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## The Global Fund in the Islamic Republic of Iran

May 2024

### Project Information

**Funding:** USD 11,222,077

**Duration:** April 2021 to March 2024

**Implementing Agencies / Partners:** Center for Communicable Disease Control of Ministry of Health and Medical Education, Welfare Organization, and Prisons Organization

### Objective:

- The Global Fund has one core grant currently active in Iran: an HIV grant that aims to help strengthen testing, prevention, treatment and care services for key populations and support continued reductions in HIV incidence and mortality.

### Background:

Located at the crossroads of Central Asia, South Asia, the Middle East and the Caucasus, Iran is home to 85 million people. HIV incidence in the country has declined markedly from its peak in 2005. In that year, there were an estimated 16 new infections per 100,000 people. By 2020, this had fallen to just 3 per 100,000 people. HIV mortality rates have also decreased each year since 2013 (UNAIDS 2021 Data Release).

Among people in prisons and people who inject drugs – two groups that have previously experienced a significantly higher HIV burden

than the general population – prevalence rates are declining. Between 2010 and 2019 prevalence among people who inject drugs decreased from 15% to 3%. Among people in prisons, prevalence fell from 2.1% in 2009 to 0.8% a decade later.

### Challenges:

- Although gains have been achieved in reducing incidence and mortality, there is more progress to be made to reach the UNAIDS 95-95-95 testing and treatment targets. Case finding is a key challenge in the country's HIV cascade, as demonstrated by the lower percentage of people who know their HIV status. To address this, the current HIV program is employing new approaches to reach those most affected by HIV in the country and make testing and counseling services available to them.

- People who inject drugs continue to account for the greatest share of new HIV infections in Iran, despite the recent reductions in prevalence. Other key populations are also estimated to be disproportionately affected by HIV, although available data is limited. Making testing more accessible for these key populations and providing harm reduction programs and differentiated antiretroviral treatment for them is an important pillar of Iran’s HIV response.

### Key Components:

1. An HIV grant of up to US\$11.2 million is being implemented in Iran throughout 2021-2024. Our investment is geared toward scaling up differentiated HIV testing services, expanding HIV prevention interventions and improving the coverage and quality of treatment care and support.
2. These activities support the country’s efforts to, in the coming years, maintain HIV prevalence at less than 5% among people who inject drugs and for people who are exposed to sexual transmission, and decrease HIV mortality by 20%.
3. Iran has also been allocated funding of up to US\$5.7 million as part of our COVID-19 Response Mechanism, which supports countries to mitigate the impact of COVID-19 on programs to fight HIV, TB and malaria, and initiates urgent improvements in health and community systems.

### Expected Outcomes:

- By the end of March 2027, maintain HIV prevalence among PWIDs at less than 5%
- By the end of March 2027, maintain the HIV prevalence among people who are exposed to sexual transmission of HIV at less than 5%; and
- By the end of March 2027, decrease the AIDS mortality by 20%.

### Results:

To achieve the 95-95-95 targets aimed at ending the HIV epidemic by 2025, the following progress was made by the Islamic Republic of Iran by the end of 2023:

- 95% of individuals in the subpopulation living with HIV should be aware of their status. Current achievement: 53%.
- 95% of those aware of their HIV status should be receiving antiretroviral therapy. Current achievement: 77%.
- 95% of those on antiretroviral therapy should have suppressed viral loads. Current achievement: 92%.

### Partnerships:

- Center for Communicable Disease Control of Ministry of Health and Medical Education
- Welfare Organization
- Prisons Organization