

Terms of Reference: SAFESStart+ Country Community Advisory Board

Introduction

Vertical transmission of human immunodeficiency virus (HIV), syphilis, hepatitis B virus (HBV), and Chagas disease is a leading cause of preventable stillbirth and child mortality. Despite the availability of effective, quality-assured tools, progress in terms of consistent availability and uptake are limited by a combination of affordability; fragmented services; outdated guidelines; as well as market, supply and demand, and adoption barriers in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Stigma, harmful gender norms, and human rights violations further limit access and uptake.

The four-year Country- and Community-Led Scale-Up of Accessible, Integrated, and Family-Centered Elimination of Vertical Transmission (EVT) Plus Services for a Healthy Start (SAFESStart+) project is designed to address barriers to EVT product access and service coverage, including demand and adoption, supply and delivery, quality, and affordability. This will be achieved by scaling up integrated EVT programs in four core-engagement countries (Malawi, Nigeria, Paraguay, and Uganda); addressing specific barriers to EVT scale-up and validation in five focused-activity countries (Brazil, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Senegal, South Africa, and Vietnam); disseminating innovations, successes, and lessons learned to ten peer-learning countries to further increase adoption and scale-up of evidence-based EVT approaches (Cambodia, Cote d'Ivoire, El Salvador, The Gambia, Ghana, Kenya, Mozambique, Philippines, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe); and advancing regional policy, learning, and market-shaping interventions in Africa, Asia, and Latin America to accelerate progress globally

Within this framework, the SAFESStart+ Community Advisory Board (C-CAB) will ensure that the voices, expertise, and lived experiences of key populations and community stakeholders inform all stages of the project.

The SAFESStart+ C-CAB will be comprised of members selected from a wide range of country-specific community stakeholders, including women with lived experience in HIV, HBV, syphilis, and Chagas disease, adolescent girls and young women (AGYW), female sex workers (FSW), women with disabilities, and women from antenatal care/maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH) civil society organizations to contribute to the following primary project outputs:

1. Country-led EVT demand, adoption, and scale-up enabled through strong community and stakeholder leadership and systems strengthening.
2. Evidence and learning generated on integrated EVT models of care through implementation science, programmatic monitoring and evaluation, and cost modeling that accelerates demand and adoption of effective tools and differentiated packages of EVT in LMIC.
3. Strategic market shaping, unlocking barriers to new and underused essential EVT products in LMIC, including strong manufacturer engagement to ensure affordability, sustained supply, and accelerated country regulatory processes.
4. Effective transition and financing of country and regional integrated EVT programs by governments and donors through evidence dissemination, regional learning and advocacy, and an investment case for greater scale-up.



Objectives

The primary objectives of the C-CAB are to:

1. Contribute to strengthening EVT stakeholder platforms at community and country levels by ensuring meaningful participation of women with lived experience of HIV, HBV, and syphilis disease (as well as Chagas disease in Paraguay), their partners, AGYW, and community groups working in EVT/MNCH.
2. Build and amplify community and civil society leadership to drive demand creation, accountability, and adoption of integrated EVT services.
3. Guide and advise on project implementation, research, advocacy, and learning to ensure approaches are evidence-based, community-centered, and context-specific.

C-CAB functions

- Contribute to country- and community-level project strategy, national advocacy initiatives, community engagement approaches, evidence generation, learning plans, and protocols.
- Work with the country's Technical Working Group (TWG) on EVT to ensure that community voices and expertise are shaping the direction of policies and programs.
- Guide country-community level EVT implementation by ensuring activities are informed by local community knowledge, experience sharing, a solid understanding of the national and sub-national context and relevant data to support effective research, programming, and policymaking.
- Provide inputs to study protocols, standardized surveys, and qualitative interview tools to be used in the SAFESStart+ values and preferences study at the country level.
- Develop strong partnerships with leading local and national women networks to strengthen and support EVT-related activities.
- Support awareness, literacy, and demand generation efforts by co-developing messaging, tools, and dissemination methods in collaboration with local support groups, peer networks, and other community structures to increase uptake and use of EVT tools and services.
- Support a continuous learning approach to assess the impact of awareness, literacy, and demand generation messaging, tools, and methods within the country context.
- Contribute to learning dissemination and informing plans for successful intervention scale-up at the country and regional levels.
- Highlight C-CAB learnings to ensure visibility of project progress nationally, documenting shared challenges and opportunities, and reporting to the Program Steering Committee (PSC) as needed.

Membership

The project management team at the country level—comprising ICWEA and WHA, with input from the local implementing partner—will form the C-CAB secretariat and oversee its operations. The C-CAB will include members selected to represent people with lived experience and community expertise relevant to the SAFESStart+ project within the country.

Each C-CAB will ensure:

1. Membership includes individuals with lived experience across all relevant disease areas represented in the country.
2. Representation of key populations, with particular attention to young women and other marginalized groups.



3. Inclusion of members from community groups that support people, especially women, with lived experience.
4. Membership of individuals with prior experience in community advisory boards or similar groups at the local or national level will be an added advantage, but not a requirement.

Note: Each country will have its own C-CAB comprising of 11 members.

Terms of membership

- C-CAB members are expected to actively contribute to discussions and meetings and take responsibility and accountability for various actions and designated duties. Although the project will increase their capacity in EVT, members are expected to demonstrate basic understanding of EVT.
- Have strong links with or belong to the local and national networks of people living with HIV and HBV, women, AGYW networks, FSW networks, and women with disabilities, among others.
- The term for membership will be for the duration of four years (2025-2029) of the project based on satisfactory performance of the individual.

Selection process:

- Members may be nominated by local community groups, peer networks, or through an open call circulated via ICWEA, WHA, and country partner networks.
- Selection will prioritize diversity, inclusivity, and representation across relevant disease areas and key populations.
- Membership is intended for the duration of the SAFESStart+ project (through April 2029). Replacement members (if needed) will be identified collaboratively by the C-CAB secretariat, remaining C-CAB members, and country partners.

Selection criteria

The SAFESStart+ project C-CAB will be selected using the following guidelines:

- Must be a community member defined as a person living with HIV, HBV, or lived experience of Syphilis. Note: for the C-CAB in Paraguay, this will be expanded to include Chagas disease.
- Should belong to or be affiliated with a community-level or national level organization that works directly with triple elimination-related issues (and Chagas disease in Paraguay).
- Must be willing to take part in all provided training and ready to designate a percentage of their time to the SAFESStart+ project.
- Could be a peer mother or an expert mother/client in any of the three diseases foci (four in Paraguay).
- Should originate from the country/district/region of operational scope of the project.
- Selection should ensure gender balance, representation of key populations, and inclusion of marginalized voices.
- Must demonstrate collaboration and effective communication skills to engage with peers, project teams, and community stakeholders.

Linkage to the TWG

- Each C-CAB will select one representative to participate in their national triple elimination working group, or a related working group in the respective country, ensuring community priorities are integrated into discussions at the TWG.



- A representative of the TWG will periodically be invited to present at the C-CAB meetings, ensuring that the C-CAB is appropriately informed and consulted on TWG decisions.

Linkage to Global Community Advisory Board (G-CAB)

- Each C-CAB will select one representative to participate in the G-CAB, ensuring that country perspectives and community priorities are integrated at the global level.
- C-CAB members will liaise with ICWEA, WHA, and local support groups and networks to inform country-level project implementation, advocacy, and learning activities as well as report to the G-CAB for strategic guidance.

C-CAB term & timelines

The SAFESStart+ C-CAB will run for four years, divided into two renewable terms depending on member performance, and will operate from November 2025 until the project concludes in April 2029.

Role and responsibilities of C-CAB

The SAFESStart+ project involves community and civil society networks at all levels of care to develop inclusive and demand-driven partnerships for innovation in EVT health care. The C-CAB will meaningfully engage members in national decision-making forums to advocate for the SAFESStart+ project

C-CAB members will function as national/community champions for EVT and will participate in workshops; develop and review information, education, and communication materials; and advocate in national forums and in select regions/districts. The C-CAB members hold an advisory role in the project as well as increasing community participation and involvement in the project. Specifically, CAB members will be expected to:

- Participate in C-CAB meetings and engagements by participating in technical trainings, reviewing the progress of the project and sharing best practices and learnings, and contributing to the data collections and dissemination processes.
- Represent the interests of the SAFESStart+ project to the community and country EVT TWGs; HIV, HBV, and syphilis (and Chagas disease in Paraguay) communities; and support appropriate community-led demand-generation, scale up, and adoption activities for EVT products.
- Generate ideas on how the SAFESStart+ project can best engage with stakeholders, civil society and community groups to maximize the benefits of new or underserved products, generate demand, scale up, and adoption.
- Support and guide the implementation of evidence generation activities throughout the project lifecycle.
- Develop strong partnerships with leading local and national women networks to strengthen and support their EVT-related activities.

Note: Throughout all project-related work, C-CAB members should strive to maintain the promotion and protection of human rights and equity in all aspects of the project and ensure that the C-CAB takes an independent, evidence-based, and non-biased stand on aspects and outcomes of the project.

Governance

Once the C-CAB members are confirmed, they will select a volunteer C-CAB Coordinator who will serve as the link between the project management team and the C-CAB members.

Financial terms and conflicts of interest

- Declaration of any conflict of interest will be expected. Suspected conflicts should be brought forward before and during the duration of the project.
- Members of the C-CAB who apply for the SAFESStart+ small grants program will declare a conflict of interest and will not be able to serve on the selection panel for the small grants in the country they have applied.
- Being a C-CAB representative is a volunteer position, but pre-defined stipends will be provided to cover transportation, communications, and other incidental costs.

Monitoring, evaluation, and learning

The C-CAB will contribute to the monitoring, evaluation, and learning (MEL) activities related to the SAFESStart+ project performance and model adoption, with a focus on ensuring that both community perspectives and priorities are reflected in the learning and accountability processes. The role of the C-CAB is advisory and participatory, focusing on interpretation, validation, and community accountability, with technical and analytical support provided by the secretariat.

- Provide input on project indicators, targets and progress milestones, relevant to community engagement, advocacy, and uptake of EVT+ services.
- Review community-generated data and ensure findings are interpreted through the lens of lived experiences.
- Promote equity monitoring, ensuring women, young women, and vulnerable populations are meaningfully included in project implementation and monitoring outcomes, ensuring equity and rights are central to monitoring processes.
- Advise on the tools by piloting and using simplified participatory monitoring tools to capture and elevate community perspectives, purposely to promote community accountability.
- Contribute to quarterly reviews and participate in annual accountability sessions to reflect on achievements, highlight challenges, and recommend corrective actions.

Member competencies and capacity

- All C-CAB members will receive orientation and training on the SAFESStart+ project's MEL framework and tools to ensure meaningful participation.
- Members are expected to demonstrate a basic understanding of participatory monitoring approaches and data use for advocacy.
- Ongoing mentorship will be provided to strengthen members' capacity to interpret evidence, apply findings, and community insights at national, regional, and global levels

Reporting and dissemination

- The C-CAB secretariat will prepare and share meeting notes or provide summaries after each engagement, making them available to the TWG, the project management team, and any other relevant stakeholders.
- C-CAB members will participate in an annual reflection of the C-CAB's contributions, influence, and value add, identifying areas of improvement to inform future C-CAB operations to strengthen impact and accountability.



- The C-CAB will contribute to an annual community monitoring brief, summarizing community perspectives, accountability findings, and recommendations to inform learning and adoption.

Administrative arrangements for the C-CAB

ICWEA and WHA will support the operational and administrative aspects of the C-CAB. C-CAB members will report to the volunteer C-CAB Coordinator, who will in turn report to the Project Coordinator for administrative procedures. The C-CAB Coordinator will provide administrative support to ensure the proper functioning of the C-CAB in line with its purpose and will serve as the primary point of contact with the project team. Responsibilities include:

- Distribute relevant materials to and from the C-CAB, including agendas, training materials, and meeting notes before and after C-CAB meetings.
- Collect, collate, and disseminate documents for input from the C-CAB.
- Liaise with members of the C-CAB as needed.
- Support logistical arrangements for C-CAB members to attend meetings or required activities.

Annex 1: Tentative schedule and agendas for 2025 C-CAB meetings

The draft agenda below is intended to be used as a starting point for discussions with the local implementing partners and other project stakeholders. It is intended that each C-CAB will have an agenda that is tailored to their country context.

Target date	Tentative agenda items	Format
December 2025	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Introductions • Project overview • C-CAB roles and responsibilities • Project status and next steps 	Hybrid

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