

THAILAND

Report prepared by the Joint UN Team on AIDS

PROGRESS TOWARDS THE FAST-TRACK TARGETS

COUNTRY PRIORITIES/ TARGETS BY END OF 2021	STATUS	RESULTS, END OF 2020
By the end of 2021, the 90–90–90 targets are reached for gay men and other men who have sex with men, transgender women, sex workers, people who inject drugs, prisoners, migrants and displaced people.	ON TRACK	94–84–97 coverage among all people living with HIV in 2020. 78–78–97 coverage of gay men and other men who have sex with men and transgender people living with HIV in 2020; 43% people who inject drugs and 4 054 migrants living with HIV are currently on ART (GAM 2021, IBBS 2019-2020 and PEPFAR ROP 2021).
By the end of 2021, gender inequalities and all forms of violence and discrimination against people living with HIV and key populations less than 10%.	ACHIEVED	In 2020, among the main key populations, less than 10% avoided seeking health care in the past 12 months (4% of male sex workers, 9% of gay men and other men who have sex with men and 6% of transgender women) (2020 IBBS).
By the end of 2021, the national HIV response is more sustained, with increased domestic funding up to 50% of total HIV spending on combination prevention allocated towards key population programmes.	ON TRACK	Domestic AIDS spending allocated to key population prevention increased from 9% in 2015 to 37% in 2019 of total spending for prevention (2019 National AIDS Spending Assessment). Universal Health Coverage (UHC) funding allocated for HIV prevention among key population programme channelled to CSOs was at 70% in 2019 (US\$ 3.46 million of US\$ 4.91 million) and 64% in 2020 (US\$ 4.13 million of US\$ 6.46 million) (National Health Security Office, 2020).

JOINT TEAM

UNHCR, UNICEF, UNDP, UNFPA, UNODC, UN WOMEN, UNESCO, WHO, UNAIDS SECRETARIAT

JOINT PROGRAMME CONTRIBUTIONS AND RESULTS IN 2020

As Thailand approaches the 90–90–90 targets, new HIV infections and AIDS-related deaths are declining. The UN Joint Team's catalytic efforts and achievements mainly focused on sustaining and expanding those gains with leadership and partnerships, addressing the gaps with policy guidance and dialogue, supporting the expansion of tailored programmes by leveraging existing financing, and improving the enabling environment, especially for the youth, key populations and other people left behind, such as migrants.

HIV TESTING, TREATMENT AND CARE

POLICY ADVICE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Leadership was sustained to support the Fast-Track Cities Initiative to end AIDS in Bangkok, with the expansion of key populations-led health services, and same-day ART dispensing in private hospitals and larger government facilities. To ensure that no one is left behind, the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration continued to support facilitated access to ARV drugs for undocumented migrants and non-Thai residents.

Technical assistance was provided in preparing the 2020 "Maintaining EMTCT" validation report. Triangulation of data shows that Thailand has met the validation threshold. A tool for congenital syphilis estimation was adapted to complement the passive surveillance and case investigation exercise (in 2018–2019 cases were <50 per 100 000 live births, but increasing, indicating the need for a stronger national response).

Advocacy called for the provision of HIV services for Myanmar refugees and asylum-seekers, and for support for refugees at nine temporary shelters. Technical assistance was provided to the International Health Policy Programme to complete the study "Access to Healthcare in Thailand for Urban Refugees and Asylum-Seekers". Report recommendations include ensuring free access to HIV services and inclusion in UHC.

PREVENTION

POLICY DIALOGUE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; PARTNERSHIPS

The Joint Team partnered with the Office of Basic Education Commission to support comprehensive sexuality education and safe, gender-equitable, inclusive learning environments to prevent school-related gender-based violence. More than 700 educators, teachers, and young people participated in a situation assessment of comprehensive sexuality education in digital spaces and formal education opportunities. Recommendations for actions have been identified, for follow-up in 2021.

The Department of Health was supported to develop an online assessment of youth-friendly health services. Results informed a tailored HIV combination prevention programme and provided training for 87 health-care staff from 45 hospitals; implementation will be expanded in 2021. In 2020, 216 youth leaders were engaged to reach out to 23 803 adolescents on comprehensive HIV prevention. Awareness-raising activities were carried out to tackle negative stigma of girls and women who have condoms and to improve attitudes of parents towards condom use among adolescents. A video clip was launched on a youth-based website, and disability-friendly media briefs/information packages were disseminated.

The PrEP pilot phase was launched in January 2020, which increased key population uptake of PrEP from less than 3,000 in 2019 to 12 000 by the end of 2020 (though that represented only 9% coverage of estimated need). Fifty health-care facilities now provide PrEP (up from 13 sites in 2019), and an additional 10 key population-led health services provided PrEP in 2020.

Lessons from operational research on PrEP among adolescents have informed the development of the National PrEP guidelines on adolescent engagement.

Implementation of the Global Fund-supported harm reduction programme was reviewed, and key findings were triangulated with latest Integrated Bio-Behavioral Surveillance data and

reviewed at the national consultation to accelerate harm reduction programming. Commissioned by the Joint Team, a national situation analysis of substance use among LGBTI communities is available, including a policy brief targeting donors and development partners and highlighting the needs and recommendations for policy and financing.

GENDER INEQUALITY AND STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION POLICY DIALOGUE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; PARTNERSHIPS

Thailand is expanding the stigma and discrimination reduction package of interventions in health-care settings, including participatory training, e-learning and quality improvement to 123 public health-care facilities at the end of 2020, leading to positive changes among health-care staff. About 20 000 staff have successfully completed the stigma and discrimination e-learning module, covering 71 of 77 provinces.

Thailand participated in the Global Partnership for action to eliminate all forms of HIV-related stigma and discrimination. Support was provided to the Thai Network of HIV+ Youth to organize the 2020 World AIDS Day campaign to reduce stigma and discrimination in the workplace, with a focus on mandatory HIV testing for job applicants and employees; an estimated 150 000 people were reached. A two-day workshop was held for 50 CSOs to raise awareness and enhance capacity of nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) and networks in support of the stigma and discrimination elimination plan.

A Government rights-based committee and representatives from various LGBTI CSOs reviewed four drafts of a gender recognition law developed by LGBTI groups. The drafts have been successfully merged into one proposed law and will be submitted for review by the cabinet.

INVESTMENT AND EFFICIENCY POLICY DIALOGUE; TECHNICAL SUPPORT; PARTNERSHIPS

The Joint Team successfully secured US\$ 40 million from the Global Fund 2021–2023 budget to accelerate key population programmes, particularly among migrants and people who inject drugs; to tailor and integrate HIV prevention for young key populations by using innovative platforms; and for generating evidence to accelerate the stigma and discrimination response for LGBTI.

Strengthening efforts in community-led healthcare, the Community Health Worker Certification Implementation Guide was completed and is being distributed. The unit costs of key population-led health services study and the social contracting mechanism assessment were also completed. Recommendations to improve the contracting mechanism and optimize performance-based payment have been presented to the responsible units.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE COVID-19 RESPONSE

The Joint Team monitored ARV drug access during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the country successfully promoted implementation of MMD of ARV. By working with the Thai Network of People Living with HIV/AIDS to monitor ARV drug interruption, support was provided to more than 13 000 people living with HIV. Home-deliveries of ARVs were provided to 6,561 people by peer educators (inside Thailand) and by post (inside and outside Thailand).

Technical support was provided for the COVID-19 socio-assessment to better respond to populations' needs during the pandemic. Engagement with CSOs improved COVID-19 prevention and livelihood support, and strengthened the resilience of LGBTI sex workers in Bangkok, Chiang Mai, Chonburi and Songkhla. Grants enabled CSOs to procure basic necessities such as food, water and personal protective equipment for 3,200 LGBTI sex workers. Technical support was provided to translate and widely disseminate COVID-19 information to people living with HIV and key populations. In addition, support for evidence-

based action among sex workers provided a strong tool for advocacy and decision making, with US\$ 15 000 of additional funding leveraged from the British Embassy to continue livelihood-support activities and provide holistic COVID-19 and HIV services.

CONTRIBUTION TO THE INTEGRATED SDG AGENDA

The Joint Team supported consultations with LGBTI people and people affected by HIV as part of the Thailand Country Common Analysis "Leave No One Behind". A total of 510 people answered an online survey, 51 joined focus group discussions, and 30 people participated in a workshop exploring intersectionality; findings will be used to inform the UNSDCF to be completed in 2021.

PERSISTING AND EMERGING CHALLENGES AND BOTTLENECKS	KEY FUTURE ACTIONS TO RESPOND TO CHALLENGES AND UNBLOCK BOTTLENECKS
<p>Many people living with HIV continue to be diagnosed late and start treatment late.</p> <p>Poor linkages between private and public health-care sectors limit progress in reaching testing and treatment targets. HIV testing coverage is still low and testing services are insufficient among key populations.</p>	<p>Focus on improving testing and treatment for key populations, especially for people who inject drugs, by strengthening capacities of community-led responses, building capacity of governments and communities to address relevant cross-cutting issues (e.g. chemsex), and supporting the development of national guidelines on HIV self-testing for launch in mid-2021.</p>
<p>Around half of the estimated 5,400 new infections in 2020 were projected to be among people aged 15–24 years. There has been a dramatic increase of STI rates especially among those younger than 25 years. HIV prevention coverage varies by key population. Access to harm reduction services is severely limited, and the use of PrEP among people who inject drugs is still contested by the community.</p>	<p>Advocate for the scaling up of PrEP coverage among the most vulnerable key populations through an integrated health service delivery model that encompasses PrEP as part of a harm reduction package, including reinvigorated condom promotion, STI case management, strengthened sexuality education and reproductive health interventions, technical support on an evidence-informed STI response, and STI national strategy development.</p>
<p>Key population programmes are still largely supported by international donors. Sustainable financing arrangements for CSOs can play a vital role in reaching the 90–90–90 targets.</p>	<p>Support the development of optimized strategies to improve CSO performance and sustainability as part of the UHC benefits package, and advocate for CSO accreditation in the mainstream health system.</p>

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