

Annex I: Terms of Reference – CRIS Evaluation

1. Background

In 2004, countries agreed on the ‘*Three Ones*’ as management principles to consider when planning an effective and coordinated HIV response. In line with the third of the Three Ones principles (one national M&E system), the Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS (UNAIDS) supports building national capacity for monitoring and evaluation. This is done through normative guidance and tool development so that countries can better plan and manage their national M&E system. One such tool is the Country Response Information System (CRIS).

Now in its third generation, CRIS version 3.0 (CRIS3) has evolved from CRIS’ original design of supporting UNGASS reporting into a system that facilitates the collection, reporting and analysis of programme/projects’ financial and indicator data. Incorporating lessons from previous CRIS versions and feedback received from countries and international partners, CRIS3 was designed to be a flexible, customizable and intuitive interface that allows the user to enter data and create reports. It aims to provide a country monitoring infra-structure that would serve the needs of the national AIDS authorities to track progress of their national response to HIV and AIDS and in reaching Universal Access.

To support the implementation of CRIS3 within countries, UNAIDS also provides technical assistance (TA) through the deployment of specially trained CRIS3 consultants. With the overall goal of *improving the rate of M&E reporting on HIV and AIDS in countries, and increasing the UNGASS reporting rate for 2010 reporting round*, the objective of technical assistance is to *strengthen the use of M&E data management and reporting tools* in countries. Although the consultants vary in expertise ranging from M&E to IT, they are all trained to execute the technical assistance modules outlined in the Technical Assistance Guide.

As part of the Second Independent Evaluation of UNAIDS and the management response to it, UNAIDS is calling on an independent evaluation of CRIS3.

2. Purpose of the Evaluation

The purpose of this evaluation is to inform UNAIDS senior management in their decision making concerning the way forward for the CRIS initiative. This will include guidance on the best way forward in (1) utilizing CRIS3 as a data management tool, (2) supporting the organizations who utilize CRIS as a monitoring tool, and (3) the role of UNAIDS monitoring and evaluation division in supporting data management tools, such as CRIS, as part of M&E systems for HIV and AIDS. This evaluation will be pertinent in the coming months as an aid to planning for the technical support required in 2011 as well as the strategic planning for 2012 and 2013.

3. Objectives and Key Questions

The three objectives for this evaluation are:

A. Assess the relevance, effectiveness and impact of CRIS at national and sub-national levels

Key Questions:

Relevance

- To what extent and in what ways is CRIS able to support countries in the provision of data management systems for evidence-based planning purposes?
- To what extent and in what ways CRIS being used to monitor the national and sub-national plans?
- How is CRIS perceived compared to other information systems and platforms of a similar nature?

Effectiveness

- How accessible and useful is CRIS at different levels?
- How many CRIS databases have been created, launched and adapted by governments, their partners and other organizations and donors?
- What is the evidence that national CRIS databases are being used to improve the capacity of results-based planning and monitoring of the national HIV response?
- How many technical and policy staff have been trained in the use of CRIS?
- Has this training helped strengthen data management systems in enabling the use of data for strategic decision making in their respective organizations?
- Have the capacity building methods and intentions been appropriate to the needs to date for both internal and external actors?
- Have capacity building efforts been translated into sustainable capacity increases for both internal and external actors?
- Has CRIS catalyzed and / or enabled its users to enhance their data analysis and evidence-based programming?

Impact

- To what extent and in what ways is CRIS supporting the harmonization of national monitoring systems?
- Does national ownership of CRIS increase its use by decision makers for evidence-based planning purposes?

B. Assess the efficiency and capacity of CRIS implementation as provided by UNAIDS Geneva.

Key Questions:

- Is the CRIS management and implementation structure appropriate?
- Are the CRIS technical assistance (TA) plans and administrative procedures appropriate?
- Are the training workshops effective in empowering a country's use of CRIS?
- Are the training workshop resources adequate for the needs of the participants?
- Is the TA Guide appropriate in guiding the tasks and functions of the CRIS consultants and country implementers?
- Is TA mission an appropriate method for providing support to countries who wish to implement CRIS?
- Are the CRIS website (www.cris3.org) and the team site (www.globalhivmeinfo.org) appropriate mediums for sharing information on CRIS and its implementation?
 - Are there alternative mediums that offer more efficient methods of sharing information on CRIS and its implementation with its users?

C. Explore role of CRIS as part on national M&E system, and organizational strategy and sustainability for UNAIDS on its use in countries

Key Questions:

- Is there a demand for CRIS?
- Considering UNAIDS mandate, role and functions, to what extent should UNAIDS invest in CRIS support, maintenance or further enhancements?
- What are the options to sustain CRIS in its current form?
- What are the roles and organizations of the CRIS users?
- What is the purpose of CRIS for the users?
- What is the optimal role and scope of CRIS in relation to other data management tools that are routinely used within the national and sub-national levels?
- What are the options to ensure interoperability between CRIS and other mainstream data management tools (ie: DevInfo, Dashboard, HMIS)?
- Does CRIS' offer an added value or have a comparative advantage in relation to other data management tools geared towards non-clinical data monitoring?

4. Deliverables

- Inception Report (including work plan, methodological approach, global user survey design, interview protocols);
- In depth country interviews;
 - Countries should be from different regions and should contain at least French speaking country.
- Country Visits (maximum 4, which includes assessing a TA or training workshop);
- Global User Survey Report;
- Draft Findings, conclusion and recommendations (from all sources used and cited in the evaluation);
- Final evaluation report.

5. Selection Criteria and Bidding process

Consultants will bid based on an average of 70 person-days of work to be done prior to August 27th, 2010. The work performed will be billed at a flat daily rate. Please indicate clearly this daily flat billing rate in US Dollars. In addition, please provide itemized budget for other costs incurred, such as communications.

The requested starting date for this contract is 18 May 2010 or earlier if possible.

Consultants will submit as defined in the Request for Proposals. The selection criteria to be used in the evaluation of the vendor are outlined as follows:

- Strong understanding of monitoring and evaluation concepts;
- Strong knowledge and understanding of program / project monitoring tools and their use in the context of international health and/or development
- Professional with IT expertise in web-based applications;
- Experience with data management systems applications;
- Experience in managing user feedback on applications and making recommendations based on it;
- Good understanding of the UN system (mandate, role and function)
- Excellent English and French proficiency is required;
- Track record of consultancy for similar projects would be an asset.



The consultant can choose to make available a pool of 1-2 technical experts, and include their CVs to the offer, which can be then used for assignments by mutual agreement between the consultant and UNAIDS.

There will be one focal point of contact at UNAIDS for all communications and management of the vendor consultant.

6. Additional Resources

More information on CRIS can be found on:

- www.cris3.org
- www.unaids.org
- www.globalhivmeinfo.org

Consultants may also benefit from the following related material:

- DevInfo:
<http://devinfo.org/>
http://www.unicef.org/evaldatabase/files/2009_Global_DevInfo_Fina.pdf
- DHIS:
<http://www.dhis2.com/>