

NSCA 2.0 Stakeholder Training

Day 1: What Can the NSCA Do For You?

Context and Questions Worksheet

Purpose: Invite participants to consider the context in a chosen country – including the supply chain situation, information gaps, and ripeness for data-informed decision-making and reform. Brainstorm burning supply chain questions and consider whether an NSCA might help answer these questions.

Country of interest: _____

Context:

Supply Chain Situation: E.g.	Data Gaps or Info Mismatch: E.g.	Opportunity Context: E.g. new health minister, increasing economic resources, new donors, etc.

Burning supply chain questions → What might an NSCA answer for you:

Can the NSCA answer this?

- _____ ☐
- _____ ☐
- _____ ☐
- _____ ☐
- _____ ☐

NSCA's Technical areas:

Strategic planning and management	Warehousing and storage	Human resources
Policy and governance	Distribution	Waste management
Forecasting and supply planning	Quality assurance /	
Procurement and customs clearance	pharmacovigilance	
Financial sustainability	LMIS	

Sample Questions that the NSCA Answers:

- Big picture: Are there glaring capability or performance gaps among the key technical areas of an effective public health supply chain?
- Are distribution capabilities evenly distributed throughout the supply chain system? Are bottlenecks greater between the central and regional warehouses or between regional warehouses and SDPs?
- Are quality assurance and pharmacovigilance capabilities paired with sufficient waste management capabilities? Where may there be misalignments in policy, infrastructure, or investment?
- Are State of the Art LMIS capabilities in the country supported by existence of all (or most) key “basic” level LMIS capabilities, or are there potential gaps that are easily addressed yet currently undermining performance? Does performance on stock accuracy appear to exceed or fall short of expectations, given existing capabilities?

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Sample Questions List

Between its three key tools – supply chain mapping, CMM questionnaire, and KPI data collection – an NSCA collects mountains of data that can be leveraged to answer important questions on countries' supply chain and informs strategic decision making.

Big picture questions and identifying strategic priorities

- Are there overlooked technical areas in the supply chain, or key supply chain functions that have been severely under-resourced relative to others in the supply chain system?
E.g. Is investment in procurement, distribution and warehousing matched by resources in waste management and pharmacovigilance? What is the current state of LMIS capability at different levels in the system?
- What are the redundancies or bottlenecks in the current system?
E.g. If all commodities flow through regional medical stores, do RMS have sufficient storage and distribution capabilities to function? Is distribution integrated for all commodities across all program areas? How many reporting requirements must facilities accommodate? How does this match with available LMIS resources?
 - Are there parallel commodity or information flows?
 - Where specifically are there opportunities for integration?
 - Are there points of relative integration against which one can compare to assess potential impact?
- Do capabilities and performance increase with the level of responsibility/critical function as one moves up levels of the supply chain, as expected? Or, are there weak points in the chain (for example, at regional hospitals or RMS)?
- Who are the central actors in the supply chain – for commodity or information flows? Were any surprisingly pivotal actors identified in the supply chain mapping exercise? Are they adequately resourced and performing as needed?

Comparing capabilities and performance

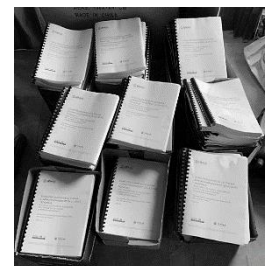
- Where does performance lag given assessed levels of capabilities?
E.g. Are investments in procurement processes, trainings and systems leading to better outcomes in commodity pricing and vendor on time delivery? How complete, accurate, timely are LMIS records? Are investment in LMIS tools matched by universal distribution of SOPs and widespread capacity training on LMIS across all levels?
 - What may be the cause – insufficient investment in training, absence of key basic / fundamental capabilities, high variability in the distribution of capabilities throughout the system, etc.
 - Can one identify key missing capabilities that may unlock latent performance potential with minimal investment?
- Are there areas where performance perhaps exceeds level of extent capabilities, presenting risks to the supply chain? In other words, are there technical areas (or facility levels) where performance may begin to decrease without future investment to buttress absent capabilities?
E.g. On time delivery is reasonably high at the CMS. Is this supported by important key capabilities – e.g. vendor management systems, consistent tracking of performance, explicit assignment of procurement responsibilities to site staff – or is it perhaps the result of individuals performing above expectations (exposing a future risk within the system)?
- How does the supply chain system compare to international standards in key performance metrics – e.g. stock availability, LMIS accuracy, on time delivery, procurement prices, staff turnover, batch testing, etc?
 - Are there levels in the current system where performance metrics sharply decline, and where increased investment in institutionalizing best practices is necessary?

Identifying key strengths, gaps, and opportunities for improvement

The CMM questionnaire is essentially a list of several hundred line-items of best practice capabilities across the supply chain. Phrased elsewhere, the NSCA asks “Does the current system include X key capabilities?” hundreds of times over.

- What key supply chain capabilities do 80% of facilities report having?
- What are the gaps in the current system – e.g. 80% report absence of a given capability?
- How does the current SC system stack up against tiers of international best practices?

E.g. SOPs, NEML, risk mitigation plans, public-private partnerships, cold chain infrastructure, distribution KPIs, supply chain budgetary lines, budget shortfalls, documented data assumptions in FASP, DQAs, FASP software, approved vendor lists, contract management systems, procurement ethic boards, temperature monitoring systems, racks, shelves, stock cards, repair and maintenance plans, WMS, approved distribution plans, guards, RFID tags, LMIS tools, standard reporting requirements, supply chain



functions in job descriptions, quarterly quality control sampling, pharmacovigilance data collection tools, action protocols, on site incineration, separate storage capacity for unusable pharmaceutical products, capacity training, etc.

Analyzing across supply chain technical areas

- Are investments in physical and human capacities aligned throughout the system?
 - E.g. Are physical investments in a given technical area paired with widespread capacity trainings in the area and/or with the allocation of critical supply chain tasks to specific staff at all facilities (i.e. formal inclusion in their job descriptions)?
 - Where performance lags capabilities, does failure to invest in or prioritize building human capabilities in this area help to explain the gap?
- Distribution, warehousing and waste management
 - E.g. Where are there weakness in the cold chain infrastructure – in transportation resources or practices? At warehouses or in storages sites? At what levels of the system?
 - E.g. Are sufficient resources available to ensure the quality of commodities throughout the length of the supply chain? Where practices in place to identify damaged products? Are processes in place to safely separate, store, and dispose of damaged pharmaceutical products?
- Quality assurance, pharmacovigilance and waste management
 - E.g. Are quality assurance and pharmacovigilance capabilities paired with sufficient waste management capabilities? Where may there be misalignments in policy, infrastructure, or investment?
- Procurement, stock availability indicators and financial sustainability
 - E.g. To what extent is the country self-funding supply chain activities, across technical areas, across levels of the system? How does this support or undermine metrics of stock availability?
 - E.g. What processes are in place to ensure timely and cost-effective procurement practices? How does this translate to on-time-delivery? How is this buttressed or undermined by broader financial best practices?

... and the list goes on!