

Update on activities of the CRIS Unit, UNAIDS Geneva  
January- April 2004

⇒ What's been happening?

- Significant progress on the **development of the Project / Resource tracking and Research Inventory modules** of the CRIS
- Ongoing discussions with the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief re: inclusion of PEPFAR indicators in the CRIS Indicator Module
- Draft **Country Operations Guide** developed - to support the establishment and roll out of CRIS at country level
- The CRIS unit has continued its **roll-out** and has held training workshops in the Philippines (Jan), South Africa (16-19 March), Fiji (22-26 March), Panama (26-30 April) and Kazakhstan (26-30 April).
- Development of the **XML transmission format** to facilitate data exchange between systems and tools of UN and other agencies - responding to PCB recommendations (Dec 2002) for a fully integrated UN system effort to prepare the Annual Report of the Secretary-General to the General Assembly on Progress towards Implementing the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment (Action 12)

⇒ The development of the Project/Resource Tracking & Research Inventory Modules

The present version of the Indicator database of CRIS (1.4b) was provided to countries in June 2003 through the UNAIDS country offices. Since then, the Project Resource Tracking (PRT) and the Research Inventory modules (RID) have been in development and will be included in CRIS version 2.0 available in mid-2004. An important part of this development process has been the pilot testing<sup>1</sup> of the beta versions of the PRT and the RID done between December 2003 and March 2004.

**Project / Resource Tracking Module**

The PRT will facilitate the financial tracking of projects and programmes and therefore improve the monitoring and evaluation of the national response to HIV/AIDS. It supports improved national planning, resource mobilisation/allocation, intervention evaluation, analysis of a country's success in implementing its National Strategic Plan, and analysis of its efforts and compliance with the UNGASS Declaration of Commitment on HIV/AIDS and other regional or global commitments.

The PRT will allow the users to analyse funding and programme gaps by any combination of time frame, geographic area, target population, type of project and organisation.

**Research Inventory Module**

The RID will enable countries to track research related to HIV/AIDS and sexually transmitted infections (STIs). It will facilitate the compilation of information on HIV/AIDS related research in country and ensure that the analysis undertaken in relation to CRIS is informed by local research findings.

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<sup>1</sup> Countries for pilot testing: PRT: Indonesia, Uganda and Kenya. RID: Uganda and Bangladesh.

It is expected that the RID will enhance the collaboration among decisions-makers and program planners, researchers, research institutions and funding agencies in order to strengthen developing country research capacity, identify research gaps and enhance the role of research in responses to the epidemic.

The National AIDS Council in all pilot countries worked closely with UNAIDS and the consultants throughout the field testing process. They participated in regular review meetings and provided technical input on project details. The NACs were also responsible for reviewing the sample of data entries, review the software and report on possible improvements.

⇒ Development of Indicator Transmission Format - Working Group Meeting

**Background**

CRIS has been designed to house information collected on indicators, resources, and scientific research relating to HIV and AIDS. Many systems/tools such as Childinfo, DevInfo, Epilinfo, CSPro, and HealthMapper house similar information.

Historically, systems/tools have often duplicated the functionality found in other systems. This may be partly due to lack of communication and/or an agreement on standards. It is hoped that in the future, central data repositories will replicate data to the software with the required specialized functionality.

To facilitate the development of the standard transmission formats and encourage their adoption, UNAIDS has convened a working group on Indicator Transmission Format made up of technical focal points from organisations using the various information systems mentioned above and technical experts whose role it will be to provide their technical advice.

This first meeting of the working group, which was held in November, developed a timeframe for the development of this transmission format. The **2<sup>nd</sup> XML meeting** occurred in late April 2004 in Divonne, France. The meeting was attended by technical focal points from cosponsors and organisations using information systems such as Childinfo, Devinfo, Epilinfo, CSPro and Health Mapper.

The meeting was also attended by technical experts who provided their technical advice on how to best to develop a XML transmission format in order to promote exchange of indicator and project data between public domain applications. The consultative XML meetings are convened by UNAIDS to facilitate this process.

⇒ Support to countries

**Training workshops**

- A national workshop was conducted in the **Philippines** for the Philippine National AIDS Council and partners. The workshop - focusing on M&E / CRIS - was conducted in partnership with the UNAIDS South East Asia and the Pacific Intercountry Team.
- As part of the strategy to strengthen the overall M&E capacity in **South Africa** the M&E/CRIS training workshop trained resource people from all of South Africa's provinces. Government agency representatives, representatives from UN Agencies in South Africa and representatives from civil society were also trained.

- The second training workshop, was convened as part of a greater meeting for South Pacific nations held in Fiji on the 22- 26 March 2004. This meeting was held to accelerate action against AIDS in the Pacific. It was attended by representatives from the government of Fiji as well as for those representing countries in the region. In addition to these officials there were several representatives from cosponsors in the region, from bilateral organisations and from civil society.
- A workshop was convened for **Central American** countries as a joint activity with UNICEF TACRO and IMPSIDA (Mesoamerican Initiative for AIDS Prevention). Country participants attended from Belice, Colombia, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panamá and Venezuela. Participants also attended from PAHO, UNICEF, UNDP, SIDALAC, Horizontal Cooperation Group, National AIDS Program of Brazil, PASCA and USAID.
- UNAIDS Kazakhstan organized a training for four countries of the **Central Asian Republics** on M&E / CRIS in late April. Jointly facilitated by UNAIDS Geneva and local partners, the workshop was attended by national delegates from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and Tajikistan (Turkmenistan not able to attend)

The **Trainers Orientation workshop** is an important part of our strategy to roll out CRIS to countries. By ensuring that qualified M&E/CRIS consultants are available to assist countries in conducting national or regional training workshops on M&E/CRIS and to provide specific technical assistance when needed, it is expected that countries will increasingly be able to implement and use the tool.

The CRIS unit will follow up closely with the consultants that have been trained to ensure that they can be matched up with the needs of countries as they unfold.

#### ⇒ 5. Next steps

The CRIS Country Operations Guide incorporating the roll-out plan for CRIS will be released along with Version 2.0 of the software (there will also be a User Guide for V2.0).

The CRIS Team is presently working to ensure the release of Version 2.0 this summer. Version 2.0 of the CRIS will have the following features:

- National AIDS Council installation version
- Indicator module housing UNGASS - HIV and other indicators (as determined at country level)
- The inclusion of a resource tracking module designed to house primary, secondary and tertiary data relating to actions undertaken within the context of a national response to HIV and AIDS
- Research inventory module - to track and analysis research efforts in country
- Version 2.0 will be an English version - subsequent language versions will be released promptly (the indicator module will remain in 5 languages).

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