This overview has been prepared by the Interagency Working Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health (SRH) and HIV Linkages (IAWG). This group is convened by UNFPA, WHO and IPPF and works with 16 other organizations¹ to:

- advocate for political commitment to a linked SRH and HIV agenda;
- support national action to strengthen SRH and HIV linkages at the policy, systems and service delivery levels; and
- create a shared understanding of SRH and HIV linkages by building the evidence base and sharing research, good practice and lessons learnt.

**Rationale**²

The majority of HIV infections are sexually transmitted or associated with pregnancy, childbirth and breastfeeding. Sexually transmitted infections can increase the risk of HIV acquisition and transmission. The interactions between SRH and HIV are now widely recognized. In addition, sexual and reproductive ill-health and HIV share root causes, including poverty, gender inequality and social marginalization of the most vulnerable populations.

The international community agrees that the Millennium Development Goals will not be achieved without ensuring access to SRH services and an effective global response to HIV. In the post-MDG world, SRH and HIV linkages and integration remain critical for human rights and development.

**Benefits**³

- Improved access to and uptake of key HIV and SRH services
- Better access of people living with HIV to SRH services tailored to their needs
- Reduction in HIV-related stigma and discrimination
- Improved coverage of underserved/vulnerable/key populations
- Greater support for dual protection
- Improved quality of care
- Decreased duplication of efforts and competition for scarce resources
- Better understanding and protection of individuals’ rights
- Mutually reinforcing complementarities in legal and policy frameworks
- Enhanced programme effectiveness and efficiency
- Better utilization of scarce human resources for health.

To find out more please visit www.srhhivlinkages.org

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1. For IAWG members see back cover.
SRH and HIV linkages in practice


intensifying integration and linkages. These plans and frameworks for scaling up and determine priorities and shape national out the Rapid Assessment to date – each country to intensify and strengthen systems and services levels. 48 countries national assessments of the bi-directional linkages in practice

2005: A Framework for programme actions to strengthen linkages between SRH and HIV. strengthening health systems to increase access to and use of a broad range of quality health professionals more effectively and satisfying ways of working.

2007: A systematic review of the linkages research literature published between 1990 and 2007 was commissioned. The results of this review are available in the gateways to integration: a case study from Haiti. To meet the service needs of some of the poorest people in Port au Prince, DHS/PAHO began providing summary case concepts and leading service areas, through the gateway to a full range of critical SRH and HIV services.

2008 onwards: The IAWG on SRH and HIV linkages resource pack – to build a common understanding of SRH and HIV linkages and be a repository for linkages resources.

2010: A stakeholder engagement about the conceptual basis and key principles for linking SRH and HIV, to build a common understanding of the current development environment, priorities and contributions of linkages for key populations.

Key achievements


2005: The Rapid Assessment Tool for SRH and HIV Linkages

2007: To build the evidence base for SRH and HIV integration, systematic reviews of the linkages research literature published between 1995 and 2007 were commissioned. This review is available in the linkages, which outlines key concepts and issue of policy and programme actions to strengthen linkages between SRH and HIV.

2008 onwards: The Rapid Assessment Tool for SRH and HIV Linkages has been used to support and inform the development of the SRH and HIV linkages agenda at the policy, normative and service delivery levels. The Tool has been piloted in 25 countries and summations of the findings and lessons learned are available in 25 countries.

2009: The guidance for Integrating Case Studies: Developed to promote good practice examples of different models of SRH and HIV Integration. Case study from Catholic Health Association of Sri Lanka, Serendib and Zambian

2010: The IAWG on SRH and HIV linkages resource pack – to build a common understanding of SRH and HIV linkages and be a repository for linkages resources.

2011: A background paper – SRH Services and HIV Interventions in Practice: Examining the Evidence from a Coordinating Board and outlined the conceptual basis and key principles for linking SRH and HIV, to build a common understanding of the current development environment, priorities and contributions of linkages for key populations.

2012: What Works? Briefs for SRH and HIV linkages programme managers, advocates and policymakers to more effectively for key populations.

2015: The What Works? Briefs for SRH and HIV linkages programme managers, advocates and policymakers to more effectively for key populations.

2013: What Works? Sexual and Reproductive health and HIV linkages for key populations: India, Indonesia, Uganda

2014: The IAWG on SRH and HIV linkages resource pack – to build a common understanding of SRH and HIV linkages and be a repository for linkages resources.

Upholding human rights

Upholding human rights is intrinsic to the [SRH and HIV] linkages agenda, in particular the human rights of people living with HIV, key populations, and women and girls.

All publications are available to download at www.srhhivlinkages.org
**Building the evidence base**

In order to gain an understanding of the effectiveness, optimal circumstances, good practices and potential trends for strengthening SRH and HIV integrated services, the IAWG discusses issues, identifies gaps and shares results on research projects that the group members have undertaken. These include:

**Integra Initiative**

The flagship Integra Initiative managed by IPPF in partnership with London School of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine and Population Council is the largest ever evaluation of different models of HIV and SRH integration. The research was embedded within the day-to-day activities of 42 government and IPPF health facilities being studied in Kenya, Malawi and Swaziland.

The research findings demonstrate that there are benefits to using integrated models of service delivery in improving service delivery and health outcomes, and that client choice is important. However, the full benefits will only be realized if there is investment in scaling up integrated services and wider health systems and community factors around cost, stigma and unintended pregnancies are taken into account. [www.integrainitiative.org](http://www.integrainitiative.org)

**Integration for Impact**

In September 2012 the Integration for Impact Conference brought together key stakeholders (particularly from sub-Saharan African countries) to present the latest research findings on the impact of integrating HIV and reproductive health services. [http://integrationforimpact.org](http://integrationforimpact.org)

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**Measuring SRH and HIV linkages**

A number of tools and indicators are being developed in order to capture progress toward linking SRH and HIV:

1. **Compendium of SRH and HIV linkages indicators**
   A list of existing indicators that measure elements of SRH and HIV linkages has been compiled and three potential indicators are being reviewed. The first iteration of the compendium will be available in 2014 from [www.srhhivlinkages.org](http://www.srhhivlinkages.org)

2. **Index of Integration**
   The Integra Initiative developed a multi-dimensional ‘Index’, to account for the actual degree of integration at each facility over time. The Index uses different data sources generated by the Integra Initiative to measure physical, temporal, provider and functional integration and weighted each to provide an integration score for each facility. [www.integrainitiative.org](http://www.integrainitiative.org)

3. **Impact of the Rapid Assessment Tool for SRH and HIV Linkages**
   An impact assessment is underway of the first 20 countries to complete the Rapid Assessment Tool between 2008 and 2010 to identify the effects of the Rapid Assessment on SRH and HIV linkages in the country.
Links with other interagency groups

The IAWG on SRH and HIV Linkages works closely with other interagency groups to ensure that the natural synergies between and expertise from each of these groups are maximized. These groups include:

- Integration Working Group of the IATT on the Prevention and Treatment of HIV Infection in Pregnant Women, Mothers and Children
  [www.emtct-iatt.org](http://www.emtct-iatt.org)

- Interagency Working Group on Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV

- Agenda for Accelerated Country Action for Women, Girls, Gender Equality and HIV

The IATT supports country-led implementation of the Global Plan Towards the Elimination of New HIV Infections Among Children by 2015 and Keeping Their Mothers Alive (Global Plan). The Integration Working group is taking forward the relevant components of SRH and HIV linkages that support the operationalization of the Global Plan and has developed a number of tools:

- Preventing HIV and Unintended Pregnancies: Strategic Framework 2011–2015
- Preventing Unintended Pregnancies and HIV
- Glimpse of the Future: Eliminating New HIV Infections in Children and Keeping Their Mothers Alive. Case study and film to support countries scaling up various aspects of EMTCT

- Job Aid for health providers on all four prongs of EMTCT
- A costing tool for prongs 1 and 2 of EMTCT (forthcoming)
- Guidelines on sexual and reproductive health and rights of women living with HIV being updated.

Members of the IAWG on SRH and HIV Linkages


To find out more

Visit [www.srhhivlinkages.org](http://www.srhhivlinkages.org) – a collection of more than 150 SRH and HIV linkages resources.

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