

# Systems <sup>for</sup> Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals <sup>and</sup> Services

*Improved Access. Improved Services.  
Better Health Outcomes.*



## Knowledge Management Plan

January 2014



**USAID**  
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

**SIAPS**   
Systems for Improved Access  
to Pharmaceuticals and Services



# **Knowledge Management Plan: Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services**

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SIAPS

January 2014



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## **About SIAPS**

The goal of the Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program is to assure the availability of quality pharmaceutical products and effective pharmaceutical services to achieve desired health outcomes. Toward this end, the SIAPS result areas include improving governance, building capacity for pharmaceutical management and services, addressing information needed for decision-making in the pharmaceutical sector, strengthening financing strategies and mechanisms to improve access to medicines, and increasing quality pharmaceutical services.

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## **Key Words**

knowledge management; learning; lessons learned; best practices; communications

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## ACRONYMS

AAR	After Action Review
CLA	Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting
DEC	Development Experience Clearinghouse
EMI portal	WHO's Essential Medicines and Health Products Information Portal
IR	Intermediate Result
KM	knowledge management
KSC	Knowledge Services Center
M&E	monitoring and evaluation
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

## INTRODUCTION

The Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program’s Knowledge Management Plan (KM Plan) will assure that USAID Washington and country Missions, other US agencies, implementing organizations, country governments, other donors, multinational organizations, and international stakeholders have access to technical products, lessons learned and best practices generated by SIAPS and receive the information they need to coordinate planning and implementation to improve activities. SIAPS has been implementing KM approaches by contributing to USAID’s Development Experience Clearinghouse (DEC) and WHO’s Essential Medicines and Health Products Information (EMI) Portal, conducting after action reviews (AARs) of key events, and managing a robust communications effort to strengthen writing and distribution of documentation. This plan represents a consolidation of those earlier efforts coordinated through internal guidance and makes more explicit the role of communications—providing a unified approach to help SIAPS fully realize the value of its contributions to the knowledge base of the development community.

The recent history of KM as a discipline has seen a shift in emphasis from data management to processes and systems and, most recently, an emphasis on adaptation and organizational learning.<sup>1</sup> Although there is continued debate over KM’s role (depending in part on the organizational context and expected results) USAID’s two Agency-wide efforts represent important models relevant for development practitioners and health professionals. USAID’s Knowledge Services Center (KSC) represents a mainstream approach organized around the generate-capture-share-apply construct<sup>2</sup> and is a direct descendant of the Agency’s 30+ years experience with managing the Development Information Division of the Center for Development Information and Evaluation Office. The KSC incorporates the people/process/technology triumvirate of disciplines to “Connecting People; Working Smarter; Getting Results.” More recently, USAID has emphasized their Collaborating, Learning, and Adapting (CLA) approach through an initiative managed by the Policy, Planning, and Learning Office, documented by its “Learning Guide” web site to support improved programming and results from development investments.<sup>3</sup> The CLA represents more of a learning organization approach, emphasizing the tacit and experiential aspects informing investments in development.

The SIAPS Program KM Plan incorporates elements of both KSC and CLA approaches to meet the program’s needs to manage creation of knowledge products and support learning processes. Acting as a bridge between monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and capacity building efforts, KM activities capture process-oriented learning during implementation as well as technical deliverables for broader dissemination. To institutionalize the KM Plan, SIAPS management and technical teams are central to integrating the plan with ongoing program activities. Processes, such as the annual work plans and quarterly reporting, are continuing to be adapted for cost-effective rollout of the KM Plan. As a global program working on pharmaceutical systems issues with central and field funding, SIAPS uses the KM Plan to share valuable experience across

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<sup>1</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge\\_management](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Knowledge_management)

<sup>2</sup> <http://www.usaid.gov/results-and-data/information-resources/knowledge-management-support>

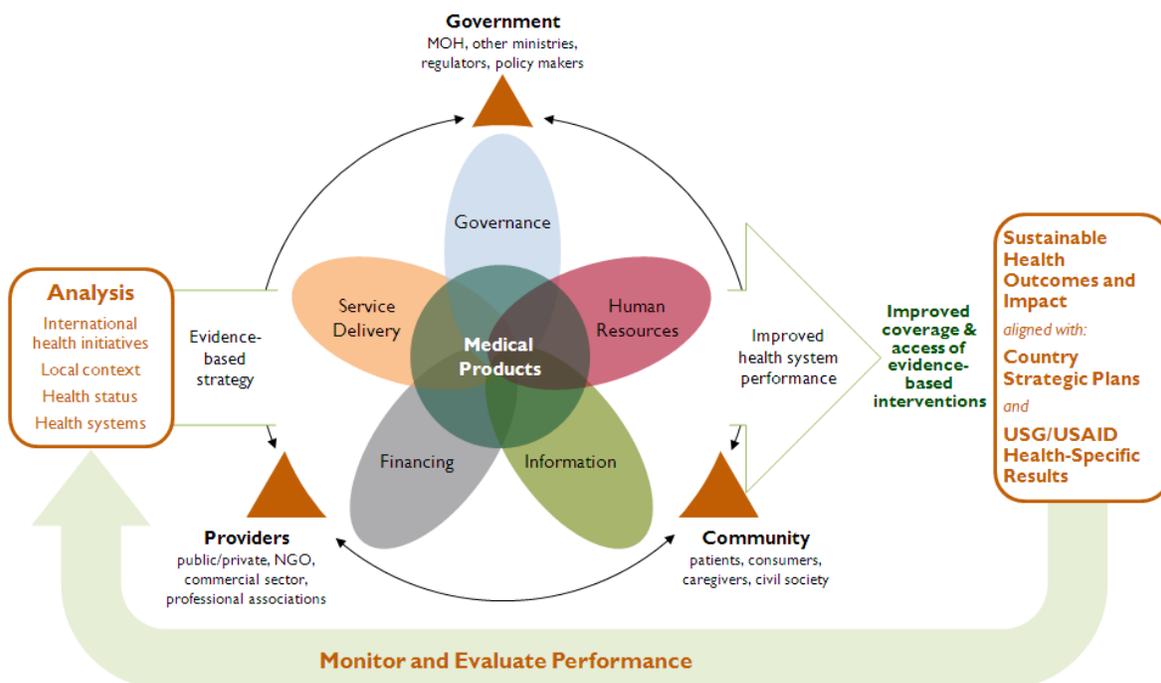
<sup>3</sup> <http://usaidlearninglab.org/learning-guide/program-cycle-learning-guide-beta>

geographic areas and technical domains to improve practice and broaden the knowledge base for pharmaceutical systems strengthening.

## BACKGROUND

SIAPS has adopted a pharmaceutical system strengthening framework (figure 1) to describe the set of dynamic relationships that inform the program’s technical approach and to direct achievement of country-specific results. Part of the explicit focus of the KM Plan is to investigate the experience of implementing the systems strengthening framework, as this is a new approach for USAID, to guide investments in essential medicines. The KM Plan helps to both validate the approach and adapt program activities through the plan’s learning activities. Select output from KM activities will in turn be shared through external conferences and workshops, brown bags, the program’s web site, social media, peer-reviewed publications, and contributions to the WHO EMI portal.

### SIAPS Pharmaceutical System Strengthening Framework



This graphic represents the SIAPS guiding framework: a comprehensive set of dynamic relationships among the five health systems building blocks (governance, human resources, information, financing, and service delivery), with a medical products building block overlay to provide technical focus and identify substantive areas of concern and related corrective interventions. This framework will be used to achieve country-specific results that are aligned with partner country strategic plans and USG/USAID health-related goals.

**Figure 1. The basis of SIAPS’ technical approach**

The KM Plan is a consolidation of existing promising practices underway within SIAPS. SIAPS will extend its current use of Google Applications for a cost-effective approach to simplifying information management and to bridge the field/headquarters gap with a single, central platform for data and documents. The Yammer social networking application will be extended to build on earlier efforts to use content management and discussion platforms to strengthen networks of

practitioners and enable more peer-learning across the program. With the support of Google and Yammer platforms, plus standardized approaches (e.g., AARs) to reflect on performance, validate promising practices, and identify lessons learned and best practices, SIAPS will be better able to learn and contribute to the pharmaceutical systems strengthening body of knowledge.

## KM PLAN COMPONENTS

The SIAPS KM Plan works internally to improve program performance through knowledge sharing, documentation, and learning and works externally to support health outcomes through increased generation, sharing, and application of knowledge. KM is a management discipline by definition and as such is coordinated with existing management processes and structures under SIAPS. Communications is the central focus of implementing the “share” section of the KM Plan as outlined in the graphic below. Communications will continue to focus on efforts to create actionable material for practitioners and stakeholders, as well as traditional marketing and education products, through support for technical writing, editorial review, document illustration, and design. Existing groups, such as SIAPS technical teams and health element teams, are natural homes for increased support to technical quality. These teams are instrumental in validating lessons learned and best practices that surface through the KM Plan for both technical practices and use of the systems strengthening framework.

### SIAPS Knowledge Management Plan



\* **Bold=KMC core task**

**Figure 2. The basis of the KM Plan**

To support the requisite competencies across the program to make the KM Plan a success, additional tools and methods will be designed with simplicity and scalability in mind. USAID’s technical guidance on AARs<sup>4</sup> is the central method used for ongoing learning during implementation. Early use of AARs informed by the USAID guidance will be scaled up as part of normal operations for SIAPS. To bolster use of existing networks within the program, the Yammer enterprise social network platform will be expanded to support workgroups for technical and operational functions. For improved collaboration and more efficient document management, SIAPS will continue the expansion of Google Drive as a single information source for documents and data.

To complement the internal KM activities, the external communications functions will be reinforced to continue using the SIAPS web site, social media platforms, USAID DEC, and the WHO EMI portal. The existing channels of communication will be better supplied with fresh information as country-level communications practices continue to mature with guidance and policy from headquarters.

For global communications and as a contribution to the larger body of knowledge around pharmaceutical systems strengthening, the SIAPS Program will continue its engagement with the WHO EMI portal project. The WHO EMI portal<sup>5</sup> is currently the most comprehensive library of essential medicines- related documentation. It contains over 3,800 publications in English, French, and Spanish; is built on a software platform with a robust indexing system, catalogued by geographic and subject areas; and has links to other topical libraries. USAID and WHO have been collaborating through SIAPS to expand the current WHO EMI portal to include non-WHO documentation on essential medicines, pharmaceutical products, policies, and practices.

The WHO EMI portal provides SIAPS with a singular opportunity to expand its knowledge exchange efforts. The SIAPS Program has played a dual role to date—supporting content development of the portal by sharing existing documents and technical support to the portal platform itself. One of the critical issues to address in moving forward is the availability of resources for WHO to further develop the portal. For that reason, the SIAPS activities listed below are built on the assumption that adequate resources are available to WHO.

The continued SIAPS engagement with the WHO EMI portal will move beyond IT platforms and early collections development to extending the reach into new geographic regions, adding new subject areas, and performing gap analysis to identify areas requiring additional research. In preparation for expansion, WHO has discussed further refining the software platform to strengthen search capabilities, capture of statistics and analysis of content use, content upload features, and functions to manage sub-collections. To reach the broadest audience, WHO is also considering options to optimize the portal for low-bandwidth environments.

To extend the portal’s reach, SIAPS will co-sponsor a series of sub-regional meetings. These events are intended to share the value of the portal, identify high-value sources of essential medicines documents within countries, and support the larger task of identifying gaps in current information. In addition, the events will help build relationships with regional and country-level

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<sup>4</sup>“After-Action Review Technical Guidance” [http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf\\_docs/pnadf360.pdf](http://pdf.usaid.gov/pdf_docs/pnadf360.pdf)

<sup>5</sup> <http://apps.who.int/medicinedocs/en/>

institutions for access to hard-to-find materials. WHO has the opportunity to use their own advisors to strengthen networks on the ground as well. These additional local and regional resources will help further define the necessary sub-collections for the portal and extend access to existing material.

WHO's focus on developing the collection aligns with their current roster of technical areas including essential medicines, innovation and intellectual property, medical devices, vaccines, regulatory systems, safety, and governance. The regional meetings will provide a platform to compare knowledge needs against knowledge gaps. By assessing knowledge gaps through the regional meetings and additional research, it will become easier to discern uneven distributions of information versus complete gaps in the literature.

SIAPS will also support WHO communications activities to promote portal content to appropriate audiences and encourage engagement from partners to grow the collections. To do this, SIAPS will use the program's web, print, and social media channels and include WHO participation in appropriate SIAPS events.

## METHODS – THE PLAN IN PRACTICE

The SIAPS KM Plan will be implemented in line with the process described in the Generate > Capture/Synthesize > Share > Apply model in figure 1. These interrelated methods provide a comprehensive approach to KM appropriate to the SIAPS context. As specific situations arise with technical assistance or within country contexts, the methods below provide users with a tool box to support learning and knowledge sharing at all levels of the program.

### **Generate**

SIAPS as a program generates knowledge in the normal course of implementing its activities. The standard approaches to capturing operational and technical knowledge flow through results reporting and technical documentation. These modes of reporting are often focused on what SIAPS did, when, and with what result. Regular reporting and technical documentation are supported by SIAPS communications' efforts to edit, illustrate, design, and disseminate materials. One area in need of greater documentation is how SIAPS implements activities and what lessons can be gleaned from that experience. To help generate knowledge of how SIAPS is implemented and to generate lessons learned, the program will scale up use of AARs. SIAPS is also strengthening support to technical writing to improve documentation of the program's technical activities.

### ***After Action Reviews***

At the core of the SIAPS KM approach is a linked set of relationships between learning practices to improve performance within the program, and approaches to document and share what works . A double learning loop approach based on organizational learning models<sup>6</sup> will be used to reflect on current practices and refine methods already in use. By using AARs<sup>7</sup> as a management tool to capture what works well and why and what to improve and how, the KM approach will generate immediate information to adjust processes as needed. AARs will be performed for all major tasks at the discretion of SIAPS management and the outputs from the reviews will be shared within the program to inform similar activities. The resulting reports will be managed by the SIAPS KM team and reviewed for potential larger lessons learned and best practices to be shared with external audiences after technical review within SIAPS. The USAID guidance on conducting AARs will be the standard across the program.

### **Capture and Synthesize**

Through routine reporting, communications products, and technical reporting, SIAPS captures a continuous stream of material about the program. From a KM standpoint, these are important assets, and they form the majority of knowledge shared about program activities. As SIAPS matures as a program with a more substantial body of completed work, it will be necessary to

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<sup>6</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational\\_learning](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Organizational_learning)

<sup>7</sup> [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/After\\_action\\_review](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/After_action_review)

effectively capture some of the tacit experience learned during implementation and to synthesize like material across countries for a more holistic view on common program and technical elements. To complement the ongoing communications efforts and better describe the experience implementing the pharmaceutical system strengthening framework, SIAPS will use the capture of lessons learned and creation of best practices to round out the body of knowledge generated by the program.

### ***Lessons Learned and Best Practices***

Lessons learned are generated both on an ongoing basis from AARs and independently by technical teams filling out a template during program implementation. The data are collated at headquarters and made available across the program for review and reuse. SIAPS' technical teams periodically review and validate lessons learned to support wider adoption. It is expected that there will be both operational and technical lessons learned from ongoing program implementation.

Best practices are drawn from a subset of lessons learned or operations research and are reapplied to support a practice area. The SIAPS technical teams are central to the process of validating best practices for wider distribution beyond the program through regular quarterly reviews conducted as part of the quarterly reporting process.

### **Share**

Sharing for SIAPS has two distinct environments—within the program and with the global community. Effective work within a large, complex global program such as SIAPS necessitates a focus on internal communications and collaboration. SIAPS continues to improve integration and knowledge sharing across the program through adjustments to program guidance and intelligent-use software platforms. Improvements in internal integration are fed directly into communications activities for a richer set of external products that better reflect the full range of program activities.

### ***Collaboration***

Internal collaboration across the program and within technical and operational groups is supported by using online work groups via the Yammer platform. By creating online forums for collaboration between the field and headquarters and from country to country, SIAPS is able to augment existing networks of practitioners and make those networks more transparent and accessible. SIAPS also uses the Google Applications suite for cost-effective document management and task-specific content organization.

External collaboration takes the form of co-authoring materials and participation in conferences and related events, whether sponsored by SIAPS or others. SIAPS' partners are also instrumental in providing external opportunities for collaboration, and the work with WHO on the EMI portal forms the centerpiece of future collaboration on knowledge sharing. The SIAPS social media platforms (Twitter, Facebook, and the SIAPS web site) are used to connect like-minded

individuals to move beyond push communications and build a greater sense of engagement outside the program.

### ***Document Management***

To organize and share documentation within SIAPS, the program will scale up existing use of Google Drive to include all program documentation for an intuitive, cost-effective, and flexible platform. This will allow for a single, central repository of program documentation, available across all SIAPS offices, to strengthen reporting, accountability, and transparency. Select sections of the Google Drive site will also be made accessible to implementing partners and stakeholders for an easy-to-manage file sharing system.

### ***External Knowledge Sharing***

To share material generated by the KM approach more broadly, the SIAPS web site, USAID DEC, and the WHO EMI portal will incorporate new document types including lessons learned and best practices. To institutionalize the adoption of lessons learned and best practices as a discipline, SIAPS will also increase the number of brown bags and seminars to reach relevant audiences and build space for discussion. The knowledge sharing activities supported under the KM Plan adds greater depth to the communications materials and events and fills out the range of products with the addition of lessons learned and best practices.

The systems strengthening framework (figure 1) is the organizing construct for implementing the program across the five intermediate results (IRs):

- Pharmaceutical sector governance strengthened
- Capacity for pharmaceutical supply management and services increased and enhanced
- Information for decision-making challenges in the pharmaceutical sector addressed
- Financing strategies and mechanisms strengthened to improve access to medicines
- Pharmaceutical services improved to achieve desired health outcomes

The IRs also provide the main themes for knowledge sharing. Communication plays an important role in achieving these IRs and provides stakeholders with a common understanding of program objectives and indicators of success. As part of the knowledge sharing element of the KM Plan, SIAPS communications products will work to:

- Provide information about the program across stakeholders
- Mobilize support among stakeholders for the program
- Deliver technical information about program interventions
- Provide information to decision makers who drive policy
- Create a supportive environment by being transparent about successes and challenges
- Serve as an advocacy platform for promoting change in systems and processes
- Foster country ownership and support sustainability with context-appropriate material

SIAPS's primary audiences can be divided into three main categories: public sector stakeholders, private sector stakeholders, and civil society stakeholders. Public sector stakeholders include USAID officials, both in Washington, DC, and the Missions; USAID technical staff, both in Washington, DC, and the Missions; host-country ministries, bureaus, and offices; implementing partners; and international organizations, especially WHO. Private sector stakeholders include private sector pharmacy workers and (potentially) pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors. Civil society stakeholders include professional associations, implementing partners, and the host-country public.

### *The USAID Audience and Internal Dissemination*

As a principle audience for SIAPS knowledge sharing, USAID has the benefit of ongoing access to program output through multiple channels. During implementation, Mission staff is regularly briefed on key accomplishments and is directly involved in clearing all locally created technical reports and communications materials. Regular debriefs by technical teams travelling to the field also provide access to the latest field implementation results. Increasingly, country teams are also developing success stories for local Mission use and inclusion in the SIAPS web site. Depending on local capacity, in-country SIAPS offices also host brown bags and knowledge sharing events to bring together stakeholders in-country. These major events are included in annual work plans and are aligned with specific technical tasks to deepen local knowledge exchange.

For USAID Washington, regular meetings with SIAPS management provide an important ongoing communications channel to share output from the program with immediate program stakeholders. The Washington-based brown bag series is used to engage USAID technical staff and help deepen the dialogue on the program's technical and policy work. The SIAPS web site is updated on an ongoing basis with material provided monthly by field offices. Announcements of key events, noteworthy program developments, and the SIAPS quarterly e-newsletter are also disseminated through the USAID Office of Health Systems (OHS) KM and Communications Advisor to internal mail lists to reach USAID audiences. The channels for internal USAID distribution are as follows:

- For training-related events, seminars, and webinars: send announcements to PDMS via USAID OHS KM and Communications Advisor and s/he will add the information to USAID University
- For general events: send announcements to GHNet Calendar/GH Meets listserv coordinator
- To advertise via posters near elevators in the Ronald Reagan Building: OHS will post material created by SIAPS
- To reach the Health System Strengthening Network email list: send to USAID OHS KM and Communications Advisor
- To reach the GH listserv: send email to USAID OHS KM and Communications Advisor

## *Audiences at Large*

To reach all audiences with communications materials, SIAPS uses the platforms, such as the SIAPS website ([www.siapsprogram.org](http://www.siapsprogram.org)), Facebook, and Twitter, and numerous types of publications, including technical reports, success stories, guides, manuals, handbooks, training materials, newsletters, and brochures. The publications are created during the regular flow of program activities and are the most visible artifacts of the program. All public products from the program have a place on the SIAPS web site and are cross-referenced with topic tags by country, disease area, health element, and technical area for easy retrieval.

The information flowing from the SIAPS Program starts with technical implementation and is codified in technical reports, lessons learned, best practices and communications materials. Once materials are developed, regular monthly updates to the SIAPS web site assures ongoing global access to information and quarterly public e-newsletters based on web site submissions help push the latest updates to a broad audience. Periodic updates to social media channels and appropriate listservs (e.g., edrug, IAHPL, and GHDonline) as topics and events warrant help to engage practitioners and educate them about results. Our technical writers are also regularly scanning online platforms for opportunities to have the health staff engage in discussions and events to help spread program findings and foster greater dialogue around pharmaceutical strengthening issues.

The SIAPS Program web site uses the WordPress open source content management platform, providing a flexible, cost-effective system to capture and share program materials. The SIAPS web site serves a global audience with content targeted at general readers for educational purposes as well as more technical, in-depth content for practitioners across the spectrum of pharmaceutical systems activities. Draft material can be reviewed and cleared directly on the site, reducing the need for email traffic and confusion over versions. By using tags effectively, updates to the site are categorized and filed by multiple terms for retrieval by country and topic. The site works well on mobile devices and in low-bandwidth settings to reach the broadest possible audience. As needed, the site can accommodate comments on specific articles and social network features, such as online communities for additional direct support to stakeholders. The site uses the same platform as USAID's Impact Blog and can readily be transferred to USAID for archiving.

SIAPS has regular internal meetings at the operations and technical levels to share and collaborate across health elements as well as larger whole-of-program meetings where USAID, SIAPS partners, and WHO participate. SIAPS also has a regular series of external international conferences where technical staff shares program experiences and results. These include disease-area-specific events on HIV and AIDS, TB, malaria, maternal and child health, and neglected tropical diseases as well as organization and subject-specific events. Each country office also has local opportunities to host and attend events for more focused knowledge sharing opportunities specific to that country's context. SIAPS includes communications support to events through material preparation (banners, handouts, documents), event planning (press conferences and webinars), and editorial review for quality control of final products.

The process for document development, finalization and clearance has not been consistently addressed across the program, in part because of local demands in-country and in part because of evolving expectations from USAID. The current general practice is outlined below. Future refinements to the process are central to smooth movement of knowledge products through the program and will require SIAPS management approval before full implementation.

Current documentation process:

1. Include major products in work plans
2. For technical material, clear approach and core content with SIAPS HQ technical team
3. Notify/clear Mission-funded material locally
4. Notify/clear centrally funded material per disease element as required
5. Internally peer review all technical material for quality assurance
6. Edit, design, and format all documents
7. Submit all final material to SIAPS web site and USAID DEC
8. Submit to WHO EMI portal per criteria for that platform
9. Conduct events/disseminate notices locally as appropriate per work plan and via online channels

## **Apply**

The AAR process generates recommendations specific to improving activities within SIAPS. By compiling relevant materials as lessons learned and best practices, the program generates a body of material to share with the development community at large. This, coupled with existing practices of technical reporting, creates a more complete and actionable body of knowledge for reuse by others. These materials are captured on the SIAPS web site, which also includes contact information for senior technical staff to support follow-on opportunities to consult as others put SIAPS' work into practice in new contexts.

## MANAGEMENT AND MEASUREMENT

### Roles and Responsibilities

- KM learning tools, methods development, and associated capacity development
  - KE Director
- KM platforms
  - SIAPS web–Communications Senior Associate
  - Google Drive–Communications Senior Associate, program associates
  - Yammer–KE Director, country and health element leads
  - WHO EMI portal–KE Director, Senior Librarian
  - Social media–Technical Project Associate, communications team
  - Social media reader/scanning–Communications Senior Specialist
  - USAID document archiving–Senior Librarian
- KM learning and sharing methods application
  - AARs–task managers with coaching from KE Director
  - Lessons learned and best practices–task managers with coaching from KE Director and access to central repositories
  - Communications
    - Content development–technical team members across the program supported by the Communications Manager
    - Editorial services–Managing Editor
    - Materials layout and design (documents, posters, power points, conference materials)– Communications Senior Associate
    - Dissemination
      - SIAPS web site–Communications Senior Associate
      - Social media–Technical Project Associate
      - Events–technical staff
  - Research/writing support
    - Information services–Senior Librarian
    - Research/technical writing–Communications Senior Specialist
- KM results management
  - KE Director with support from M&E team

## **Results Measurement for the KM Plan**

The M&E approach to the KM plan will build on the guidance from USAID's Knowledge for Health project captured in their publication *Guide to Monitoring Knowledge Management in Global Health Programs*.<sup>8</sup>

Specific monitoring of KM activities will be carried out through a detailed implementation plan and documented through the overall SIAPS M&E reporting system.

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<sup>8</sup> Ohkubo, S., Sullivan, T. M., Harlan, S. V., Timmons, B. T., & Strachan, M. (2013). *Guide to monitoring and evaluating knowledge management in global health programs*. Baltimore, MD: Center for Communication Programs, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.