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# Annual Report

USAID | Health Policy Initiative IQC  
(October 2007–September 2008)

**October 31, 2008**

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by RTI International.

# USAID | Health Policy Initiative

## Annual Report

Contract No: GPO-I-00-05-00035-00

Period: October 1, 2007 – September 30, 2008

Prepared for:

United States Agency for International Development

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## Abbreviations

|                |   |
|----------------|---|
| A <sup>2</sup> | Analysis and Advocacy                               |
| ADB            | Asia Development Bank                               |
| AIDS           | Acquired immune deficiency syndrome                 |
| APCOM          | Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health        |
| APN+           | Asia Pacific Network of Positive People             |
| CA             | Cooperating agency                                  |
| CDC            | Center for Disease Control                          |
| CHAS           | Centre for HIV and Sexually-Transmitted Infections  |
| COP            | Chief of Party                                      |
| CTO            | Cognizant Technical Officer                         |
| EWC            | East West Center                                    |
| FHI            | Family Health International                         |
| FY             | fiscal year   |
| GMR-C          | Greater Mekong Region and China                     |
| HIV            | Human immunodeficiency virus                        |
| HPI            | Health Policy Initiative                            |
| HSPH           | Harvard School of Public Health                     |
| ICRW           | International Center for Research on Women          |
| IDLO           | International Development Law Organization          |
| IQC            | Indefinite quantity contract                        |
| IR             | Intermediate result                                 |
| MARP           | most-at-risk population                             |
| MMT            | Methadone Maintenance Treatment                     |
| MOIC           | Ministry of Information and Culture                 |
| MSH            | Management Sciences for Health                      |
| MSM            | men who have sex with men                           |
| NCAIDS         | National Center for AIDS/STD Prevention and Control |
| NGO            | nongovernmental organization                        |
| PAS            | Project Administration Specialist                   |
| PEPFAR         | President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief          |
| PMP            | Performance Monitoring Plan                         |
| PSI            | Population Services International                   |
| PSN            | Purple Sky Network                                  |
| PWHA           | People living with HIV/AIDS                         |
| RDMA           | Regional Development Mission for Asia               |
| RNM            | Resource Needs Module                               |
| RTB            | Regional Technical Board                            |
| SCAWCO         | State Council AIDS Working Committee Office         |
| STI            | sexually-transmitted infection                      |
| TRG            | Training Resources Group                            |
| TWG            | Technical Working Group                             |
| UNAIDS         | United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS          |
| UNDP           | United Nations Development Programme                |

|       |   |
|-------|---|
| USAID | United State Agency for International Development |
| USG   | United States Government                          |
| VCT   | voluntary counseling and testing                  |
| WAPN+ | Women's Asia Pacific Network of Positive People   |
| YPAB  | Yunnan Provincial AIDS Bureau                     |
| YPCA  | Yunnan Provincial Civil Affairs                   |



# Introduction

RTI International is one of four prime contractors for the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) | Health Policy Initiative Indefinite Quantity Contract (HPI IQC). Under Contract No. GPO-I-00-05-00035-00, RTI leads a consortium, including the Harvard School of Public Health (HSPH), the International HIV/AIDS Alliance (the Alliance), the International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), Management Sciences for Health (MSH), Pact, and Training Resources Group (TRG). IQC objectives are captured in 5 result areas.

- **Result 1:** Policies development and implementation
- **Result 2:** Strengthening champions and supporting advocacy
- **Result 3:** Health sector resources
- **Result 4:** Multisectoral engagement
- **Result 5:** Data used for evidence-based decision making

HPI also addresses crosscutting issues including poverty, gender, human rights, and stigma and discrimination.

The RTI consortium currently holds one task order, Strengthening HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy in the Greater Mekong Region and China (HPI/GMR-C),<sup>1</sup> Contract No. GPO-I-01-05-00035-00 which was awarded on September 28, 2007. Achievements and results to date are detailed in the following section.

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<sup>1</sup> At the request of the USAID IQC Cognizant Technical Officer (CTO), RTI recently changed the Task Order name from *Strengthening HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy in the Asia Pacific Region* to *Strengthening HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy in the Greater Mekong Region and China*. This name has been approved by the USAID Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) CTO for this Task Order and the USAID IQC CTO in Washington, DC. RTI has submitted a modification request to the RDMA CTO for this Task Order name change.

# Individual Task Orders

**Strengthening HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy in the Greater Mekong Region and China (GMR-C)**

# USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Strengthening HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy in the Greater Mekong Region and China (GMR-C)

## Task Order Summary

**USAID Task Order Number:** GPO-I-01-05-00035-00

**Location:** Greater Mekong Regional and China (GMR-C)

**Title:** USAID | Health Policy Initiative, Strengthening HIV/AIDS Policy and Advocacy in the Greater Mekong Region and China (HPI/GMR-C)

**Activity Description:** HPI/GMR-C is working in Beijing, Yunnan, and Guangxi provinces in China, as well as in Thailand to accelerate the development and implementation of HIV/AIDS policy for most-at-risk populations (MARPs) and people living with HIV/AIDS (PWHA). The project also supports civil society organization and participation in the policy process. HPI/GMR-C is also building advocacy capacity through small grants and technical assistance to local organizations.

**Participating Subcontractors:** The International HIV/AIDS Alliance, Burnet Institute

## **Program Overview**

HPI/GMR and China operates under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR) and in support of the USAID/RDMA strategy of "Increased effective response to HIV/AIDS and other infectious diseases" by contributing to the Program Objective of Investing in People in the Health Program area and Program Elements: 1.1.HIV/AIDS. Additionally, HPI/GMR-C's program in China is carried out in support of the United States Government's (USG's) comprehensive and coordinated approach to HIV in China. The project activities are situated in China (Yunnan and Beijing, with outreach activities to Guangxi) and the Greater Mekong Region (GMR).

HPI/GMR-C is focused on strengthening the policy environment, both formulation and implementation, as it relates to MARPs. The program's strategic approach is to work closely with governments and civil society to build their capacity to implement policy and to create links and mechanisms to facilitate civil society participation in HIV policy development and decision making. In China, the policy process is followed from the central through to the provincial level and models that demonstrably improve the quality of and access to services for MARPs are articulated and documented for replication.

HPI/GMR-C supports activities under three intermediate results (IRs). In accordance with our contract with USAID RDM/A, these three IRs are defined as follows:

- IR1: Policies and plans adopted and implemented
- IR2: Policy champions strengthened
- IR3: Data utilization

## **Achievements**

### **Management**

The project commenced on September 28, 2007, with the signing of the contract between USAID and RTI. During the first quarter, the main focus of activity was to develop and submit to USAID the Year 1 work plan and Performance Monitoring Plan (PMP) and to establish the project's presence in both China and Thailand. Meetings were conducted with the broader cooperating agency (CA) community and key nongovernmental organizations (NGOs), including Purple Sky Network (PSN), Asia Pacific Network of Positive People (APN+), and the Women's Asia Pacific Network of Positive People (WAPN+). The USAID CTO accompanied the COP to Beijing to meet with and discuss HPI/GMR-C's China activities with USG partners, including U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, U.S. State Department, and the China-based CA community.

The China program commenced in Kunming on January 2, 2008, and the staff members were appointed as RTI employees on February 4, 2008. In the second quarter, HPI/GMR-

C established itself in Yunnan, met with stakeholders, instituted the work plan, and ensured that local staff were trained in USAID policies and procedures.

During the second quarter, the COP made monthly visits to Kunming and continues to make regular visits to China. The home office Project Administrative Specialist (PAS) provided in-country operations and administration training from March 18–29, 2008.

After much effort made toward establishing the Beijing office as outlined in our Year 1 work plan, we determined, in consultation with USAID, that given our limited financial resources, establishing an office in Beijing would not be the best allocation of funds. Accordingly, we removed this item from the Year 2 work plan. However, we acknowledge that access to national decision makers is critical. Accordingly, we are developing an approach where the COP and/or Provincial Director, Kunming, will attend key strategic national-level meetings (such as the United Nations Joint Programme on HIV/AIDS [UNAIDS] Expanded Theme Group meetings) and will use local Chinese consultants to represent the project (where appropriate.) This process has already commenced and on September 24–25, the Provincial Director, Kunming, attended the UNAIDS Expanded Theme Group meeting.

The Provincial Director, Kunming will also become responsible for maintaining the relationship with relevant Chinese government bodies, including the State Council AIDS Working Committee Office (SCAWCO) and the National Center for AIDS/STD Prevention and Control (NCAIDS).

Throughout August, RTI, along with the CA community, participated in the development of the fiscal year (FY) 2008–2009 work plan. HPI/GMR-C's Year 2 work plan was submitted on August 25 and was approved in early September. HPI/GMR-C is endeavoring to get a number of key activities underway, beginning immediately in the first quarter of Year 2. Subsequently, we spent September preparing paperwork for multiple consultant agreements. Considerable time in September was also spent on preparing the FY2010 Mini-Country Operational Plan for China and the PEPFAR annual report.

## **IR1: Policies and plans adopted and implemented**

### *China*

HPI/GMR-C has focused on consolidating relationships with Chinese counterparts, the CAs, and other stakeholders to determine a policy agenda that will be the focus of work over the coming years. To this end, formal meetings were conducted with Yunnan AIDS Bureau, Center for Disease Control (CDC), and Guangxi AIDS Office, CDC.

HPI/GMR-C has continued to develop a relationship with the Yunnan Provincial AIDS Bureau (YPAB), actively participating in quarterly face-to-face meetings, including other representatives of the CA community. HPI/GMR-C provided some financial and technical support to YPAB for their Integrated Training Workshop for Provincial HIV Prevention and Treatment held on April 9–11, in Gejiu, including site visits to three USAID hot spots: Gejiu, Mengzi, and Kaiyuan.

HPI/GMR-C has also been actively cultivating a relationship with the Yunnan Provincial Civil Affairs Bureau (YPCA) because we are keen to support NGO registration. As a first step, HPI/GMR-C, in partnership with the Alliance, approached the YPCA and recommended that the YPCA host an information workshop for the NGO sector. HPI/GMR-C and Alliance jointly offered to provide financial and technical support to this workshop. Accordingly, the YPCA hosted the Accelerating Community Social Organization Development Workshop on September 9. A total of 48 participants from the local NGO sector (including 10 representatives from HIV MARP groups), CA community, other international NGO sectors, and other stakeholders (such as universities) attended the meeting.

In September, (YPCA) launched a revised policy on NGO registration known as the Yunnan Provincial Civil Affairs Guidance on Construction and Management of Community/Social Organizations. On face value, the new policy shows significant improvement in collecting registration fees, membership composition, and the range of suitable parent/sponsoring organization. However, the question remains whether the policy will translate into a process that is supportive of MARP-driven community organizations in the context of HIV. HPI-GMR-C will continue to work with YPCA in our approved Year 2 work plan.

HPI/GMR-C has commenced discussions with the International Development Law Organization (IDLO) regarding the potential for collaboration in Yunnan, as part of our Year 2 work plan. IDLO, with a grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, commenced work in Yunnan in 2007 and has established strong collaborations with a number of private law firms. Possible areas for collaboration include establishing a network of HIV lawyers to deliver pro bono legal services, providing technical assistance to the Chinese government to support greater harmonization of HIV-related legal frameworks and strategies to reduce HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Discussions are ongoing.

With technical assistance from a regional consultant, HPI/GMR-C completed the Yunnan Operational Policy Assessment of Name-linked Voluntary Counseling and Testing (VCT) at the end of June. The assessment included a provincial-level review, plus county-level site visits to Gejiu and Dali to see how the policy was being implemented. MARPs, NGOs, CAs, China CDC, and USAID participated in the assessment.

HPI/GMR-C presented the report to USAID on July 22 and subsequently, USAID distributed the report to the CA community. The CAs also met on August 7 to discuss the report recommendations and to identify areas of responsibility and collaboration. Family Health International (FHI), Population Services International (PSI), the Alliance, and HPI/GMR-C agreed to collaborate on joint initiatives to support VCT demand strategies for MARPs (particularly men who have sex with men [MSM]). USAID also shared the report with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Beijing in September. FHI, as the CA lead implementing agency for VCT, has undertaken to negotiate with the Yunnan CDC to implement the report recommendations. FHI and Yunnan CDC held a meeting in late September to plan how to best move forward on VCT. As a result of this meeting, the Yunnan CDC has decided to reconvene the VCT Technical Working Group (TWG). HPI/GMR-C and PSI, along with FHI, were invited to join the TWG.

An Assessment of Yunnan's Methadone Maintenance Treatment (MMT) program was proposed by the YPAB and will be conducted jointly by the YPAB, the Police College, and an HPI/GMR-C consultant. The assessment is scheduled to be completed by December 25. As a result of the work plan preparation discussions, HPI/GMR-C learned that PSI and the Alliance are also doing related MMT work. Accordingly, our three agencies have agreed to collaborate closely on the roll out of our methadone activities.

## **IR2: Policy Champions Strengthened**

### *China*

#### MSM

In March, HPI/GMR-C became a member on the Yunnan MSM TWG. This group is composed of 28 work units drawn from MSM groups, government departments, Yunnan CDC, the education and media sectors, and international projects, with 13 core members. The TWG is coordinated by the Yunnan CDC and aims to strengthen coordination among MSM groups and more effectively implement HIV and MSM programs, support multisectoral collaboration, develop strategic information on the HIV prevention and care needs of MSM communities, and promote integration of resource allocation and technical support.

In order to build the advocacy capacity of organizations working on HIV policies and programs in Yunnan, HPI/GMR-C facilitated an HIV Advocacy and MSM workshop in May. Attended by 24 participants from all eight MSM groups, Yunnan CDC, FHI, the Alliance and PSI, the workshop addressed advocacy concepts, explored successful examples, identified advocacy issues and goal setting, analyzed target audience, developed advocacy messages, and made action plans. As an output of the workshop, 16 issues concerning MSM were identified. On the last day of the workshop, a small grants

scheme for workshop participants to enable them to operationalize their advocacy plans was announced.

Workshop participants who were interested in seeking small grants were invited back for a 1-day workshop on June 5 to learn about the grant application process and USAID-required rules and regulations. Four small grants applications were submitted in response to the announcement of the small grants program in May. A four-person panel reviewed the applications and three were selected for funding. The original applications needed substantial revision and the budgets needed to be brought in line with USAID regulations. This review was undertaken by Burnet Institute, HPI GMR-C staff, and the local organizations in August. It is projected that the grants will be distributed by the end of October.

The Yunnan CDC held an introductory meeting on 9 May to launch the national Ministry of Health Plan to Implement Pilot HIV Interventions among MSM. This plan aims to decrease incidence of HIV, syphilis and hepatitis B among MSM, to strengthen policy implementation related to testing and to develop HIV and MSM interventions appropriate at local level. HPI/GMR-C supported the attendance of participants from the MSM advocacy training. Our future MSM and HIV advocacy activities will be delivered within the context of the national plan.

In July, the HPI/GMR-C Policy and Advocacy Advisor attended the national Workshop of MSM Community Participation in HIV Work, sponsored by the United Nations TWG on MSM and HIV/AIDS, held in Nanjing, Jiangsu Province.

In August, a 5-day MSM and HIV Advocacy Workshop was conducted in Nanning, Guangxi Province, similar to what had been done in Yunnan earlier in the year. The workshop was well received and attended by government officials and 28 participants from 16 community organizations and NGOs, including two from Hebei Province and Sichuan Province. Discussion covered core knowledge of the advocacy process, knowledge specific to MSM HIV advocacy, and group work and practice.

## PWHA

HPI/GMR-C, the Alliance, and Pact co-hosted the Yunnan PWHA Sharing Meeting on July 9–10. This meeting was meant to create a platform for communication sharing among the PWHA support groups, international NGOs, lawyers, and government agencies, and to improve our understanding of the impact of HIV from an HIV-positive perspective. HPI/GMR-C addressed advocacy and policy and the Alliance took the lead on organizational development and community mobilization. Pact brought expertise on income generation. We also used the venue as an opportunity to announce the HPI/GMR-

C and Alliance tandem small grants scheme. Thirty-one PWHAs from all over Yunnan participated in the workshop and a total of 60 people attended overall. Day two was limited to HIV-positive people only to provide the PWA community with a safe space to discuss relevant issues. The day was structured around small group discussions. Topics included advocacy, organizational development, and income generation.

HPI/GMR-C and the Alliance have instituted a small grants program to support the PWA community to increase its capacity in advocacy and community group development. From July 31 to August 1, HPI/GMR-C and Alliance cohosted a follow-up workshop to train the interested groups to complete the application form. Ten groups attended with a total of 10 participants. The closing date for applications was August 31 and a total of 10 applications were received. The assessment of grant applications will be completed in late October and the anticipated start date for the grants is late November.

## *Regional*

### MSM

HPI/GMR-C is working to improve regional policy and programming responses to HIV and MSM through multiple channels. HPI/GMR-C, along with other partners, is working to strengthen PSN's capacity to function as an effective regional advocacy network, representing HIV and MSM issues, as well as strengthen their ability to provide technical assistance and leadership to their country-level members. Technical assistance is being provided to PSN through participation on their Technical Advisory Board and mentoring.

PSN's Regional Technical Board (RTB) held their quarterly meeting on July 14. HPI/GMR-C presented our proposal to recruit and second a policy and advocacy specialist to the PSN Secretariat starting in early FY08–09. This proposal was supported by the board members. A position description has been approved as part of the Year 2 work plan. HPI/GMR-C will also draft an options paper and investigate local registration and establishment regulations, and will assist with preparation of documentation for PSN independent registration.

HPI/GMR-C formed a coalition with the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Asia Pacific Coalition on Male Sexual Health (APCOM), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) (China office), and UNAIDS to undertake an analysis of spending by countries (within the South to Southeast Asia region) on MSM programs. The findings of the HPI/GMR-C report, *Mapping donor support for HIV programming for men who have sex with men in the Greater Mekong Subregion*, was presented during the PSN annual Country Working Group meeting in Bangkok on July 15–16. Participants (Country Working Group members and Country Focal Points) have agreed to take responsibility for keeping the mapping updated and disseminating the information to their

members. HPI/GMR-C and FHI will collaborate on developing a data collection and synthesis tool as part of our FY08–09 work plan to assist them in this task.

Plans for follow-up to the advocacy training in Laos have been finalised. Burnet Institute will work in collaboration with the Lao Centre for HIV and Sexually-Transmitted Infections (STIs) (CHAS) to advocate with the Ministry of Information and Culture (MOIC) to adopt a regulation on free advertising in mass media of information, education, and communication (IEC) materials on HIV and MSM.

*Thailand MSM advocacy:* Plans for additional work in Thailand have been put on hold as all MSM organizations and the national Rainbow Sky Network are fully occupied with activities around the allocation of 23 million Bhat from the Health Security Fund in Thailand. The time frame for programming this funding is very tight and organizations are unable to make any time available for further work on advocacy with HPI/GMR-C until the Health Security Fund program is completed.

## PWHA

In Year 1, our work with strengthening the HIV-positive community via the APN+ network was facilitated under a subcontract with the Alliance (regional program) executed in June.

As part of this effort, HPI/GMR-C contributed funding to support the Research Methods Training Workshop conducted in Bangkok from September 17–19. A total of 26 participants from the following countries attended: Burma, Cambodia, India, Lao, Malaysia, Nepal, Papua New Guinea, and Vietnam. Secondly, the Alliance undertook a capacity assessment visit to meet with APN+'s member organization, Egat Hope. A second capacity assessment visit will be undertaken in November to Malaysia. As outlined in the Year 2 work plan, HPI/GMR-C will, in the future, work directly with APN+. HPI/GMR-C and Pact (as the major providers of USAID grants to APN+) will hold consultation meetings in October to streamline and jointly plan support to APN+.

## **IR3: Data utilization**

### *China*

In China, the focus of this IR is to expand A<sup>2</sup> activities in both Guangxi and Yunnan. This process has also included consolidating our relationship with FHI. From March 31 to April 1, HPI/GMR-C's Provincial Director, Kunming and the Policy and Advocacy Officer traveled to Guangxi to meet with Chinese counterparts and to commence the process of developing an A<sup>2</sup> advocacy work plan.

In Yunnan, HPI/GMR-C and FHI worked toward relaunching A<sup>2</sup> with the Chinese government and other stakeholders. On 22 April, HPI/GMR-C and FHI, in partnership with the Yunnan CDC, cohosted an A<sup>2</sup> Orientation Workshop with the Chinese government and other stakeholders. More than 40 participants attended, including representatives from the Chinese government, health institutes, universities, NGOs, and CAs. HPI/GMR-C, FHI, and Yunnan CDC each presented on the A<sup>2</sup> model and implications for provincial planning. Importantly, the Yunnan CDC highlighted that the A<sup>2</sup> project has increased provincial capacity to better understand and respond to the HIV epidemic.

In Guangxi, under the A<sup>2</sup> partnership, HPI/GMR-C and FHI made a joint visit in May to the AIDS Office and the Guangxi CDC to plan for the next phase of A<sup>2</sup>. In August, three consultants were contracted to work with the Guangxi CDC to update the Resource Needs Module (RNM) of the Goals Model. Data input of RNM includes demographic data, behavioral data of MARPs, HIV and sexually transmitted disease prevalence rate, unit cost of interventions, cost of care, and ART failure rate. These data are collected through the red head letter issued by the Guangxi government—meaning we had high-level support for this activity. In early October, the three consultants will meet with the relevant government departments to verify the collected data before inputting it into the RNM. The technical report on RNM will be completed by the end of November and the GOAL Model-to-Asian Epidemic Model link will take place in December to generate the policy scenarios. The policy scenarios will, in turn, inform the basis of advocacy efforts in Year 2.

HPI/GMR-C, in partnership with FHI, provided technical support to both Yunnan and Guangxi CDCs for the preparation of their A<sup>2</sup> presentations for the International AIDS Conference in Mexico City.

### *Regional*

As with the China program, the focus of this IR is on A<sup>2</sup>. In Quarter 2, the A<sup>2</sup> partnership reenergized itself and a productive partnership between HPI/GMR-C, FHI, and the East West Center (EWC) is underway. The team has been meeting regularly and there is agreement that A<sup>2</sup>, at the regional level, needs to increase its collective focus on regional-level advocacy. Accordingly, work under this IR is closely linked to the MSM IR2 activities discussed above. In June, the A<sup>2</sup> regional management team hosted a brown bag lunch for the international and local community in Bangkok. Presentations were made by all three A<sup>2</sup> implementing partners: HPI/GMR-C, EWC, and FHI.

During the fourth quarter, the A<sup>2</sup> regional team focused on finalizing the A<sup>2</sup> Implementer's Guidelines. It is anticipated that these will be finalized by the end of October.