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For its HIV grant, El Salvador chooses sub-recipients representing key populations

El Salvador has announced the selection of six sub-recipients (SR) for its \$23.1 million HIV grant, marking another step forward on its path towards completing the Global Fund's processes under the new funding model (NFM).

Six non-governmental organizations were selected by the principal recipient (PR), Plan International, to implement a series of HIV response activities designed to target the most at-risk populations in the Central American country.

According to a 2012 UNAIDS report, HIV prevalence is at 0.6% in El Salvador, but significantly higher among certain key groups, including men who have sex with men, transgender people and commercial sex workers.

According to a sentinel surveillance study conducted in 2012, sero-prevalence for men who have sex with men is at 10.7%; commercial sex workers, both male and female, have a sero-prevalence rate of 3.14%.

More complete data is expected in 2016, as an integrated bio-behavior (IBBS) study is scheduled to take place in 2015.

The six groups were chosen after an open call for bids by the PR, from 22 applicants. Civil society groups said that the timing of the bid, occurring just 15 days after the open call, may have been too tight for a number of groups to participate and suggested in remarks to Aidspan that the next tender have a longer turn-around time.

Other civil society organizations that work at the grass-roots level have complained that the technical requirements to become eligible to even be considered as a Global Fund SR are too onerous and beyond their technical and managerial capacity.

A technical evaluation committee from the PR shortlisted 10 groups based on an established eligibility criteria and with the technical help of US-based contractor GMS, narrowed the shortlist to the six chosen groups.

The six organizations chosen are:

- Entre Amigos Association, which works with MSM
- Alejandría Association, which represents transgender people
- Aspidh Association, which represents transgender people
- Orquídeas del Mar, a union of commercial sex workers
- FUNDASIDA, a national HIV outreach NGO
- Population Services International's local arm, PASMO

There has been no announcement about the allocation of the funding for each of the sub-recipients, nor any elaboration of the nature of the activities each organization will be carrying out.

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