

Why GAO Did This Study

The President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), reauthorized at \$48 billion for fiscal years 2009 through 2013, supports HIV/AIDS prevention, treatment, and care services overseas. The reauthorizing legislation, as well as other key documents and PEPFAR guidance, endorses the alignment of PEPFAR activities with partner country HIV/AIDS strategies and the promotion of partner country ownership of U.S.-supported HIV/AIDS programs. This report, responding to a legislative directive, (1) examines alignment of PEPFAR programs with partner countries' HIV/AIDS strategies and (2) describes several challenges related to alignment or promotion of country ownership. GAO analyzed PEPFAR planning documents and national strategies for four countries—Cambodia, Malawi, Uganda, and Vietnam—selected to represent factors such as diversity of funding levels and geographic location. GAO also reviewed documents and reports by the U.S. government, research institutions, and international organizations and interviewed PEPFAR officials and other stakeholders in headquarters and the four countries.

What GAO Recommends

GAO recommends that the Secretary of State direct OGAC to develop and disseminate a methodology for establishing baseline measures of country ownership prior to implementing partnership frameworks. OGAC concurred with this recommendation.

[View GAO-10-836 or key components.](#)
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PRESIDENT'S EMERGENCY PLAN FOR AIDS RELIEF

Efforts to Align Programs with Partner Countries' HIV/AIDS Strategies and Promote Partner Country Ownership

Why GAO Found

PEPFAR activities are generally aligned with partner countries' national HIV/AIDS strategies. GAO's analysis of PEPFAR planning documents and national HIV/AIDS strategies, as well as discussions with PEPFAR officials in the four countries GAO visited, showed overall alignment between PEPFAR activities and the national strategy goals. In addition, statements by global and country-level PEPFAR stakeholders indicate that PEPFAR activities support the achievement of partner countries' national strategy goals. PEPFAR officials noted that a number of factors may influence the degree to which PEPFAR activities align with national strategy goals, including the activities of other donors, the size of the PEPFAR program, and policy restrictions. PEPFAR may also support activities not mentioned in the national HIV/AIDS strategies but that are addressed in relevant sector- or program-specific strategies. PEPFAR officials reported various efforts to help ensure that PEPFAR activities support the achievement of national strategy goals, including assisting in developing national strategies, participating in formal and informal communication and coordination meetings, engaging regularly with partner country governments during the annual planning process, and developing a new HIV/AIDS agreement, known as a partnership framework, between PEPFAR and partner country governments.

PEPFAR stakeholders highlighted several challenges related to aligning PEPFAR programs with national HIV/AIDS strategies or promoting country ownership of U.S.-supported HIV/AIDS programs. First, PEPFAR indicators, including indicator definitions and timeframes, sometimes differ from those used by partner countries and other international donors. Second, gaps may exist in the sharing of PEPFAR information with partner country governments and other donors. Third, limitations in country leadership and capacity, such as lack of technical expertise to develop strategies and manage programs, affect country teams' ability to ensure that PEPFAR activities support achievement of national strategy goals. Fourth, Office of the U.S. Global AIDS Coordinator (OGAC) guidance to country teams regarding development of partnership frameworks does not include indicators for establishing baseline measures of country ownership prior to implementation of partnership frameworks. Without baseline measures, country teams may have limited ability to measure the frameworks' impact and make needed adjustments.