

Technical Support Visit to Namibia, November 6–19, 2004: Trip Report

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About RPM Plus

RPM Plus works in more than 20 developing and transitional countries to provide technical assistance to strengthen drug and health commodity management systems. The program offers technical guidance and assists in strategy development and program implementation both in improving the availability of health commodities—pharmaceuticals, vaccines, supplies, and basic medical equipment—of assured quality for maternal and child health, HIV/AIDS, infectious diseases, and family planning and in promoting the appropriate use of health commodities in the public and private sectors.

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ACRONYMS

BMS	Bristol-Myers Squibb
CDC	U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CMS	Central Medical Stores
MoHSS	Ministry of Health and Social Services
MSH	Management Sciences for Health
MTP	Monitoring-Training-Planning
PEPFAR	U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief
PMTCT	prevention of mother-to-child transmission
RMS	Regional Medical Store
RPM Plus	Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus Program
SOW	scope of work
USAID	U.S. Agency for International Development
WH	warehouse

BACKGROUND

Under the President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, through the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Namibia Mission, Management Sciences for Health (MSH)/Rational Pharmaceutical Management Plus (RPM Plus) has received funding to provide technical assistance to the Namibia Ministry of Health and Social Services (MoHSS) for strengthening the MoHSS pharmaceutical management system to support the scale-up and expansion of HIV/AIDS programs.

The capacity of the MoHSS Central Medical Stores (CMS) needs enhancement to ensure that drugs and other commodities are available and accessible in a dependable manner for implementing a nationwide program for prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) of HIV/AIDS and highly active antiretroviral therapy. Rapid expansion of PMTCT-plus throughout Namibia will create new strains on CMS management and logistics systems. USAID's technical assistance and training of CMS staff will help them meet this new challenge effectively.

As part of this assistance, RPM Plus is supporting the implementation of a revised inventory management system at the CMS and Regional Medical Stores (RMSs) of the MoHSS. This intervention is being carried out with Impact Africa, a South African company that supplied the existing computerized inventory control system, Syspro, to the Namibia CMS in 2000. Since that date Impact Africa has provided support and other assistance to maintain and improve the system. With the input and assistance of MSH, an initiative was planned in May 2004 to further improve the effectiveness of the CMS and to extend the system to the RMSs at Oshakati and Rundu. The proposals recommended modifications of services and software, which Impact Africa was to undertake, to address the needs of the medical stores in the short and long term. The modification, upgrade, and implementation of these new systems and procedures for inventory control, storekeeping, and management information systems at CMS Windhoek-Namibia was completed and put into effect on September 20, 2004.

Purpose of Trip

Francis Aboagye-Nyame traveled to Windhoek, Namibia, to provide continuing technical assistance to the MoHSS and review the implementation of the new procedures and systems of the CMS.

Scope of Work

- Provide training to CMS staff and management as part of the rollout of the upgraded computerized inventory control system
- In collaboration with technicians from Impact Africa, provide technical support and guidance in the planned rollout of the upgraded Syspro scheduled begun on September 20, 2004

- Meet and hold discussions with representatives of MoHSS, CMS, RMSs, and others on continued technical assistance to the pharmaceutical sector that may be required
- Review progress of implementation of the project with local RPM Plus staff

ACTIVITIES

- **Provide training to CMS staff and management as part of the rollout of the upgraded computerized inventory control system Syspro**

This activity was not carried out because of time constraints as a result of the delay in the issuance of Vim's visa.

- **In collaboration with technicians from Impact Africa, provide technical support and guidance in the planned rollout of the upgraded Syspro, begun on September 20, 2004**

A number of discussions were held with Johann Jones, Impact Africa technician; Vim Dias, RPM Plus; and CMS staff with the goal of reviewing the implementation of the upgraded workflow and Syspro that began on September 20, 2004. During this review a number of flaws were detected and recommendations for remedying them made. Where it was not immediately possible to fix problems, plans were put in place to do so. The details of the work done as a result of the various discussions are presented in Vim Dias's trip report and Annex 1.

- **Meet and hold discussions with representatives of the MoHSS, CMS, RMS, and others on continued technical assistance to the pharmaceutical sector that may be required**

a. Meeting with USAID and CDC –November 16, 2004

This meeting was held in the USAID Namibia conference room. In attendance were Cathy Thompson, Deputy Team Leader HIV/AIDS, USAID Namibia; Tom Kenyon, CDC Namibia; Shiimi Lahya, USAID Namibia; Dawn Pereko, RPM Plus; and Jude Nwokike, RPM Plus Namibia.

The meeting served as a forum to brief participants on the work that RPM Plus is doing in Namibia and to review the draft RPM Plus five-year strategy submitted to USAID and the RPM Plus Namibia 2004 progress report/success stories. The participants agreed as follows—

- RPM Plus will investigate further and make recommendations for enhancing the system for providing pain medication to HIV/AIDS patients, palliative care, and improved access and availability of controlled pain medicines in health care facilities without pharmacists.
- RPM Plus will investigate the possibility of public-private partnerships in the delivery of medications, especially for the compounding and dispensing of chronic pain medications such as mixed morphine.
- RPM Plus will investigate policy openings for enhancing the prescribing rights of nurses, particularly for follow-up of stabilized HIV/AIDS patients.

- RPM Plus Namibia was requested to provide an update on the status of pediatric antiretroviral formulations in Namibia and globally. This information will be shared during the next USAID partners meeting.
- Strategic Plan: A number of corrections were proposed in the plan. Major changes included the following—
 - The proposed scholarship scheme for training pharmacists will be taken up under the U.S. government program. RPM Plus will formally withdraw the proposal made to the MoHSS, and Dr. Tom Kenyon will write to the MoHSS explaining the current position. Dawn Pereko will provide Tom with details of the costing for training of pharmacists in South Africa. Actual allocations with the cap for training will be made in collaboration with the MoHSS based on need. RPM Plus long-term training plans will be subsumed in the overall U.S. government in-country training plan, with a ceiling of 5 percent of approved annual budget.
 - The plan should incorporate provisions for the development of logistics systems for rapid test kits and nutrition packages.
 - The plan should indicate how it fits into the overall work plan of the MoHSS and MTP III (as defined in the 2004 MoHSS document *National Strategic Plan on HIV/AIDS: Third Medium-Term Plan (MTP III), 2004–2009*)
 - RPM Plus should ensure that the annual plan of the Pharmaceutical Services Division incorporates planned activities.
- A request from the Bristol-Meyers Squibb (BMS) project in Katima Mulilo for assistance was discussed, and it was concluded that RPM Plus will provide support to any entity that is doing work related to the Namibian government's HIV/AIDS program.
- It was agreed to suspend the contract for Dr. Jacqueline Anthoos (National Institute of Pathology [NIP] Scientist) until the requisite documentation and registration as required are provided.

b. Meeting with Johannes ≠Gaeseb, Acting Deputy Director, Pharmaceutical Services Division

Discussions with the Acting Deputy Director of the Pharmaceutical Services Division on various aspects of the project, as follows—

- Drug Registration and Quality Assurance
Discussed recommendations of consultants and Dr. Forster's request. Conclusions reached included the following—
 - Support will be provided for entry of all applications into the computer-assisted drug registration program SIAMED through data entry clerks supervised by a pharmacist.
 - The possibility of organizing a retreat for members of the Pharmaceutical Analysis Committee will be explored as soon as possible to consider the recommendations of the consultancy report and carry out review of the most critical dossiers identified. If the retreat cannot be organized, a

consultant will be hired to assist in prioritizing and initiating review of the dossiers.

- RPM Plus will provide support and the necessary hardware and software for the exercise.
- Recruitment
Discussed the status of the recruitment drive for the MoHSS. RPM Plus was informed by the MoHSS that arrangements are under way to absorb five of the Pharmacist's Assistants engaged by RPM Plus into the MoHSS payroll. RPM Plus will employ the new set of Pharmacist's Assistants that will graduate under the same terms and conditions of the previous batch of Pharmacist's Assistants engaged for the MoHSS.

c. Meeting with Acting Director, Tertiary Health Care and Clinical Support Services Directorate

Met with and briefed Mrs. Dinah Tjiho, the new Acting Director, Tertiary Health Care and Clinical Support Services Directorate, on the RPM Plus project in Namibia.

d. Meeting with Dr. Norbert Forster, Under Secretary, MoHSS—November 16, 2004

Briefed Dr. Forster on the status of implementation of the project. Various aspects of the project were discussed, as follows—

- Annual Pharmacists and Pharmacist's Assistants meeting will be restarted as scheduled by MoHSS.
- Lack of personnel and the resultant increased workload on pharmacists, off-site training, and involvement of MoHSS personnel in workshops and seminars for the development of work plans and activities were seen as problems. To avoid taking staff away from their positions for long periods and also to reduce the occurrence of such incidents, it was agreed that, where possible, on-the-job solutions and interventions bringing the activity to the doorstep of the recipients should be pursued. In addition, RPM Plus will endeavor not to take staff away from their posts unduly, in a bid to ensure the involvement of the MoHSS in the decision-making process.
- Human Capacity Development for HIV/AIDS Assessment:
Dr. Forster informed us that he had reviewed the scope of work (SOW) for the assessment; however, the MoHSS would want the assessment to focus only on the pharmaceutical sector and not the whole health sector as proposed.
- Review of National Medicines Policy:
MoHSS concurs with the SOW but proposes that we use foreign consultants who can offer a fresh look at the system.
- Drug registration and quality assurance:
The MoHSS made an urgent request for human resources support to carry out the recommendations of the consultancy—specifically, to provide support for the immediate review of dossiers. Dr. Forster was informed that a potential candidate for the position of Quality Surveillance Laboratory (QSL) Manager had been interviewed and the process of engagement was ongoing.

- **CMS/RMS:**

After presenting an update on the status of implementation of CMS/RMSs interventions, Dr. Forster indicated that the MoHSS can procure forklifts with funds from the Grain Fund for the RMSs and CMS. This action responds to the observation that lack of appropriate handling equipment prevented use of available spaces at the Rundu Medical Store to alleviate CMS lack of adequate space.

Dr. Forster expressed concern about the poor performance of suppliers to the CMS and the lack of implementation of sanctions to ensure performance. He was informed that, as part of the interventions, a draft Procurement Policy and Procedures manual was being developed and will be submitted to the Procurement Committee for discussions. When revised procedures are adopted, training will be given to CMS procurement staff to update their skills in managing procurement and monitoring supplier performance.

- **Computerization:**

Dr. Forster was briefed on the efforts being made to obtain software for the management of pharmaceutical activities at the clinic level. The plan is to obtain a system that would allow management of data on patients with HIV/AIDS and tuberculosis, print dispensing labels, and also is used for inventory control activities.

Dr. Forster indicated that efforts must be concentrated on assisting the facilities to maintain an efficient pipeline and not just on providing computers and software. He asked RPM Plus to focus attention on supporting the health facilities to manage their inventory and dispensing practices.

- Dr. Foster was informed of a previous meeting with the Acting Director, Tertiary Health Care and Clinical Support Services Directorate, at which it was suggested that a workshop be held for senior management of the MoHSS from headquarters and the regions to present RPM Plus activities. This workshop was proposed to be held during or close to the annual MoHSS managers meeting. Dr. Forster concurred with the suggestion.
- Dr. Foster concurred with the need to form a project steering committee between MoHSS and RPM Plus.

e. Meetings with CMS Management

A number of meetings were held with management of CMS to review the status of implementation of proposed changes to the CMS workflow. Concern was expressed on the implementation of reforms in procurement and accounting as well as the required refurbishment of the Assembly and Dispatch Bay.

A draft Procurement Policy and Procedures manual was given to the head of CMS and the

Procurement and Tenders Pharmacist for comment, after discussions with the Procurement and Tenders Pharmacist.

f. PEPFAR Partners Meeting—November 18, 2004

Attended and participated in the November partners meeting held at the USAID conference room.

g. Meeting with Madaline Feinberg and Shiimi Lahya, USAID Namibia

Held discussions with USAID on reporting requirements and additional indicators that RPM Plus will be routinely monitoring and including in quarterly reports. It was agreed that RPM Plus will resubmit the 2004 success story and also report on the following indicators quarterly—

- Percentage increase in compliance of physical stock to stock records
 - Number of people trained
 - Percentage availability of essential medicines at the CMS
 - Percentage availability of essential medicines at selected treatment facilities
- **Review progress of implementation of the project with local RPM plus staff**
Held discussions with RPM Plus Namibia staff on progress of implementation of the project. Natatie Gaul from the Field Support Office (FSO) in Boston was also in country to do a mini audit of the office operations and financial management systems.¹

Collaborators and Partners

- | | |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. Cathy Thompson | USAID Namibia |
| 2. Lahya Shiimi | USAID Namibia |
| 3. Madaline Feinberg | USAID Namibia |
| 4. Tom Kenyon | CDC Namibia |
| 5. Dr. Norbert Forster | Under Secretary, MoHSS |
| 6. Mrs. Dinah Tjiho | Acting Director, Tertiary Health Care and Clinical Support Services Directorate |
| 7. Johannes #Gaeseb | Acting Deputy Director, Pharmaceutical Services Division |
| 8. Gilbert Habimana | Head, CMS |
| 9. Harriet Lima | Procurement and Tenders Pharmacist, CMS |
| 10. Kennedy Kambyambya | Distribution Pharmacist, CMS |
| 11. Johann Jones | Technician, Impact Africa |

¹

Adjustments to Planned Activities and/or Additional Activities

- Because of a delay in the issuance of a visa to Vim Dias, the activities planned for the Regional Medical Stores could not be carried out.
- Attended MSH office procedures and financial systems training conducted by Natalie Gaul from the Field Support Office in Boston.

**ANNEX 1. REPORT OF JOHANN JONES, IMPACT AFRICA TECHNICIAN,
VISIT TO CMS: NOVEMBER 15–19, 2004**

DATE	COMMENTS	ACTION
November 15, 2004	1. Meeting from 10:30	
	2. Decision was made that the stock accepted into the warehouse (WH) function is moved to the receiving bay.	
	3. Stock should be reduced when a waybill/dispatch note is printed and not at the point of invoicing.	Create a dispatch note and invoice.
	4. The fact that all stock items are flagged as traceable causes the problem that there is a GRN per batch number and a page per batch.	Write a report writer report to sort all the GRNs for the day by PO number, stock code, and lot number.
	5. Transfer document prints a batch per page.	Report writer report to sort the transactions per day by WH, by stock code, by batch number.
	6. An income statement and balance sheet are required.	Need to clear the current ledger balances. Train users how to input all the general expenses.
November 16, 2004	1. Generate via report writer a GRNs report and transfer document.	
	2. Meeting on the replenishment report. Revised the calculations.	
	3. Meeting at dispatch on procedures and problems.	
	4. CMS account query with Syspro.	
November 17, 2004	1. Anna's PC won't connect to the network. The PC was rebooted and the network settings checked. A network technician needs to check the PC.	
	2. Connect TallyGenicom 8008 printer to Joelene Bushney PC. Modify the port on the PCs connected to this printer.	Anna's PC doesn't connect to the network.
	3. Monica had problems with transferring expired stock.	Using lot numbers with no quantity on hand or available.
	4. Show Mary at reception how to print delivery notes and how to reprint delivery notes. Explained the statuses 1 and 4.	
November 18, 2004	1. Meeting with Accounts on the format of the GRNs to match with the invoices.	

DATE	COMMENTS	ACTION
	2. Edit the delivery note format.	Add the order quantity. Add the comments that the institutions must respond to any discrepancies within 10 days, otherwise it will be invoiced by default.
	3. Edit the PO format.	Format the line numbers with a fixed height.
	4. Sat with Vim and gave him samples of all the documents from Syspro.	
	5. Generate the GRN print report via an SQL view.	
	6. Edit the local PO format. More lines added to the page.	
	7. Load Syspro onto Anna's PC that was reloaded with Windows.	
November 19, 2004	1. Create Diana on Syspro.	
	2. Train Hilda and Diana how to process stock receipts and print the various documents.	
	3. Explained to Elizabeth how to clear the GRN trial balance report and how to add missing GRN numbers on the system.	
	4. Change the VAT Code C to 0% exclusive of VAT. The inventory master default tax code is P for purchasing and the other tax code is C for zero VAT. The contract price is inclusive of VAT.	
	5. Explained to procurement the way to enter prices with VAT. Edit the catalogue field.	
	6. Purge expired contract prices date before December 31, 2004.	
	7. Train Diana Sheedana general training on the Icon on her favorites menu.	
	8. Query by Monica transferring stock.	Used wrong bin.
OUTSTANDING ISSUES	1. Set up income statement and balance sheet.	Need to clear all the accounts and balance them to the subledger before we can continue and set up a procedure to capture all expenses in the system.
	2. Train on how to use Dispatch Notes.	The format has been set up. Too many changes. Will implement on the next visit.
	3. Roll out Syspro to Rundu and Oshakati.	Servers are not in place.
	4. Train the four accountants on the way Syspro integrates.	To reconcile the subledgers to the General Ledger. Give them a system overview on how the different operations affect the General Ledger.