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**Zambia Integrated Systems
Strengthening Program**

Year I Quarter I Report July-September 2010

November 24, 2010

This publication was produced for review by the United States Agency for International Development. It was prepared by Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program.

Recommended Citation: Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program: November 2010. *Year 1 Quarter 1 Report (July – September 2010.)* Bethesda, MD: Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program, Abt Associates Inc.

The Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program is a technical assistance program to support the Government of Zambia. The Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program is managed by Abt Associates Inc. in collaboration with Akros Research Inc., American College of Nurse-Midwives, Banyan Global, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health-Center for Communication Programs, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, and Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia. The project is funded by the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), under contract GHH-I-00-07-00003 (Order No. GHS-I-11-07-00003-00).



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Abbreviations/Acronyms

AIDS	Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
CDC	Center for Diseases Control
CO	Contracting Officer
COP	Chief of Party
DCOP	Deputy Chief of Party
EMMP	Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan
EmONC	Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care
F&A	Finance Director
FP	Family Planning
GIS	Geographical Information System
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
HSSP	Health Services and Systems Program
IMCI	Integrated Management of Childhood Illnesses
IRS	Indoor Residual Spraying
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MACEPA	Malaria Control and Evaluation Partnership in Africa
MIAM	Malaria Institute at Macha
MOH	Ministry of Health
MOP	Malaria Operational Plan
MOU	Memorandum of Understanding
MNCH	Maternal Neonatal and Child Health
MTC	Malaria Transmission Consortium
NMCC	National Malaria Control Centre
PMI	President's Malaria Initiative
PPAZ	Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia
PPP	Public Private Partnerships
RH	Reproductive Health
RDTs	Rapid Diagnostic Tests
TDRC	Tropical Disease Research Center
TWG	Technical Working Group
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
ZISSP	Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program

I Introduction

The Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program (ZISSP), a 4.5-year task order contract, began operations in June 2010. ZISSP is designed to increase use of high-impact health services through a health systems strengthening approach. The program technical staff will work intensively at all levels of the health system – national, provincial, district and community – in collaboration with the Zambian Ministry of Health and public and private sector stakeholders, to build capacity for delivery and improve uptake of quality health services.

This report presents ZISSP's progress in the quarter from July 1 to September 30 2010. The report outlines the key program achievements, challenges and focus areas for the next quarter.

I.1 Program Objectives

The Zambia Integrated Systems Strengthening Program's overarching goal is to work with the Ministry of Health within its existing structures to foster sustained improvements in management of the health care system while also increasing the utilization of high-impact health services.

I.2 Technical Areas

The ZISSP areas of clinical and technical focus include HIV/AIDS, malaria, family planning, and maternal, newborn and child health and nutrition. The program will strengthen policies, resource management and service delivery systems across these interrelated public health services. As a result of ZISSP interventions, more families and individuals in the most vulnerable districts in Zambia will utilize the services and receive the information required for them to attain and maintain good health.

I.3 Organization of ZISSP Activities

The ZISSP activities are organized under the following four task areas:

Task 1: Strengthen the ability of the MOH at the national level to plan, manage, supervise and evaluate delivery of health services nationwide

Task 2: Improve management and technical skills in provinces and districts in order to increase use of quality health services within target districts

Task 3: Improve community involvement in production of health in targeted areas

Task 4: Ensure service delivery and other activities are effectively integrated at all appropriate levels in the health system through joint planning and in-kind activities with partners and appropriate public private partnerships (PPP)

I.4 Strategic Approach

To achieve results under each task, ZISSP has adopted the following five main strategies:

- Use a whole-system approach to unblock obstacles and strengthen the delivery and utilization of essential services
- Build Zambian capacity as the foundation for sustainability
- Increase impact through partner engagement and integration
- Plan from the “bottom-up” to ensure relevance and participation
- Ensure gender integration

1.5 ZISSP Team Organizations

ZISSP is implemented by Abt Associates, in partnership with the Akros Research, the American College of Nurse Midwives (ACNM), Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Banyan Global, the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health-Center for Communications Programs (CCP), and Planned Parenthood Association of Zambia.

2. Major Accomplishments during this Period

Three technical experts seconded to the Ministry of Health (MOH)

ZISSP seconded three national level capacity building technical experts to the Ministry of Health to strengthen program performance in family planning, child health and nutrition, and human resources. The EmONC technical specialist has accepted an offer and will report on January 3, 2011.

Six technical experts seconded to the National Malaria Control Center (NMCC)

ZISSP seconded six national level malaria technical experts to the National Malaria Control Center (NMCC) to strengthen the ability of the NMCC to plan, coordinate, scale up, and oversee nationwide indoor residual spraying and other malaria interventions. The specialists include the following: (i) Entomologist, (ii) Malaria M&E Specialist, (iii) GIS Specialist, (iv) IRS Advisor, (v) Logistics Advisor, and (vi) Active Case Surveillance Program Manager.

Twenty-two specialists seconded to Provincial Health Offices (PHOs)

Eight Management Specialists, six Clinical Care Specialists (CCSs), and nine Community Health Coordinators (CHCs) joined the nine Provincial Health Offices to assist in building skills, and systems in provincial and district health teams. Interviews are underway to select the remaining staff – one Management Specialist, and three Clinical Care Specialists.

Target District Nomination Analysis completed

Under Task 3 of the ZISSP contract, the MOH and USAID are expected to select 27 districts which will be the focus of ZISSP community-level assistance. The community health coordinators who will work in these districts will help districts and facilities to manage community-level health resources effectively. To assist with the selection of the 27 districts, ZISSP, in collaboration with the MOH, developed selection criteria and proposed 27 target districts on this basis. The analysis that will guide the MOH and USAID to select the districts was submitted to the Ministry on September 15, 2010.

Transition Plan for Indoor Residual Spraying developed

Following the close-out of most HSSP activities in December 2009, USAID granted a cost-extension to extend IRS activities from December 2009 through July 2010. During this period, HSSP focused on implementing IRS activities. In order to ensure continuity of support to NMCC after July 2010, HSSP and ZISSP prepared a transition plan to define the specific malaria-focused activities that were to be completed under the HSSP Cooperative Agreement, as well as the new activities that were to be initiated under ZISSP, during the 6-week period of overlap between the two programs (15 June – 31 July, 2010). The plan enabled a smooth transition between the two projects, and ensured that there was no break in support for critical ongoing activities, while new or intensified activities were started up.

July – December 2010 Workplan developed

ZISSP's initial six-month workplan was devoted largely to establishing the foundation for full program implementation during the subsequent four years. The major activities included development of the district selection criteria and facilitating the discussions required to select

the 27 districts that would be targeted for ZISSP interventions. In addition staff with expertise in reproductive and child health, health human resources and malaria programming would be recruited and seconded to their respective directorates in the MOH, the National Malaria Control Centre (NMCC). Assessments were planned and results presented in inception reports to inform action planning. The ZISSP provincial level teams – each consisting of a Clinical Care Specialist, Management Specialist and Community Health Coordinator – would be created in support of the nine Provincial Health Offices and associated District Health office teams. Other activities included support to the national malaria control interventions and the national level technical working groups.

Environmental Mitigation and Monitoring Plan (EMMP) developed

ZISSP developed an environmental mitigation and monitoring plan to provide guidance on procedures for safe and effective performance of IRS and healthcare activities, and on the safe disposition of chemical and biological wastes from these activities. This plan outlines how ZISSP will work with all partners and relevant departments of the Ministry of Health to ensure that the guidelines and procedures recommended in the plan are implemented, in order to improve environmental mitigation, waste management, and to reduce risk. The plan also outlines how ZISSP will support the Environmental Council of Zambia to ensure that facilities in the districts implementing IRS meet the WHO guidelines on waste management and disposal.

Performance Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (PMEP) initiated

ZISSP initiated the development of the PMEP. The PMEP presents the strategy and indicators that ZISSP will employ to monitor and evaluate progress in each of the key focus areas of the program. The M&E plan was organized by major tasks and technical areas, and includes indicators relevant to three ZISSP funding sources: The PEPFAR Country Operation Plan (COP), the USAID Population/Child Survival Operation Plan (OP), and the Malaria Operation Plan (MOP) of the President's Malaria Initiative (PMI). The PMEP will be finalized in the second quarter based upon USAID's comments.

Trained 2,205 spray operators from 53 IRS districts

ZISSP provided technical and financial support to the NMCC to conduct cascade training for 2,205 spray operators in 53 IRS districts. ZISSP ensured that the 53 IRS districts had the resources to train the required number of spray operators. The main objective of the cascade training was to prepare the spray operators technically for the 2010 spray season. It also aimed to make participants understand the importance of safety for themselves, households and the environment when handling chemicals.

Quantified expired pyrethroid insecticides

ZISSP provided technical and financial assistance to the NMCC to identify districts with excess chemicals and developed a plan for re-distribution to other districts. ZISSP also conducted an analysis of the expired insecticides in all the IRS districts.

Financed the Malaria Program Review

ZISSP provided the NMCC with technical and financial support (\$50,000) to conduct the Malaria Program Review.

Strategy for Insecticide Resistance Management developed

ZISSP provided technical and financial support (\$6,500) to NMCC to develop a strategy for insecticide resistance management. Participants were drawn from Akros, Center for Disease Control, Comprehensive HIV/AIDS Management Program, The Environmental Council of Zambia, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Ministry of Mines, Malaria Control and Evaluation Partnership in Africa, Malaria Institute at Macha, National Malaria Control Center, Malaria Transmission Consortium, President's Malaria Initiative, Tropical Disease Research Center, University of Zambia, Zambia Sugar Company, and Zambia Integrated

Systems Strengthening Program. Thirty-six participants attended the meeting and the general consensus was reached on the terms of reference. The strategy will provide guidance to the National Malaria Control Center and partners on the Insecticide Resistance Management in Zambia.

Support for the International Conference on Malaria Training and Capacity Building for Southern Africa

ZISSP provided technical and financial support (\$23,000) to NMCC to conduct the international conference on Malaria Training and Capacity Building for Southern Africa (MTCBSA), September 12-16, 2010. ZISSP sponsored all local participants with transport, meals and accommodation. ZISSP also facilitated the participation of Dr. William Brogdon, the entomologist from CDC, who was the key facilitator.

Strategic Plan for Active Case Surveillance developed

The strategic plan for active case surveillance was developed with technical assistance from Akros. The objective of the strategic plan is to assist the NMCC to pilot an Active Case Surveillance pilot in Lusaka district and subsequently Kazungula district. The objective of this pilot is to improve the accuracy and timeliness of malaria diagnostics and case reporting at health facilities through training initiatives and quality control. It is also aimed at improving malaria interventions in low parasitemia districts through active case detection. According to this strategy an intervention team will visit the household of individuals with confirmed malaria in order to test family members and neighbors for malaria parasites using rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) to treat with antimalarials as necessary, and to employ malaria prevention measures as appropriate to the situation.

Breeding mosquito colony at NMCC insectary maintained

ZISSP provided support to maintain a breeding mosquito colony at the NMCC insectary for entomological studies. The insectary obtained two pure genetic stocks from the Macha and Kisumu strains through the Macha Research Trust and CDC respectively after signing an MOU. These strains are still viable and have been used in insecticide resistance studies.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and insecticides distributed

ZISSP distributed personal protective equipment (PPE) and insecticides for use in 53 districts in the 2010 IRS season. The program also coordinated with RTI extensively to manage issues related to supplies and ordering.

Supported NMCC during the IRS Implementation

ZISSP supported NMCC by paying a major share of the operational costs to implement IRS in 25 districts. To do this, seven teams were created to support the IRS operations and also assist NMCC and ECZ with supervision and monitoring of all the 53 districts.

3. Finance and Administration

The Goals of the administration and finance unit are to:

- Provide timely, accurate and relevant information to continuously improve the effectiveness and efficiency of financial and administrative operations of the project
- Fulfill external reporting requirement to all stakeholders

The objectives are as follows:

- To guide ZISSP & Abt partners to achieve compliance with all applicable laws and regulations
- Safeguard the project's assets and resources
- Provide financial planning, analysis and administrative support to program managers
- Ensure efficient and effective internal control system

- Provide human resources management support
- To provide logistical support to the program

Key Achievements

Financial and Administrative activities

- Successfully held an orientation conference for all ZISSP staff including partners in September 2010
- Continued to improve quality of documentation for financial transactions (ROVs)
- Continued to uphold compliance training and enforcement at every given opportunity

Overall budget and expenditures

As of September 30, 2010, ZISSP had spent a cumulative total of \$1,107,027. The cumulative obligated amount for the same period to September 30 was \$26,270,555. The total project estimated amount is \$88,092,613. Cumulatively, ZISSP had spent 4.21% of total obligated funds. The remaining obligated funds as at September 30, 2010 were \$25,163,528.

4. Human Resources

ZISSP has a total staff of 57, including 2 senior management staff, 42 technical staff and 13 support staff. The project is currently recruiting for several positions including the Director for Finance and Administration, Director of Technical Support, 4 Clinical Care Specialists, 1 Management Specialist (Eastern Province), 1 Finance Assistant and a total of 23 Drivers with a placement of 2 drivers per province with 4 placed at the Lusaka Office.

Key products/deliverables

The following are the key results produced during the quarter:

- Monthly ROVs for July, August and September 2010

5. Challenges

Challenges	Solutions
The major challenge was how seconded staff should avoid being completely subsumed in the routine work.	Seconded staff will need to strike a balance which enables them to continue to play an important role in the provinces and at the national level in influencing strategies, and developing system level solutions to problems. ZISSP developed a Memorandum of Understanding to facilitate smooth operations with seconded staff.
Delayed final selection of target districts	USAID approved the nomination methodology. Awaiting final selection by MOH.
The shortage of IT equipment impaired the ability of staff to work effectively.	The procurement required development of the IT requirements and design, IRM review, competitive bidding, and CO approval of the purchase agreement. In the meantime, staff were encouraged to use their personal laptops.
In the final stage of the Task Order process, an excessive number of contractual deliverables (228) was proposed.	The project team needs to work with the COTR and CO to revise these deliverables.
Delayed recruitment of the Finance and Admin Director.	Plans are underway to recruit the Finance and Admin Director

Challenges	Solutions
Delayed recruitment of the Director for Technical Support. Candidate withdrew his candidacy and this created the need to recruit again for this position.	Placed advertisements to recruit another person
Additional management and technical burden on the DCOP and COP in the absence of the F&A Director, the Technical Director, M&E Director, and MNCH Team Leader.	COP and DCOP delegates certain activities and continue to work for more hours to beat the deadlines

6. Focus for the next quarter

The following are the activities to be implemented during the next quarter:

1. Finalize development of the PMEPE
2. Review family planning training materials for nurse tutors and clinical instructors
3. Begin development of a strategic plan for the performance management package
4. Provide capacity building for new HR staff in the provinces
5. Participate in performance assessment activities in all nine provinces
6. Develop inception reports for all the seconded staff
7. Develop a report on TWGs to describe the status of the group and plans for revitalization and strengthening
8. Provide leadership and technical assistance to develop an adolescent reproductive health strategy
9. Develop an overall EmONC plan
10. Design and assist in IMCI training needs assessment in target districts
11. Strengthen district level management capacities for IRS implementation through training, monitoring and supervision, geo-coding and enumeration of housing units
12. Enhance NMCC technical and operational research capacities by facilitating entomological investigations to monitor and evaluate IRS activities
13. Finalize recruitment of personnel
14. Develop Year 2 Workplan
15. Finalize the Basic ZISSP Finance and Administration Procedures manual
16. Finalize the ZISSP/Abt staff benefits manual