

Progress on Differentiated HIV Testing Services Post-meeting action plans Uganda case study

Authors: Geoffrey Taasi, Ivan Arinaitwe, Moses Luwunzu, Hudson Baliddawa, Cordelia Katureebe
Ministry of Health Uganda



BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

Uganda, one of the 21 ICAP CQUIN network countries, subscribed to the ICAP CQUIN Differentiated HIV Testing (dHTS) Community of Practice (CoP) in 2023. Before joining the dHTS CoP, Uganda was one of the 7 countries (Uganda, Malawi, Zambia, Zimbabwe, Ivory Coast, and Senegal) that piloted the ICAP CQUIN dHTS Capability Maturity Model(CMM) in 2022. When the CMM was fully developed, Uganda joined other CQUIN network countries to conduct a self-staging meeting in February 2023, and developed an action plan to address the identified CMM gaps during the HTS meeting in Nairobi, March 2023. We summarize the progress on implementing the HTS action plan, for the period April-September 2023

METHODS

After the dHTS meeting in March 2023, the action plan was presented to the Uganda HTS Technical Working Group (TWG) for validation. Because the same TWG had participated in both the staging meeting, and identifying gaps in the CMM, the action plan was adopted in its entirety.

We laid a plan to implement the action plans, beginning with domains that were easily achievable. We leveraged on the ongoing process of HMIS tools pilot to revise the dHTS data collection and reporting tools, to include linkage to prevention indicators. With financial support from CHAI, and Technical Assistance from ICAP CQUIN, we revised the national dHTS implementation and scale up plan (optimization plan) to cater for the Status Neutral Testing Approach. We mobilized financial support from PEPFAR and Global fund grants to conduct supportive supervision for both public and private health facilities, while PSI and other partners are facilitating the development of a private sector engagement framework which will further streamline partnerships between Ministry of Health and the Private health sector

At all stages of implementation, recipients of testing services, and stakeholders from the prevention, and MTCT programs were engaged



Figure 1: Stakeholders pose for a group photo during the Uganda National dHTS Optimization plan writing workshop, August 2023, Entebbe, Uganda

RESULTS

Table 1: Uganda dHTS action point performance progress (March-September 2023)

Domain type	Domain	Baseline Score	Status	Due date	Action taken
Enabling	Policies 2: Optimizing HIV Testing	Orange	Ongoing	Apr-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> National algorithm is being revised. Lab validation has been completed. Field evaluation is ongoing
Enabling	Policies 3: Linkage	Yellow	Completed	Oct-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Linkage to combination prevention has been included in the nation HTS scale up plan (optimization plan)
Enabling	Implementation and scale up plan	Orange	Completed	Oct-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training materials being developed to aid nationwide dissemination
Enabling	Private sector engagement/oversight	Red	Ongoing	Jun-24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Private sector engagement plan is being developed with support from PSI. National HTS TWG already includes private sector representatives Quarterly supportive supervision visits do include private sector health facilities
Enabling	M&E	Orange	Ongoing	Sep-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M&E tools are being piloted, a The client card, HTS register, and monthly reporting forms have been revised to include linkage to combination prevention services cascade
Outcome	Population coverage	Green	Not started	Nov-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Evaluation to be conducted at end of year
Outcome	Linkage to Rx 1: Timely Linkage	Green	Ongoing	Nov-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be determined during the DPR in September
Outcome	Linkage to prevention and other services	Orange	Completed	Sep-23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> M&E tools are being piloted HTS tools adapted to report linkage to combination prevention services Training materials are being developed to aid dissemination of changes

As indicated in Table 1 above, out of the eight (8) action domains prioritized in 2023, action points for 3 three domains (Policies 3, Implementation and scale up plan, and Linkage to combination prevention services) were completed by September 2023, while action points for four (4) domains were still ongoing. One domain (Population coverage) was not started as it is planned later in November



Figure 2: Uganda National dHTS Optimization plan, 2023

DISCUSSION

The successes achieved so far are a result of collaborative efforts from local and international actors (stakeholders). Wider stakeholder engagement is essential to secure buy-in of normative guidance. Aligning action plans to CMM domain gaps enabled the country to “implement with focus” and is a critical success factor. Competing program priorities and limited resources are hinderances to fast attainment of action plan projections. In the next 6 months (October 2023 –March 2024), Uganda will strive to accomplish all her action points.

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- PSI
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- CSOs

