

# THE SUSTAINABLE FINANCING INITIATIVE IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE

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.

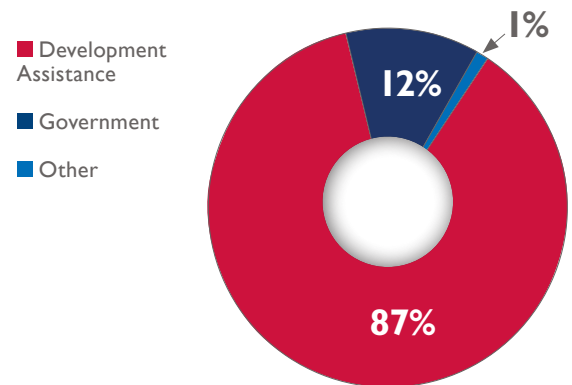
Côte d'Ivoire has the highest HIV prevalence in West Africa. In 2019, there were about 458,434 people living with HIV (PLHIV), and the prevalence of HIV among persons ages 15 to 49 was 2.9 percent. In 2019, 12,000 people were newly infected with HIV, and 13,000 died from an AIDS-related illness.<sup>1</sup> The Government of Côte d'Ivoire is committed to reducing barriers to HIV services by increasing domestic resource mobilization and increasing public-private partnerships. Côte d'Ivoire's rapid economic growth in recent years (averaging about 8 percent annually since 2011),<sup>2</sup> presents a unique opportunity to increase domestic funding for health, including the HIV/AIDS response.

In collaboration with the Government of Côte d'Ivoire and relevant stakeholders, SFI, with Country Operational Plan (COP) co-funding, focused on facilitating stakeholder analysis of sustainable financing challenges, strengthening government capacity for oversight and leadership of HIV programs, and generating evidence on user fees for HIV services to reduce barriers to care. To mobilize additional resources for HIV, SFI established relationships with the private sector. By supporting local and national partners, the Government of Côte d'Ivoire will be well placed to increase program quality, outreach, and the sustainability of its HIV response.

## AT A GLANCE

HIV / AIDS Response Funding Sources in 2017<sup>3</sup>

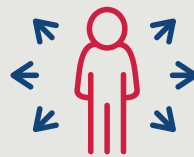
**Côte d'Ivoire total:  
\$150 million**



## How SFI Contributes to a Sustainable HIV Response



SFI strengthened a government-led multi-sectoral health financing committee to design and **implement strategies to increase domestic resources** for HIV.



SFI is helping the Ivorian government strengthen its capacity to provide **oversight and leadership of HIV programs at central and decentralized levels** and ensure HIV program managers are better able to mobilize, allocate, and manage resources.



SFI generated evidence to monitor the **implementation of a law eliminating user fees** for HIV services.

<sup>1</sup> PEPFAR (2019). Côte d'Ivoire Country Operational Plan COP 2019. Strategic Direction Summary. May 31, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> World Bank (2019). The World Bank in Côte d'Ivoire. Country Overview. <https://www.worldbank.org/en/country/cotedivoire/overview>

<sup>3</sup> Institute for Health Metrics and Evaluation (IHME) (2020). Financing Global Health Visualization. Seattle, WA: IHME, University of Washington.

SINCE 2019, SFI HAS FOCUSED ON THREE KEY AREAS IN CÔTE D'IVOIRE: PUBLIC FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT, PRIVATE SECTOR ENGAGEMENT, AND FINANCIAL PROTECTION. WITH ACTIVITIES RELATED TO MULTI-STAKEHOLDER ANALYSIS, GENERATION OF EVIDENCE, ADVOCACY, TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, AND ENGAGEMENT WITH PRIVATE SECTOR ACTORS, SFI IS LAYING THE GROUNDWORK FOR A MORE SUSTAINABLE DOMESTIC HIV RESPONSE.

## Financial Protection

To strengthen Côte d'Ivoire's HIV response, SFI laid the groundwork to eliminate barriers to HIV care, such as illegal user fees. While HIV services are included in a package of free services provided by public sector facilities, some PLHIV report being charged direct payments, or user fees, for these services. To address this problem, SFI funded a study of 32 health facilities to assess the magnitude of the user fee problem. Through interviews with more than 1,000 PLHIV and 112 healthcare providers, the study found that nine percent of the PLHIV interviewed were charged user fees during the year preceding the study. Sixty-five percent of PLHIV who were charged a fee were unaware that it was illegal, and 85 percent were unaware of how to report the illegal collection of user fees. SFI also supported qualitative research with 212 PLHIV in six regions to analyze the impact of these fees on access to HIV services. To follow up, SFI informed the development of an alert system to immediately identify cases of user fees with the goal of helping Côte d'Ivoire ultimately eliminate them. **Continued monitoring of progress towards user fee elimination will be important to ensure that PLHIV are able to access quality services without financial barriers.**



**9%** of PLHIV participating in a study were charged user fees for HIV services.

**65%** of them did not know these fees were illegal.

## Public Financial Management

SFI is **strengthening the capacity of the public sector to provide oversight and leadership of HIV programs** at central and decentralized levels to ensure their sustainability. Furthermore, SFI has worked to ensure active private sector participation in the HIV Task Force of the National Coordination Platform for Health Financing.

## Private Sector Engagement

SFI worked with multiple stakeholders across the government, private sector, and civil society to create an ecosystem of partners that can design and implement strategies to increase domestic resource mobilization. For example, SFI worked with the National Coordination Platform's HIV Task Force to support the National Fund for the Fight Against AIDS to mobilize private sector resources—ultimately engaging more stakeholders in financing the country's HIV response.

SFI is also **assessing the feasibility of a model for decentralized antiretroviral (ARV) drug distribution at the community level**. By allowing patients to refill ARVs in private pharmacies, this model will relieve pressure from overburdened public facilities and assist in controlling the spread of COVID-19 while strengthening access to antiretroviral drugs.



Human Resources for Health representatives discuss health sector reform



Stakeholders discuss the creation of a capacity building plan for health managers

## SUMMARY

SFI's continuing efforts to monitor user fee elimination, analyze and address funding gaps, increase government oversight capacity, and develop a decentralized drug distribution model are contributing to the sustainability of the HIV response in Côte d'Ivoire.