**Quarterly update on activities of the CRIS Unit, UNAIDS Geneva
October - December 2003**

⇨ **What's been happening?**

- In October, the CRIS unit undertook a rapid assessment of the status of CRIS in countries. The assessment provided a "snapshoot" of CRIS to support planning the way forward vis-à-vis country establishment (see below for details of assessment results).

- The CRIS was introduced to new partners through workshops organised in India, China, Tunisia and Ethiopia. UNAIDS has organized or participated in 14 training workshops relating to M&E / CRIS since October 2002. This has resulted in CRIS being introduced in all regions with more than 200 resource people being trained in M&E/CRIS globally.

- In November, the CRIS Unit convened a working group to discuss the development of a common transmission format for data. The meeting brought a number of technical focal points together to work on standardisation activities.

  The meeting focused on developing technical capabilities for moving indicator data between DHS, CRIS and HealthMapper. The forum also offered the opportunity to demonstrate how data and application functionality can be shared. The final objective of the meeting was to formalise the process for data flow based on business requirements.

- The last quarter of 2003 saw a rapid advancement in the process of developing the two additional databases of CRIS; the Project / Resource Tracking Database (PRT) and the Research Inventory Database (RID). The PRT and the RID prototypes are being field tested in five countries with the objective to identify user requirements. Once pilot country feedback is received the CRIS unit can integrate new user requirements and develop the beta versions of the databases.

- Throughout the fourth quarter UNAIDS has continued its support to the roll out of CRIS in countries. This has been done through providing additional funds to priority countries and through developing generic PAF proposals to support countries mobilising funds.

⇨ **1. CRIS in action (including key findings from rapid assessment - attached as Annex 1)**

Every 6 months the CRIS Unit has requested information from countries to assess the implementation of CRIS globally. In October, a series of questions were sent out to all UNAIDS offices and to the UNAIDS geographical desks requesting feedback on the status of M&E/CRIS in the countries.

The objective of the rapid assessment was to get an overview of the steps which have been taken to implement M&E / CRIS, that is; whether M&E working groups were meeting regularly, have M&E and IT investment plans been developed, has CRIS been installed at the national and/or sub national level and whether data has been entered into the system. Countries were also asked to specify their technical support needs and report on training activities related to M&E/CRIS which have been organised in countries.

The major findings from the rapid assessment were that out of a total of 58 responses, 17 countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America reported that they had installed and were using

the CRIS software released in June/July 2003[1]. The country feedback also informed us that 28 countries have functioning M&E working groups. 27 out of 58 countries requested additional technical support – the CRIS Unit is working to determine the extra technical support requirements.

Follow up activities from the rapid assessment include:

- The CRIS Unit will follow up those countries that did not respond, particularly with those countries who have received PAF funding for installing CRIS.
- UNAIDS Country Coordinators and UN Country Teams will be encouraged to utilise PAF funds for the scaling up of CRIS in countries. A generic CRIS PAF Proposal has been developed to facilitate this process.
- The CRIS Unit will follow up with the countries who have received PAF to strengthen CRIS – in order to determine status and progress made.
- Steps to be completed to provide an appropriate response to technical requests received from countries.

⇨ **2. Indicator Transmission Format Working Group Meeting**

Background

CRIS is designed to house information collected on indicators, resources, and scientific research relating to HIV and AIDS. Many systems/tools such as Childinfo, DevInfo, EpiInfo, CSPro, and Health Mapper 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 and a follow up meeting during the first quarter of 2004 will report back on progress.

⇨ **3. The introduction of the Project/Resource Tracking & Research Inventory Databases**

Presently, the planned structure of CRIS includes three databases – the Indicator Database (IND) the Project / Resource Tracking Database (PRT) and the Research Inventory Database (RID). In future versions, all three databases will be installed together. The pilot versions of the PRT and RID will be installed separately.

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[1] These countries are: Ethiopia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Nigeria, Tanzania, Zimbabwe, Pakistan, Thailand, Argentina, Chile, Dominican Republic, Mexico, Paraguay, Uruguay, Sudan and Kazakhstan

Project / Resource Tracking

This Project / Resource Tracking Database will allow for the financial tracking of projects and programmes, facilitating improved monitoring and evaluation of the national response to HIV and AIDS. It will facilitate 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 CRIS host institution to analyse funding and programme gaps by any combination of time frame, geographic area, target population, type of project and organisation.

Research Inventory Database

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

The goal is to enhance 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 informing responses to the epidemic.

Following the pilot testing of the RID – roll-out countries for RID will be identified. Further information can be obtained from cris@unaids.org

Field testing of PRT and RID

Initial testing of the prototype began in late 2003. The pilot countries will test the functionality of the PRT and the RID and provide feedback on user requirements.

Once feedback is received from the field, the prototype PRT and RID databases will undergo additional programming to assure that user requirements are taken into account. The beta versions of the software will then be released for wider use and testing.

The following countries will be testing the prototypes from December 2003 – February 2004:

> **PRT:** Indonesia, Uganda and Kenya
>
> **RID:** Bangladesh and Uganda

⇨ **4. Support to countries**

The last quarter of 2003 saw continued support to countries in their efforts to implement and roll out CRIS.

Training workshops

In October the CRIS organised two M&E/CRIS training workshops for South Asia and China.

The first training workshop was conducted in India (21- 24 October) for India, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, Bangladesh, Nepal and Bhutan. Unfortunately Myanmar and the Maldives were unable to attend the workshop.

The workshops focused on the regular training material usually covered during the 4 days of M&E/CRIS training as well as significant hands on / practical experience. A generic PAF template was introduced, encouraging participants to use this for mobilisation of funds.

A national training workshop was held in China gathering M&E experts / resource people from all the provinces in China. The CRIS Indicator Database and relevant documents were translated into Chinese prior to the workshop and the workshop was conducted in Chinese.

A third workshop conducted during the 4th quarter was the first workshop to be held for the Middle East and North African (MENA) countries. This workshop was held between the 3-6 December in Tunisia. The countries that joined the workshop included Djibouti, Tunisia, Morocco, Lebanon and Algeria. This workshop was conducted in two parts – the first part focusing on the development of national strategic plans followed by the second part focusing on monitoring and evaluation and CRIS.

In December, the CRIS Unit joined a workshop organized by IGAD (Intergovernmental Authority for Development) / World Bank for countries from the Horn of Africa. The workshop focused on monitoring and evaluation and included representatives from Djibouti, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Kenya, Somalia, Sudan and Uganda.

Plans were developed for next steps for CRIS roll-out in these countries.

CRIS roll out

In order to assist priority countries with an accelerated roll-out of CRIS additional funds were provided to China, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Haiti, Indonesia, Papua New Guinea, Rwanda, and Vietnam. The resources are intended to support the initial stages of the implementation of CRIS including the work of the national Monitoring and Evaluation working group - regular M&E working group meetings and drafting a National M&E plan including an IT investment plan.

⇨ **5. Next steps**

There are several training workshops planned including:

- Training workshop for South Africa – March 2004
- Training workshop in Fiji (Pacific Island countries) – March 2004
- Training workshop in Panama (Central American countries) – April 2004
- Training of Trainers Workshop, Geneva – April 2004

Capacity development for CRIS and data collection/analysis will continue to be a priority, especially as countries are increasingly using CRIS and following the introduction of PRT and RID to countries.

The CRIS Unit will prioritise the Training of Trainers workshop to ensure that facilitators are trained adequately to be able to take over the training process and respond to country support needs.

Other priorities include <u>finalising the PRT and the RID</u> and the development of CRIS version 2.0. The new databases will be accompanied by user guides. The CRIS databases along with user guides will be available in UN languages.

Annex 1. Results of the rapid assessment "**Status of CRIS globally – December 2003"**

Process for this report series

A series of questions was sent to all UNAIDS offices and UNAIDS geographical desks (3rd October 2003) requesting a "snap-shot" of the M&E / CRIS situation in each countries. The use of six-monthly follow up questionnaires to countries and participants has been our strategy to obtain a better picture of the CRIS operationalization at country level.

Indicators of CRIS operationalization include whether initial steps such as the establishment of M&E working groups has occurred, and whether sub-national installations of the CRIS have taken place. Proxy indicators such as technical support requests and training of persons within country to use the CRIS are also collected.

Attention has also been paid to whether a country has applied for and obtained Programme Acceleration Funds (PAF) from UNAIDS for CRIS activities.

A database of the status of CRIS at country level has been developed by the CRIS Unit to keep up-to-date information for CRD, other departments/units within UNAIDS and the cosponsors.

Responses received:

A total of fifty-eight (58) responses have been received from countries since the beginning of October 2003. The following is a summary of those responses.

Africa (20) – Benin, Cameroon, Chad, Congo – Brazzaville, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Kenya, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, South Africa, Rwanda, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda and Zimbabwe.

LAC (16 + 1: Caribbean region) – Argentina, Belize, Brazil, Chile, Costa Rica, Dominican Republic, El Salvador, Guatemala., Guyana, Haiti, Honduras, Jamaica, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay and Uruguay

Asia and the Pacific (12) – Cambodia, China, Indonesia, Lao PDR, Myanmar, Nepal, Pakistan, Papua New Guinea, Philippines, Sri Lanka , Thailand and Vietnam.

Europe (7) – Belarus, Kazakstan, Moldova, Romania, Russia, Ukraine and Uzbekistan.

Middle East and North Africa (2) – Morocco and Sudan

Other information included in report, based on recent interviews with UCCs and other partners at the 13th ICASA, as well as feedback from the CRD Geographical Desks and Theme Group Support (PAF).

Results (from 58 responses received)

- 17 countries in Africa, Asia, Latin America and Europe have installed and are using the software that was released in June/July 2003.

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Prepared by UNAIDS CRIS Unit
Electronic copies to UNAIDS Geneva, ICTs and country offices; Cosponsor Focal Points; CRIS partners.

These countries are: Ethiopia; Madagascar; Malawi; Mozambique; Nigeria; Tanzania; Zimbabwe; Pakistan, Thailand; Argentina; Chile; Dominican Republic; Mexico; Paraguay; Uruguay; Sudan; and Kazakhstan

- Only one country reported sub-national installation – however, the present version of the Indicator Database is not designed for sub-national installation, this functionality will be available in early 2004

- 28 countries have functioning M&E working groups – this is the first step in the establishment of CRIS, as determined during the training workshops

  o of the 28 countries reporting functioning M&E working groups – 6 had NOT completed the M&E / CRIS training workshop

  o 10 countries who had completed the training (& responded to the request for information) had not established or revitalized the M&E working group

- CRIS is operational in six (6) countries where PAF resources have been made available for CRIS specific activities, a further nine (9) countries have had PAF allocation for CRIS in 2002-2003 but reported that CRIS was not yet functioning

- Five countries who have approved PAF for CRIS did not provide a report on the status of their CRIS

- 27 out of the 58 countries requested additional technical support – particularly around M&E training

- Five African countries reported ongoing or completed recruitment of an M&E / CRIS Officer working with the NACs and UN.

Recommendations and key actions for follow-up

- Summary of country responses to be shared and discussed with CRD geographical desks and ICTs – CRIS to follow up with those countries that did not respond, particularly those receiving CRIS PAF

- UCCs and UNCTs will be encouraged to utilize PAF resources for scaling up CRIS – The CRIS Unit has prepared a generic CRIS PAF Proposal for use during country level PAF preparations. To be made available to UCCs.

- specific follow up with countries who have accessed PAF resources for CRIS activities – CRIS Unit to follow up in collaboration with PAF Team and CRD geographical desks

- CDC PAF resources for the intensification of CRIS operations in countries of Southern Africa now approved. Over the next 12 months these resources will be used to operationalise the Maputo Declaration in nine identified countries in partnership with RIACSO, UNICEF Regional Office, USAID and GAMET/World Bank

- Assessment of technical support requests to be made and provision in 2004-2005 made to accommodate these – CRIS Unit in collaboration with cosponsors and ICTs

Highlights of responses

Table 1. Sub-Saharan Africa

Country	Trained in CRIS	M&E Working Group established	CRIS installed	PAF* for M&E / CRIS
1. Benin	Yes	Yes	No	No

2. Cameroon	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
3. Chad	Yes	No	No	No
4. Congo Brazzaville	No	No	No	No
5. Eritrea	No	No	No	No
6. Ethiopia	Yes	?	Yes	Yes
7. Kenya	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
8. Lesotho	Yes	No	No	No
9. Madagascar	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
10. Malawi	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
11. Mali	Yes	Yes	No	No
12. Mozambique	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
13. Namibia	Yes	Yes	No	No
14. Nigeria	Yes		Yes	
15. Rwanda	Yes	Yes	No	No
16. South Africa	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
17. Tanzania	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
18. Togo	No	Yes	No	No
19. Uganda	Yes	Yes	No	
20. Zimbabwe	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

Table 2. Asia and the Pacific

Country	Trained on CRIS	M&E Working Group established	CRIS installed	PAF for M&E / CRIS
38. Cambodia	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
39. China	Yes	No	No	No
40. Indonesia	Yes	Yes	No	No
41. Lao DPR	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
42. Myanmar	No	Yes	No	No
43. Nepal	No	No	No	No
44. Pakistan	No	Yes	Yes	Yes
45. Papua New Guinea	No	No	No	No
46. Philippines	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
47. Sri Lanka	No	No	No	No
48. Thailand	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
49. Vietnam	Yes	No	No	No

Table 3. North Africa & Middle East

Country	Trained on CRIS	M&E Working Group established	CRIS installed	PAF for M&E / CRIS
50. Morocco	Yes			
51. Sudan	Yes		Yes	

Table 4. Europe

Country	Trained on CRIS	M&E Working Group established	CRIS installed	PAF for M&E / CRIS
52. Belarus	No	Yes	No	No
53. Kazakstan	No	No	Yes	Yes

54. Moldova	Yes			Yes
55. Russia	Yes	No	No	Yes
56. Romania	No	Not known	No	No
57. Ukraine	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
58. Uzbekistan	No	No	No	Yes

Table 5. Americas

Country	Trained on CRIS	M&E Working Group established	CRIS installed	PAF for M&E / CRIS
21. Argentina	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
22. Belize	No	No	No	No
23. Brazil	No	No (have developed M&E Plan)	No	No
24. Caribbean region [2]	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
25. Chile	Yes	No	Yes	No
26. Costa Rica	No	No	No	Yes
27. Dominican Republic	No	Yes	Yes	No
28. El Salvador	No	Yes	No	No
29. Guatemala	No	Yes	No	No
30. Guyana	Yes	No	No	No
31. Haiti	Yes	No	No	No
32. Honduras	No	Yes	No	No
33. Jamaica	Yes	Yes		
34. Nicaragua	No	No	No	No
35. Panama	No	No	No	Yes
36. Paraguay	Yes	No	Yes	No
37. Uruguay	Yes	No	Yes	Yes

PAF – UNAIDS Programme Acceleration Funds

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30 January 2004

[2] The following countries from the Caribbean region have been trained on the use of CRIS, however individual country details were not included in the Caribbean report – Anguilla, Antigua & Barbuda, Dominica, Dutch Caribbean, Grenada, St Kitts & Nevis, St Lucia, St Vincent and the Grenadines.