

Albania CCM Evolution

Recommended CCM Transition Options

Workshop Report

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Submitted to: Secretariat of Albania Country Coordination Mechanism
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Executive Summary

On March 7th 2019, the workshop titled “Recommended CCM Transition Options” was organized with the members of the Albania Country Coordination Mechanism (CCM). The workshop is part of the activities that are conducted in the context of the “CCM Evolution Project”, a 12-months long initiative that is currently being implemented in the country.

The purpose of the workshop was to discuss the various options that exist for the evolution process of the CCM. The objective was to identify the most feasible option for the evolution and to present same to the CCM Executive Committee for endorsement in the next official CCM meeting (scheduled for end of March 2019).

9 out of the 16 CCM representatives (the 17th CCM position is still vacant) were present in the meeting (see List of Participants in Annex 1). Out of the 9 CCM representatives, 5 were members and 4 were alternate members.

Based on the findings and recommendations of other activities in the context of the “CCM Evolution Project”, international best-practices and the specifics of the Albania legal and regulatory framework, a list of 5 options for CCM transition were elaborated. Two of the options were further detailed into sub-options. A total of ten (10) options and sub-options was presented to CCM for consideration.

At the end of the workshop the following option was unanimously voted by all participants:

- CCM should continue to operate within the authority of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection (MoHSP);
- The Institute of Public Health (IPH) should host the CCM Secretariat;
- CCM should take measures to request for continued CCM Funding support from The Global Fund Secretariat during this transition period.

The recommendations of the workshop will be presented for approval and adoption to a CCM meeting that is planned to take place within March 2019.

Background

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 assisting 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 months, in 18 pilot countries including Albania, 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:

- Standard CCMs
- Transitional CCMs
- CCMs in Challenging Operating Environments

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.

Albania and three other countries with Transitional CCMs were selected to be part of a pilot project that has conducted a Baseline Assessment that evaluated all four key areas of CCM functioning, namely oversight, linkages, engagement and internal functioning.

Goal, objectives and activities

The goal of the present intervention was to facilitate an open discussion among the CCM members with the final aim of identifying the most feasible option for CCM evolution; this option would finally be presented for endorsement to the CCM in the next official meeting.

Objectives included:

- List all possible options for the CCM evolution process;
- Discuss PROs and CONs for each option;
- Identify the most feasible option for CCM evolution;
- Propose measures for mitigating the CONs related to the most feasible option.

An additional goal was to discuss and provide a recommendation based on CCM eligibility requirements **“2_Transparent and documented PR selection process”**.

Regarding the feasible options of the Primary Recipient (PR) for the transition grant. Three options (MoHSP, IPH and UN organizations) were discussed and decided to further organize an online poll between the CCM members to decide the most appropriate option.

Preparatory work

The preparatory work included detailed discussion between CCM Secretariat, the international and the national consultant (workshop facilitator) to summarize the preliminary recommendations for the CCM evolution, which the international consultant summarized in a PowerPoint presentation (see Annex 3). This presentation was based on the findings and presentations of the CCM Evolutions “Linkages” team, who had conducted an in-country mapping and analysis in January 2019. This also included a desk review of the documents prepared in the context of the “CCM Evolution Project”.

The preparatory work also included attendance in the workshop organized by the international consulting team (SANIGEST International) as follow up to their Transition Readiness Assessment (TRA) and workplan – initially presented to the CCM and stakeholders in December 2018. This workplan lays the foundational work towards the forthcoming Albanian application for a TGF Transition Grant (expected to be the final TGF contribution to the country). The workshop took place on March 6th 2019.

Format of activities

The format of the CCM discussion was that of a facilitated workshop that included presentation of the recommended options, whole group discussion to perform a preliminary selection, small group work to evaluate PROs and CONs of each option, presentation of findings, voting of the most feasible option and discussions in the large group over the mitigation measures for the CONs of the selected option.

Agenda, activities and summary of discussions

Agenda

The agenda of the workshop was as follows:

10.00	Opening (CCM Secretariat, International Consultant)
10.10	Icebreaker “What if my organization received a million-dollar grant?”
10:45	Keynote presentation “Linkages Assessment: Findings and CCM Transition Options”
11:45	Whole group discussion: preliminary selection
12:45	Voting for most feasible options
13:00	Break
14:00	Breakdown in small groups: discussion of options
15:00	Presentation of small groups’ work and recommendations
15:45	Voting for most feasible option
16:00	Mitigation measures for CONs related to the selected option
16:30	Primary Recipient options – preliminary discussion
16:55	Conclusions from workshop, next steps and way forward
17:00	Closing

CCM placement options

Following the icebreaker, the keynote presentation laid out the following options for the CCM evolution:

Under the Prime Ministers' Office (Option 1)	Under the Ministry of Health (Option 2)	Independent body (Option 3)	Under UN (Option 4)	Integration of CCM Functions into other Entities (Option 5)
Move to PM Office to improve the inter- ministerial coordination	Leave as it is now (Option 2.1) CCM under the MOH Secretariat at PHI (Option 2.2) Advisory body to MoH (Option 2.3) TWGs per WHO recommendation (Option 2.4)	Create independent body outside of the government	Move it under UN to assure independence of decision making, participation of government and access for CSO's	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reproductive Health Committee • Interagency Coordination Committee • National Council for Civil Society • Other bodies (CCM members to identify/add)

Figure 1: Key placement options for CCM in Albania

The keynote presentation was delivered through an interactive format and participants were invited to engage with the facilitator in evaluation PROs and CONs for each of the presented placement options.



Figure 2: From the presentation of placement options

In the following is represented a summary of discussions:

Option 1: This option is rooted in the earlier experience with the National Committee for the Prevention and Control of HIV/AIDS in Albania. The committee was chaired by the Deputy Prime Minister and operated only for a very limited period of time. HIV/AIDS is not perceived as a priority in this level and the committee was short lived and convened only once or twice.

The participants voted unanimously to exclude option 1 as a potential placement opportunity.

Option 2: This option represents a viable option (including all the remaining sub-options) and should be further considered as a feasible placement opportunity. The following arguments were provided:

- CCM has been functioning under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection since the first grant, so business processes for operation have matured.
- The operation within a governmental body gives support and credibility to the activity of CCM, whereas at the same time, the balance between Government and CSO Representatives guarantees independence in decision-making.
- A significant government contribution is required for the forthcoming transition grant.

The participants voted unanimously to continue evaluating option 2 and its sub-options as potential placement opportunities

Option 3: The creation of an independent body requires significant time and changes in the regulatory framework. The representation and participation of governmental institutions (such as MoHSP) in independent bodies is heavily regulated and, to a large extent, limited. Therefore, an independent body can take time to form and face restrictions in its operations. For these reasons:

The participants voted unanimously to exclude option 3 as a potential placement opportunity.

Option 4: Whereas current practice shows that UN is effective in supporting the operations of several bodies (e.g. the Reproductive Health Committee, the Immunization Committee, etc.), the UN institutions will be phasing out as Albania develops and the country is set in the path to become a member of the EU. The sustainability of the CCM will not be guaranteed. In addition, the UN bodies are also beneficiaries and Secondary Recipients of TGF funds, therefore hosting the CCM might be seen as a source of conflicts of interest.

The participants voted unanimously to exclude option 4 as a potential placement opportunity.

Option 5: The possibility to integrate the CCM functions in other entities was judged as the least feasible options. First, most entities have a clear and well-defined scope, so overlapping of scopes is unlikely. Second, some of the entities have themselves problems with sustainability. For example, the Committee on Reproductive Health is itself not operational.

The participants voted unanimously to exclude option 4 as a potential placement opportunity.

As a conclusion, the participants decided to consider only the sub-options listed under option 2: “CCM under the Ministry of Health and Social Protection. All the four options were considered feasible although most participants who took the floor deemed the options 2.3 and 2.4 as less feasible.

As a next step the participants split into two groups, one of them facilitated by the CCM Secretariat Administrative Officer and the other facilitated by the local consultant.



Figure 3: From the discussions of the small groups

The discussion in the small groups was lively and engaging. Upon reaching conclusions within the groups, each group appointed a rapporteur to present the recommendations to the CCM.

Conclusions can be summarized as follows:

- Option 2.2 with CCM functioning under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection and CCM Secretariat within the IPH seems the most feasible option.
- Indeed, IPH is considered the “technical branch” of MoHSP and acts as such since its establishment.
- HIV/AIDS program is operating within IPH since more than 20 years and the TB program is expected to move at IPH within 2019.
- IPH has additional capacities to offer in support to CCM activity such as the network of reference labs, the reference center for HIV related counselling, the Department of Health Education and Promotion, etc.
- This option represents more of a continuation of the status quo as the current set up is identical.
- The current level of CCM operations was evaluated to be well functioning in the EPA evaluation three years ago.

Nevertheless, the other 3 sub-options, namely 2.1, 2.3 and 2.4, also received the required consideration. The following arguments were provided:

- Option 2.1. also leaves CCM under the auspices of MoHSP and comes with all the strengths of Option 2.2. Nevertheless, MOH focus is primarily policy-making, so Option 2.2. adds the technical support to an otherwise political environment.

- Option 2.3. was deemed to weaken the position of CCM. By assuming an “advisory” role, CCM will not have the decision-making strength it has now and the ultimate decision-making would be left with MoHSP. All participants felt that this goes against the up-to-date functioning of CCM and how they see its role.
- Option 2.4. that saw the transition of CCM towards a TWG saw many weak points. First, the participants stated that they do not see the role of CCM as a “technical body”. They see the coordination of HIV/AIDS and TB response as comprehensive processes that harmonize technical decision-making with prioritization, decision-making, resource allocation, etc. which go beyond technical activities. Second, the activity of CCM is voluntary and participants are already used with this concept. In a technical working group, participants might feel like performing “technical tasks” and therefore expecting a compensation for their work.

As a conclusion, both working groups came with the conclusion that the option 2.2, i.e. “Keeping CCM under the auspices of MoHSP and the CCM Secretariat within IPH” is the most feasible option that guarantees optimal functioning and long term sustainability.

As the next step, a voting process took place, where all participants confirmed Option 2.2. as the preferred option.

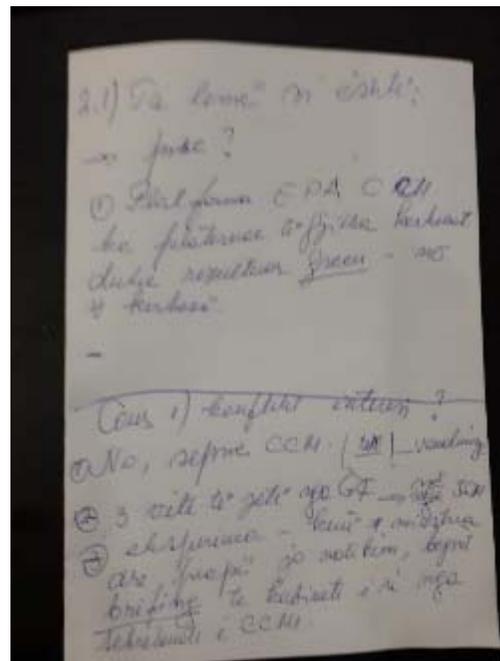
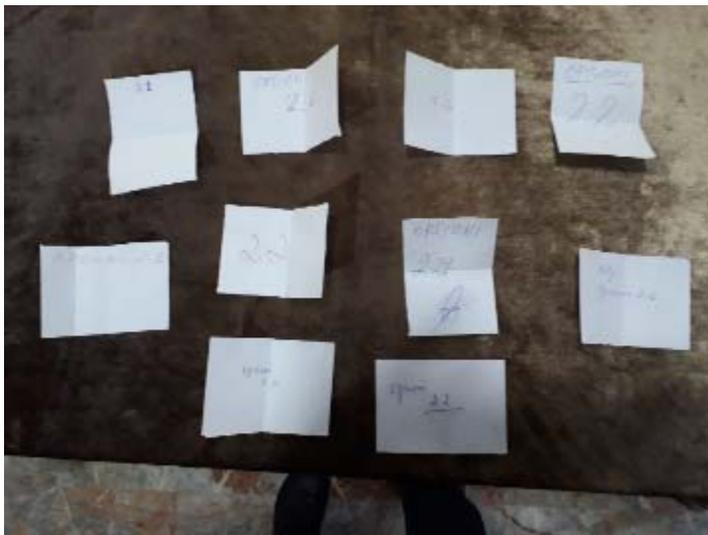


Figure 4: Voting papers and notes from work in groups

The last part of the workshop was dedicated to brainstorming on how CONs related to Option 2.2. could be mitigated. The following discussion tool place:

Table 1: Mitigation measures for the identified challenges in relation to option 2.2.

Challenges with Option 2.2.	Mitigation measures
Minister as Chair person is too high level and often poses a challenge for CSOs	This has not proven to be the case in Albania. The balanced composition of CCM (8 government representatives, 8 CSO representatives and 1 UN representative) has been balanced and decision making was not influenced by the Minister.
Funding for Secretariat might be an issue	This was highlighted as one of the relevant challenges. Various options were discussed (including sharing of responsibilities for funding the Secretariat). It was concluded that for the next 3 years of transitional grant, the CCM should cover in full the expenditures for secretariat functioning through funding from GF transition grant. Upon completion of the transition grant, the secretariat can become a permanent staff of MoHSP or IPH.
If Minister changes, it is not clear what will be the priority of new one and CCM might disappear	Experience has shown that Ministers have changed, but nevertheless the work has continued the same. The CCM Secretariat has been instrumental in briefing the new minister and his/her cabinet on the activities and expected contribution. As a matter of fact, in the last 6 years, the rotation of ministers has not been that frequent with only two persons sitting in the position (excluding a caretaker technical minister for a period of 3 months).
It's not functioning at the level required now and obviously there is no guarantee it will function effectively where there is no TGF money	The evaluation of the current CCM highlighted a few items that require attention and the CCM has made it a priority addressing them. Since over 30 years, Albania has a tradition of having in place a well-functioning body related to HIV/AIDS. This is a tradition that will likely continue to materialize.

Primary Recipient

At the end of the workshop, based on CCM eligibility requirements “**2_Transparent and documented PR selection process**”. A consideration was also given to the fact whether MoHSP should continue to act as Primary Recipient (PR) for the transition grant.

All the participants were very supportive of the role of MoHSP as the Primary Recipient. Although most of the CCM members who attended the workshop were CSO representatives, they highlighted the role played by MoHSP in the previous two rounds of funding. The following strengths and added values were mentioned:

- MoHSP has provided adequate institutional support and stability to the program execution during the two previous TGF grants.
- Through its technical branches (HIV/AIDS and TB program) MoHSP also provides technical support and, when required, leadership.
- Due to the balanced nature of CCM (8:8:1), MoHSP has never imposed decision-making but has been highly supportive to the activity of CSOs.
- Last, but not least, the very active role of the CCM Secretariat has been instrumental in coordinating between TGF, CSO representatives and MoHSP representatives.

In the following, the consultant put together a table where PROs and CONs of three potential PR organizations – Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Institute of Public Health and UN Organizations were elaborated and included as Annex 2 to this report.

An online poll between the CCM members will take place to generate a recommendation for the CCM and ultimately identify the Primary Recipient for the transition grant.

As a conclusion, MoHSP is considered as the most appropriate Primary Recipient (PR) for the eventual transition grant.

Conclusions and recommendation

Following the discussions during the workshop the conclusion and recommendation for endorsement in the forthcoming official CCM meeting is as follows:

The CCM meeting of March 7th 2019 recommends to the Chair of the Country Coordination Mechanism to endorse the following option for the CCM transition:

- 1. CCM should continue to operate under the auspices of the Ministry of Health and Social Protection;*
 - 2. CCM Secretariat should continue to provide support to the CCM activities and be based at the Institute of Public Health;*
 - 3. CCM should provide financial support to the CCM Secretariat through funding to be secured from TGF transition grant.*
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Figure 5: Group photo of workshop participants

Annexes

1) List of Participants

List of participants CCM Albania, Workshop March 7, 2019					
No.	Name Surname	Institution	Position Title	Email/Celular	Signatures
1	Leliana Gjergji	NCCS	Ex Director	liliana.gjergji@nccs.gov.al	
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17					
18					

2) PROs and CONs on the Primary Recipient of the transition grant

Three alternative options – Ministry of Health and Social Protection, Institute of Public Health and any of the UN organizations that are present in the country as potential PR for the transition gram with the PROs and CONs summarized in the following table by the consultant.

Table 2: Summary of discussions around the selection of a future Primary Recipient

Placement option	PROs	CONs
MoHSP	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Institutional support and stability • Mature business processes • Positive experience with first two grants • Institutional memory • All stakeholders in one place • Ownership of transition matters (domestic financing, amendment of legal documents) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in Ministers can bring period of uncertainty • Suboptimal functioning was highlighted in October 2018 evaluation
IPH	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Excellent technical knowledge • Experience in supporting activities during the first two grants • Hosts HIV/AIDS program • TB program is also moving to IPH 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pure technical body • Does not provide full institutional support as the MoHSP • Insufficient time to recreate the organizational framework • Insufficient time to build consensus around this option
UN	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organizations with credibility in the country • Mature processes in managing grants of this size • Have been consistently part of the first two grants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Role of UN organizations is being reduced as the country moves towards EU membership • Insufficient time to recreate the organizational framework • Insufficient time to build consensus around this option • Willingness of UN to take responsibility might be an issue • Certain “distance” from national decision-making in transition-related matters, i.e. domestic funding, amendment of legal documents (i.e. UN would not do it directly)

3) Linkages Assessment: Findings and CCM Transition Options