

Engaging Anew with the PEPFAR COP Process: 2017 Updates and New Civil Society Opportunities

January 2017

2017 is here and with it a new PEPFAR Country Operational Plan/Regional Operational Plan (COP/ROP) process. Earlier this month, the Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) published the final version of the [2017 PEPFAR COP Guidance](#), which incorporates some and neglects other recommendations made by civil society. **It is crucial that civil society advocates understand the key directives of the 2017 COP Guidance, remind PEPFAR teams of their responsibilities, and be prepared to report to OGAC and to their local, regional, and global civil society peers when and where PEPFAR teams fall short.**

Key Dates for Civil Society in the 2017 PEPFAR COP Process

January: PEPFAR teams should be able to provide local civil society organizations (CSOs) with country-level data (“POART data”) from Quarter 4 of PEPFAR’s 2016 programming. During the week of January 23rd, PEPFAR teams are scheduled to hold a “strategic retreat” that includes local CSO representatives to discuss the 2017 COP process.

February/early March: PEPFAR teams meet with OGAC in Washington, DC to discuss preliminary COP priorities. Three meetings are held: February 6-10 with PEPFAR teams from Group 1 (Cameroon, Ethiopia, Haiti, Kenya, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zimbabwe), February 20-24 with Group 2 (Botswana, Cote d’Ivoire, Lesotho, Malawi, South Africa, Swaziland, Uganda, Ukraine, Zambia), and March 7-10 with Group 3 (Burundi, DRC, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Sudan, Vietnam). PEPFAR teams are required to provide local CSOs with the outcomes of each meeting within 4 days.

Late-February/March: PEPFAR teams required to submit draft COPs (SDS) to OGAC. Due dates are as follows: Group 1 is March 2, Group 2 is March 16, and Group 3 is March 30. In addition, several countries and regions with smaller COPs/ROPs (Angola, ARP, Burma, Caribbean, Cambodia, Central America, Central Asia, Dominican Republic, Ghana, India, Indonesia, PNG) have an earlier submission date of February 16. PEPFAR teams are required to share the draft COPs with local civil society at least 48 hours before submission of the draft COPs to the country mission (which will likely be a few days before the submission date to OGAC).

March/April: COP review meetings held in Johannesburg for Group 1 (April 19-21), Group 2 (April 24-26), and Group 3 (April 27-29). Also, review meetings for several countries and regions with smaller COP/ROPs will occur Feb. 28-March 2 in Bangkok (ARP, Burma, Cambodia, Central Asia, India, Indonesia, PNG) and March 13-15 in Washington, DC (Angola, Caribbean, Central America, Dominican Republic, Ghana). PEPFAR teams are required to include at least 2 local civil society representatives per country as participants in the review meetings.

Key Points for Civil Society from the 2017 PEPFAR COP Guidance

- 1) PEPFAR teams should seek the inclusion of a **diverse range of civil society organizations** in consultations, including representation from all key and priority populations
- 2) PEPFAR teams should include organizations from within and outside of the capital (e.g. by phone) and should ensure that both rural and urban interests are represented, **with the presumption to include all groups that voice interest in engagement**
- 3) **External partners will be invited to fully participate** throughout the in-country COP preparation process and during the COP Review/Approval in-person meeting
- 4) PEPFAR teams should ask local civil society to select up to **two representatives** to attend the COP review meeting
- 5) For concentrated epidemic countries, it is recommended that **at least one of the representatives come from a civil society organization representing key populations**

In this period, we remind our civil society partners of the **crucial and urgent need** to:

- 1.) Review the 2016 COPs [here](#) and identify areas for improvement and priority areas for the 2017 COP process.
- 2.) Engage with your PEPFAR country team (**Important: we now have contacts** for most PEPFAR countries, so please write to us if you need your PEPFAR country team's contact information)
- 3.) Plan to participate in PEPFAR quarterly review civil society meetings, and insist that the PEPFAR country team provide key populations data a minimum of 2 weeks in advance of the meeting. OGAC is now posting much of the 2016 data [here](#).
- 4.) Continue to communicate with other major donors and key stakeholders, such as the Global Fund and the local Ministry of Health, to align priorities for key populations programming
- 5.) Communicate with OGAC, either via your PEPFAR country team or through global civil society like MSMGF, to provide input on improvements to the civil society engagement components of the COP review process

As always, we greatly value receiving your thoughts and feedback, which help reinforce our advocacy efforts at local, regional, and global levels. We would appreciate hearing your perspectives on how PEPFAR engagement is going at country level, including examples of successes, positive experiences, and ongoing challenges. Please communicate your feedback and any questions/concerns you may have to Nadia Rafif, Director of Policy, at nrafif@msmgf.org. We thank you for your much-appreciated engagement with this critical process.

Yours in global solidarity,
The MSMGF