs, the selection of areas prioritized by the CE SI in the request form, and the assessment of the identified needs, the TA objective, and the activities to meet it. Other areas may have been selected:

- Situational analysis and needs assessment.
- Engagement in country dialogue processes.



Key outcomes or deliverables should be verifiable, for example:

- Methodological document or training report on the use of strategic information for CSOs and KPs.
- Document outlining the strategy for disseminating information documents on the NMSP 2022-2026 and its monitoring plan.
- Document with the methodological design of informative webinars.



Be more specific in the type of indicators required in the outcome section.

Share the TA strategy with the CCM when implementation is about to start.

Contact and send the TA to the GF portfolio manager.

Include advocacy activities to formalize the CLM system in the NMSP and link it to the country's information system.



Review the wording and use of acronyms (some sections use NMSP, and others use NMP).

To avoid conflicts of interest, the implementation of the CLM for the NMSP should exclude those CSOs that implement activities under the NMSP.



Include knowledge and management of indicators and CLM in the consultant's profile.

Advocating to Decriminalize Key Populations in Guyana

Profile of the Technical Assistance applicant organization

Merundoi Incorporated is an organization that works on behavior change through public education and radio broadcasts, empowering communities (especially young adults and KPs) to take ownership of their attitudes, actions and behaviors and to support each other. It has been involved in human rights advocacy (awarded EU HR 2017) and eradicating stigma and discrimination among KPs, especially PLHIVs.

Guyana Trans United seeks to improve the quality of life of transgender people and other KPs by ensuring their rights are recognized and respected at all levels. It provides comprehensive healthcare for transgender people and HIV prevention and diagnosis for KPs. It works with healthcare services to promote quality care and policy reforms to guarantee the rights of its population.

Proud To Be Trans, is another CSO that advocates for the human rights of transgender people, the prevention of gender-based violence, and access to healthcare services. Based on their technical and administrative capacity, the CCM Governance Committee selected these organizations to submit and support the TA request in March 2022.



Background and Rationale for Requesting Technical Assistance

- Guyana is the only country in continental America that criminalizes sex work and consensual sex between men.
- These laws promote stigma and discrimination in health facilities, undermine the HIV response, and create barriers to accessing services.
- In late 2021, the GF approved the funding request to strengthen the integration of TB/HIV services for KPs and vulnerable groups.
- Among the recommendations made by the GF TRP for the funding request was a concern that Guyana continues to criminalize sex between men under the Criminal Code Act of 1893, which is one of the main barriers for MSM and TWs to access services and limits response outcomes. However, no specific intervention exists to advocate for removing this legal barrier.
- To respond to these observations, the organizations request TA from the CE SI to explore the reasons for low testing uptake (especially among men), barriers to adherence and prevention, and the needs of KPs and vulnerable KPs.
- The knowledge gained from the TA will be applied to HIV and TB care approaches, prevention, testing and linkage to services to improve outreach to the groups mentioned above. This will ensure that no one is left behind in the effort to eliminate HIV/AIDS as a public health problem.

Key and vulnerable population communities that will benefit from this TA

The TA intends to benefit: MSM, transgender people, and people living with HIV.



CE SI area(s) of Technical Assistance selected in the request:

Applicants selected two CE SI areas of TA:

Situational analysis and needs assessment

- CRG-related assessments to inform decision-making.
- Program reviews to ensure community perspectives inform service delivery.

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The main objective of the request is to ensure an equitable HIV response for KPs in Guyana by determining the impact of the criminalization of male-to-male sexual activity under the Criminal Code Act of 1893 and to develop a work plan to influence decision-makers to remove barriers for MSM and TWs to access services related to the Act. For this purpose, it is necessary to:

- Conduct an assessment of the impact of the criminalization of sex between men under the Criminal Code Act of 1893 in Guyana.
- Obtain information and strategic insights on the impact of the criminalization of MSM on HIV prevention and care through a consultative process with stakeholders in the national HIV response, including community advocates, CSOs, service providers, technical partners, and others.
- Strengthen the 2022-2024 HIV grant implementation by developing of a budgeted advocacy plan to address these legal barriers.

These goals became the specific objectives of the TA request.

Intended approach (strategies and activities)

Activities to achieve the goals were organized as follows:

- Develop an evaluation framework and tools to understand the impact of the criminalization of MSM under the Criminal Code Act.
- Conduct community-led discussions through focus groups with subpopulations to explore key issues, gather relevant information, and define subgroups within the target populations to be studied (gay men, transgender people, other MSM, etc.).
- Conduct a desk review of the impact of the criminalization of MSM under the Criminal Code Act:
 - Identify key aspects of the impact on healthcare services for KPs as well as other social, economic and political contexts based on the Criminal Code (epidemiological and contextual analysis).
 - Identify gaps in healthcare services for KPs due to criminalization, stigma and discrimination.
 - Identify key programmatic gaps, including those related to KPs, focusing on barriers due to stigma, discrimination and criminalization.
- Conduct stakeholder consultations to gather strategic information and insights on the impact of the criminalization of MSM and KPs on HIV prevention and care.
- Conduct consultations with CSOs, KPs and people living with HIV on the impact of criminalization of MSM sex on HIV prevention and care, and identify advocacy strategies to amend the Criminal Code Act of 1893.
- Hold a national-level workshop to develop an advocacy plan to address the negative impacts of the Criminal Code Act of 1893. This workshop would include the following activities:
 - Analysis of key findings from the two consultations and identification of key gaps.
 - Identification of strategic interventions for the advocacy plan.

Expected key outcomes and/or deliverables

- Results from the desk review on the status of regulations (laws and policies) that contribute to barriers to accessing HIV healthcare services.
- A community peer-led document with advocacy interventions prioritized from the two consultations (one with stakeholders and one with KPs).
- A stakeholder consultations report on the impact of gender on the provision of HIV/TB and KP differentiated services, especially for men.
- Minutes or reports of the national-level workshops with KPs and CSOs to develop an advocacy plan.
- A report with advocacy recommendations to address the impact of the Criminal Code Act of 1893 on the implementation of the 2022-2024 HIV grant.
- An advocacy plan to remove legal barriers that impede access to healthcare services due to stigma, discrimination and criminalization.

A timeline of one month and a half was set for developing the deliverables and achieving the TA outcomes.

Profile of the consultant(s)

The following criteria were defined for the selection of the consultant(s):

- Demonstrated **knowledge** and **expertise** in HIV, health, SRHR and gender.
- Demonstrated knowledge and expertise in **research** and **quantitative data analysis**.
- Knowledge and expertise in HIV-related **monitoring**.
- Strong writing, **research** and **analytical skills**.
- Knowledge in implementing **community-led assessment initiatives** with KPs and vulnerable members.
- Knowledge of **human rights issues**, particularly regarding HIV and TB in Guyana.
- Excellent understanding of GF processes.
- Ability to use **ICT systems** and **tools**.
- **English language proficiency**. Skills in the local languages of Guyana are desirable.



Coordination with other stakeholders

Support was provided by the Technical Secretariat and the CCM Governance Committee, which assisted in the selection of the NGO to receive the TA and discussed the objectives and timeline of the TA.

Members of the MOH were contacted to coordinate the steps to be taken, and the GF team was informed.

LAC Platform support

Challenges

- This TA request responds to an observation by the GF TRP that the funding request lacked advocacy activities to repeal a law that criminalizes sex between men, a legal barrier for MSM to access services. The main challenge was that the selected organization does not work with this population. The TA request was also conditioned on effective MSM engagement.

Factors that facilitated the development of the TA request

- The request was formulated in response to a recommendation from the GF TRP, which facilitated its approval.
- The LAC Platform assisted in completing the request.

Recommendations

- If a TA request is focused on a key population, it should be prioritized that the organizations working with that population should be the ones requesting the TA.
- Be more specific in the background and rationale; it is unnecessary to provide socio-demographic and economic information about the country, or if provided, it can be more concise. It is not relevant to mention the problems of migrants if they are not the target population.
- Do not be overly ambitious in the formulation of the general objective; although the TA process can contribute to advocacy, it is not certain that it can guarantee an equitable response to the KPs.
- In the general objective, it should be clear that the aim is to analyze the relationship between the assessment results and the criminalization of sexual relations between men to generate evidence for policy advocacy to change these laws.
- Include in the activities an analysis of the findings of the consultation processes.
The activities can be summarized to make the application easier to understand and read.
- The main outputs can be summarized as assessment findings, advocacy plan and consultation report.
- One and a half months is a very short time to develop the intended activities. It is recommended to extend the TA implementation process to three months.

Improving the Quality of HIV Services in **Venezuela** through Evidence-Based Advocacy

Profile of the Technical Assistance applicant organizations

Acción Ciudadana Contra el Sida (ACCSI) is a community organization that protects, promotes and advocates for the human rights of PLHIV, LGBTIQ+ and vulnerable populations. It has participated in the implementation of the GF Master Plan, provides care and HIV prevention services to PLHIV, promotes enhanced engagement of PLHIV and develops advocacy actions. It is part of the Coordination and Support Group (CSG) of the GF in Venezuela. It has recently implemented a CLM strategy focusing on ARV dispensaries and consultations on drug supply to PLHIV in the public health system.

Red Venezolana de Gente Positiva (RVG+, Venezuelan Network of Positive People) is a non-profit civil association created in response to stigma and discrimination against PLHIV. It is a network for exchanging information and experiences, training on issues related to HIV/AIDS and advocacy for the rights of PLHIV. It comprises focal points designated in each state and approximately 64,000 people registered in the National STD/HIV/AIDS Program, who advocate for greater engagement and commitment of PLHIV to improve their quality of life.



ACCSI
acción ciudadana contra el sida
La discriminación por sida también es una epidemia



RED VENEZOLANA DE GENTE POSITIVA
RIF: J-293486556

Background and Rationale for Requesting Technical Assistance

- Since 2009, various constituencies have identified ARV shortages in Venezuela.
- In 2016, the Venezuelan government stopped purchasing antiretrovirals (ARVs), drugs for opportunistic infections (OIs), and reagents for diagnosis and monitoring of antiretroviral treatment (ART), creating a humanitarian emergency.
- In 2018, the National AIDS Program reported ARV stockouts affecting 84% of PLHIV receiving care in the public sector.
- Following an advocacy process in 2018, the GF approved the Master Plan for strengthening the response to HIV, TB and Malaria in Venezuela, which included the procurement and supply of ARVs and resources for a CLM plan focused on ARV dispensaries, HIV services in the public health system, and the ARV supply process.
- This has enabled the strengthening of CSOs in data collection, documentation and systematization, and management of indicators for community monitoring of grants.
- Developing an evidence-based advocacy strategy aimed at Venezuelan state institutions and international cooperation agencies is necessary to strengthen the local HIV response.

Key and vulnerable population communities that will benefit from this TA

The TA intends to benefit: MSM, sex workers, transgender people, migrants, refugees and internally displaced people, people living with HIV, and adolescent girls and young women.



CE SI area(s) of Technical Assistance selected in the request:

Applicants selected two CE SI areas of TA:

Engagement in country dialogue processes

- Engagement planning of communities in GF processes.
- Caucusing and collective strategizing for coordinated community-led advocacy.

Supporting design and implementation arrangements

- Workshop(s) to strengthen knowledge of civil society and communities on the GF.

Objectives of the Technical Assistance

The main objective of the request is to strengthen the engagement and involvement of CSOs through the implementation of advocacy strategies to improve HIV, TB and COVID-19 care and treatment services (availability, accessibility, acceptability, affordability and quality) as part of the community-led monitoring (CLM) approach to the implementation of GF grants in Venezuela. To achieve this objective, applicants intend to:

- Develop an advocacy plan within the CLM.
- Train 40 CSO members in: a) advocacy within the CLM, b) use of social networks to disseminate actions and achievements in the GF processes, and c) negotiation and conflict resolution.
- Promote spaces for linkages and negotiations between CSOs involved in the response to HIV, TB and malaria with government and international cooperation agencies.

These goals became the specific objectives of the TA request.

Intended approach (strategies and activities)

The activities to achieve the objectives were organized as follows:

- Implementation of training strategies on the use of CLM data related to GF grants for HIV, TB, Malaria and COVID-19; exchange of knowledge and expertise on policy analysis; use of data for advocacy and conflict resolution; and design of an advocacy strategy for quality improvement of prevention and treatment services for HIV, TB, Malaria and COVID-19.
- Three working days to develop an advocacy plan (work plans, communication, follow-up and evaluation) within the CLM framework.
- Design a communication plan to support advocacy objectives.
- Workshop on the use of social networks and communication tools in the context of GF processes.
- Meeting of linkages and negotiations between CSOs involved in the response to HIV, TB and malaria, as well as with other government and international cooperation agencies.

Expected key outcomes and/or deliverables

- 30 people trained in advocacy and the use of CLM data to advocate for grant improvements and highlight successes.
- An advocacy strategy.
- A communications strategy work plan.
- 30 people trained to manage social networks focused on advocacy.
- Meeting minutes.

A timeline of two months was set for developing the deliverables and achieving the TA outcomes.

Profile of the consultant(s)

Only Spanish language skills were included in the profile of the consultant or consulting team.

Coordination with Other Stakeholders

The GF portfolio manager was consulted on the development of the request.

LAC Platform support

Challenges









- It was not easy to coordinate the application development due to the fragmentation of CSOs in the country.
- Unrealistic expectations about the scope of the TA.
- Document review and application development took a long time due to the multiple activities that ACCSI was undertaking.

Factors that facilitated the development of the TA request

- The LAC Platform assisted in completing the application.
- Previous CLM work conducted in the country served as the basis for developing the TA request.

The TA request was approved but, due to the window selected by the country to submit funding requests for HIV/AIDS/TB and malaria to the Global Fund, it had to be postponed to prioritize TA for the development of social dialogues with communities.

Recommendations

-  More synthesis in the wording of the request. Certain points need not to be explained because they are known to those to whom the application is addressed (e.g., the definition of CLM or that the GF grants have saved lives).
-  Improve consistency between the background and rationale and the objectives of the TA (e.g., in the general objective, it needs to be clarified whether the government or the GF grants will be the target of the advocacy tool).
-  Review the feasibility of a two-month timeline for activities, given the number of activities and deliverables intended.
-  It is recommended to include 'Other: CLM and advocacy to improve HIV services' among the CE SI areas of the TA selected in the application.
-  This request should be shared, and feedback should be requested from the GCS in Venezuela. This will facilitate the implementation of the TA.
-  In the key outcomes or deliverables section, elaborate on: an advocacy strategy on what? and for whom? a work plan for a communication strategy on what? a meeting minute on what?
-  It is recommended to complete the profile of the consultant(s) according to the objectives of the TA: expertise in working with CSOs and KPs, expertise in developing advocacy strategies, knowledge of the country's political environment, use of information for advocacy, and expertise in communication issues.
-  Promote linkages between CSOs and communities for TA implementation.

5. General conclusions

Depending on different contextual factors, there are varying TA needs among CSOs and KPs in the region. According to the information analyzed, the TA requests of CSOs and KPs in the region are focused on enhancing community engagement in the national response, improving community engagement in the country's GF processes, and influencing laws that criminalize KPs.

The capacities and skills of TA applicants also vary, with some populations needing more support in developing their applications than others who have experience in this type of activity. Some applicants have previous experience in developing, submitting and implementing TA applications to the CE SI, as in the case of Colombia and El Salvador, whose applicants recognized the importance of these processes.

There are two starting points for developing TA requests. The first is the TA request that responds to feedback from the GF TRP on their funding requests, especially if they are community-based. In such cases, CCMs lead the process and generally suggest or support the selection of the requesting organization, as was the case in Ecuador and Guyana. The second starting point is when the funding request comes from the perceived needs of leaders and organizations, as was the case in El Salvador, Colombia, Venezuela and Bolivia.



The challenges in developing TA requests are also diverse and depend on both the applicants and the needs to which the request responds. In this regard, the following were identified: lack of experience in problem analysis and request development, communication barriers (such as internet access), lack of clarity on TA needs, unrealistic expectations on the scope of the TA, low synthesis capacity (mainly in the background and rationale section), and lack of coherence between background, rationale and objectives. When the CCM assigns the development of the request to a specific organization the challenges include the difficulty of CSOs to work in a coordinated manner, the lack of recognition of the benefits of requesting and supporting the TA processes, and the lack of time of the representatives from the requesting organizations.

Regarding the factors that facilitated the development of the TA request, it should be noted that all applicants mentioned the support of the [LAC Platform](#). Other factors were the engagement of different stakeholders (CCM members, other networks and CSOs), previous experience in developing and supporting TA requests, continuity with broader TA processes, and whether the request was made in response to a requirement of the GF TRP.

Less frequently, but no less important the attitude of the organization's leaders, their drive and persistence also proved to be key factors in the development of the request, as in the case of Bolivia and the CLM's earlier work in Venezuela.



6. General recommendations

- Focus the offer of TA services on those populations that are less engaged in GF processes.
- Develop measures to promote the CE SI within the CCMs; a short time may be requested at an assembly meeting to disseminate this initiative and to explore other spaces for CSOs and KPs to meet and engage.
- Emphasize the benefits of capacity building and the impact of TA processes both at the level of the requesting organizations and at the level of national and local responses.
- The [LAC Platform](#) can identify TA needs, through informants and other stakeholders and offer TA to communities, for example, through members of the CCM or consultants who have supported TA processes.
- Given the diversity of TA needs of communities, and depending on the outcomes of the short-term TA processes, they should be linked with the Global Fund's CE SI long-term TA modality.
- If CCMs select the CSOs that should submit the request, they should ensure time and human resources are available to develop and implement the TA requests.
- Improve skills in developing TA, requests, including needs assessment, problem analysis, and formulation of objectives and activities strategically and coherently. The [LAC Platform](#), could lead a webinar to provide specific recommendations on how to draft requests.

