

Procurement and Supply Chain Management

Fact Sheet on UNFPA's support to Procurement & Supply Chain Management

Nov 2013



UNFPA haulage trucks transporting drugs from Freetown to the Districts

Background

The Global Programme to Enhance Reproductive Health Commodity Security (GPRHCS) is the UNFPA flagship programme to ensure access to a reliable supply of contraceptives, medicine and equipment for family planning, HIV/STI prevention and maternal health services. GPRHCS is a thematic fund that catalyzes national action. The ultimate aim of the fund is **reproductive health commodity security** (RHCS), which is achieved when all individuals can obtain and use affordable, quality reproductive health supplies of their choice whenever they need them. It has a pivotal role in accelerating progress towards the ICPD Programme of Action and the MDGs. Although Sierra Leone started receiving GPRHCS funding in 2008, initially the funding framework was not large since Sierra Leone was considered only as a Stream 2 country. However, in 2009, Sierra Leone was selected as a priority stream 1 country, and the Programme expanded to its full-scale operation in 2010, just as the Free Health Care Initiative kicked off. Since 2010, Sierra Leone has been receiving approximately 5 million USD (1.5 million for drugs and 3.5 million for project activities) per year from the GPRHCS fund.

Strengthening the accountability

UNFPA also partners with a civil society organization, the Health for All Coalition, (HFAC) to assist the Government in monitoring the use of health commodities for enhanced accountability. Prior to the launch of the Free Health Care Initiative, the Government was struggling with the issue of drug leakages, which affected greatly the availability of necessary drugs and equipment. HFAC monitors clearing, storage, distribution and use of health commodities to ensure availability at service delivery points. HFAC works in partnership with the Anti-Corruption Commission and the Sierra Leone Police, to investigate cases and take appropriate action against the suspects. This has worked as a deterrent for possible abuse and corruption. As a result, there has been a substantial reduction in pilferage, and accountability in the use of health commodities has been strengthened.

UNFPA Support to Procurement of Drugs

Since the roll out of government's Free Health Care Initiative in 2010, UNFPA has procured reproductive health drugs in support of the FHCI including essential life-saving drugs and contraceptives to the value of approximately 7.5 million and this includes \$5million through the GPRHCS programme and US \$2.5 million through support from the African Development Bank (AfDB).

In addition to the procurement of RH/FP drugs for the FHCI, UNFPA procured equipment for maternity wards for all the 13 districts through the UN Joint Programme that was funded by DFID and Irish Aid. With support from the AfDB, UNFPA procured equipment worth US \$1.03 million for the 27 newly refurbished health facilities comprising of 21 PHUs, one Primary Health Complex and 5 District Hospital maternity wards in Bonthe, Bo, Kenema, Tonkolili and Port Loko Districts.



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Main Results Achieved under Logistics, Supply of Drugs and Equipment:

- ❖ Rehabilitation and refurbishment of the RH store at CMS with funding from the Japanese Government.
- ❖ Completion of the Unfinished District stores initially funded by EC.
- ❖ Supply of equipment including Generators, furniture and fridges to district and hospital stores countrywide.
- ❖ Procurement, distribution and installation of computers and accessories for CHANNEL at all District and Hospital stores countrywide.
- ❖ Training and mentoring Government store keepers, pharmacists, District Medical Officers, Hospital Superintendents and IT technicians in the use of CHANNEL.
- ❖ Sponsoring a study tour of selected Government officials on LMIS to Madagascar in 2011.
- ❖ Installation VCCT at the Central Medical Stores with an extension to the Minister of Health's office.
- ❖ Procurement of 3 haulage trucks, 5 vans and 26 Motorbikes to support the distribution of commodities to different parts of country.
- ❖ Technical Support to the CMS in procurement, and LMIS by the recruitment of an IT Consultant based at the CMS and availability of the RH Technical Specialist and RHCS advisor.



HFAC staff monitoring Drug Supply in Port Loko District

Support to Logistics and Supply Chain Management Systems

UNFPA has also helped with the refurbishment of two District Medical Stores (DMS) in Kono and Koinadugu and equipped 12 DMS with all the required furniture, ICT equipment, refrigeration and generators in order to ensure proper storage function of FHC commodities. In an effort to strengthen distribution, UNFPA procured and handed over to the MOHS three haulage trucks, five pick-ups and twenty-six (26) motorbikes so that drugs are efficiently and effectively distributed from the Central Medical Stores (CMS) to DMS and from the DMS to Peripheral Health Units (PHUs).

CHANNEL is electronic software developed by the UNFPA initially to capture Reproductive Health Commodities procured by UNFPA and supplied to various countries across Africa. Since the launch of the Free Health Care by His Excellency the President in 2010, CHANNEL has been used as the main electronic tool for the implementation of the LMIS. In 2011, the Ministry again with the support of UNFPA, decided to upgrade the CHANNEL software, modifying it to incorporate Sierra Leone's Reports Request and Issue Voucher (RRIV) forms to ensure entry of consumption data from Peripheral Health Units (PHUs), use of a user name and password, all this in an effort to domesticate the software.

With the upgrade of CHANNEL, all FHCI drugs to be dispensed in Sierra Leone were recorded and continue to be recorded in CHANNEL, which is now being utilised in all the 13 Districts of Sierra Leone for all health commodities. In addition, the Ministry with the help of development partners has also deployed thirteen (13) District CHANNEL Operators in all the districts to manage the software in the field. The data generated by District CHANNEL operators is used for decision-making purposes especially in forecasting and strategic planning. This has enabled MoHS to generate monthly consumption data from more than 70% of PHUs in the country.

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Challenges in responding to Procurement and Supply Chain Management (PSM) Needs



UNFPA Delivery pick ups given to District Medical Stores

- Although the efforts and resources of UNFPA has greatly helped to address the RHCS needs and improve the Procurement and Supply Chain Management (PSM) systems of the country, a number of problems still exist in the area of RHCS. Despite UNFPA's best efforts, only 41.1 % Service Delivery points in 2012 reported "no stock outs" mainly due to RH/FP commodities not being integrated into the Free Health Care distribution system.
- There is also a continuous need to train and retain skilled government staff members to handle the procurement and logistics management.
- Following the historic breakthrough when in 2011, the Ministry of Health and Sanitation allocated USD 165,000 for RHCS for the first time, none of these funds has yet been released for the purpose and UNFPA has been advocating for the release of the allocated budget.

Way Forward



IT operators being trained in CHANNL Software

- Together with MoHS and its partners, UNFPA will continue to make concerted efforts to increase its presence in the field to systematically monitor the availability of commodities in Service Delivery Points in the field. A field monitoring plan will be prepared according to which UNFPA will try and visit SDPs in the field throughout the year in a systematic manner.
- In the past, the RHCS committee, comprising of MoHS and health development partners have been meeting on an ad hoc basis. UNFPA will try to revive the RHCS committee meetings to ensure that the committee meets on a regular basis and that RH commodity security is addressed as one of the key points in all the meetings. This way, the committee can act as an overseeing body to monitor the commodity levels in the field. UNFPA will also continue to hold regular meetings with CMS and NPPU to review and coordinate distribution plans in order to ensure that RH commodities are included and integrated into the Free Health Care distribution system.
- UNFPA, with support from Civil Society continues to advocate for the release of the allocated funds and continues to engage parliamentarians to increase Government allocation for Health and to advocate with the Ministry of Health and Sanitation for an increase in the RHCS budget to a minimum of 1% of the total health budget.
- UNFPA will also work with the National Pharmaceutical Procurement Unit (NPPU), which has been set up to improve the procurement and Supply Chain Management of the country especially in the area of electronic management information system.

Sierra Leone

Procurement Network

UNFPA has also helped to set up the Sierra Leone Procurement Network (SLPN) comprising of key procurement stakeholders in the country. The professional network, first of its kind in the country was set up in early 2013 to provide a professional community that encourages shared learning and promote procurement related best practices in the country.

For a visual representation of UNFPA's partnership with civil society network in monitoring the commodities and other initiatives by UNFPA Sierra Leone, please visit our YouTube site at

<http://www.youtube.com/user/UNFPASierraLeone>