

## LMG Honduras Quarterly Report: July – September 2013

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**Date of Publication:** September 24, 2013

**Development objective:** Provide technical assistance to the Ministry of Health (MOH) and local NGOs and other non-public Institutions in organizational capacity building to provide HIV/AIDS education and prevention services to key and priority populations.

**Keywords:** Leadership, Management, Governance, Honduras, HIV/AIDS, non-governmental organizations, civil society organizations, contracts, grants, results-based financing, capacity development

Funding was provided by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under Cooperative Agreement AID-OAA-A-11-00015. The contents are the responsibility of the Leadership, Management, and Governance Project and do not necessarily reflect the views of USAID or the United States Government.

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# LEADERSHIP, MANAGEMENT & GOVERNANCE PROGRAM HONDURAS

QUARTERLY REPORT FOR  
JULY-SEPTEMBER 2013

*Submitted September 24, 2013*

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## Abbreviations

AHMF	Asociación Hondureña Mujer y Familia
AOR	Agreement Officer's Representative
ART	Anti-Retroviral Therapy
ASONAPVSI DAH	National Association of People Living with HIV/AIDS
CAP	Estudios de Conocimiento, Actitudes y Prácticas
CASM	Comisión de Acción Social Menonita
BSS	Behavior Surveillance Survey
CoAg	Cooperative Agreement
COCSIDA	Centro de Orientación y Capacitación en Sida
CGSSI	Comunidad Gay Sampedrana para la Salud Integral
ECOSALUD	Ecología y Salud
GHI	Global Health Initiative
GOH	Government of Honduras
LDP	Leadership Development Program
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/ Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
LMG	Leadership, Management, and Governance (Project)
LMS	Leadership Management and Sustainability (Project)
MOH	Ministry of Health (also known as SESAL Secretaria de Salud)
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MOST	Management and Organizational Sustainability Tool
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
MSM	Men who have Sex with Men
MSM-T	Men who have sex with men and transgendered individuals
PLHA	People Living with HIV and AIDS
PEPFAR	President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PHC	Primary Health Center
PMP	Performance Monitoring Plan
PRODIM	Programas para el Desarrollo de la Infancia y la Mujer
PY	Project Year
RSD	Regiones Sanitarias Departamentales (Regional Offices of the MOH)
RSM	Región Sanitaria Metropolitana. Just referred to Tegucigalpa and San Pedro Sula.
SOW	Scope of Work
STI	Sexually Transmitted Infections
STTA	Short Term Technical Assistance
SWOT	Strengths Weaknesses Opportunities Threats
TA	Technical Assistance
TB	Tuberculosis
TOR	Terms of Reference
ULAT II	Unidad Local de Asistencia Técnica (Local Technical Assistance Unit) II (Project)

USAID	United States Agency for International Development
UECF	Unidad de Extension de Cobertura y Financiamiento (Unit for Extension of Coverage and Financing)
UGD	Unidad de Gestión Descentralizada (Unit for Decentralized Administration)
USG	United States Government

## I. Executive Summary

This report describes the main achievements for the Leadership, Management & Governance (LMG) program in Honduras for the July-September 2013 period. This report serves to update USAID/Honduras on project accomplishments and inform of any outstanding issues during this period.

The major accomplishments of the LMG/Honduras program from July-September 2013 are:

- Concluded the collect information phase of the initial assessment of LMG capacities in MOH and NGOs.
- Identified the prioritization of interventions for the design of the action plans for MOH and NGOs.
- Provided technical assistance to UGD in their capacity building efforts with the regions (RSD) in the areas of technical monitoring of grants.
- In coordination with the UGD, adapted the technical audits tools.
- Provided technical assistance to UECF to complete reporting requirements established in the USAID Financial Implementation Letters.
- Support ECOSALU to prepare for a supervisory visit from the USAID Director.

## II. Program Context and Expected Results

### National Context:

Honduras is a lower middle-income country that has seen improvements in certain health and economic indicators, but still suffers from serious social inequalities and low rates of several health indicators. In addition, Honduras struggles with a disproportionately high HIV prevalence rate, particularly among certain populations. The Government of Honduras (GOH) and international donors have invested funds in capacity building in the health sector in recent years, resulting in improvements in certain health indicators. However, in order for Honduras to improve further its overall health status, it must reach out to key population groups who are currently underserved, and therefore, whose health status is far worse than national averages would suggest. For improvements in health among these hard-to-reach populations to occur, quality, usage, and financing of critical health services—particularly HIV/AIDS services—must be improved.

At 0.7%, Honduras' HIV prevalence rate is similar to other countries in Central America<sup>1</sup>. However, Honduras is considered to have a concentrated epidemic, with key populations showing significantly higher HIV prevalence rates than the general

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<sup>1</sup> HIV prevalence rates in Central America: El Salvador 0.8%, Guatemala 0.8%, Nicaragua 0.7% (source: Central America Partnership Framework Implementation Plan 2010)

population in specific geographic regions: along the Atlantic coast and the Bay Islands, and north-to-south along the country's major transportation route from Cortés to Tegucigalpa. According to the 2006 Behavior Surveillance Survey (BSS), the HIV epidemic disproportionately affects the Garífuna population, MSM, and sex workers with HIV prevalence rates of 5, 9.7 and 5.5 percent, respectively.

According to the National Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI)/HIV/AIDS program report, as of December 2011, a total of 30,026 HIV positive cases were diagnosed in Honduras and 8,159 people are actively receiving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment. HIV voluntary counseling and testing (VCT) facilities are available through both the MOH and some local NGOs. Other prevention services provided by the MOH are Prevention of Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) services, condom distribution and screening and diagnosis of STIs. However, behavioral change communication (BCC) activities for key populations are generally provided by local NGOs that are actively involved within these communities.

To improve health conditions among key populations, quality, usage, and financing of critical health services must be improved. This includes prevention and HIV testing services that are organized and delivered at the community level. In addition to the responsibility of the GOH in assuring access to a basic package of health services, community participation is a critical factor in improving health status at the community level, especially as it relates to preventing disease and promoting health.

#### Project Context:

##### **The Government of Honduras' Response to HIV/AIDS**

Over the past decade, the GOH has taken various steps to respond to the HIV epidemic. The current HIV/AIDS National Strategic Plan (PENSIDA III), 2008 – 2012, prioritizes scale-up of prevention efforts for MSM, Garífuna, sex workers and pregnant women. The Sula Valley, North Coast, and the Tegucigalpa metropolitan area are identified as important geographical focus areas due to their higher prevalence rates, and special emphasis is given to HIV diagnosis and treatment and to monitoring and evaluation of PENSIDA III efforts. The GOH has now started the process of drafting PENSIDA IV, anticipated to be finalized in 2013 and written under the umbrella of the National HIV Strategy that was completed in March 2011. The National HIV Strategy formulates a strategic vision for comprehensive HIV and AIDS promotion, prevention, care and support services within the National Health Sector Reform framework, under which the MOH has separated the stewardship and service delivery functions. Also within this framework, two new units were established to manage the decentralization of health services; the aforementioned UECF and UGD.

The National HIV Strategy outlines 14 key activities that provide greater access to a basic package of HIV services at the individual, family, and community levels, including the definition and operationalization of a basic package of services according to life cycle and type of services (promotion, prevention, treatment, care and support);

reorganization of STI/HIV/AIDS service provision structure; and the definition of a new management model for results-based service provision.

### **US Government Assistance in Honduras**

As part of its health portfolio, USAID improves the quality of and access to HIV/AIDS care and treatment services through both civil society organizations and the MOH. In close collaboration with the GOH since 1993, USAID has supported HIV/AIDS prevention activities for key populations through financial and technical support to local NGOs. Since 2005, this support has included capacity building for community health workers to perform HIV rapid testing for vulnerable populations to promote healthy behavior change. USAID continues to work with the MOH to: a) develop and prepare the implementation of the National HIV Strategy; and b) improve supplies and logistics systems for HIV commodities (ARV drugs, HIV rapid tests and condoms).

USAID HIV and AIDS programs in Honduras are implemented as part of the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) in line with the strategic priorities outlined under the Central American Regional HIV/AIDS Partnership Framework (PF), 2009 - 2013. Activities also directly contribute to the Honduras Global Health Initiative Strategy, 2011 – 2015. The over-arching Global Health Initiative (GHI) country goal in Honduras is to “Improve the health status of underserved and vulnerable populations”. In collaboration with the MOH, other USG agencies/departments and private sector partners, the HIV-related component of the GHI strategy contributes to the achievement of “Priority Area 1: Increased access to quality essential services for underserved and vulnerable populations”, and “Priority Area 2: Improved stewardship and responsiveness of the health system”.

### **Expected Results**

All project activities from this quarter contribute to achieve the following two Expected Results of the LMG/Honduras program:

- (1) Organizational capacity developed within the MOH to establish and carry out effective funding mechanisms, management and stewardship of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide HIV prevention services; and
- (2) Organizational capacity developed within local NGOs to support the implementation of evidence-based, quality HIV prevention services for key populations in compliance with the new MOH funding mechanisms.

Because the reporting period is the second full quarter of project implementation, most activities are related to start-up.

## **III. Intermediate Program Results and Activities**

This section of the quarterly report serves to inform USAID/Honduras of the results achieved from July to September 2013, and to report on specific activities. The activities

and results are presented in two categories: Project Management and Expected Results. Results by Expected Result and Activity are listed according to the approved work plan.

### 3.1 Project Management

#### *Activity 1: Establish LMG / Honduras office space*

During this reporting period, the project completed negotiation of the sub lease of the house that serves as headquarters for USAID funded projects LMG/Honduras and AIDSTAR One/Honduras (JSI). In addition, the Inventory Disposition Plan was reviewed and discrepancies were reconciled together with USAID and JSI. At the time of submission of this report, the final steps leading to handover of the inventory from LMG/Honduras to JSI was underway. Lastly, LMG/Honduras completed the renovations of the space allocated to the project in the shared office building, and procured the limited additional equipment and supplies that were needed by the project.

### 3.2 Expected Results

Below are the activities from the program work plan that were conducted (wholly or partially) during the reporting period.

**Expected Result 1:** Organizational capacity developed within the MOH to establish and carry out effective funding mechanisms, management and stewardship of local non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to provide HIV prevention services

**Activity 1.1:** Together with the UGD, UECF, and RSD (regional offices of the MOH), carry out assessments of the three units in leadership and management capacity (assessments will be coordinated to streamline processes and make efficient use of staff time).

The assessment tool was completed for use in the initial assessment of skills and capabilities in Leadership, Management and Governance within the Ministry of Health, and within the NGOs. The methodology included a component for the identification of technical assistance priorities and capacity building needs that would contribute to strengthening the management of 8 contracts signed between the Ministry of Health and the NGOs.

Active participation by the MOH in the sessions was supported by the UGD. A total of four (4) workshops were held on the implementation of the diagnostic tool. Two workshops were held in the city of La Ceiba in order to be close to the area of influence of the RSDs and the NGOs. One was held with representatives from the RSDs<sup>2</sup> where a total of 29 participants attended, and the second was

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<sup>2</sup> Cortés, Colón, Atlántida, the Bay Islands, Tegucigalpa metropolitan area and San Pedro Sula metropolitan area

held with representatives from the NGOs<sup>3</sup> with a total of 32 participants. Two additional workshops were carried out with central level Ministry of Health in the city of Tegucigalpa. The first was held with 5 team members of the UGD technical team, and the second was held with 7 members of the UECF technical team.

LMG/Honduras is in the process of preparing the draft LMG needs assessment report, and identifying priorities for capacity building. The information gathered in the assessments was reviewed and contributed to the preparation of PY2 work plan. The specific intervention plan for each of the participating instances in the model will be concluded during the first quarter of PY2.

**Activity 1.2:** Together with the UGD, UECF, and RSD, carry out assessments of the three governance units using the four LMG governance practices as a basis for the assessment.

Same comment as that for Activity 1.1

**Activity 1.3:** Together with the UECF, UGD, and RSD, facilitate participatory governance assessments of the NGOs.

Same comment as that for Activity 1.1

**Activity 1.4:** Address management weaknesses identified during the organizational management assessment.

A subsequent product of the LMG needs assessment report and the identification of priorities for strengthening capacities is the specific intervention/action plan for each of the instances participating in the assessment process. These action plans are currently being prepared, and address the weaknesses that were identified in the assessment process with Ministry of Health instances and the NGOs. The assessments used a SWOT (Strengths Weakness Opportunities and Threats(SWOT) analysis approach. These action plans will be concluded during PY2 Q1, and will guide the technical support provided to address the identified management weaknesses.

**Activity 1.5:** Support capacity building of the UECF, UGD, and RSD in the review, analysis, and operationalization of new HIV/AIDS prevention projects, with defined deliverables included in the 8 new contracts.

In the absence of a contract with an NGO to provide STI/HIV prevention for the sexual diversity population during the June – December 2013 contracting process, a special procurement process was initiated by the government to contract services to provide coverage to this key population. During this process,

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<sup>3</sup> COCSIDA, CASM, PRODIM, ECOSALUD, AHMF and the Maternal Lactation League

technical assistance was provided to the UGD technical team to prepare terms of reference to support this activity, and to assure coverage of prevention services for this important population.

A discussion was initiated with Ministry of Health instances (UGD, UECF) to begin to establish a conceptual framework for designing results based financing model. As a result of these discussions, LMG is supporting the design of this model under a contract between the Ministry of Health and the NGOs.

**Activity 1.6:** Capacity building of the UECF in the development, procurement, implementation, and monitoring of the 8 NGO contracts, with an emphasis on accountability and results.

LMG/Honduras provided several types of support to the UECF during the reporting period as part of this process:

- Support to the UECF in the preparation of the quarterly financial report of the USAID Financial Execution Letters;
- technical assistance for the preparation of the format for the monthly advance of funds and liquidation request to be submitted to USAID;
- support for the UECF in following up on requests from the NGOs about administrative and financial management of funds assigned to the Ministry of Health;
- support to UECF to follow up on pending NGO fund liquidations from the previous round of contracts (prior to June 2013).

**Activity 1.8:** Increase the capacity of the UGD and UECF to manage, coordinate, and align all resources supporting the National HIV Strategy.

LMG/Honduras technical assistance to the UGD and UECF was focused primarily on support to manage USAID funds, a skill that can also be applied when managing resources from other sources in the future. Assistance in future project years will consider the need and opportunity to expand support in this area.

**Activity 1.9** Facilitate exchanges with other actors, countries, and entities that have gone through a similar transition processes to learn lessons about administering USG funds, managing grants to local organizations, etc.

This activity was not focused on during the first nine months of implementation due to the need to issue procurement notices and establish contracts as quickly as possible to avoid any break in funding for prevention activities. Technical Assistance in future project years will consider the interest and opportunity to expand support in this area.

**Activity 1.10** Develop the capacity of the UECF, UGD, and RSD to work with the NGOs to develop their sustainability plans (i.e. increase their capacity to present and market their technical proposals to other donors).

This activity will be shifted to PY2 following the outcome of the needs assessment and development of action plans by the NGOs to develop sustainability plans.

**Activity 1.11:** Support the definition of roles and responsibilities for the UECF, UGD, and RSD so that the NGO procurement and monitoring processes are implemented efficiently and effectively.

Preliminary technical assistance in this area was initiated and will continue into the next project year.

**Activity 1.12:** Support the UECF and RSD to assess their existing M&E systems for grants, including financial monitoring and liquidation of NGO advances.

Preliminary technical assistance in this area was initiated and will continue into the next project year.

**Activity 1.13:** Support the UGD in their capacity building efforts with the regions (RSD) in the areas of technical monitoring of grants, specifically focusing on accountability and meeting targets.

LMG/Honduras provided technical assistance to the UGD to support the Departmental Sanitary Region in Atlántida and ECOSALUD. The purpose was to discuss the contents of the contract signed between the Ministry of Health and the NGOs. In addition, an analysis was done with the Atlántida RSD on the different types of monitoring carried out, and support provided to ECOSALUD. Based on some weaknesses found in activities for technical closings, RSD staff oriented NGO technicians. The orientation was focused on preparing NGOs to meet all requirements for future closings.

LMG/Honduras trained the UGD technical team on the monitoring and evaluation (M&E) process. During this activity, the NGO's M&E performance was analyzed in the following areas: training on PEPFAR indicators; training on data collection methodology for technical audits, identifying data sources, and the process for data verification.

LMG/Honduras, jointly with the UGD technical team, developed a review process of the bimonthly technical audit tools that will be carried out with the NGOs by the RSDs. The next steps are to validate these tools, train the RSD technical teams in their use, and implement them.

In collaboration with the UGD, LMG/Honduras developed a review process for the Knowledge, Aptitude and Practice (CAP in Spanish) tools to be carried out by the NGOs. The data collection survey instruments for the CAP were analyzed. These instruments were previously modified and adapted by the AIDSTAR-Two Project to be able to collect all the needed information and measure behavior changes by the beneficiaries.

Guidelines were prepared for the preparation of educational and promotional materials, which were implemented during the AIDSTAR-Two Project. Adaptations are being made with the participation of different Ministry of Health departments. These guidelines were subsequently shared with the UGD and the Directorate of Network Services.

**Activity 1.14:** Strengthen the capacity of the UECF and UGD to manage their own Annual Operating Plans.

Preliminary technical assistance in this area was initiated and will continue into the next project year.

**Activity 1.15:** Support the UECF and UGD to advocate for increased resources within the GOH and the MOH.

This activity was premature to implement during the initial phase of project implementation when priority systems and procedures for managing USAID funds were still under development. This activity will be considered for future project years.

**Activity 1.16:** Build the capacity of project staff to identify and document cost share.

The LMG home office project support staff are trained in capturing cost share and will support the field team to document required cost share in the next project year.

**Expected Result 2:** Organizational capacity developed within local NGOs to support the implementation of evidence-based, quality HIV prevention services for key populations in compliance with the new MOH funding mechanisms.

**Activity 2.1:** Together with the UGD, UECF, and RSD, assess NGO management and governance systems that are in place to manage their grants/contracts and reach agreed-upon targets from their contracts.

The initial LMG capacities assessment workshop for NGOs was carried out in La Ceiba with a total of 32 participants. The assessment report as well as the prioritization of strengthening NGO capacities is under preparation (draft). The information gathered was instrumental in defining priorities during preparation of the PY2 work plan. The specific action plan for each of the participating NGOs will be concluded during the first quarter of PY2.

**Activity 2.2:** Strengthen the governance capacity of the NGOs, focused on accountability, stakeholder coordination and engagement, setting a shared direction, and stewardship of resources.

Results expected of this activity (technical assistance, capacity building, effective board governance) were not achieved due to delays in the finalization of the assessment tool and process. Capacity building and technical assistance is expected to begin in the first quarter of PY2, based on the priorities identified through the capacity assessment.

**Activity 2.3:** Facilitate management capacity assessments of NGOs, including the assessment of leadership capacity.

Same comment as activity 2.1

**Activity 2.4:** Together with the UECF, UGD, and RSD, develop NGO capacity to respond to the requirements of national and international donors, including responding to open procurements by these donors.

Technical assistance in proposal development was provided to NGOs during the procurement process for the current contracts which took place in May and June. There was no additional activity during this quarter.

**Activity 2.5:** Facilitate strategic planning with each NGO, involving both personnel and Boards.

This activity will take place following the definition of action plans by the NGOs.

**Activity 2.6:** Strengthen/maintain the administrative and financial capacity of the NGOs so that they maintain their appropriate registrations with the GOH.

Technical assistance was provided to UECF to support the NGOs in follow up and preparation and review of their required routine financial reports.

**Activity 2.7:** Building on the work done by AIDSTAR-Two, continue strengthening the technical capacity of the NGOs to manage the provision of HIV/AIDS prevention and education services to key populations.

LMG/Honduras provided several types of support to the UECF during the reporting period as part of this process:

Technical assistance was provided to the COCSIDA technical team prior to the USAID/Honduras Roatan Representative's visit in the following areas: improving educational curricula according to the comments given by the USAID technical assistance and technical team documents that have been provided to support curriculum development, developing service guidelines for providing rapid HIV testing, and developing a methodology for using the educational tools and materials on preventing gender based violence.

Technical assistance was provided to the technical team of CASM in the Colón Department on the requirements for the acquisition of rapid tests, and on developing educational tools and materials on preventing gender based violence.

Technical assistance was provided to the ECOSALUD technical team in the preparation of educational activities with female leaders and a theater presentation for the USAID Director's visit.

Technical assistance was provided to COCSIDA at the RSD of Roatan for the preparation of the monthly technical review meetings.

A two-day training was provided for the technical team of the NGO Liga Lactancia Materna on the development of KAP studies. We reviewed and discussed the ballots, informed consent forms, and supervisor checklists.

**Activity 2.8:** Provide support to local NGOs in their efforts to provide counseling and referral services.

The assessment carried out this quarter will determine the types of technical assistance that will be prioritized by the NGOs. The action plans will be completed during the first quarter of PY2.

## Ad-Hoc Activities

LMG/Honduras provided several types of support to the UECF and UGD during the reporting period not included in the work plan:

Technical Assistance to the UGD for the preparation of the Quarterly Report at the Ministry of Health. LMG/Honduras worked with the UGD technical team and the HIV/STI department. The project reviewed the fulfillment of PEPFAR indicators, an analysis of achievements was conducted, and next steps were determined for meeting the targets.

Training was conducted for the NGOs financed by the Ministry of Health on the procedure for preparing the Expense Measuring (MEGASS in Spanish) report. UECF staff was trained in the preparation of the MEGASS report.

Support to the UECF in the preparation and updating of budgets in the USAID letters of execution 7-11 and the reconciliation of expenses versus the approved budget.

Technical assistance provided to UECF on the Coordination of Acquisitions during participatory meetings on the preparation of its manual of procedures and standards for the acquisition of goods and services. This manual will be comprised of four chapters: i. Contracting individual consultants; ii. Bid process for contracting non-government organizations; iii. Bid process for contracting consulting firms; and iv. Procedures for minor acquisitions of goods and services.

Technical assistance to the UECF on the Coordination of Monitoring and Follow-up for the process of preparing dashboards. This activity includes the design of a general dashboard to support UECF General Coordination in following up its projects, as well as the preparation of a dashboard for the USAID project for tracking follow up of NGOs' performance contracted by the Ministry of Health.

Technical assistance to the UECF during participatory meetings on the review and updating of its Organization and Functions Manual. This Manual will become part of the general Ministry of Health Organization and Functions Manual.

## IV. Monitoring and Evaluation

A draft PMP was submitted to USAID on April 12, and following feedback from USAID, a revision was submitted on June 3, and another proposal was submitted on September 13. Final approval of the PMP is pending at the time of this report. No specific monitoring and evaluation activities were conducted during the reporting period, other than the activities described above.

<i>INDICATOR</i>	<i>TARGET</i>	<i>PROGRESS TOWARD</i>	<i>EXPLANATION</i>
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		<i>ACHIEVEMENT</i>	

## V. Outstanding Issues, Constraints, Delays and Actions Taken

*Constraint 1: Delays in the delivery of inventory disposal plan from LMH/Honduras to the JSI Project.*

Actions taken:

- 1) Coordination meetings held between LMG and JSI administrative teams to resolve the inconsistencies found in the disposition plan by USAID (note that the inconsistencies were found to be relatively minor in nature, and were easily corrected).
- 2) Adjusted and corrected all inconsistencies and sent corrected files to USAID for approval of the final disposition plan.

## VI. Financial Report

Period Jul'13-Sep'13

Pipeline at the beginning of period ***	\$ 431,070.25
New funds Obligation	\$ -
Expenses during the reported period + Accruals	\$ 256,816.33
Pipeline at the end of the period	\$ 174,253.92
Estimated expense burn rate for next period	\$ 234,376.40
Estimated quarters of pipeline	0.74

Note: Please note this is not a final financial balance projection; MSH Accounting has not yet closed the final quarter ending September 2013

## VII. Lessons Learned

The process of contracting NGOs directly with USG funds by the MOH has been a major challenge for the corresponding authorities and technicians. Although all the administrative requirements (procedures manuals, guides) are not yet in place, all stakeholders have learned quickly how to manage the process, with one important lesson learned: it is crucial to systematize each process and procedure, and institutionalize them to ensure sustainability after the technical and financial assistance from USAID ends.

## **VIII. Coordination with Other Actors**

During the reporting period, LMG/Honduras coordinated planned activities and strategies with the UECF, UGD, and USAID. In addition, LMG/Honduras coordinated with a John Snow Inc. (JSI) project on the use of shared office space and finalization of the inventory disposition plan.

LMG/ Honduras also coordinated on administrative matters with the MSH ULAT II Project in order to maximize resources, and will increase attention to technical communication and coordination in the next quarter in response to this recommendation by USAID.

## **IX. Gender Component**

The review of the bidding process for the 8 new NGO contracts has shown that gender is an important and cross-cutting issue that must be carefully considered and included in the USAID/UECF approach. The approved LMG/Honduras Program Description clearly defines the key populations for this program (i.e. MSM and partners, CSW and partners, and the Garifuna population). By definition, working with these groups requires careful attention to gender issues and a strategy to be sure that gender is addressed. The Program Description also mentions that the NGOs will develop specific approaches and strategies to identify difficult to access populations in order to increase NGOs' coverage of services. LMG/Honduras will work more intensely on the issue of gender as technical activities commence, in particular by encouraging and promoting the UGD and the Regions to ensure that the implementing NGOs include a gender approach in their strategies, particularly with hard-to-reach populations.

## **X. Summary of Key Conclusions**

LMG/Honduras activities during this reporting period involved significant administrative and technical issues. On the administrative side, LMG office spaces were remodeled and equipment was installed. On the technical side, close technical assistance was provided to the UECF and UGD to support their roles in administering and monitoring the 8 contracts with the NGOs. The design, implementation and completion of the LMG capacity assessment with the MOH and NGOs was a major accomplishment this past quarter, and was a pivotal activity for defining the priority needs for capacity building and technical assistance for both the MOH and NGO participants. The project technical assistance team also spent time with UGD to review all the technical audit tools for use with the NGOs, and these tools will be useful for the UGD and RSD teams during their technical oversight and management of the contracts.

LMG/Honduras began its efforts to support the MOH when an intense procurement process was already underway, and there was tremendous pressure to respond in a

way that was agile and specific to the needs the GOH was facing. The project team has gained momentum and the value of the technical assistance provided by the technical staff has been acknowledged by various counterparts in MOH, as well as by the NGOs.