

Minutes  
of  
Policy and Advocacy Advisory Council Meeting: 19

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The PAAC meeting was held at the Ministry of Internally Displaced Persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia on December 10, 2019 at 11:00 AM.

**Objectives:**

- To give update on current initiatives regarding the CCMs evolution;
- To present G-CCM self-assessment results;
- To present the status update on G-CCM Transition Action Plan; and
- To define the Future remote support needs

**Attendees:**

Tim Clary	EHG Consultant
Sanja Matovic	EHG Consultant
Gocha Gabodze	Association “Brotseuli”, executive director
Maka Danelia	NCDC, GF TB Program Manager
Ia Kamarauli	Ministry of Internally Displaced persons from the Occupied Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs of Georgia
Tea Petriashvili	NGO “New Way”
Nino Badridze	Infectious Diseases, AIDS and Clinical Immunology Research Center, Head of Epidemiological Department
Natalia Zaqareishvili	UNFPA, Program Analyst, PAAC Member
Nino Tsereteli	Center for Information and Counseling on Reproductive Health - Tanadgoma, executive director, PAAC member
Kakha Kvashilava	Georgian Harm Reduction Network, executive director
Irina Grdzeldze	CCM, Executive Secretary
Natia Khonelidze	CCM, Administrative Assistant

The 19<sup>th</sup> meeting of the Policy and Advocacy Advisory Committee was opened by **Ms. Irina Grdzeldze**, CCM Executive Secretary. She thanked the attendees for participation and presented them EHG consultants: Mr. Tim Clary and Ms. Sanja Matovic. They provide consultancy services to the G-CCM in preparation for the transition period. They developed G-CCM Transitional Plan with an accompanying Action Plan; all documents were elaborated within the PAAC consultancy format and have been endorsed by the CCM. Ms. Grdzeldze emphasized the fact that the developed plan is a live document and will be revised annually. The Action Plan has already been revised and updated within the frame of

consultants' ongoing visit during the meeting with the Oversight Committee. Ms. Grdzeldze introduced to the attendees the purpose of the meeting: to present the updated G-CCM Transitional Action Plan, to present the GF recent CCM evolution initiatives, as well as CCM self-assessment results. She once again thanked the audience and gave floor to the consultants.

**Mr. Clary** referred to the attendees to make brief introduction of themselves.

Following the introduction, before moving on to the main part of the meeting, **Mr. Clary** gave a brief note regarding their assignment: the consultancy work started back in 2016, with the idea that Georgia as a country would be transitioning away from the GF support rather soon. Nevertheless, at present there is commitment to GF grants at least through 2025. Then he listed the topics to be covered during the meeting: (1) CCM evolution initiatives; (2) G-CCM self-assessment results; (3) G-CCM Transition Action Plan and (4) future TA needs. He also noted that during the next day, at the CCM meeting, these topics would be presented in more formal way rather than a current informal discussion.

**Mr. Clary** gave information regarding the CCM's evolution: it started in 2016, but it was not known as an evolution initiative back then. The consultants started the assignment in 2016 with the support of GIZ and EHG, to conduct the study of 5 CCMs to see what their needs were and how and where they should go in the future. This five countries were: Georgia, Moldova, Ethiopia, Guinea and Ghana. The study results were presented to the GF at Geneva. The main point was that all CCMs were moving in different paths and there was a need to start thinking about evolution of CCMs. There was a need for making differentiated rather than standardized models for the CCM in terms of their development and functionality. Last year the GF started to pilot CCM evolution initiative in 18 counties (15 supported by the GF and 3 by GIZ). The evolution initiative looks at four areas of the CCMs: (1) functioning, (2) oversight, (3) linkages and (4) civil society engagement. Last year during the conference in Morocco, where a number of different organizations that were going to pilot this work were invited to review how to proceed with the implementation of the evolution initiatives. The consultants held a separate session regarding the results of those 5 countries at the conference. The study results were overviewed by the presenter. According to Mr. Clary, Georgia appeared to be a shining star among those countries and he acknowledged the contribution of all interested parties in all these processes. He also stated that at the end of their assignment, in April 2020, there will be a final workshop where he would like to see representatives from Georgia, involved in all these processes talking about the success story of the G-CCM. Mr. Clary gave floor to Ms. Sanja Matovic to talk about the recent initiatives regarding the CCMs evolution in the upcoming year.

**Ms. Sanja Matovic** talked about the recent initiatives of the GF regarding the CCMs evolution: Based on the GIZ CCM integration study, the GF launched the CCM evolution initiative in September 2018. The baseline assessment was done in 18 countries. A long questionnaire was used to assess the functionality of the CCMs, oversight function of the CCMs, CSO meaningful engagement, CCMs' linkages with other health coordination platforms in the country and overall integration of the CCM within the health system. For the period of 10 months, through the consulting companies and teams, GF provided technical assistance to these 18 counties in all those 4 areas. In August-September 2019, GF conducted an end line assessment to evaluate the results of the provided TA. Two component, namely oversight and linkages showed an actual progress. In terms of CSO engagement, there was a better progress regarding their communication with constituencies, but less with their meaningful engagement. The results of the evaluation were presented to the GF in November this year and decision was made to roll

out this initiative in 115 counties. It will start in 2020 with 90 countries. Soon there will be more information about which countries will be covered and what kind of support regarding these four components will be provided. Now that the GF has differentiated approach in terms of CCMs functionality, the TA provided will depend on the level of maturity of the CCM. G-CCM is considered as a strategic CCM, hence the TA will be different from those who are just functional ones. Starting from 2020 consultants will have more information regarding the roll out of the initiative and will provide us with updated information. Ms. Matovic stated that they will continue advocating for G-CCM to serve as a role model for all those processes.

**Mr. Gocha Gabodze** made a comment and underlined the importance of the work done by the G-CCM in the country. Although there are some groups, who are left behind all this processes and it will be important to add their representation in the CCM. The issue regards Trans\* communities who have considerable challenges regarding HIV, as well as young key populations who actively consume new psychoactive substances and have greater risk behaviors. Mr. Gabodze thinks that it will be important to have representation of Trans\* and young population in the G-CCM. Another issue concerns the capacity and qualification of community representatives to be meaningfully engaged in CCM's activities. He thinks that capacity building of community representatives in order to properly and effectively advocated for their needs should be considered by the GF.

**Mr. Tim Clary** responded that of course the risks and needs, as well as representation in the CCM of TG as well as Young Population should be considered, but based on the evidence based epidemiological situation in the country. CCM Governance manual defines the representation of KPs in the CCM depending on the epidemic. In case of having evidence regarding these populations, he strongly recommends to include them in the HIV National Strategic Plan and then in the representation of the G-CCM.

Again **Mr. Gabodze** noted that it is very difficult to get evidence regarding Trans\* people, since there is no defined estimates size of the population in the country. He thinks that the GF should have certain directives to the Government of Georgia regarding conducting the studies of size estimation for this population.

**Mr. Clary** also made a comment regarding the capacity building of community representatives. The CCM evolution initiatives consider some kind of capacity building depending on the identified needs but it mostly concerns their ability to communicate with their constituencies.

**Ms. Natia Khonelidze**, CCM administrative assistant, commented regarding the MSM community representation at the G-CCM. G-CCM recently underwent the renewal of membership and TG activist representation is already envisioned.

Then **Mr. Clary** moved to the next topic of the agenda and presented the results of the CCM self-assessment. The later was a part of the requested TA from the country. Consultants developed a questionnaire with 20 questions, which are based on the CCM evolution initiative baseline questionnaire. Last week the questionnaire was sent to G-CCM current members (29 totally). In order to maintain confidentiality the members were asked to submit the completed questionnaires directly to the consultants. The consultants received back 16 responses. The questionnaire covered the general topics such as oversight, resource mobilization, linkages with other bodies, civil society engagement and CCM functioning, including sub-committees and secretariat and how conflict of interest is managed.

According to the results, G-CCM received high scores, for example on the scale from 1 to 10, where ten was the best score, answers mostly included nine or ten. Of course there were some outlier cases but it didn't affect the final results much. Based on the assessment results the only areas where improvement might be needed are resource mobilization and leadership training. Two areas where the G-CCM scored the highest were CS engagement and functioning of the CCM secretariat. The idea of conducting self-assessment was to develop a capacity building plan but based on the received results there is no such need at this point.

**Ms. Nino Tsereteli**, director of NGO "Tanadgoma", asked whether there was a question regarding the CCM sustainability in the questionnaire; what was the self-perception of the G-CCM regarding its sustainability?

**Mr. Clary** responded that there was not such direct question, but the one dealing with resource mobilization could be indirectly linked to sustainability. Then he gave an example of the study evaluating the sustainability of CCMs in certain countries, where out of nine countries only one CCM was able to survive after GF withdrawal. The situation in Georgia is different, there is a Government Resolution #220 that backs the CCM as a national coordination body. In most countries CCMs are not legally recognized organizations.

**Ms. Sanja Matovic** also commented that in many cases it appeared that CCMs were not integrated in the entire health system after the transition. That was one of the reasons why GF started this evolution initiatives. In addition, she highlighted the importance of preparation for the transition in advance.

**Mr. Tim Clary** also noted that many countries are fine with the decision to stop CCM functioning after GF withdrawal, because they were established and functioning only for GF grant and they were never integrated in national health sector coordination structure. While discussing the issues of sustainability, the GF recognizes its huge investments made to Civil Society. And the results with CSs in many countries where GF left, were not good. Therefore, GF recognizes its tremendous mistake in this regard and gives emphasis to sustainability. Mr. Clary gave floor to Ms. Matovic to talk about the G-CCM Transition Action Plan.

**Ms. Sanja Matovic** started with clarification that the Action Plan concerns the CCM transition and not programmatic transition. She acknowledged PAAC's contribution to the development of the G-CCM Transition and Action Plan. Both documents were approved by the CCM in January 2019 and they present live documents, meaning that they include ongoing activities and will be updated every year. She noted that the last revision of the Action Plan was done during the meeting with OC in the previous week and she briefly presented the audience those updates. The plan has 6 main objectives: *(1) to deepen the understanding of CCM members and key stakeholders on a need for G-CCM transition* – during the current year there were number of meetings, workshops and discussions related to the transition, during consultants' visit to Georgia they were also sharing experiences from other countries. These activities are ongoing and will be conducted on needed basis. The responsibility for these activities are shared among EHG consultants (remotely through April 2020) and PAAC; *(2) to strengthen the existing G-CCM structure for its own transition* – Term of References for PAAC and OC committee have been revised and updated to reflect the changes as defined by the plan and the revision of the CCM secretariat's ToR and renewal of the G-CCM membership to reflect changes are ongoing. If the decision will be made in the future regarding the expansion of the G-CCM mandate, of course, those document will need additional revisions to include new roles and responsibilities; *(3) to build G-CCM*

*capacity to oversee the programmatic transition and implement the necessary steps for its own transition* – self-assessment have been already conducted and can be repeated in the future in case of need. G-CCM has orientation packages which will need periodical updates as needed basis. Orientation needs will be additionally discussed during the CCM meeting the next day. The consultants will also update the existing orientation packages. *(4) To develop and/or update the existing governance and legal documents to address changes and possible expanded G-CCM role* – all the changes during the transition will need to be reflected in the relevant legal and governance documents. During the current TA period consultants updated CCM governance manual. In addition, the G-CCM Transition Plan stresses the need for revising the Resolution #220 when/if the decision will be made on expansion of the CCM roles and responsibilities. *(5) To deepen the understanding of key stakeholders and of G-CCM members on a need for resource mobilization for G-CCM functioning after GF leaves* – the issues regarding the start of resource mobilization activities, including the preparation of the budget for the CCM after GF withdrawal were discussed during the meeting with OC. This planning will need to take place in advance before the government accepts the budget for the certain year. This is an important objective where the PAAC will have an important role. *(6) To establish a system for monitoring of the G-CCM transition process* – the Action Plan itself will be used for monitoring the transition activities. The Action Plan contains indicators for each activity, which were revised during the meeting with OC last week. OC will be responsible for overseeing the implementation of the Action Plan, as well as the G-CCM Transition Plan. At the end Ms. Matovic underlined once again that the Action Plan is a live document will be revised and updated annually.

**Ms. Ia Kamarauli** asked to make clarification regarding the activity 4.4 of the Action Plan: adjustment of other relevant document (e.g. national programs, guidelines, etc.) to address G-CCM expanded role.

**Ms. Sanja Matovic** replied that the activity relates to the case when/if the G-CCM will make decision to expand its role for example to include Hepatitis C in its mandate. In this case there will be need to make relevant changes to ToRs of CCM, PAAC, OC, governance manual and other documents to reflect the new roles and responsibilities.

At the end of the meeting **Mr. Clary** mentioned that the current visit is the last one within their assignment, which ends in April 2020. The consultants will be providing remote assistance until then. Revising the existing G-CCM orientation package and updating the CCM secretariat ToR will be the part of their remote assistance. He addressed the audience to think about additional TA needs for the next couple of months and get back with suggestions to CCM Secretariat. In addition he also stated that Georgia might also be participating in the CCM evolution initiatives of the GF, but at this point the details are not know yet.

**Ms. Matovic** also suggested that G-CCM may be proactive and communicate with the portfolio manager and express need/wish to receive the support for evolution initiative.

At the end PAAC members thanked the consultants for their tremendous efforts put into the strengthening of the G-CCM and expressed their wish to continue receiving support from their side during the further CCM evolution initiatives.

At the conclusion, Mr. Tim Clary summarized the meeting and thanked the participants.

**Decision points:**

- All discussed points will be presented at the CCM meeting on December 11, 2019;
- PAAC will elaborate additional TA needs if any and submit to the CCM Secretariat;
- The consultants will continue remote TA until April 2020.

**Minutes prepared by Tamar Zurashvili**

Policy and Advocacy Specialist, PAAC