

CCM EVOLUTION PROJECT –BASELINE ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPROVEMENT PLAN – ALBANIA

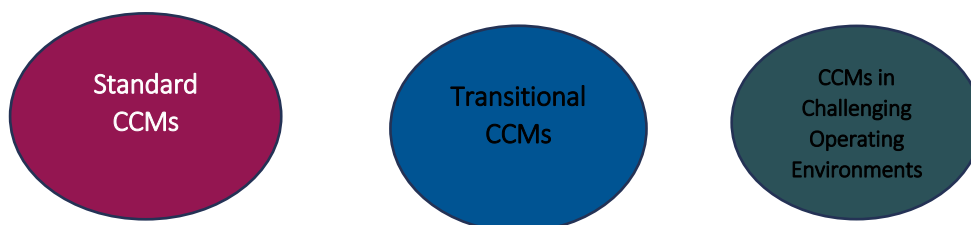
CCM EVOLUTION CONCEPT

With The Global Fund (TGF) Strategy for 2017-2022, Country Coordination Mechanisms (CCMs) play an even more important role in encouraging countries to implement sustainable programs and responsibly plan transition processes. Planning for sustainability is an integral part of program design and should be taken into account when developing funding requests, which is one of CCMs' direct responsibilities. To enable the further strengthening of CCMs, the "CCM Evolution Project" was launched in May 2018, upon TGF Board's approval.

The project is supposed to assist CCMs in better aligning their roles and responsibilities with TGF new Strategy and becoming more active and involved in national transition planning. The project will be implemented over a total of 12 month in 2018-2019 with a phased approach:

- ✚ Septemberto December 2018: Baseline Assessment of the selected CCMs and development of according improvements plans;
- ✚ Februaryto March 2019: Mid-term Measurement of performance;
- ✚ September 2019: Final performance measurement.

One of the essential aspects of the project is the differentiated approach to CCMs. Based on different circumstances in which CCMs operate, three categories of CCMs were identified:



This approach allows for taking into account the differing skills required for CCMs in differing settings. As a result, CCM improvement plans are developed according to CCMs' specific needs.

CCMs from 18 countries were selected to pilot the Evolution approach and based on results and lessons learned from the project, further decisions will be made. At the first stage of the project, currently performed baseline assessments of CCMs help to define their maturity level and identify priority areas for strengthening. Four CCM main functions will be assessed:

- ✚ Oversight;
- ✚ Linkages;
- ✚ Engagement;
- ✚ CCM internal functioning.

ALBANIA BASELINE ASSESSMENT METHODOLOGY

Albania is among four transitional countries that have been selected for this pilot. Baseline assessment activities took place during October 7 -27, 2018. The team of two consultants, temporarily joined by a CCM Hub representative, conducted a comprehensive desk review of all relevant documents during the first week of the assignment. Interviews with different stakeholders (CCM members and non-members from all constituencies represented in the CCM Albania) were conducted starting from the end of the first week and during week 2. In week 3, the Baseline Assessment team was also joined by the assigned Oversight Consultant. Based on data triangulation and document review, the team of consultants then developed guiding principles for the direction of improvement in each of the four key areas that were presented to and endorsed by the CCM Albania in the course of its General Assembly held on 23 October 2018. Following this approval, the consultants developed a more detailed improvement plan containing specific activities and together with the CCM Secretariat, have begun a costing exercise for these activities. Different sources of financing will be taken into account and finalized between the CCM Albania Secretariat and TGF CCM Hub.

BASELINE ASSESSMENT RESULTS

As to all four key areas (oversight, linkages, engagement, CCM internal functioning), CCM Albania is currently at the maturity level of “working towards functional”. This result is based on the vast majority of indicators being rated as “working towards functional”, with some exceptions where the CCM Albania has already achieved a “functional” or even “engaged” level.

OVERSIGHT

There had been a significant delay in the implementation of the current grant; thus a lot of oversight activities that might have otherwise been conducted if the grant would have been implemented according to its original schedule, were dismissed. However, it has to be underlined that the oversight committee was still performing oversight visits, mainly to VCT centers that are currently managed by the government, but were initially established under an earlier TGF grant.

CCM Albania has a Conflict of Interest (CoI) policy, an annual declaration form, and a form that CCM members are asked to sign before CCM meetings. All those documents were developed in 2015, with technical assistance from an Initiative 5% consultant. Unfortunately, consultants have only seen the CCM’s 2015 annual CoI declarations that were signed by all members. Since then, policy documents have not been updated, and subsequent new members of CCM have not been profoundly oriented regarding the CoI policy.

Reviewing the CCM meeting notes (2017 - 2018), the consultant team has noted that at the beginning of every meeting, the issue of CoI was raised by the CCM Chair with the head of the CCM’s Oversight Committee (OC) confirming that none of the CCM members have a conflict of interest with regard to topics to be voted upon. According to these meeting minutes, there existed only one single case of CoI, when the former minister of health recused himself from both discussions and voting. However, during the interviews, some of the respondents have recalled recusing themselves from voting procedures, due to the identification of CoI. The team of consultants also participated in a CCM General Assembly where basic principles of CoI management were upheld. In general, there exists a clear need for the CCM’s training regarding CoI definition and mitigation, especially with regard to the most recent election of new Civil Society membership into the CCM.

CCM Secretariat also shared the Code of Conduct (CoC) document with consultants, which had been circulated electronically among CCM members and the corresponding email thread was presented as a means of confirmation that all members have endorsed it. The team of consultants could not retrace if all CCM members pronounced themselves electronically in the document. However, it is clear that no signed versions exist. Therefore, it is also recommended to include CoC into the orientation training for CCM members and the CoC be signed by all CCM members.

Albania is supposed to submit the transitional grant funding request in April 2019. Currently, the Transition Readiness Assessment (TRA) is being conducted, and CCM is eagerly awaiting the assessment report to start both the funding request development as well as a general transition strategy and/or plan. In this regard, it is critical to ensure that CCM Albania has a good understanding of TGF concept on Resilient and Sustainable Systems for Health (RSSH) and develops transition activities accordingly. It will also be required for the CCM's OC to have access to all necessary skills and capacities related to transitioning to enable this body to oversee the transition planning and implementation process (financial management, epidemiology, risk management, etc.). The corresponding details regarding related priority activities can be seen in the annex the improvement plan.

LINKAGES

So far, there have not been any active discussions regarding the upcoming transition process among CCM members. All key stakeholders expressed their concern because of the delay in the TRA report's submission that is considered as a starting point for transition planning. Mapping of potential stakeholders and additional sources of funding has not yet been conducted. Respondents were stating that the upcoming TRA triggered indeed some initial discussions, which since then have not been advanced any further.

Consultants were not able to identify any national level coordination body that is functional, besides the CCM. In the past, there existed some national coordination bodies, but none of them is currently functional, except for the Immunization Coordination Committee (ICC) and the Reproductive Health Committee (RHC), which are supported by UNICEF and UNFPA. It seems that – unless there is external support (both financial and technical) – there is little chance for the functioning of such type of entities; and even these two cited committees are facing challenges as to their continuation. A major difference to this bodies also lies in the fact that issues discussed at the ICC and RHC are much less prone to stigmatization than HIV and TB.

An interesting topic worth further exploration and discussion is the country's Law on Infectious Diseases that was passed in 2016. Clause 33 states that amongst other committees, the MoH shall establish an "advisory committee on HIV, TB, and Malaria." This could serve as a potential basis for the future of a national coordination body after the transition from TGF. This topic was not further explored within the scope of the baseline assessment, and will be further pursued under the upcoming Linkages mission in January 2019. This mission will also include the mapping of all potential key stakeholders and sources of funding; a priority activity that has to be conducted as soon as possible (see improvement plan).

ENGAGEMENT

As mentioned above, despite all main governance documents being as such in place, they have not been updated since 2015 when they were developed with assistance from Initiative 5%.

For instance, CSO selection procedures had been changed recently within the CCM meeting of June 2018, but these changes are not yet reflected in the CCM's governance policy manual. While the process has been transparently communicated to the CCM and interested CSOs, the consultants are of the opinion that the CSO selection/election process should be entirely led at the level of the broader CSO constituency and not at the much more narrow level of 'sub-constituencies' created around the number of seats available for each sub-group. This would allow for as many organizations as possible participating in this process. Therefore, the establishment of a functional and cross-topic CSO platform unifying all CSO voices should be supported. At the moment, CSOs do not represent their constituencies but rather tend to represent merely their own organizations, often in the capacity as SR of the current grant. This was mentioned by a number of CCM members from different sectors. There are no meaningful constituency communication plans for CSOs in place, and the consultants were not able to identify any evidence of formal and systematic information sharing and feedback loops between CCM member CSOs and their colleagues outside of the CCM. CSOs are actually under-represented in the CCM as to their number of seats, while the Government sector on the other hand disposes of enough seats to reach the necessary quorum of 50% for standard decisions with their own votes. However, this does not seem to bother CSO representatives who have a self-understanding of being able to have their voices heard in the CCM.

CSOs will need to learn mechanisms and strategies of collaboration not only with the government but also among themselves. They should be able to collaborate constructively and be actively involved in transition planning and implementation, which will require some specific capacity strengthening as lined out in the attached improvement plan.

CCM INTERNAL FUNCTIONING

Referring to above statements, CCM governance policy documents have to be updated to reflect several changes that have been introduced in practice but not yet in writing.

Governance policy documents also need to reflect the upcoming transition process and define the role that the CCM and its committees will play during the transition planning and implementation process.

CCM still needs capacity strengthening on essential oversight functions. This will be a useful foundation for more complex transition oversight tasks that the OC will soon be confronted with. For further strengthening of CCM transition capacities, the team proposes to hire a Transition officer.

In the light of upcoming transition, it is also strongly recommended that the CCM updates its communication plan to be more specific concerning transitional activities in the country.

Annex: Improvement Plan

CCM Evolution Area	Specific topic	Activity Description	Proposed Start Date	Proposed End Date	Stakeholder in charge	Priority Level	Deliverable	Comment (Rationale for cost / Specifications)
Oversight	1. Frequency and focus	Development of the comprehensive oversight plan, linked to activities under the current grant and including transition related activities. Plan should be costed.	December-18	February-19	Oversight Committee	High	Newly developed oversight plan reflecting grant performance and transition activities	1 Workshop in early December for OC (2 days: 6 persons from OC, Sec, interested CCM members = 15 persons); Projector necessary and workshop material (flipcharts, markers, etc.) plus translator. 1 meeting (half-day) with OC in January with Oversight Consultant and Linkages Team during 2nd week of linkages mission (w/o 14 January 2019). Translator needed.
	1. Frequency and focus	Assist the CCM in the process of oversight committee elections (review the current criteria for OC members, add specific criteria regarding the skills that needs to be available among members). This will be remote support.	November-18	December-18	CCM Secretariat, CCM Executive Committee	High	Oversight committee member list with profiles	No costs; remote support through Oversight Consultant.
	2. Data driven discussions	Skill building of OC members to review the performance of the PR at the moment of PU/DR to the GF, specifically focused on transitional grant activities.	February-19	March 2019	CCM Executive Committee Oversight Committee	High	PU/DR, CCM meeting minutes reflecting substantial discussion of grant implementation	1-day training towards end of February (w/o 25 Feb) for OC and interested CCM members (15 persons). Projector necessary and workshop material (flipcharts, markers, etc.) plus translator.
	6. Risk management	Train both the CCM and Oversight Committee on risk management: risk management purpose, risk identification tools and approaches, risk mitigation approaches.	February-19	April-19	CCM Executive Committee Oversight Committee	High	OC and CCM meeting minutes where potential risks are identified and risk mitigation actions defined	1-day workshop on risk management orientation and risk mapping with full CCM in preparation of April transition grant submission in the same week of 25 Feb. (30 persons: CCM members and alternates + observers). Projector necessary and workshop material

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								(flipcharts, markers, etc.) plus translator.
	7. Cofinancing	Enable OC to track government commitment regarding co-financing.	May 2019	July 2019	CCM Executive Committee Oversight Committee	High	OC and CCM meeting minutes where co-financing commitment fulfillment will be presented	Series of activities, integrated in other activities and meetings throughout the 3 months including coaching. No costing needed at this point.
	Other	Assist the CCM in better understanding of the TGF's concept on RSSH and enable them to identify RSSH issues during the grant implementation, so that lessons learned are incorporated in transition planning. This will be part of the CCM orientation.	January-19	January-19	CCM Executive Committee Oversight Committee	High	OC and CCM meeting minutes discussing RSSH bottlenecks	This is an integral part of and therefore costed under the 2.5-day orientation training (w/o 14 January 2019) - Activity Number: CCM Functioning 1.
Linkages	1. Effectiveness of the CCM's coordination role	Mapping of all relevant national stakeholders/ coordination bodies to identify potential platform for future existence of CCM or any other body with similar functions	January-19	January-19	CCM Executive Committee	High	Completed mapping report	Mission of Linkages consultants (07 to 18 Jan 2019), which will include non-costed meetings with key stakeholders and 2 non-costed meetings with Executive Committee (CCM Vice-Chair, OC Chair, MoH Representative).
	2. Linkage to secure co-financing	Mapping of all relevant national stakeholders/ coordination bodies to ensure planning smooth transition and mobilization of required financial resources	January-19	January-19	CCM Executive Committee	High	Completed mapping report	Mission of Linkages consultants (07 to 18 Jan 2019), which will include non-costed meetings with key stakeholders and 2 non-costed meetings with Executive Committee (CCM Vice-Chair, OC Chair, MoH Representative).

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	3.Communication and information sharing	Establish linkages with mapped stakeholders via MoU, communication plan or other instruments for communicating and sharing results of strategic/transition planning.	January-19	September-19	CCM Executive Committee	High	Signed MoUs, communication plans or any other proof of instruments used	Mission of Linkages consultants (07 to 18 Jan 2019), which will include non-costed meetings with key stakeholders and 2 non-costed meetings with Executive Committee (CCM Vice-Chair, OC Chair, MoH Representative) followed by continuous process.
	4.Alignment and national ownership	Identify how the 2016 Law on Infectious Diseases' clause 33, stating that amongst other committees MoH has to establish an "advisory committee on HIV, TB, and Malaria" could serve as a basis for the future of a national coordination body after the transition from TGF.	January-19	February-19	CCM Executive Committee, MoH	High	Integration of reflections' outcomes in CCM's transition strategy / plan	Mission of Linkages consultants (07 to 18 Jan 2019), which will include non-costed meetings with key stakeholders and 2 non-costed meetings with Executive Committee (CCM Vice-Chair, OC Chair, MoH Representative).
Engagement	1.Representation (elections and composition)	Update the existent CCM policy manual to incorporate changes related to the CSO member election procedure, add procedure describing nomination of government CCM members, nomination of PR and selection of SRs.	Immediate	December-18	CCM Secretariat, CCM Executive Committee	High	Updated CCM policy manual	No costs involved. Remote support through Oversight Consultant for drafting/ reviewing drafts. Content handover ensured between BL Assessment consultant teams and OS consultant. NB: needs to be verified: if manual contains procedures describing the replacement of not performing constituency members.
	1.Representation (elections and composition)	Train CCM members in RSSH through WHO or GF flagship course	August-19	September-19	CCM Executive Committee	Medium	Number of trained members	Possible participation of some selected CCM members (preferably from the MoH) in WHO running course in Barcelona or - if possible - internal GF course to be conducted in Albania.

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	2. Meaningful participation of members	Enable CSO's to participate actively and in constructive manner in transition planning and implementation process, through identification of additional sources of funding, innovative approaches for service delivery.	February-19	September-19	CCM, CSO Constituency in CCM	High	Signed MoUs and/or contracts with new sources of funding.	1 specific Workshop with CS constituency after grant proposal (May 2019); because this is a process, before and after this workshop, every TA mission will follow-up on this (mainly Oversight Consultant). E.g. a 3-days' workshop could be possibly founded through CRG EECA platform.
	3. Constituencies Communications	Development of budgeted, grant- and/or CCM-related constituency communication plans for CSO CCM members (sharing the information regarding ongoing grant implementation process, receiving feedback from the constituency and collect their opinion and points of view regarding important CCM decisions that directly might impact constituencies)	January-19	August-19	CSO Constituency	High	1) Budgeted constituency communication plans in place for each CSO CCM member 2) Evidence of the implementation of CSO constituency communication plans	This will be an additional 0.5 day workshop under the CCM Orientation. This is an integral part of and therefore costed under the 2.5-day orientation training (w/o 14 January 2019) - Activity Number: CCM Functioning 1.
CCM Internal Functioning	3. Training on core functions and topics	Train all old and new CCM members and alternates through all three tiers of the CCM Orientation Program, including its Executive Committee and Oversight Committee modules as well as STC module	Immediate	January-19	CCM Executive Committee	High	N° of CCM members and alternates having participated in all three training tiers	2 days Orientation workshop for whole CCM (members, alternates, Sec and interested observers = around 30 persons) + 0.5 day specifically for CCM Civil Society Members/Alternates (amount of persons to be defined) in the week of 14 January 2019. Projector necessary and workshop material (flipcharts, markers, etc.) plus translator.

CCM Evolution Area	Specific topic	Activity Description	Proposed Start Date	Proposed End Date	Stakeholder in charge	Priority Level	Deliverable	Comment (Rationale for cost / Specifications)
	3.Training on core functions and topics	Conduct capacity and needs assessment of Oversight committee	December-18	December-18	Oversight Committee	High	Assessment report	This is an integral part of the 1 Workshop in early December for OC (2 days: 6 persons from OC, Sec, interested CCM members = 15 persons); therefore costed under Activity Number: Oversight 1.
	3.Training on core functions and topics	Continued "on-job" training and mentoring for Oversight Committee on oversight core functions, approaches, and tools	January-19	September-19	Oversight Committee	High	N° of mentoring sessions (more specific deliverables will be defined after the needs assessment and first round of orientation)	No specific costing, continued support through Oversight Consultant.
	5.CCM Communications	Update CCM communication plan to be more specific in relation with the transitional activities	August-19	August-19	CCM Secretariat, CCM Executive Committee	High	Updated CCM communication plan published on CCM websites and shared through other means of communication	No specific costing, continued support through Oversight Consultant and part of 1 of the visits, including a work session with the CCM Secretariat; communication costs will fall under regular CCM communication costs.
	7. Ethics-specific training and signature of documentation	Train CCM members in CoI and CoC management policies to establish clear understanding of the meaning and principals and their application (both CoI and CoC)	January-19	May-2019	CCM Executive Committee	High	N° of CCM members trained; signed CoI and CoC declarations and CCM meeting minutes referring to CoI management	This is an integral part of and therefore costed under the 2.5-day orientation training (w/o 14 January 2019) - Activity Number: CCM Functioning 1.
	Other	Hire Transitional Officer	January-19	February-19	CCM Secretariat, CCM Executive Committee	High	Hiring process completed	