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of the Global Fund

Regional Latin America HIV Grant Funding to Be Discontinued

A regional HIV grant with a checkered history and serial problems in its aim to respond to stigma and human rights challenges across Latin America and the Caribbean has been discontinued for its failure “to deliver on the original goal of reducing stigma and discrimination and promoting understanding of human rights and gender equity among military and the police,” according to a recommendation by the Grant Approvals Committee.

The project was meant initially to serve as a replicable model for how to support universal access to HIV prevention and support to people living with AIDS among military and police personnel. But in May 2013, directives from the Board for its approval required significant revision and reprogramming.

The HIV/AIDS Prevention and Control Committee for the Armed Forces and National Police of Latin America and the Caribbean (COPRECOS LAC) covered Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, El Salvador, Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru and Uruguay in Phase 1. Costa Rica, Ecuador and Venezuela were included in Phase 2 in programmes foreseen under the grant

The decision’s approval announced by the Board on 26 November is the final nail in the coffin of the beleaguered programme. A first request funding request in 2008 under Round 8 was denied, but on re-application a year later, during Round 9, Phase 1 funding was approved at \$13.9 million. A Phase 2 request of \$38.1 million was modified and approved provisionally and incrementally, with the Board predicating the release of \$16.7 million on a slate of conditions and modifications.

While Phase 1 of the grant was to provide a coordinated response to the AIDS epidemic within the military and police and their communities, in approving funding for Phase 2, (see GFO [article](#)), the Board demanded a shift away from the security personnel focus to other key populations, including commercial sex workers, MSM and transgendered people.

According to the Technical Review Panel, neither of those approaches, led by the principal recipient (PR) Cicitelli Associates Inc., were successful.

In the decision presented to the Board, the Secretariat considered that the applicant for the grant had failed to implement a new strategy to focus on key populations or to work together with existing networks of key populations to promote respect for human rights and to reduce stigma and discrimination in the region.

Nor did the PR submit required documents detailing capacity-building or a revised work plan and budget that reflected the revision and reprogramming of the grant; it was further criticized for its failure to provide “convincing evidence of sufficient experience in advocacy for human rights to carry out the required activities.”

In its statement to the Board, the Secretariat added: “based on the documentation received, the TRP does not feel that the grant applicant has responded adequately to previous concerns raised by the Global Fund. The TRP observes that direct service provision remains the focus of the proposed project to the detriment of other (more essential) advocacy components and that it remains unclear from the revised budget and description of revised activities what proportion of the resources would actually be directed to key population partners. In addition, the revised budget remains extremely high on staff costs, and there seems to be little budget for actual implementation of program[me] activities.”

In its strongly worded review, the language of which was adopted by the Secretariat in its recommendation, the TRP considered the submission for renewal “[did] not represent good value for money in that it shows no convincing evidence it will be able to achieve its primary goal of reducing stigma and discrimination in the region... [In] addition, the TRP does not see that any further reshaping of this current investment will result in achieving that goal.”

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