Increasing Local Capacity for Health Commodities Quantification in Swaziland

In Swaziland, the USAID-funded SIAPS Program has taken great strides in ensuring country ownership and sustainability of local technical assistance initiatives. Since 2012, SIAPS has supported quantification efforts in Swaziland, providing extensive support to the Ministry of Health (MoH) in conducting quantification exercises for antiretrovirals (ARVs), TB medicines, and sexual and reproductive health commodities to guide procurements and inform budgeting. As a result, seven quantification documents have been produced with assistance from SIAPS.

In September 2015, SIAPS conducted an in-depth quantification training for the MoH Quantification Committee, which comprises representatives from the Central Medical Stores (CMS) and national program representatives dealing with ARVs, TB medicines, and sexual and reproductive health. Seventeen participants were trained on the processes, methodologies, data analysis, and organization for quantification. They were also introduced and trained on when and how to use world-renowned quantification tools (including Quantimed, Reality√, and PipeLine) for health commodities. The quantification capacity building exercise was appropriately timed to coincide with the annual quantification and budget proposal submission timelines at the Ministry of Planning. As such, participants were able to use actual data and produce quantification results to be submitted and used for the fiscal years 2016-2019.

After completion of the exercise, the quantification subcommittee leads were able to present quantification results and explain the processes, methodologies and tools used to conduct proper quantification. Furthermore, they have been able to conduct quarterly review of supply plans with minimal assistance from SIAPS. This signifies an important step to SIAPS technical assistance strategies, which are focused on ensuring country ownership and sustainability beyond the SIAPS project.

All participants cited improved confidence in independently conducting quantification exercises for the MoH. SIAPS has established a pool of experts to ensure continuity in forecasting the demand for ARV, TB medicines, and sexual and reproductive health commodities in the country. This is a critical component in mobilizing and securing financial resources to ensure improved commodities availability and procurement procedures.

These skills are vital to ensuring the uninterrupted availability of health commodities in the country. Following the successful implementation of this intervention, the MoH will continue to lead and facilitate annual quantification and supply planning exercises to inform budgeting for health commodities.