



USAID GLOBAL HEALTH SUPPLY CHAIN PROGRAM

TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE, NATIONAL SUPPLY CHAIN ASSESSMENT TASK ORDER

2018 Annual Report

NSCA 2.0



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ABOUT AXIOS

Axios International, Inc. is part of a global healthcare organization with over 20 years of experience in the delivery of sustainable and innovative access to care solutions in low- and middle-income countries, providing a broad range of services in the global health sector to help modernize and strengthen health systems and quality of care. For more information, visit www.axiosint.com.

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ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

CMM	Capability Maturity Model
GHSC-PSM	Global Health Supply Chain – Procurement and Supply Management
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
MOH	Ministry of Health
NSCA	National Supply Chain Assessment
TO	Task Order
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

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BACKGROUND

In February 2015, Axios International, Inc. (Axios) received an IDIQ award for Technical Assistance – Global Health Supply Chain (GHSC). Subsequently, the NSCA Task Order (Contract # AID-OAA-TO-00013) was awarded to Axios in July 2016. This task order focused on updating a national supply chain assessment tool appropriate for use in developing country contexts. This report provides a brief overview of the activities and deliverables completed as part of this task order (TO) between July 19, 2017 and July 18, 2018. It summarizes program overview, achievements, funds obligated, and problems encountered and how they were rectified during the year two period of the TO.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

A National Supply Chain Assessment (NSCA) tool was initially developed between 2010 and 2012 at the request of USAID by the PEPFAR-funded Supply Chain Management System (SCMS) project. USAID's objective was to establish a common basis by which to assess the performance of national public health supply chains for health commodities. The concept included developing a methodology that would produce a single score on a set performance scale that delivered the ability 1) for countries to self-assess the status, progress, and future needs within the public health supply chain, 2) to compare results across countries, and 3) to inform USAID investment decisions.

To develop the NSCA 1.0 tool, SCMS first conducted a literature review of Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) in use or recommended by international agencies, countries, and academia. Three issues emerged from this review:

- Though there was a wide range of KPIs, enough commonality existed to support the development of a core set of indicators (<20).
- Creating a meaningful single score outcome would be very difficult and could distract from other findings.
- KPIs alone provide an incomplete picture of a health supply chain. It is also necessary to understand the capabilities and potential capacity of the health supply chain.

After further review of the literature, and with the agreement of USAID, SCMS drew on the SCOR¹ model to create the NSCA Capability Maturity Module (CMM) as a complement to the KPI assessment.

This version of the NSCA, now referred to as NSCA 1.0, was piloted in three countries and subsequently deployed in a further 13 assessments over a three-year period.

This task order (AID-OAA-TO-00013) was developed to build on the achievements and lessons learned from NSCA 1.0 by developing an updated tool. This task order focused on updating the tool itself, preparing a number of support tools to guide and improve implementation efforts by a wide range of partners, creating templates to support dissemination, and piloting the new tool, NSCA 2.0, in two countries, Rwanda and Zambia.

The updated NSCA 2.0 incorporated a number of changes and improvements, as compared to NSCA 1.0. Key changes include the addition of four new modules, the introduction of yes/no binary responses for more objective scoring of capability maturity model items, and a clear sampling strategy. The updated tool also focuses more on aligning with public sector tools instead of commercial best practices. Additionally, optional key performance indicators have been added to the tool as a complement to the

¹ The **Supply Chain Operations Reference (SCOR)** model is unique in that it links business processes, performance metrics, practices, and people skills into a unified structure. It is hierarchical in nature, interactive and interlinked. <http://www.apics.org/apics-for-business/frameworks/scor>

core key performance indicators. Reference performance levels have also been outlined for the core key performance indicators.

More generally, the updated tool includes a number of support resources designed to reduce the burden of designing and implementing an NSCA. The implementation guide has been updated and data collection includes an automated component (through the use of Survey CTO and its upload capabilities to a centralized database). Also, analytic workbooks have been developed to quickly analyze data and produce simplified outputs for interpretation, and templates have been developed to guide report writing and other dissemination activities.

ACHIEVEMENTS

Over the course of year two (July 19, 2017 – July 18, 2018), the team focused on completing several key tasks. The project team engaged in a number of activities that produced pilot data in year two. An NSCA was completed in Rwanda during year one and the team completed the final report on that activity in year two. The project also implemented an NSCA 2.0 in Zambia during year two and completed an initial report; this assessment activity also provided pilot data for continued refinement of the NSCA 2.0 toolkit. An additional assessment was completed in Uganda via a joint effort with the Global Fund. The project ensured that the paper tool and other required documents were updated and usable for the Global Fund team implementing in the field. The project also provided its Sampling and Survey Design Technical Advisor to participate in the field assessment and train the team.

The project also initiated dissemination activities, including a 4-day training with 65 participants in Washington, DC. Overall, participants indicated the training was a positive experience in that they both learned about the NSCA and felt capable of implementing the tool. Additionally, Global Fund staff intend to recommend using the NSCA as their standard tool for future Global Fund-supported supply chain diagnostics. After the training, feedback from both the training team and training participants was utilized to refine the training materials further and create a standard training package that can be used to train others on a go forward basis.

In addition to these three specific activities, the project worked to refine a number of the deliverables that comprise the NSCA 2.0 toolkit. These activities and other year two achievements on specific deliverables are outlined in the tables below:

Note: Where there is a percent completion indicated, the percent is a best estimate for the degree of deliverable completion as of the end of year two.

TABLE I. PROGRESS ON TASK ORDER DELIVERABLES FOR YEAR TWO			
#	CATEGORY	DELIVERABLE DESCRIPTION	DATE ACHIEVED/ ESTIMATED PERCENT COMPLETION IN YEAR TWO
1	Administrative	Monthly Financial Reports	Submitted Monthly
2	NSCA 2.0 Toolkit Deliverables	Finalize Initial Documentation List of Required Elements	July 2017
3	NSCA 2.0 Toolkit Deliverables	Initial Documentation Package*	95%
4	NSCA 2.0 Toolkit Deliverables	Revised NSCA 2.0 Package**	85%
5	NSCA Pilot Activities	NSCA 2.0: Zambia Pilot Activity Final Report and Annexes	85% (Report) 75% (Annexes)
6	NSCA Pilot Activities	NSCA 2.0: Submit Rwanda Pilot Final Report to the DEC	July 2018
7	NSCA Pilot Activities	NSCA 2.0: Pilot Lessons Learned Report	August 2017

TABLE 1. PROGRESS ON TASK ORDER DELIVERABLES FOR YEAR TWO

#	CATEGORY	DELIVERABLE DESCRIPTION	DATE ACHIEVED/ ESTIMATED PERCENT COMPLETION IN YEAR TWO
8	Dissemination Deliverables	Develop Dissemination and Training Plan	June 2018
9	Dissemination Deliverables	NSCA 2.0 Training Session(s)	April 2018
10	Dissemination Deliverables	NSCA Training Report	July 2018
11	Dissemination Deliverables	Implement Dissemination Plan***	April 2018 – July 2018

* A number of items comprise the initial documentation package. These items are noted in Table 2. below.

**Items included in the Initial documentation and NSCA 2.0 package components are built into the toolkit itself. These sub-deliverables include updating information captured by the tool, improved methodology, automated analysis as feasible, weighting data as needed, and improving tool usability.

***The dissemination plan outlined both near and long-term dissemination activities. Some activities were completed by the project during year two, while others will be completed by USAID in the future. The date range of April to July 2018 reflects only dissemination activities completed by the project in year two.

One of the key deliverables, the initial documentation package, is a collated group of sub-deliverables. The sub-deliverables and dates of achievement for elements of this core deliverable completed during year two of the task order are outlined in Table 2.

TABLE 2. INITIAL DOCUMENTATION PACKAGE COMPONENTS

#	DELIVERABLE DESCRIPTION	DATE ACHIEVED/ ESTIMATED PERCENT COMPLETION IN YEAR TWO
	Preparation, Training, and Initiation	
1	Implementation Guide	90%
2	Memorandum of Understanding Template	June 2018
3	Sampling/Site Selection Tool	June 2018
4	Data Collection Training Presentation	July 2018
5	How to Conduct a KPI Interview	90%
6	How to Conduct a Capability Interview	90%
7	Glossary	95%
	CMM Data Collection Tools	
8	CMM Master Questionnaire	June 2018
9	CMM Paper-Based Tool	June 2018
10	CMM SurveyCTO	June 2018
11	CMM Instructions to update Survey CTO	50%
	KPI Data Collection Tools	

TABLE 2. INITIAL DOCUMENTATION PACKAGE COMPONENTS		
#	DELIVERABLE DESCRIPTION	DATE ACHIEVED/ ESTIMATED PERCENT COMPLETION IN YEAR TWO
12	KPI – Indicator Reference Sheet	99%
13	KPI Paper-Based Tool (Central Level)	90%
14	KPI Paper-Based Tool (Non-Central Level)	90%
15	KPI Instructions to update Survey CTO (Central Level)	50%
16	KPI Instructions to update Survey CTO (Non-Central)	50%
	CMM Analysis Tools and Templates	
17	CMM Analysis Workbook and Dashboard	90%
18	Instructions for CMM Analysis Workbook and Dashboard	90%
19	CMM Data Analysis Plan	90%
20	CMM Codebook	90%
	KPI Analysis Tool and Templates (Central Level)	
21	KPI Analysis Workbook and Dashboard (Central Level)	90%
22	Instructions for KPI Analysis Workbook and Dashboard (Central Level)	90%
23	KPI Codebook (Central Level)	90%
24	KPI Data Analysis Plan (Central Level)	90%
	KPI Analysis Tools and Template (Non-Central Level)	
25	KPI Analysis Workbook and Dashboard (Non-Central Level)	90%
26	Instructions for KPI Analysis Workbook and Dashboard (Non-Central Level)	90%
27	KPI Data Analysis Plan (Non-Central Level)	90%
28	KPI Codebook (Non-Central Level)	90%
	Reporting Tools and Templates	
29	NSCA 2.0 Country Debrief/ Final Presentation Template	June 2018
30	Action Brief Template	April 2018
31	Action Brief Sample	April 2018
32	Final Report Template	April 2018

FUNDS OBLIGATED AND DISBURSED

At the start of year two, a total of \$1,000,000 was committed to this Task Order (AID-OAA-TO-16-00013). Between July 19, 2017 to July 18, 2018 an additional \$373,000 was obligated, bringing the total obligated funds for the task order to \$1,373,000. The Task Order ceiling is \$1,496,582. Table 3. provides a brief overview of funds disbursed over the life of the Task Order through the end of year two.

TABLE 3. FUNDS OBLIGATED FOR TASK ORDER AID OAA TO 16 00013 THROUGH THE END OF YEAR TWO					
#	MODIFICATION NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	DATE	FUNDS OBLIGATED (USD)	TOTAL FUNDS OBLIGATED (USD)
1	N/A*		Jul 29, 2016	\$950,000	\$950,000
2	Modification #1	Minor Clause Changes	Feb 3, 2017	\$0	\$950,000
3	Modification #2	Changed Fixed Fee Payment	May 9, 2017	\$0	\$950,000
4	Modification #3	Increased Obligated Amount	Jun 6, 2017	\$50,000	\$1,000,000
5	Modification #4	Increased Obligated Amount	Jan 2, 2018	\$223,000	\$1,223,000
6	Modification #5	Increased Obligated Amount	May 18, 2018	\$150,000	\$1,373,000

*Initial funds disbursement

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED AND HOW THEY WERE RECTIFIED

During the course of any project, unexpected challenges arise. This section briefly describes key implementation challenges experienced during year two and how they were rectified. In year two, a key challenge included the presence of three different Task Order Directors over the course of the year. The initial Task Order Director left the role in the third quarter of 2017; the role was quickly filled by an interim Task Order Director. This individual left the team in February 2018 and the final project Director joined the team in March 2018. While the project filled this critical role quickly in each instance of turnover, the shift in personnel did create opportunities for the introduction of error. For example, not all contract requirements were clearly conveyed during the transition and some historical knowledge of what sub-items were agreed to as a part of each deliverable was lost. The project worked to identify these gaps and ensure that all required deliverables were completed and of good quality.

In addition to the staffing challenges related to key personnel, Axios, as a small business experienced in supply chain technical assistance and operations, lacked significant depth of in-house subject matter experts specific to the development and implementation of supply chain assessments. To mitigate this challenge, the project engaged STTA from a number of SMEs to provide additional support, guidance, and expertise throughout the project. These SME's included personnel engaged through subcontracts with Abt Associates, Medical Assess Uganda Limited, other Axios group companies, as well as a number of individual consultants. The USAID and PSM personnel also provided team members to support the pilot activities in Zambia.

In addition to staffing challenges, some administrative challenges existed as well. On-time financial reporting, which had been a challenge in Year 1, was achieved at an early stage in Year 2 due to Axios' appointment of a new individual to take on those responsibilities. From September 2017 forward, all reports were completed on-time and met the contractual quarterly reporting requirements.