

## New Procurement Manuals Guide Long-Term Contraceptive Procurement in Bangladesh

*Independence in procuring health supplies is a key element in today's health sector reform movement, both as a way to decrease a country's reliance on donor support and to improve commodity security. Three recently published manuals produced for Bangladesh outline a set of fundamental procurement procedures that could be adapted to any country seeking to purchase health commodities on a long-term basis.*

**Family Planning in Bangladesh**  
The family planning effort in Bangladesh has been widely recognized as one of the world's most successful. Contraceptive prevalence in the country rose from 5 to 43 percent between 1975 and 2000, and is expected to meet a government goal of 70 percent by 2015. However, the prospect of 27 million contraceptive users on the near horizon goes well beyond the capacity of a donor community that is currently responsible for providing the vast majority of contraceptives in Bangladesh.

**Moving Away from Donated Commodities**  
A key step in resolving imminent stock shortages was taken in July 1998, when the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare used World Bank funding to execute a U.S.\$1.8 billion commodity purchase for delivery over a five-year period. The shift away from over-reliance on donated commodities not only advances the country's contraceptive security policy to ensure that product availability meets rising demand, but also fits into the larger picture of the Bangladesh Health and Population Program Project, a reform-oriented program that is heavily supported by the World Bank. Additionally, it enables donors to refocus their efforts on programmatic needs, like service delivery improvement, and information and education.

**Procurement Manuals Ease the Process**  
The success of the mammoth procurement exercise was largely facilitated by adherence to a first-of-its-kind set of procurement manuals, authored by



A key to contraceptive security in Bangladesh is moving the country away from reliance on donated reproductive health supplies. With guidance from a set of manuals authored as part of the DELIVER project, Bangladesh recently completed a \$1.8 billion independent procurement exercise.



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the Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) as part of the DELIVER project. In all, three guidebooks were produced with significant support from the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare—one focusing on goods, one on services, and a reference manual containing key World Bank and Government of Bangladesh procurement documents. “The manuals essentially reconcile Bangladeshi practices with World Bank standards for transparent procurement,” explains PATH Consultant, Dian Woodle. “Yet, because they are based on fundamental procurement procedures, these guides could be adapted to any country that is undertaking health sector reform or is facing decreased donor support for contraceptives,” she adds.

DELIVER’s Country Team Leader for Bangladesh, Shyam Lama, and DELIVER/Bangladesh Chief of Party, Nurul Hossain, led the all-important effort to orient key Bangladeshi procurement personnel and functionaries in their use of the manuals. “Bangladesh is now responsible for a complex process that was previously managed completely by donors,” says Lama, noting that the procurement activities involved more than 9 square meters of paperwork. Lama and Hossain are currently working with PATH to create a simple primer for individuals with little or no procurement background but who need to acquire a basic understanding of the procurement process in Bangladesh. 

Want more information?

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