

# Life Saving Commodities – Supply Chain & Local Markets

## Background

The UN Commission on Life-Saving Commodities for Women and Children (the Commission) was formed in 2012 by the UN Secretary-General as part of the global Every Woman Every Child (EWEC) movement ([www.everywomaneverychild.org](http://www.everywomaneverychild.org)). The Commission challenged the global community to increase access to and appropriate use of essential medicines, medical devices, and health supplies that effectively address the leading preventable causes of death during pregnancy, childbirth, and childhood.

Led by a wide range of high-level leaders from around the world, the Commission made ten recommendations focused on rapidly increasing the availability and use of 13 priority commodities for reproductive, maternal, newborn, and child health (RMNCH) to achieve the goal of saving the lives of six million women and children by 2017.

Eight expert groups<sup>1</sup> – or Technical Resource Teams (TRTs) – carry forward the Commission’s recommendations by supporting countries in their efforts to make these essential commodities more widely available and used, and by addressing global and regional RMNCH challenges. Each of these TRTs specializes on a type of commodities or on a barrier that prevents a wider use of these commodities.

## Pooling expertise on supply chains and local markets

The availability of quality-assured essential commodities at the point of use is hindered by weak and unreliable supply chains. Challenges often exist at all levels of the supply chain in a country and across all supply chain functions including quantification, procurement, distribution, storage, and inventory management. Left unaddressed, these challenges quickly erode the value of all other investments in health at the health facility level and in the community. The absence of a well-functioning supply chain contributes to poor quality of care, and ultimately poor health – and sometimes death – among women and children.



Community Health Agent Koudedia Kouyatz checks supplies in Manadougou, in the district of Ouellesebougou, Mali, November 2012.

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The Supply Chain & Local Markets TRT works to address these supply chain challenges and barriers to ensure essential commodities are delivered efficiently and safely and available where and when they are needed.

## Progress to date

### *Supply and awareness activities:*

- Documented knowledge on promising practices for supply chain management, including: guidance on the potential barriers along the supply chain, guidance and case studies on supply chain integration, a toolkit on resources for supply management coordination committees, guidance on supply chain management indicators, an inventory of ICT tools for supply chain management, and best practices in linking health management and logistics management information systems.
- Developed guidance for quantification (forecasting and supply planning) of RMNCH essential commodities with evidence-based algorithms to support countries in forecast development.

<sup>1</sup> The other TRTs focus on family planning; maternal health; newborn health; child health; demand, access and performance; global markets, quality and regulation; and advocacy.

These groups are coordinated by a multi-agency Strategy and Coordination Team hosted by the United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF).

- Encouraged private sector engagement: The TRT developed a toolkit on private sector engagement and is currently testing it in Nigeria.
- Improved information systems for use in supply chain management: the TRT supported the development of OpenLMIS v.1.0, for deployment in Tanzania and Zambia. OpenLMIS is a collaborative, community-focused initiative to create an open source electronic LMIS for health commodity supply chains in low-income countries.
- Added features to CommTrack, a tool for mobile logistics and supply chain management that is currently deployed in four of the eight pathfinder countries<sup>2</sup>.
- Added logistics management functionality to an open-source health management information system (DHIS2) to improve linkages between service delivery and logistics data, and is testing those new features in Nigeria.

#### *Local market shaping activities:*

- Implement comprehensive local market-shaping interventions to increase access to zinc and oral rehydration solution (ORS): The TRT launched large scale zinc/ORS programs in Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda and India.
- Explore local market-shaping opportunities across other commodities: The TRT has developed local market shaping strategies for chlorhexidine and amoxicillin DT in Nigeria. The TRT has also completed country assessments for Malawi, Tanzania and Kenya, highlighting key opportunities, as well as an analysis of market bottlenecks in Ethiopia and Liberia. The TRT is now developing an approach to work with the East Africa Community to support local manufacturing, specifically through coordinated procurement, manufacturing technical assistance, buyer support and regulatory engagement.

### **How to involve the Supply Chain & Local Markets TRT**

The TRT is available for technical assistance to identify country-specific supply chain barriers and potential solutions, develop forecasts and supply plans, engage the private sector, develop monitoring and evaluation plans, develop recommendations on ICT solutions, and customize and deploy supply chain information systems.

<sup>2</sup> The 'pathfinder countries' are the eight countries where the TRTs started their work: Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Malawi, Nigeria, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Tanzania, and Uganda.

### **Members**

Conveners: USAID and UNFPA

The Supply Chain & Local Markets TRT brings together experts who serve as focal points for key activities. Supporting organizations include the Clinton Health Access Initiative (CHAI), Dimagi, John Snow, Inc., Management Sciences for Health, the mHealth Alliance, PATH, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), the US Agency for International Development (USAID), the University of Oslo, Norway, and VillageReach, among others.

### **Resources**

The Supply Chain & Local Markets TRT has developed several tools that countries may use to improve their supply chains, including:

- A framework to identify key barriers and supply challenges
- Briefs on best and promising practices for supply chain management
- Country cases studies in supply chain integration
- A guide to best practices in supply chain integration
- A guide of key supply chain indicators for measuring performance
- A toolkit for supply management coordination committees
- A toolkit to help in-country supply chain managers to engage with potential private sector supply chain partners
- A quantification guidance package

### **Contact us**

For more information or to request tools and technical assistance, please contact Jennifer Bergeson-Lockwood at [jbergeson-lockwood@usaid.gov](mailto:jbergeson-lockwood@usaid.gov) or Kabir Ahmed at [kahmed@unfpa.org](mailto:kahmed@unfpa.org)

