Rapid Assessment Apparatus:
Center for Applied Research on Men and Community Health (CARM AH)
April 2016
The assessment was a facilitated self-assessment jointly accomplished by CARMAH and APCOM. The results of this assessment present the capacity of the organisation of the given time.

This Rapid assessment was conducted under APCOM’s JumpStart program for the purpose of providing technical assistance to CARMAH as implementer of TestSGN, and a partner of the Regional City-based HIV Testing Campaign-TestXXX Project.

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**ACRONYMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFAO</td>
<td>Australian Federation of AIDS Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>ART</td>
<td>Anti-retroviral Therapy</td>
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<tr>
<td>ASHM</td>
<td>Australian Society on HIV Medicine</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARMAH</td>
<td>Center for Applied Research on Men and Community Health</td>
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<td>CBO</td>
<td>Community-Based Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>CDC</td>
<td>Center for Disease Control</td>
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<tr>
<td>HCMC</td>
<td>Ho Chi Minh City</td>
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<tr>
<td>IDU</td>
<td>Injecting Drug Users</td>
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<tr>
<td>LGBT</td>
<td>Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender</td>
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<tr>
<td>M&amp;E</td>
<td>Monitoring and Evaluation</td>
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<tr>
<td>MOH</td>
<td>Ministry of Health</td>
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<tr>
<td>MSM</td>
<td>Men who are having sex with other men</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MSW</td>
<td>Male sex workers</td>
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<tr>
<td>NDRI</td>
<td>National Development and Research Institute</td>
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<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisations</td>
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<tr>
<td>PAC</td>
<td>Provincial AIDS Committee</td>
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<tr>
<td>PEF</td>
<td>Performance Evaluation Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>PrEP</td>
<td>Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis</td>
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<tr>
<td>PWUD</td>
<td>People who use drugs</td>
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<td>Rap App</td>
<td>Rapid Assessment Apparatus</td>
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<tr>
<td>SGN</td>
<td>Saigon</td>
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<tr>
<td>UN</td>
<td>United Nations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VUSTA</td>
<td>Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YMSM</td>
<td>Young men who are having sex with men</td>
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GLOSSARY

Governance refers to how leadership and management at an organisation’s highest level are accountable to the achievement of the organisation’s missions, values and goals. The governing body of an organisation takes leadership and overall responsibility for strategic directions, policy, planning and monitoring of the organisation’s work. Good governance is a commitment to accountability, leadership, ethical conduct and transparency.

Strategy refers to what an organisation wants to achieve. Having a clear set of values, a vision and purpose assists an organisation to define its strategy/ies. Planning how strategies will be achieved guides the organisation.

Policies and producers document how an organisation operates. Policies and procedures guide staff, volunteers and members/constituents on how to implement the organisation’s work. They also document how an organisation complies with legislation, like laws to protect workers and members/constituents, and international conventions such as the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Management is about accountable oversight and implementation of an organisation’s day-to-day operations. This includes managing an organisation’s resources, structures, systems, policies, procedures, planning, monitoring and activities.

Responsible management includes:
- Aligning operational processes to the strategic direction
- Regularly reviewing the organisation’s systems and processes to make sure they are adjusted to:
  - Any shift in the organisation’s strategic direction.
  - Changes in government policy or law.
  - Changing needs and priorities of the community.
  - Evidence-based leading practice.
  - The results of monitoring, review and evaluation processes.
  - Updated contract requirements and approvals.
The Regional City-Based HIV Testing Campaign (TestXXX)

In Asia and the Pacific Islands, HIV treatment coverage levels across the region are below global averages. Earlier diagnosis and treatment is critical for progress towards reaching the target laid out in the 2011 Declaration on HIV/AIDS towards the ultimate vision of Zero New HIV Infections, zero discrimination and zero AIDS-related deaths. The HIV/AIDS epidemic continues to affect the men who have sex with men (MSM) population with young men being the most at risk, especially in urban centers. Many organizations have difficulties reaching young MSM, relying heavily on traditional venues and peer-to-peer outreach. With the advent of online sexual/dating apps like Grindr, Hornet and Jack'd in addition to other online venues such as Facebook, online outreach has become crucial.

HIV Epidemiology Among YMSM in Vietnam

According to 2013 estimations and projections, there are an estimated 256,000 people living with HIV (PLHIV) in Vietnam in 2014. The epidemic is concentrated primarily among People Who Inject Drugs (PWID) MSM and Female Sex Workers (FSW). In addition, a substantial proportion of all new infections are occurring within intimate partner relationships. Indeed, in 2013 the greatest number of new infections occurred among Men who share needles while injecting drugs and between high-risk men and their long term female sexual partners; 45% and 28% respectively.

In 2013, average HIV prevalence among PWID was 10.3% and in FSW it was 2.6%. Among MSM it was 3.7%. These populations are mostly concentrated in large urban centers and mountainous Northern provinces. HIV prevalence varies per area. For example, HIV prevalence among MSM in Ha Noi and Ho Chi Minh City is estimated to up to be around 16% but is only under 2% in other provinces.

Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF)’s Contribution

EJAF funds frontline programmes that help to alleviate the pain - whether physical, emotional or financial - of those living with, affected by or at risk of HIV/AIDS, and to continue the fight against this worldwide pandemic so that no one is left behind. Their target reach includes men who have sex with men in Asia-Pacific region.

APCOM’s TestXXX Initiative

With the grant from Elton John AIDS Foundation (EJAF), APCOM develops TestXXX, city-based HIV testing campaigns in cities with high HIV prevalence among MSM, aims to increase the uptake of HIV testing among the young cohort of the population (i.e., YMSM). Its pilot project, TestBKK, a Bangkok-based campaign, currently running in its second year, has made a remarkable achievement in increasing the uptake of HIV testing and care continuum as well as the dissemination of HIV knowledge and materials among YMSM in Bangkok. Learn more about TestBKK here.

CARMAH’s Locally-Based TestsGN Campaign

CARMAH is collaborating with APCOM to increase the uptake of HIV testing and continuum care among YMSM in Ho Chi Minh City. During the first year, APCOM will focus on assisting CARMAH on initiation and the launch of the campaign. The second year will focus on using the framework and extending the reach of the campaign with new project partners and funding sources. The third year will concentrate on developing a national level campaign encouraging HIV testing for MSM throughout the whole country.

Glossary

- **External relationships**: are productive relationships with other organizations doing similar or related work. These organizations might be other NGOs or community organizations, government agencies, regulating authorities, or for-profit companies. External relationships enable organizations to:
  - Build networks.
  - Build referral systems.
  - Access and collect information (e.g., the results of research and analysis) to keep informed of external changes.
  - Use external information to guide their strategic direction and decision making.
  - Promote and share their own information.
  - Share work, responsibilities, outcomes, risks, and successes.

- **HIV technical module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to support staff and volunteers to be competent and confident to respond to HIV/AIDS.

- **Advocacy module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to undertake, or plan to undertake, advocacy activities.

- **Peer support module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to share knowledge, care, emotional, social and practical help between people who have faced the same challenges or issues.

- **Health promotion module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to develop, manage and, or engage in health promotion campaigns and approaches.

- **Rapid HIV testing module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to contribute to the roll-out of community-based HIV rapid testing including preparing to deliver rapid HIV activities. (E.g. rapid testing activities might include: training; promoting the service; disseminating information about the service; providing rapid testing).

- **Technical guideline module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to develop and, or disseminate technical guidelines. This module is applicable for professional societies.

- **Technical training and professional development module**: assesses the capacity of an organization to provide technical training in new skills and programs to develop existing skills. This module is applicable for professional societies.
INTRODUCTION: CENTER FOR APPLIED RESEARCH ON MEN AND COMMUNITY HEALTH (CARMAH)

CARMAH is a research center having an office in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. The organisation shares a vision of a community of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) in Vietnam that has the physical and mental health to fully participate as active and accepted members of society. CARMAH believes that the LGBT community has the capacity to provide health services and interventions for its members and the responsibility to thoroughly evaluate those activities for efficacy. The goal of the organisation is to become the leading center for research and evaluation on health for gay and bisexual men and transgender people in Vietnam.

CARMAH’S ORGANISATIONAL PURPOSE AND VALUES

PURPOSE: CARMAH has a vision of a community of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people in Vietnam that has the physical and mental health to fully participate as active and accepted members of society. We believe that the LGBT community has the capacity to provide health services and interventions for its members and the responsibility to thoroughly evaluate those activities for efficacy. Our goal is to become the leading center for research and evaluation on health for gay men, bisexual men and transgender in Vietnam.

VISION: To improve the health and quality of life of gay and bisexual men, transgender people, and other men who are having sex men (MSM) in Vietnam through the application of effective and evidence-based health interventions;

VALUES:
CARMAH, as a research center:
• conduct high-quality research and evaluations to international standards;
• collaborate actively and positively with Vietnamese and international partners;
• cultivate relationships of mutual trust and understanding with the MSM and Transgender communities;
• actively involve MSM and transgender community as participants in research work;
• promote a multi-cultural, professional and stimulating working environment.

As essential component of its values, CARMAH conducts high-quality research and evaluations using international standards on specific issues affecting MSM, transgender people, and people belonging to the inter-sectionalities of key population subgroups such as MSM sex workers and MSM who use drugs. The organisation collaborates actively and positively with national and international partners, at the same time cultivates mutual trust and understanding among the MSM and transgender communities.

The MSM and transgender community are active participants in the work of CARMAH. The organization promotes a working environment that is sex positive, non discriminatory, multicultural, professional and participatory.

CARMAH’s main products are data and evidence on MSM and transgender populations. The organisation leverages these informative outputs in their advocacy work with the Provincial AIDS Committee to implement an evidence- and human rights-based, as well as, targeted HIV interventions.

HISTORY

The organisation was established in January 2012 with core activities including HIV/AIDS, STI and LGBT health research, advocacy, peer support and HIV service delivery. CARMAH received legal acknowledgment and registration in accordance to Vietnamese Laws in June 2013.


In April 2013, CARMAH was able to set up its Executive Board consisting of 5 members, which serve as their governing body. As of April 2016, the organisation has 16 paid staff and 20 volunteers including the members of Senior Advisory Group.

With the intention to provide a focused and targeted research on the transgender community, CARMAH established its Transgender Community Advisory Board in December 2014. The transgender community advisory board is not limited to reach transgender people within the geographic areas identified by the research, but expands its networks to national coverage.
I. GOVERNANCE AND STRATEGY

Overall Score: 3.22 / 4

A. GOVERNANCE

Average Score: 3.67 / 4

CARMAH is a legally registered local non-profit organisation in accordance with the Laws of Vietnam under the name of its Director. The country’s laws only require the name of the Director to be registered in the entry, and does not require a functioning or existing Board. CARMAH, nevertheless, set up a governing body, called the Executive Board, which is composed of five (5) people. CARMAH’s current Executive Board members, who were selected last April 2013, possess a diverse range of expertise and skills required to govern the organisation. The Board members do not have defined length of term.

The Executive Board conducts regular meetings with minutes being recorded. Meetings are called for purposes of approving guidelines or policies drafted and recommended by the Senior Management Team. When the executive board is not convening, the Senior Management Team makes decisions. There is a clear overlap in this particular function between the Board and Management Team as one person is a member of both bodies.

However, the practice and relationship of the Executive Board to the organisation is not reflected in the CARMAH Organogram. The current organogram presents a different arrangement.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

CARMAH follows a governing structure, however, the same should also be reflected in their organisation’s organogram. This enables transparency especially on the manner and flow of decision making, which serves as an important reference for other partners and funders.

The organisation needs technical support in the development of its Governance Manual to define governance operations, including the process of electing members of the Executive Board and regulations to ensure clear separation of oversight and management roles and responsibilities. For this next step, Carmah needs funding for Board Meetings to develop and endorse such manual.

A clear and formally adopted Organogram will also assist APCOM in conducting oversight and monitoring of project activities.

B. STRATEGY AND PLANNING

Average Score: 3 / 4

There is generally strong capacity in strategy and planning. CARMAH is guided by a purpose in its establishment, which is to serve as a research institution and provide evidence and data on health for gay men, bisexual men, and transgender people in Vietnam. The mission and vision of CARMAH are rights-based and were developed through consultation with the community. The mission and vision give the organisation a strong commitment to the communities its works to serve.

Although clear in their mission and vision, CARMAH does not yet have a strategic plan. The Executive Board and the Senior Management Team have discussed to develop a Business Plan (using a US model) as they are transitioning from a research center to a social enterprise for purposes of sustainability. The governing level of the organisation considers this as negative risk management to deal with the funding cuts that is experienced by most countries in the region. PATH, under the USAID, is currently providing support to complete the Business Plan.

The organisation applies a consultative process and involves communities in its planning. As much as the organisation is focused in terms of its strategic direction and plans, it maintains flexibility to respond to the needs of the community and external factors. One example is the addition of transgender people as part of the key populations that CARMAH works with. When it started, CARMAH only worked with MSM and male sex workers. Moreover, the studies or projects CARMAH conduct are based on results of consultations with the community, CBO, and NGOs. For CARMAH, understanding the community context and culture is very important in its work.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

CARMAH through its Executive Board should fast track to set up its Business Plan for the organisation’s sustainability. For the Business Plan to be inclusive, support is needed for CARMAH to conduct community consultations and stakeholder meetings, especially involving MSM, transgender people, male sex workers, and young key affected population.

The organisation needs technical support in establishing a coordination protocol with other community-based organisations (CBOs), especially those funded under USAID, and Provincial AIDS Committees in the development of its Business Plan. This engagement is necessary so as to delineate and highlight CARMAH’s roles as a research institution, at the same time a service provider, and avoid overlapping of services among the CBOs.
C. POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Average Score: 3 / 4

CARMAH has only two (2) organisational policies and procedures, which are the Personnel/HR Policy and the Operations Manual. These are developed in compliance with legal requirements according to the laws of Vietnam. These policies and procedures are up-to-date and shared within the organisation, implemented and reviewed regularly. These documents also follow the policies set by Vietnam Union of Science and Technology Associations (VUSTA), a government agency and the Principal Recipient of Vietnam's Global Fund country grant.

These documents observe the principles of promoting and protecting the legal and human rights of its staff and constituents.

In the operations of their clinic, CARMAH follows the WHO Guidelines on HIV Testing and Counseling, the National Guidelines developed by the Ministry of Health for Testing and Anti-Retroviral Treatment (ART), and the Center for Disease Control (CDC) HIV guidelines.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

CARMAH needs technical support in developing the following organisational documents to accommodate larger grants and projects (e.g. Elton John AIDS Foundation):

- Finance Policy and setting up a working finance management system;
- Procurement Policy;
- Organisational Standard Operating Procedures;
- Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines;

The support may comprise of technical trainings on the accepted finance procedures, project management in relation to Standard Operating Procedures, and organisational and programmatic monitoring and evaluation.

These are important policies to be set to ensure consistency with APCOM’s own policies in the implementation of the Regional grant. However, the organisation also needs to allow flexibilities so as to accommodate rules and regulations according to their own country’s context.

II. MANAGEMENT

Overall Score: 3.35 / 4

A. FINANCE

Scoring not applicable.

CARMAH does not have an established accounting system. The organisation is not using accounting software to record their transactions, instead, it utilises Excel spreadsheet. The records are maintained and kept safely in a cabinet where only the director and accountants can access. The organisation has one (1) full time and one (1) part time accountants to manage the financial transactions.

There are no written policies and procedures for: recording transactions, chart of accounts, purchasing requirements and maintenance of records. There is also no written policy on authorization and approvals necessary for financial transactions. However, it is a practice that the Director is responsible for approving transactions and identifies unallowable expenditures. In addition, he is also responsible for keeping the unused, void and returned checks. On the other hand, CARMAH has managed to apply its own travel policies that cover the staffs who are travelling around the city for a particular research project.

There is adequate segregation of the duties between the full time and part time finance/accountant staff. The full time staff prepares for all the financial records and supporting documents, whereas, the part time accountant comes to office and checks on all the documents and recording transactions.

CARMAH does not have a system to track advances, which is important to ensure that they are appropriately accounted for and liquidated that any excess advance is returned and that appropriate documentation is obtained.

CARMAH possesses audited financial statements in Vietnamese language and performs monthly periodic analysis of actual against budgeted expenses.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

As a short-term technical support, CARMAH needs assistance to develop its financial reporting system. This capacity is considered relevant and urgent in relation to the organisation’s management of project funds under the partnership with APCOM.

For future big grants that CARMAH may secure, it also needs support to develop its finance and operations manual to guide it finance management and its daily operations.

The organisation also needs to develop its chart of accounts so it is able to classify its own income and expenditures, and know the status of funding that they manage at given time.

Finally, CARMAH needs to develop its cost-sharing policy to provide proof of contribution of other payments from other grants towards its daily operations.

APCOM and CARMAH undertook the assessment of finance capacity using a separate tool the objective of which is to evaluate and measure the capacity of the organisation in managing project funds as sub-grantee.
B. RESOURCE MOBILISATION
Average Score: 3 / 4

CARMAH possesses reasonable capacity to mobilise resources. It has developed successful grant proposals and has networked with potential funders. The organisation’s main research project and core funding for the long term are secured from the grant they acquired from National Development and Research Institute (NDRI). UNAIDS Vietnam has also provided support to CARMAH in its PrEP advocacy and consultation meetings.

However, resource mobilisation activities are limited to the Executive Board and Director of the Secretariat. Most resource mobilisation activities are also done independently and not in partnership with other networks or organisations, although it has sub-contract agreements with G-Link, a local CBO, in relation to the project funded by NDRI.

Currently, there is also no pro-active approach on searching for funding opportunities as the organisation is secured of funding from NDRI.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

More technical support is needed for CARMAH junior staff to be trained on writing effective grant concept notes and/or proposals. Delegation of tasks within the secretariat to mobilise resources will be a more effective strategy to secure funds rather than relying solely on the Executive Director and Executive Board.

It is recommended that CARMAH needs to exchange its capacity to identify alternative opportunities for funding and partnerships. The organisation has identified the following concepts or ideas that may be funded by other sources:
- Advocacy to allow the use, and eventually selling of, HIV self-testing kits;
- PrEP and related support services;
- Needle exchange program for people who inject drugs; and
- Research on understanding economic backgrounds of male sex worker aged 15-29.

The capacities to build partnerships and mobilise support play an important role in the implementation of the Regional City-based TestSGN project, as the project involves different partnerships with local testing centers, private clinics and other service providers, and private sector. In addition, in order for the campaign to achieve its goal of behavioural change and increase in HIV testing, CARMAH must mobilise additional resources for continuity and sustainability.

Technical support is needed for CARMAH to develop its Resource Mobilisation and Sustainability Plan.

C. STAFFING
Average Score: 3.67 / 4

CARMAH currently has 16 paid staff – 13 full-time and 3 part-time. The Senior Management Team, composed of three staff with higher capacity, is responsible in leading the secretariat in its daily operations. It also currently manages 20 volunteers under its research projects. The staff and volunteers have job descriptions and signed contracts.

The organisation supports capacity development of its staff and apply new learning in their work. Annually, CARMAH provides the staff with 40 hours of continuing education on courses of their own choice that enhances their capacity in support of their roles in the organisation. These lessons are taken online either with University of New York or credible universities in Vietnam.

Communication promoting positive relations among the staff is encouraged, although no written policy is in place to govern this practice. The organisation organises weekly meetings, with the agenda to provide updates on the work and schedule for the week.

In December 2014, CARMAH established its Transgender Community Advisory Board (CAB) to facilitate meetings and discussions with the transgender community.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

The current staffs of CARMAH are relatively strong in their capacity to perform necessary functions for a research project. However, there needs to be additional training to perform advocacy activities especially with the key actors in Ho Chi Minh City, and in the rest of the country. Examples of these stakeholders are Provincial AIDS Committee (PAC), VUSTA, and Ministry of Health.

CARMAH also needs additional staff or personnel to solely focus in the strengthening of the organisation including its advocacy and communications.

D. PROJECT MANAGEMENT
Average Score: 3.5 / 4

CARMAH currently manages four (4) research projects with funding coming from different sources (please see Annex A, Organisational Profile, page 29). These projects focus on 1) HIV risk and prevention among young male sex workers in Vietnam; 2) the use of health services among MSM in HCMC; 3) PrEP and; 4) Transgender population. Each project has a respective workplan and budget, and measurement indicators.

In addition, each project has established data collection procedure and protocols based on the guidelines and policies of the various funders.

Regular monitoring of the projects, is done at the senior management level. The Director leads on project management and M&E as he has more expertise in these areas. There are no formal internal trainings conducted to enhance the M&E capacity of the staff.

Although the projects are rights-based and needs-based, only a few staff have the capacity to conduct needs analysis and stakeholder consultations to align the projects with the organisational strategy and the needs of the community in Vietnam’s context.

On the other hand, everyone in the secretariat performs risk management strategies during project implementation. These strategies include individual-based risk management for fieldwork, and practice-based risk assessment. The organisation also provides an in-house training on assessment of risk management. The projects follow guidelines or manuals set by the PAC and MOH on Risk Management.
At the organisational level, CARMAH does not have a workplan endorsed by the Executive Board due to the absence of a Strategic Plan, or in CARMAH’s case a Business Plan. The Organisational M&E Policy, M&E Toolkit (including guidelines and indicator book), and Performance Evaluation Framework (PEF), are also not in place.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

Support is needed to develop CARMAH’s organisational work plan and ensure the alignment of its activities and projects into bigger strategic direction.

Technical support is also needed to develop its organisational Monitoring and Evaluation Policy, M&E toolkit (including guidelines and indicator book), and M&E Performance Framework following a training on M&E to monitor the impacts of the organisation and their research in the HIV advocacy in Vietnam.

In addition, support is need for the development of guideline on conducting Risk Assessment and Management for the safety of employees and field workers.

It is also recommended that CARMAH maintain or update records of gathered data. This will prove useful in their advocacy activities and resource mobilisation.

CARMAH staff need training on project management to ensure transferability of management knowledge, proper task delegation and more effective project implementation.

E. COMMUNICATIONS

Average Score: 3.25 / 4

While CARMAH’s capacity in internal communications is relatively strong, capacity in external communications has significant gaps and need strengthening.

Communication is considered as a very important aspect within the internal structure of CARMAH. Hence, there is regular internal communications between board and staff. There is also a monthly and weekly staff meeting where internal issues and project-based concerns are raised and addressed accordingly.

External communications to stakeholders are through diverse online and offline channels. However, the technical partners are contacted only when needed, or if there are opportunities for funding. The frequency of the communications between partners or other organisations depends on the activities that are conducted. External communications are frequently done through online platforms such as Facebook, emails, and its website. Face-to-face meetings are conducted if required.

Although CARMAH does not make use of newsletters or formal correspondence, it regularly utilises email to update their partners on the status of their current research. The organisation also focuses on developing its staff’s verbal and oral capacity to present its research findings to bigger audience and government offices.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

Technical support is needed to develop a communications guide that the staff can follow, especially on means and manners of sending communications to the external partners.

Training is also needed among staff to write press releases to go along with their published research. This training can also include building relationships with media outlets such as local newspapers and media broadcast stations. In addition, CARMAH staff also need support in effectively using online platforms in their key messaging.

F. MEMBER ENGAGEMENTS

(N/A, CARMAH does not have member organisations or individual constituents)

III. EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS

Overall Score: 3.5 / 4

A. PARTNERSHIP

Average Score: 3 / 4

CARMAH is active in seeking new partners and the organisation conducts some activities with other CBOs. Currently, the partnerships developed with other CBOs are mainly through informal cooperation and coordination, with communication through informal channels. CARMAH has a limited number of formal partners and CARMAH does not yet have formal partnerships with dedicated resources and collaborative activities key stakeholders such as PAC and MOH. There were attempts to build partnership with USAID but with no outcome as yet.

The capacity to build and maintain partnerships is limited to the Senior Management Team. This part of secretariat has the knowledge to map and analyse stakeholders in relation to their project implementation. The other staff has the capacity to develop only informal coordination, collaboration and cooperation with partners, but not on in a formal sense such as through putting Memorandum of Agreements in place. The capacity of staff to build and maintain partnerships needs to be further developed.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:

CARMHA needs to engage more effectively with key stakeholders in Ho Chi Minh City such as the PAC, and the Ministry of Health. The organisation is one of the leading research centers on MSM and transgender people in Vietnam, and their findings will serve as an evidence base for targeted and right-based programmes.

Together with the Project Management Training to the staff recommended under other capacity areas, stakeholder mapping and analysis is also necessary for effective engagements with other local actors such as the CBOs. This support can include establishing ways to improve exchange of information between partners and among networks.

Support is also needed for CARMAH to develop partnerships with CBOs and technical agencies in Ho Chi Minh City and in Vietnam within the sustainability of the Regional City Based HIV Testing Campaign: TestXXX project. The TestXXX model uses a multi-partnership approach to ensure that key messages on HIV testing successfully reach young MSM.

B. STRATEGIC INFORMATION

Average Score: 4 / 4

Producing strategic information is a core function of CARMAH in its role as a research center. Disseminating evidence for HIV programming is an integral part of their contribution to the HIV response as a local organisation. The strategic information, in both English and Vietnamese, is disseminated widely to government bodies, local NGOs, international NGOs, healthcare professional level, UN bodies, and community workers.
CARMHAH is very keen on gathering information and data from diverse sources, which they use in their planning and research analysis. They gather information from research or similar surveys related to MSM, drug users and sex workers. Data are also collected from PAC and national level agencies related to HIV.

CARMHAH focuses both on qualitative and quantitative research, but they prioritise qualitative data. CARMHAH has additionally developed a framework on correct methodologies for gathering data.

There is adequate knowledge among the staff to identify, collect and use strategic information to inform their activities. Staff are also trained in motivational interviewing by Hanoi Medical University to effectively gather qualitative information and extend peer support.

However, there is limited capacity in disseminating information strategically to partners and other stakeholders. There is also limited capacity in research analysis among the junior staff. In addition, capacity to translate research findings to advocacy messages needs enhancing.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:**

- **CARMHAH needs external support to disseminate its publications strategically in all platforms including national, regional and global channels.** The technical support should cover the identification of key messages and tailoring of activities to fit into needs of the identified target audience.

- **Training for CARMHAH staff is also needed on research analysis and writing effective reports.**

### IV. PROGRAMME AND TECHNICAL CAPACITY

**Overall Score: 3.87 / 4**

#### A. HIV TECHNICAL CAPACITY

**Average Score: 3.33 / 4**

All key staff from the senior management level down to the volunteers have the required knowledge, understanding and competence on HIV gathered from previous HIV and AIDS experience ranging up to 30 years. Through a technical support team consisting of itself, UNAIDS and The Thai Red Cross, CARMHAH is able to access recent information or evidence on HIV.

Being a knowledge hub on HIV in Ho Chi Minh City, CARMHAH has provided technical support to a number of community-based organisations in the form of trainings. Due to a lack of guidelines and protocols on technical support provision, these trainings are done in an informal manner and conducted on an irregular basis. In September 2015, CARMHAH has organised a PrEP consultation amongst the CBOs in HCMC to provide them with latest updates on this innovative prevention method.

CARMHAH also ensures that staffs’ knowledge and skills are up to date, and hence, are able to work confidently. As mentioned in the Staffing section, the organisation supports in-house training and annual 40-hour continuing education on particular courses.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:**

- **CARMHAH needs to strengthen its relations with VUSTA, the principal recipient of Global Fund country grant, in order to access support in further developing the organisations’ and its staff’s technical capacity on the related field. In addition, it is necessary for CARMHAH to organise a method of bringing down the knowledge and information from the regional level to the CBOs at a local level.**

- **External support, particularly funding and module development, is also needed for CARMHAH to provide effective technical support to other CBOs.**

#### B. ADVOCACY

(not applicable)

#### C. PEER SUPPORT

**Average Score: 4 / 4**

All key staff from the Senior Management Level to the volunteers have the required knowledge and skills in peer support. There is strong internal capacity building on peer support within the organisation. In addition, staff are willing to share their knowledge and train new volunteers.

CARMHAH has developed and put in place a protocol in conducting peer support and motivational interviews. The protocol was modelled based on the project but it was adjusted based on the broader context of Ho Chi Minh City. The document is used in CARMHAH’s activities offering peer counselling and referral services. However, the protocol is open to revisions to be more effective.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:**

- **The peer support protocol needs an improved approach to include guidance of linking male sex worker and transgender people who are tested positive into treatment and care.**

- **Support is also needed for CARMHAH to mobilise funding to sustain its peer support activities.**

#### D. HEALTH PROMOTION

**Average Score: 4 / 4**

Health promotion for key affected populations (MSM, MSW, and transgender people) is at the center of CARMHAH’s projects. These projects have regular monitoring and evaluation conducted using electronic forms. CARMHAH staffs are encouraged to maintain interview records in electronic format for easy access and monitoring.

CARMHAH develops its own key messaging for health promotion activities in accordance with the applicable guidelines set by its funders. These messages are also guided by feedback from stakeholders and communities. CARMHAH observes a consultative process, gathering community, partners and other stakeholders in formulating key messages on health promotion.
However, there is a need for the staffs to improve their capacity on assessment of the organisation's health promotion activities and messaging.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:**

- Additional funding is needed for CARMAH to sustain its health promotion activities. As this element found to be an important activity within their projects, CARMAH needs to sustain health promotion to encourage its interviewees/respondents, and other MSM, MSW, and transgender, to get tested and know their status.

- CARMAH staff also need to be capacitated to monitor and report to progress and results of their health promotion activities. By documenting the results, CARMAH will be able to improve the effectiveness of its activities.

**E. TECHNICAL GUIDELINES**

**Average Score: 4 / 4**

CARMAH has developed and produced technical guidelines in consultation with experts and end users. Examples of the guidelines produced include training module to guide medical doctors in treating people living with HIV, and modules to guide researchers in conducting motivational interviews. The organisation has the capacity to identify, prioritise and plan the acquisition or development of technical guidelines based on the needs of the professionals they work with and their target audiences.

All responsible staff have relevant, knowledge, skills and experience in the development of technical guidelines. CARMAH also supports its staff in taking on-going training and development opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills.

CARMAH possesses capacity to disseminate the guidelines developed by the organisation. Dissemination of the guidelines is conducted during workshops and conferences, and direct distribution to key leaders in the community.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:**

- CARMAH needs to strengthen its engagement with the United Nations, both country and regional offices. Forming partnerships with UN agencies enables access to new information for the development and interpretation of technical guidelines. This may include study tours to observe good practices and implementation of technical guidelines in organisations and agencies.

- Just as Communications Capacity, support is needed for CARMAH to strategically disseminate its technical guidelines to the right users, and increase the impact of its work.

**F. TECHNICAL TRAINING**

**Average Score: 4 / 4**

CARMAH’s key staff have the relevant, knowledge, skills and experience in providing technical trainings. The organisation has the capacity to identify, prioritise and plan its training and professional development activities based on project needs and based on incoming projects.

CARMAH conducts regular reviews on its plans to provide training. However, staff need capacity to promote and advertise trainings by utilising online platforms, and existing partnerships and networks.

**RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE NEXT STEPS:**

- Funding is required as CARMAH intends to provide an extensive professional training for clinical professionals, which shall participants’ (who are medical doctors) per diems, venue rentals, meeting packages and modules. Therefore, resource mobilisation is a capacity that CARMAH needs to be strengthened.

**TECHNICAL SUPPORT RECOMMENDATIONS**

The Rapid Assessment Apparatus provides CARMAH with a snapshot of its current strengths, needs and capacities. This summary report indicates that CARMAH is strong in its staffing, strategic information, and in program and technical capacities including HIV technical capacity, peer support, health promotion, technical guidelines, and technical training. Although reported with reasonable capacity, support is needed on project management and communications. The organisation is less strong in governance, strategy and planning, policies and procedures, resource mobilisation and partnerships.

CARMAH reports to be strongest in the program and technical module. However, resources need to be mobilised to strengthen current knowledge and skills, and at the same time, to sustain the services the organisation offer.

On the other hand, the Rap App shows CARMAH is less strong in governance and strategy, and needs additional support in this area.

The next steps highlighted in this report in terms of technical support needs are summarised below:

**A. IMMEDIATE TECHNICAL SUPPORT FOR TestSGN**

- Technical support in developing CARMAH’s governance manuals to define governance operations and ensure clear separation of management and oversight roles and responsibilities;
- Technical support in developing the organisational policies combined with training workshops on program management:
  - Finance Policy and setting up a working finance management system;
  - Procurement Policy;
  - Standard Operating Procedures;
  - Monitoring and Evaluation Guidelines;
- Development of organisational Monitoring and Evaluation Policy or protocol, Toolkit and performance framework, following a staff training on the same topic;
- CARMAH needs assistance to develop its financial reporting system. This capacity is considered relevant and urgent in relation to the organisation’s management of project funds under the partnership with APCOM.
B. SHORT TERM

- Support to develop CARMAH's organisational work plan reflecting the organisation's purpose, mission and vision;
- Resource mobilisation training including effective writing of concept notes and proposals, and mapping and identifying potential sources of funding;
- Development of a resource mobilisation plan following the training mentioned in the preceding, with subsequent support or mentoring to improve the organisation's engagements with potential donors;

C. MEDIUM TERM

- Support in CARMAH's organisational communication activities particularly in developing key messages from research findings, utilisation of online platforms and channels to deliver key messages, and building partnerships and networks with media outlets in Ho Chi Minh City;
- Continuing technical support and mentoring on disseminating key messages, including the identification of target audience, tailoring of activities based on target audience, and development of policy and advocacy materials;
- Technical support to develop CARMAH's strategy to ensure that its activities on peer support, health promotion and technical trainings are strengthened, developed according to the needs of the target audience, and has sufficient funding for sustainability;

D. LONG TERM

- Advice on how to build and maintain good relations with UN agencies both at country and regional level;
- Support to gain recent and updated technical guidelines from regional and global bodies that will provide guidance to CARMAH with regards to their work particularly on health promotion, research and advocacy;
- Strengthen the Executive Board and the capacity of staff to gain more knowledge and technical capacity on HIV, peer support and health promotion;
- Support to strengthen the capacity of staff in research analysis, both in quantitative and qualitative aspects;

ANNEX A - CARMAH

Organisational Profile

By completing the organisation profile you will provide us with basic information about your organisation and the work you do. This information will assist us to tailor the self-assessment to your organisation and enable the facilitator to ask more relevant questions.

It will take you approximately 30 minutes to complete this profile. Please write or type your answers to the questions below and send the completed form to (name of contact person to be inserted) before the assessment date.

Date: 20 / 03 / 2011

CONTACT DETAILS

a. Full name of the organisation: Center for Applied Research on Men and Community Health
b. Short name/abbreviation of organisation: CARMAH
c. Address (building/street number, street, city, postcode, country): KM Plaza, 51-53 Vo Van Tan Street, District 3, Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam
d. Contact telephone number: + 848-3930-9590
e. Website address (if applicable): www.carmah.vn
f. Contact email address: carmahvn@carmah.vn

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS

What social media platforms does your organisation use or have a presence on? (Please tick)
- Facebook
- Twitter
- Instagram
- Other Please specify:

ORGANISATION STRUCTURE AND REGISTRATION

a. What year was your organisation established? 2012
b. What year was your organisation registered (if applicable)? 2013

Please briefly outline the management structure of your organisation. (Please attach an organigram if you have one)
GOVERNANCE

Do you have a governing body? (e.g. a board or management committee)
- No (If no: Please describe how your organisation is governed)
- Yes (If yes: How is your governing body structured and how many members do you have (e.g. a board with 7 members a chairperson and two sub committees)?
  - 5 (five) members of equal voice

VISION, VALUES, PURPOSE

Do your organisation have a vision, set of values and purpose?
- No (Please go to question 6.)
- Yes (If yes: Please tell us what your organisations vision, values and purpose are below)

Our organisation’s vision is
- To improve the health and quality of life of gay and bisexual men, transgender people, and other men who have sex with men in Vietnam through the application of effective and evidence-based health interventions.

Our organisation’s values are
- We conduct high-quality research and evaluations to international standards.
- We collaborate actively and positively with Vietnamese and international partners.
- We cultivate relationships of mutual trust and understanding with the MSM and TG communities.
- The MSM and TG community are active participants in our work.
- Our working environment is multicultural, professional and stimulating.

Our organisation’s purpose is
- At CARMAH we have a vision of a community of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (LGBT) in Vietnam that has the physical and mental health to fully participate as active and accepted members of society. We believe that the LGBT community has the capacity to provide health services and interventions for its members and the responsibility to thoroughly evaluate those activities for efficacy. Our goal is to become the leading center for research and evaluation on health for gay and bisexual men and transgender people in Vietnam.

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

Please list your organisation’s donors or income sources.
- Center for Drug Use and HIV Research, USA
- Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center, USA
- Harvard Medical School AIDS Initiative in Vietnam, USA
- Center for LGBT Health Research, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, USA
- UNAIDS
- PATH

STAFF

Do your organisation have paid staff?
- No (Please go to question 8.)
- Yes (If yes: Please answer the following)
  a. How many paid full-time staff do you have?
  b. How many part-time staff do you have?

Please list the roles of your staff (e.g. CEO, Project Officer, etc.)
1. Bao Le, MSW, Director
2. Donn Colby, MD, MPH, Senior Technical Advisor (unpaid)
3. Huyen Hoang, MAA, Foundation Advisor, (part-time, paid)
5. Mai Doan Anh Thi, Research Consultant (part-time, paid)
6. Geoff Manasse, BA, Senior Art Advisor (full time volunteer, unpaid)
7. Huu Tran, BS, Senior Project / Administrative Officer
8. Linh Nguyen, BA, Accountant
9. Quan Nguyen, BA, Health Educator Project Manager
10. Hai Phung, BA, Senior Project Officer
11. Khoi Le, MCP, Senior Project Officer
12. Toan Trang, BA, Project Officer
13. Thien Dinh, MSW, Project Manager
14. An Dang, BA, Senior Project Officer
15. Xuan Huynh, BS, Project Officer
16. Loc Nguyen, NA, Health Educator
17. Man Nguyen, NA, Health Educator
18. Tuan Luong, Community Supporter

VOLUNTEERS

Do you have volunteers?
- No (Please go to question 8.)
- Yes (If yes: Please answer the following)
  a. How many volunteers do you have?
  b. How many volunteers are currently active?
  c. Please list the roles of your volunteers (e.g. board member, adviser, project worker, etc.)
    - Collaborators
    - Community Advisory Board for transgender women (TG)
    - Community networking
    - Capacity building
    - Culture enhancing
    - Encouraging and gathering subjects
    - Launching program, spreading into community
    - Listening, gathering information from community
    - Advising
    - Supporting
Rapid Assessment Apparatus Summary Report:  
Center for Applied Research on Men and Community Health (CARMAH)

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

Do you have technical advisors?

☐ No (Please go to question 11.)
☒ Yes (If yes: please answer the following)

How many advisors are there?
- 4 (four)

Please list/describe the roles of your technical advisors

1. Project Development and Implementation: Responsible for providing leadership and guidance in all scientific and technical areas related to healthcare.
   - They oversee the development, implementation, management and evaluation of all scientific and research projects and services undertaken by CARMAH and its partners.
   - They provide advice to the CARMAH director for strategic and innovative planning activities including regular needs assessment.
   - They provide supervision and guidance to the CARMAH data manager regarding data collection, analysis, and reporting.
   - They provide training to CARMAH staff on research methodology, including the ethics of human subject research, data collection, and implementation of specific protocols.
   - They act as liaisons between CARMAH, donors and implementing partners in regard to technical components of scientific and research projects.

2. Fund Raising:
   They assist the CARMAH director in developing technical aspects of grant proposals.

3. Reporting:
   They provide leadership on scientific and technical reporting
   - They take the lead in writing reports to donors and partners on the results of scientific protocol implementation.
   - They coordinate the submission of manuscripts and abstracts to journals and scientific conferences.

MEMBERSHIP

Does your organisation have member?

☒ Yes (If yes: Please answer the following)

What social media platforms does your organisation use or have a presence on? (Please tick)

☐ MSM
☐ Transgender
☐ PLHIV
☐ PWUD
☐ Young people
☐ Health workforce
☐ Other Please specify:
   Other LGBT folks

COVERAGE

What geographic area does your organisation cover? (e.g. local, provincial, national, regional)
- Vietnam national wide

FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

What are your organisation’s core activities? (e.g. advocacy, peer support, service delivery, etc.)
- HIV/AIDS and STI Research
- Advocacy
- Peer support
- Service delivery
- LGBT health

PROJECTS

a. How many projects do you currently have?
   - 4

b. Please list your current projects
   - HIV Risk and Prevention Young Male Sex Workers in Vietnam
   - Survey on the use of health services among MSM in HCMC: Online Survey
   - PrEP Research
   - TG Research

C. Approximately how people did you reach through your core activities in the last year? (Please tick)

☐ 0 - 50
☐ 50 - 100
☐ 100 - 500
☐ 500 - 1,000
☐ 1,000 - 2,000
☐ 2,000 - 5,000
☐ 5,000 and above Please specify: 1200 for YMSW projects, 2000 for on-line survey over the whole country, 500 for TG project, 2000 for PrEP

UNAIDS Headquarters to UNAIDS Country Office, NDRI
**STAKEHOLDERS / PARTNERS**

Who are your key stakeholders? (e.g. KAP, volunteers, funders, government departments, non-government organisations, etc.)
- MSM, TG, LGBT, Young Male Sex Workers, YMSW using drugs
- Young people
- People in the healthcare in VN who are interested in serving the whole community
- Provincial AIDS Community
- Health Department
- Communist Party
- Governmental bodies
- People who manage healthcare

**FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

What are the future directions of your organisation? (e.g. plan to expand coverage, reach new groups, etc.)
- Continue to be the leading research NGO in Vietnam for MSM and LGBT.
- Provide technical skills and trainings on research and campaigns to MSM CBOs.
- Narrow the gap between MSM healthcare needs and healthcare services.
- Enhance staff human development and capacity to improve quality of life for themselves and for the MSM community.

**KEY ACHIEVEMENTS**

What were your organisation’s successes in the last year?
- Completed three research studies
- Co-authored of many scientific papers produced by our main investigators in the USA
- Received an award as the excellent presenter of The 6th Vietnam National Scientific Conference on HIV/AIDS in Hanoi.
- Completed website revisions and updates viewable on the desktop and mobile devices.
- Added information to our website and a Facebook page on PrEP. Introduced PrEP to the MSM community in Vietnam and began efforts to make it available to our stakeholders.
- Created the Transgender Community Advisory Board and expanded our networking to reach beyond our narrow study areas

**KEY CHALLENGES**

What were your organisation’s challenges in the last year?
- Transitional funding has come to an end. We are looking for new projects to keep our trained staff employed and to continue to fulfill our mission.

Thank you for taking the time to complete this form.
Please email your completed organisation profile to the facilitator of your self-assessment.
We are united in our courage to advocacy issues that affect the lives of men who have sex with men and transgender people, including HIV, rights, health and well being.