

THE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING INITIATIVE IN CAMEROON

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.

Cameroon has made progress to control the HIV epidemic, but still has one of the highest rates of HIV in West and Central Africa. With an HIV prevalence of 3.4 percent in the general population, in 2020, there were about 504,000 people living with HIV (PLHIV). In that same year, nearly 14,600 people were newly infected with HIV and approximately 12,700 died from an AIDS-related illness.¹ The Government of the Republic of Cameroon (GRC) is committed to **eliminating user fees for HIV services and developing a new health financing strategy to ensure access to high quality healthcare services**, while decreasing household expenditures on health care.

SFI is collaborating with the GRC and relevant stakeholders to eliminate user fees from HIV services and leverage untapped resources in the private sector to distribute antiretrovirals (ARVs). These efforts represent important milestones in Cameroon's HIV response.

AT A GLANCE

HIV/AIDS Response Funding Sources in 2017²
Cameroon total: \$130 million

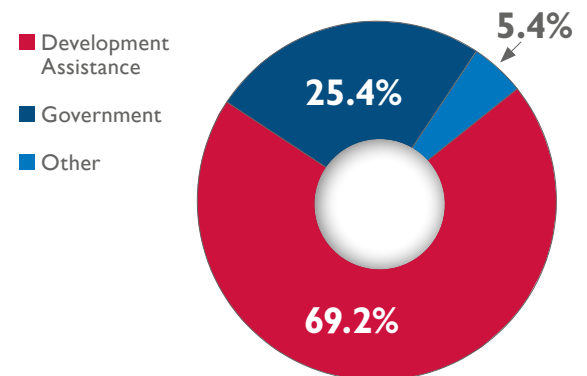


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How SFI Contributes to a Sustainable HIV Response



SFI is **increasing access to ARVs** for PLHIV. SFI is evaluating the feasibility of five possible models of decentralized drug distribution (DDD) for ARVs in the country.



SFI trained national and regional officials on Universal Health Coverage (UHC), to solidify their commitment to **ensuring coverage for PLHIV, pregnant women, and children** under UHC.



SFI ensured the **consolidated UHC Phase I package includes HIV** care and treatment services.

¹ PEPFAR (2020). Cameroon Country Operational Plan COP 2020. Strategic Direction Summary. March 23, 2020.

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

SINCE 2018, SFI HAS FOCUSED ON TWO KEY AREAS IN CAMEROON: FINANCIAL PROTECTION AND PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT. ACTIVITIES AIMED AT INCORPORATING HIV SERVICES INTO UHC AND INCREASING ACCESS TO ARVS WILL HELP IMPROVE THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR PLHIV AND STRENGTHEN THE HIV RESPONSE IN CAMEROON.

Financial Protection

In 2017, the Government of Cameroon committed to guaranteeing equitable access to health care for all. With the 2019 decision to eliminate all user fees associated with HIV care and treatment, the GRC embarked on Phase I of UHC, focused on PLHIV, pregnant women, and children under five. SFI supported the National AIDS Control Committee in developing a communication strategy to inform the public and health service providers about the elimination of HIV user fees; it also supported the Ministry of Health in updating its strategic communication plan for UHC. SFI is also coordinating and delivering training on UHC to decentralized health officials, health facility staff, civil society, and the general population.

SFI supported the MOH to develop a consolidated package of interventions to be included as free services in the next phase of UHC. The following HIV services are included:

- HIV testing
- Early infant diagnosis
- ARVs and Cotrimoxazole
- Tuberculosis preventive treatment
- CD4 (white blood cell count) testing
- Laboratory services, consultations, and transportation
- Condom distribution



Participants at the UHC regional training in Adamaoua.

Private Sector Engagement

SFI is supporting the decentralized delivery of ARVs through the private sector by evaluating the feasibility of several decentralized models, including private pharmacies, clinics, faith-based organizations, community pickup points and home delivery. Following the evaluation, SFI will support implementation and scale up of high impact models to reduce public sector burden and improve convenience and quality of care. ARV distribution through private pharmacies and other private sector pickup points has the potential to help alleviate stigma, decrease travel time, and increase convenience for clients. In addition, **these models increase options for stable patients to access ARVs in the manner that is most convenient for them.** Only stable patients will be transitioned to these new pick-up locations, preserving continuity of care.

POTENTIAL DDD MODELS



Community-based organizations and faith-based organizations



Community-based pickup points



Private pharmacies



Private clinics and hospitals



Home delivery

SUMMARY

SFI's efforts in Cameroon to expand access to ARVs, advance universal health coverage, and ensure the elimination of HIV user fees will ensure continued access to care for PLHIV, while also increasing the sustainability of the HIV response.