

THE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING INITIATIVE IN CAMBODIA

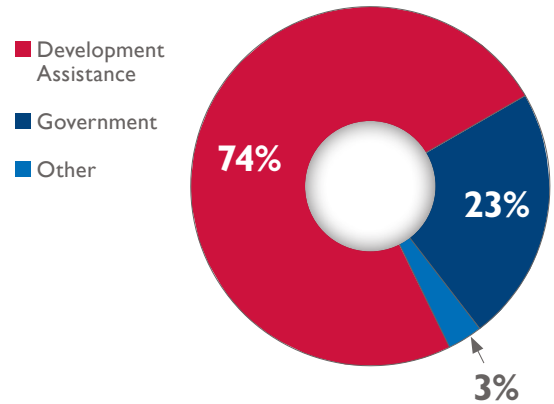
Funded by the United States President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), the Sustainable Financing Initiative for HIV/AIDS (SFI) aims to increase sustainability of the HIV response by promoting shared financial responsibility with host country governments. Since 2014, the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has implemented SFI in 16 countries and two regional programs, with a budget of nearly \$48 million.

Cambodia has made substantial progress on its HIV response. In 2017, it achieved its 90-90-90 targets. In 2020, about 72,200 (0.6 percent of the population) were people living with HIV (PLHIV). In 2019, less than 1,000 people were newly infected with HIV and about 1,300 died from an AIDS-related illness.¹ While the current HIV/AIDS response is heavily reliant on donor funding, the Royal Government of Cambodia (RGC) is committed to enhancing its HIV response by increasing its financial contributions, improving resource use efficiency and increasing its return on investments.

In collaboration with the RGC and relevant stakeholders, including civil society organizations, SFI supported policy change, strengthened HIV financing, and ensured access to health care and essential medicines. The results of these efforts mark critical milestones in Cambodia's Journey to Self-Reliance and its growing domestic ownership of the country's HIV response.

AT A GLANCE

HIV/AIDS Response Funding Sources in 2017²
Cambodia total: \$39 million



How SFI Contributes to a Sustainable HIV Response



SFI supported advocacy efforts that made it possible for all PLHIV to **access a financial protection scheme.**



SFI built the **capacity of government officials** to better advocate for increased funding for HIV.



The RGC invested **\$1.5 million** in antiretrovirals (ARVs) annually from 2018-2020, and committed to increase incrementally to \$5 million annually by 2023.

¹ PEPFAR (2020). Asia Region Operational Plan, ROP 2020 Strategic Direction Summary. April 17, 2020.

² Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) (2020). Financing Global Health Visualization. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington.

BETWEEN 2018 AND 2020, SFI FOCUSED ON THREE KEY AREAS IN CAMBODIA: PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT, AND FINANCIAL PROTECTION. AS A RESULT OF THIS INITIATIVE, THE COUNTRY IS WELL PLACED TO ACHIEVE UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE, AND INCREASE ACCESS TO QUALITY HEALTHCARE SERVICES AND AFFORDABLE ESSENTIAL MEDICINES FOR PLHIV.

Public Financial Management

SFI provided technical assistance and capacity building to **support evidence-based policy change for a more sustainable and domestically financed HIV response**. SFI supported work that informed budget allocation for the integration of HIV activities, the use of health facility funds for HIV services and other efforts to strengthen the procurement and supply of HIV commodities, particularly ARVs. As a result, from 2018-2020 the **RGC invested \$1.5 million per year to procure ARVs** and committed to increase this investment to \$3 million in 2021, \$4 million in 2022 and \$5 million in 2023, and to maintain this investment in subsequent years.

SFI supported the RGC to create a Policy Circular, SarCharNor #213, which had six main components that helped to **increase the budget allocation for HIV/AIDS, expand PLHIV access to social protection schemes and maintain an effective and sustainable HIV response**. Endorsed by the Prime Minister, SarChorNor #213 demonstrates the RGC's strong political commitment to funding its HIV response. SFI also provided technical assistance in costing and financing the National Strategic Plan for the RGC's HIV response. By 2023, the National

Strategic Plan for Multisectoral and Comprehensive Response for HIV and AIDS aims to achieve 50 percent domestic financing for HIV, mostly through sustained increased investments in ARVs. By increasing its contribution to ARVs, the RGC will be paying for almost all of the critical care and treatment programs Cambodians need.

SFI PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT ACHIEVEMENTS

\$4.5 million
invested in ARVs over
three years



\$12 million committed to ARVs from 2021 to 2023, increasing to \$5 million per year starting in 2023.

Private Sector Engagement

An assessment of the HIV response identified several opportunities for promoting collaboration with the private sector. These opportunities include mobilizing resources via corporate social responsibility initiatives, increasing private insurance coverage, increasing testing, providing HIV prevention and treatment services, and supporting the distribution of HIV commodities.

SFI-supported advocacy efforts resulted in the **addition of private sector opportunities in the National Strategic Plan for Multisectoral and Comprehensive Response for HIV and AIDS** (2019–2023).

Financial Protection

SFI supported the **integration of HIV financing into existing health financing structures** like social health insurance and other existing demand-side financing schemes. This includes expanding Health Equity Fund (HEF) eligibility to all PLHIV through SarChorNor #213.

The HEF program is a social protection scheme that provides free access to all health services and other social protection programs. SFI's work also led to the ability of facilities to use discretionary funds for HIV and incentivized them to improve quality of care. Access to the HEF and more services has reduced barriers, helping PLHIV receive quality care and ensuring that they are financially protected.

SUMMARY

SFI's work in Cambodia demonstrates that in a politically challenging environment, identification of champions, evidence generation and building local capacity, engagement across ministries, and sustained technical support is crucial to increase financial responsibility. Utilizing the private health sector, integrating HIV financing into well-established health insurance and social protection schemes, and strengthening the quality of care can ultimately help end the HIV epidemic in Cambodia.