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WORKSHOP ON LEAD TIME REVIEW, MOHFW



A workshop was held on November 20, 2012, at Spectra Convention Center, Gulshan-1, Dhaka, on lead time review of the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare (MOHFW). The workshop was organized by MOHFW, supported by the Systems for Improving Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services Program of Bangladesh (SIAPS BD). Thirty-three participants, including nine women from the MOHFW Procurement and Logistics Management Cell (PLMC), Logistic and Supply Unit of the Directorate General of Family Planning (DGFP), the Central Medical Stores Depot/Directorate General of Health Services, the Program Management and Monitoring Unit, and the World Bank, were present at the workshop.

Ms. Badrunnessa, Program Manager/Deputy Secretary, MOHFW, served as the chair. At the outset of the workshop, she welcomed participants and requested that they concentrate in every session and learn the important role that procurement plays at MOHFW. She also thanked SIAPS BD for its support in organizing such a significant workshop.

The overall objective of the workshop was to consider the reduction of steps and timelines involved in the MOHFW procurement process, through more efficient and effective work flow management.



SIAPS BD made the presentation on lead time and its implications, emphasizing that lead time is not only time but also money, because it relates to many other factors in the procurement process and beyond, even affecting the stock-out situation.



The World Bank has been taking steps to provide a No Objection Certificate (NOC) to packages in a much shorter time than previously. MOHFW has also been taking necessary steps to expedite file processing, which helped reduce the time taken for procurement from earlier years.

MOHFW is in close touch with procuring entities and taking actions as and when necessary to help reduce lead time and will continue to do so in the future. The PLMC can help overcome any kind of delay.

Finally, based on achievements made in DGFP procurement in the last three years, the decision has been made to reduce total lead time in procurement from 78 weeks to 58 weeks. This was proof of major improvement in relation to reducing time with successful procurement of all the items in the last three years.

Ms. Badrunnessa also presided over the closing session. She expressed deep gratitude to the participants for their sincere participation in the workshop. At the same time, she requested SIAPS BD to organize such a workshop in future on the outcome of the learning and challenges at the implementation site.

UPAZILA INVENTORY MANAGEMENT SYSTEM (UIMS-V2) ROLLED OUT IN ALL 486 UPAZILAS

The Upazila Inventory Management System (UIMS) is desktop-based software to maintain the day-to-day logistics function of upazila family planning stores. In 2007, the DGFP initiated development of desktop-based inventory software for the family planning stores with assistance from the US Agency for International Development (USAID) through the USAID | DELIVER Project (implemented by John Snow Inc.). The UIMS software was introduced in 40 upazilas in 2008 as a pilot. Another 84 upazilas were brought under the UIMS software between 2008 and 2009. Since then, UIMS software has been used in 124 of 486 upazilas for day-to-day logistics management activities.

At the end of 2009, the Stengthening Pharmaceutical Systems (SPS) Program took over UIMS from USAID | DELIVER to maintain and roll out the system country-wide. Based on the lessons learned and user demand, the SPS Program upgraded the software with some new features and renamed it UIMS-v2. Later, SPS provided training to the staff of 49 upazilas (new sites) and installed the upgraded software in all 173 upazilas using UIMS.

For the last couple of years, technical advisers from SIAPS have conducted regular troubleshooting and on-the-job training in the software. SIAPS also provided technical support to the DGFP in backing up the database, managing user access, and fixing software defects; it is also making enhancements and modifications. Based on the successful implementation of the system, MOHFW/DGFP asked SIAPS to take the necessary initiatives to roll out the system in the remaining 313 upazilas by December 2012.

SIAPS initially carried out an options analysis to identify a sustainable mechanism for system roll out in the new upazilas. It came up with the idea of using a training of trainers (TOT) to develop a pool of trainers. The SIAPS team set criteria to pick 15 champions from 173 upazilas and 21 regional warehouses on the inventory management system. Then, SIAPS facilitated formation of five regional teams (each consisting of one SIAPS technical adviser and three DGFP staff members), which were approved by DGFP. A five-day TOT was organized by DGFP for these five regional teams, and each team developed an action plan for conducting basic training on

UIMS and an installation cycle as well. According to plan, the training started on October 13, 2012, in five different venues and ended on December 13, 2012. Three participants from each upazila had been selected to participate in the training based on the criteria that participants must have some basic knowledge of computer operation.

A total of 968 participants (782 male and 186 female attendees) attended the two-day training course. In addition, 75 high officials from DGFP and MOHFW attended in different batches as resource persons.



The objectives of UIMS training were as follows:

- The primary objective was to train upazila store personnel on UIMS-v2.
- The secondary objective was to roll out the UIMS-v2 software to all upazilas in Bangladesh to efficiently maintain the family planning stores' inventory with the automated software.
- The final goal was to bring all family planning stores into an integrated inventory management system. Ultimately, all monthly reporting and data consolidation will be done automatically and instantly through online connectivity among all upazila stores, warehouses, and DGFP headquarters.

Immediate outcomes

- The capacity of all 486 upazila officials has been developed to run the software smoothly.
- Operational status of UIMS among the upazilas has increased and can be monitored through the Supply Chain Information Portal.
- Autogenerated supply plans, issue vouchers, and monthly 7B reports are available.

Long-term outcomes

- Availability of contraceptives at the service delivery point (SDP)-level will be ensured.
- All upazila family planning stores are under UIMS operation.
- Manual workload of the storekeepers is reduced.
- Storekeepers will be able to concentrate on other activities of good warehousing.
- Correctness of monthly logistics report is enhanced.
- DGFP max-min supply policy is ensured.
- SDP-level stock-outs of contraceptives are reduced.
- Reporting time is faster and the percentage of timely reporting is enhanced.
- Different types of logistics reports are available at any point in time.
- Huge government printing costs (issue vouchers, 7B forms, supply plan registers) will come down.

EFFECTIVE AND EFFICIENT PROCUREMENT AND SUPPLY CHAIN MANAGEMENT THROUGH PLMC

As a part of system strengthening and capacity building of MOHFW, SIAPS Bangladesh has been trying to establish the MOHFW PLMC. After brainstorming sessions and meetings with MOHFW officials, Ms. Aktari Mamtaz, the Senior Secretary and the Additional Secretary (Medical Education and Development) were convinced to form the PLMC. Finally, the government order (GO) was issued on August 26, 2012, to form the PLMC.

According to the order, the PLMC should consist of two program managers (PMs) and six deputy program managers (DPMs) under the overall guidance of Ms. Mamtaz. The PLMC officially launched on October 9, 2012, as MOHFW issued a GO assigning eight persons to perform their duties.

The overall objective of the PLMC is to ensure effective and efficient management of procurement and supply chain management activities of all the procuring entities under MOHFW. Its specific objectives are the following:

- Effective procurement planning
- Efficient procurement
- Effective logistics and supply chain management
- Capacity building
- Monitoring and evaluation

The DPMs will assist the PMs in achieving the objectives that focus on the following specific areas:

- Goods and services
- Logistics management
- Monitoring and evaluation
- Capacity building
- Works-Public Works Department, Health Wing
- Works-Health Engineering Department

In the meantime, an orientation workshop was held November 18–19, 2012, at Proshika Human Resource Development Centre, Manikganj, for the PMs and DPMs. The Additional Secretary (Medical Education and Development) was present at the workshop and played a key role in discussing details of PLMC structure and responsibilities. The terms of reference (TORs) for the PMs and DPMs were drafted through the same workshop in a participatory way. All the participants were keen to provide

ANNUAL BIDDERS' ORIENTATION FOR CMSD/DGHS SUPPLIERS

The Central Medical Stores Depot (CMSD), supported and facilitated by the SIAPS Program, which is implemented by Management Sciences for Health and funded by USAID, organized the annual bidders' orientation for potential national and international bidders to supply health and non-health commodities to the CMSD and the Directorate General of Health Services. Held on March 21, 2013, in the MIS Conference Room, Mohakhali, Dhaka, the program lasted about two and a half hours. It was chaired by Brigadier General Syed Iftexhar Uddin, Director, CMSD and Line Director (Procurement, Logistics and Supplies Management). The participants were bidders on health and non-health commodities who had registered for the program as well as CMSD officials. The director of CMSD gave the opening remarks; CMSD deputy directors and a delegate from MOHFW's PLMC made presentations.

What is the importance of bidders' orientation?

The intention is to orient national and international bidders with updated information on bidding procedures, qualifications, maintenance of delivery schedules, and relevant matters. In addition, CMSD officials are very interested in listening to bidders' opinions about doing business with the CMSD.

The orientation should enable applicants to understand the bidding requirements, the bid document or bid form, and the bidding process, giving them information about how to complete the different bid forms and the framework agreement, as well as information on rights of bidders and their limitations.

What benefits can be expected from bidders' orientation?

The bidders' participation provides an opportunity to ask questions and exchange experiences with the procuring entity, the CMSD, which will ultimately affect the bid evaluation process by allowing efficient submission of bids and removing confusion on all sides.

Discussions and recommendations

Many issues were discussed. They included common problems faced by the CMSD on bid submission, structure of the bid document, importance of the bid form, the bidder information form, price schedule forms, securities, qualification requirements (technical and financial), other required documentation, technical requirements for goods and services, dos and don'ts during evaluation of bids, practices that can lead to debarment, the framework agreement, and complaints and appeals rights.

The bidders' raised their queries and provided recommendations on the following issues:

- Who has power to sign or power of attorney, and how a board of directors can delegate their authority to sign the bid and related documents
- Instituting a system for automatic release of unsuccessful bidders' bid security after a contract is signed, rather than requiring those bidders to request bid security release from the director
- Establishing post-qualification criteria including a site visit for verification
- Instituting a quicker way to release 30 percent payment after the installation and commissioning of electro-medical equipment

their feedback and suggestions to develop the TORs.

The formation and functioning of the PLMC is expected to strengthen the procurement and supply chain management of MOHFW.

STRENGTHENING THE PHARMACOVIGILANCE SYSTEM IN BANGLADESH

With an increasing number of people needing access to medicines in low- and middle-income countries, implementing and enforcing regulation and ensuring reliable surveillance systems have become crucial to guaranteeing all medicines and commodities provided to patients are safe and effective and meet approved quality standards. However, few low- and middle-income countries have adequate pharmaceutical regulatory functions, including licensing of premises, inspection of manufacturers and distributors, and monitoring the quality of drugs.

To address gaps and develop strategies for building regulatory capacity and improving the system in Bangladesh, the Directorate General of Drug Administration (DGDA), with support from SIAPS, conducted a comprehensive assessment of the national medicines regulatory system. The assessment was funded by USAID and the US Food and Drug Administration.

Conducted from June to November 2012, the assessment showed that parts of the laws and regulations are outdated or are not congruent with pharmaceutical legislation in other countries. The DGDA is also severely understaffed to fulfill its mandate and support the local industry, given the rapidly growing pharmaceutical market, the high number of registered products, and the country’s large population size.

The assessment also revealed the absence of an electronic system to maintain an updated register. Such drawbacks have led to an ineffective supervisory system in which substandard medicines and commodities have become a part of the health system.

During a three-day workshop in November 2012, held in Dhaka, where the results and findings of the assessment were discussed and circulated, the DGDA designed and prioritized two separate action plans.

“We need to introduce an automated drug registration system as early as possible to reduce the lead time in the drug registration process, and we also need to take initiative to attain a harmonized global standard in drug regulation,” said Mr. Ruhul Amin, Deputy Director of the DGDA. “We believe that SIAPS should play an instrumental role in our country’s drug registration system advancement.”



The workshop, held in collaboration with SIAPS’s partner, the University of Washington’s Global Medicines Program, was attended by Mr. Md. Humayun Kabir, Bangladesh’s Senior Secretary of MOHFW, and Major General Md. Jahangir Hossain Mollik, Director General of the DGDA, along with several DGDA staff.

The concept of pharmacovigilance is “relatively new in our country and we should revitalize the current Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring Cell and also explore stakeholders’ support in explaining to physicians their role in minimizing adverse drug reaction,” added Mr. Salim Barami, DGDA Director.

With support from SIAPS, the DGDA has reintroduced and restructured the National Adverse Drug Reaction Monitoring cell, thereby ensuring that the public’s health, safety, and access to quality medicines and commodities are safeguarded. SIAPS is currently assisting the DGDA in updating and enhancing its website for better public access to vital information from the administration.

WE WOULD BE HAPPY TO HEAR FROM YOU

Please send comments to Md. Fazle Karim at fkarim@msh.org.

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For more information, please visit
DGFP Supply Chain Information Portal
<http://www.dgfplmis.org/>

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