

Concept note

Support for national medical procurement and supply chain management systems in the WHO European Region, with a focus on transitioning countries.

Purpose

The purpose of this document is to outline activities proposed for several countries in the WHO European region and request assistance in confirming the engagement of the WHO Regional and Country Offices. The activities described below have diverse funding sources and contribute to the overall goals of supporting Procurement and Supply Chain Management (PSM) in the region. Specific areas of work include support to countries transitioning from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (the Global Fund), emergency PSM supply chain preparedness and developing a broader plan of action for PSM capacity development. The period of the project is August to December 2020 for the first two activities and the latter will be conducted based on availability of funding.

WHO requests the support and collaboration of Ministries of Health in these activities, including the nomination of focal points of senior procurement officials and others as needed to participate in the development of key information and proposed strategies.

Scope and Background

The World Health Organization (WHO) in its Regional Office for Europe (EURO) includes fifty-three member states (MS), of which twenty-seven are members of the European Union. In all Member States, PSM systems are under pressure to maintain delivery of essential medicines for priority medicines—including HIV, Tuberculosis and Malaria—as well as emergency medicines and health products in the context of the COVID-19 outbreak. The WHO European Programme of Work highlights the importance of the support that WHO will provide in the next biennium in this area.

Current activities in five European countries (Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan) include assessments and strategies to facilitate transition from the Global Fund procurement support. As these five Member States transition out of eligibility, continuity of the supply of priority disease medicines requires assessment of risk factors and development of a careful transition strategy. The Global Fund has provided funding to WHO to support assessments and transition strategies in these countries, including PSM, market dynamics and other areas.

In addition to the work to support the five Global Fund recipient countries, other European countries have expressed interest in reviewing the resilience of their PSM emergency capacity. Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, The Republic of Moldova, and Tajikistan¹, will be offered similar support through the WHO EURO emergency response.

A broader area of work, where the above activities align, will include a coordinated regional

¹ [To be confirmed.](#)

initiative to provide support for the development of PSM systems. This will include the development of a European Procurement Framework and capacity development activities.

Main Objective

The overall objective is to contribute to regional efforts to build capacity of PSM systems to respond to increasing demands for medicines and health products in up to eight EURO Member States. Specific areas of focus will include transitioning countries and emergencies, as aligned under the broader context of PSM capacity strategies in the region.

Summary of Activities

The following is a list of activities intended to deliver on the above objectives:

- Develop and pilot an emergency resilience module of the maturity model (UNICEF/WHO EURO/HQ);
- Develop a regional companion document to the global UNICEF/WHO review of assessment tools for regional-specific assessment practices (UNICEF/WHO EURO);
- For the Global Fund transitioning countries, undertake a series of assessments to identify the risks affecting commodity continuity including:
 - A desk review of recently completed supply chain-related assessments in the countries to build on baseline understanding of the performance level of the national PMS systems. (WHO HQ / CO);
 - Assessments of the volatility of the medicines markets in the countries including capacity to mitigate and manage shortages (WHO HQ / CO);
 - Review of local and regional manufacturing environment, particularly with a view of its role in decisions to transition procurement from donor funded products (WHO HQ/CO);
 - Review of existing pooled procurement mechanisms and their potential to support continuity strategies. (WHO HQ / CO);
 - Conduct the UNICEF Supply Chain Maturity Assessment in the selected countries (WHO EURO/RO/HQ/CO and UNICEF /CO).
- Based on the findings of the above assessments, develop specific commodity continuity strategies for the transitioning countries. The assessments and strategies will also contribute to the eventual development of national plans with recommendations, timelines and proposed targets for each country to facilitate future funding for related capacity development. The former is a deliverable for the Global Fund, and the latter is part of a regional initiative, with funding to be determined.
- Contribute to the development of a coordination platform across programme, agencies and donor for PSM efforts in the region, replicating the proven efforts of the global Inter-Agency Supply Chain Group (ISG) at a regional level.

Country workshops, assessments and national planning

The working model for this work includes assessments and planning activities that engage national stakeholders and that will rely on the WHO Country Office(CO) relationships and knowledge of the context of the country.

The technical approach for the assessments will include engagement of external content experts, who will be expected to work in close partnership with WHO COs. The support requested of the WHO COs is outlined in more detail below and will be supported by the above budget availability to hire national consultants to facilitate the work and support National Professional Officers:

- Support assessment activities through engaging appropriate stakeholders of the national Ministries of Health (MoH) to ensure their collaboration and eventual ownership of the outcomes.
- Engaging national consultants to assist the content experts in identification of information, national context, facilitation of stakeholder meetings and reporting writing, including eventual translations.
- Contribute to the development and facilitation of meetings with national stakeholders to review the outcomes of the assessments and their applicability to the final development of transition strategies for the transitioning countries identified by Global Fund.
- In the case of the PSM assessment, this activity is undertaken in collaboration with UNICEF and will be based on their UNICEF Maturity Model. The CO in this case requested to support the nomination of focal points from the related MOH entities to participate in a workshop². The assessment will be based on the UNICEF Maturity Model Workshops. To that end, the nominated participants:
 - o Should be experts involved in national PSM functions, such as managers of priority disease programs (HIV, TB, Malaria), pharmacists, procurement experts, who have the capacity/interest and authority to contribute to the assessments.
 - o Would ideally be in positions to communicate and promote findings within decision making levels within their agencies.
 - o Should include the National Procurement Agency as a critical stakeholder.

² The PSM assessments are proposed to take place in collaboration with UNICEF, based on its tool known as the UNICEF Maturity Model. This tool has been translated into Russian and can be facilitated through online or in-person workshops as needed. The format of the assessment is a workshop facilitated by a technical expert with national stakeholders. The Model will be demonstrated, and participants trained to develop a score card. This participatory learning approach will promote a hands-on training to transfer the know-how on how to run this exercise in the future. The aim is to develop a needs-driven and context-specific strengthening work plan including technical support and capacity building.

Annex 1

Introduction to the UNICEF Maturity Model

This document provides information on the UNICEF Supply Chain Maturity Model and is based on information received from UNICEF. It is provided here as supplemental information to the Concept Note.

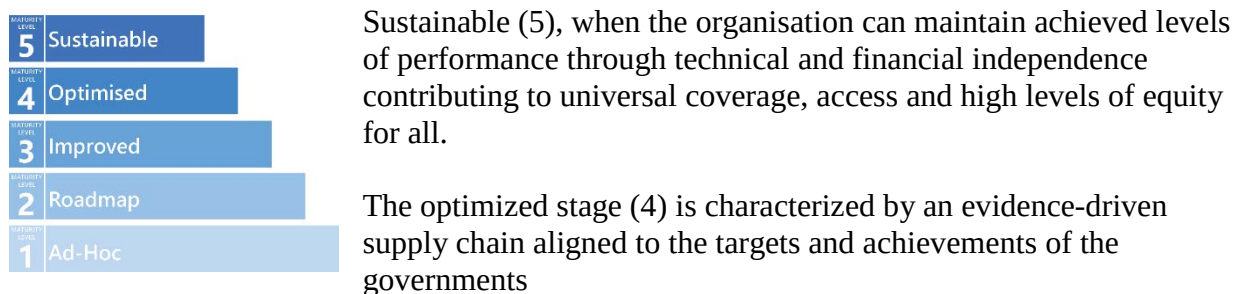
The strengthening cycle begins with the identification of needs and opportunities for improvement and the UNICEF Supply Chain Maturity Model assesses all strategic and tactical areas measuring performance and attained capability against a maturity continuum.

This model, which reviews the performance of national supply chain systems within country regardless of the type of products they manage (focusing at the systems, not on individual products), provides the following benefits:

- Identifies strengths, gaps and priorities across all areas of the national public supply chains which serves as the foundation to develop evidence-based roadmaps and grant proposals to strengthen supply chains, such as Procurement and Supply Management plans for Global Fund grant proposals, and Gavi HSS funds.
- Informs the government's response plan and serves as the basis for WHO and UNICEF Country Offices and other partners to co-ordinate to provide the required technical contribution in support of government identified objectives.
- Serves as a Monitoring and Evaluation framework to track progress along the maturity continuum from all deployed interventions.
- Additionally, it can serve as a complement to quantitative and detail-rich assessments such as the Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) or USAID's National Supply Chain Assessment (NSCA).

Overview of the Maturity continuum

The maturity model works under the premise that a supply chain goes through different levels of performance and capabilities to contribute towards the achievement of the health-related SDGs. In this manner, the five levels of maturity are established as follows:



Improved (3) strategic and tactical efficiencies are observed across all areas of the supply chain with an emphasis on capacity development.

The roadmap (2) stage includes interventions aimed at enhancing the capacity of the supply chain are at advanced levels of implementation and have resulted in initial yet concrete gains

The ad-hoc (1) stage represents a supply system that has a basic level of operation and functionality.

The baseline values consensually established will inform the nature, and quantify the scope, of the investment needs for each supply chain area, and help develop specific strengthening national roadmaps or response plans when needed.

Assessment Methodology

The assessment of a country's maturity can be led by national government supply chain stakeholders or jointly with partners and other relevant parties across different levels of the health system (i.e., central, regional, local level).

The recommended methodology contains the following seven stages:



1. The creation of a multi-stakeholder team is of paramount importance for the success of the assessment, as it will deepen the understanding across the different government departments and all involved stakeholders. It is recommended to have government representatives from the supply, health programmes and financial teams as well as at least one representative from all relevant partners.
2. It is recommended to complete the assessment across all areas of the supply chain instead of having area-specific evaluations.
3. Assessments can be implemented across distinct geographical levels (local, regional and central) of the health system, considering that one assessment cannot encompass two or more levels; therefore, all evaluations are level specific.
4. It is recommended to share all relevant documentation with the team before the assessment to encourage familiarization with the methodology and model.
5. Conduct the maturity model assessment with a WHO-designated mediator who will lead the exercise and will request evidence, as required, to confirm the selected answers.
6. All results will have to be validated and endorsed by the government and participating stakeholders.
7. The final results of the maturity model have to be signed off by the assessing team and will serve as the foundation to develop an evidence-driven strengthening roadmap.

Critical success factors

1. Understanding that the maturity model will identify underperforming areas, and these results will have to be complemented by more in-depth analysis to identify the root cause, and the extend of the gap.
2. The end goal of the initial maturity assessment is to develop the country and context-specific roadmaps, not only to measure the maturity levels.

3. As a monitoring and evaluation framework, the maturity model will provide a robust way to measure and track achieved impact across all deployed interventions.
4. The government should own and lead the maturity model exercises with an external partner, when feasible, serving as an assessment mediator to ensure impartiality.
5. The government should take stock of the findings to devise and lead evidence-based strengthening roadmaps, leveraging the expertise and comparative advantages of specialised partners and donors to operationalize their commitments.
6. The government adopts a well-planned, continuous learning process in the implementation of the maturity model that moves from building individual capacity to developing institutional capabilities using innovative technical assistance (TA) delivery system integrated within national supply strategies and plans.

National workshop model

Day 1		Day 2		Day 3		Day 4	
Introduction to Maturity Models		Maturity Assessment by Function		Maturity Assessment (Cont)		Validation and Action Planning	
Activities	1. Overview of Health Supply Chains	1. Finance and Domestic Resource Mobilization	1. Procurement	1. Utilization by End-user			
	2. Maturity Models, An Introduction	2. Policy and Regulatory Frameworks	2. Delivery and Clearance	2. Monitoring and Evaluation			
	3. Defining Assessment Scope	3. Definition of Need	3. Inspection	3. Results Validation			
	4. Methodology for Conducting the Assessment	4. Budgeting and Planning	4. Warehousing Distribution & Reorder	4. Other factors impacting Supply Chain Performance			
	5. People and Practice			5. Prioritization of Intervention Areas			
	6. Data Analytics			6. Action Planning			
	7. Systems Design			7. Close			