



Saving Lives Through Improved Access to Contraceptives in the DRC

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's (DRC) 2021-2025 National Multisectoral Strategic Plan for Family Planning builds on its predecessor, by seeking to ensure "that all Congolese of childbearing age have access to affordable, quality family planning services, regardless of social class, geographical location, political affiliation or religion¹." To achieve this vision, the strategic plan is based on six pillars: 1) obtain effective government and donor commitment to family planning (FP), 2) increase access to FP services, 3) improve the quality of FP services, 4) create demand for FP services, 5) improve the logistics of contraceptive supply, and 6) strengthen the progress assessment system. Since 2017, the USAID-funded Global Health Supply Chain – Technical Assistance (GHSC-TA) Francophone Task Order (TO) project has provided systems strengthening technical assistance in the DRC, supporting its Programme National d'Approvisionnement en Médicaments Essentiels² (PNAM) and the Programme National de la Santé de la Reproduction's³ (PNSR's) key priorities.

The project partnered with the DRC's government to improve commodity security by improving the quality of FP services, improving the logistics of contraceptive supply, and strengthening the progress assessment system. To achieve this goal, the project supports the country in four areas: 1) building workforce capacity; 2) improving best practices for distribution, warehousing and logistics; 3) improving monitoring and evaluation through enhanced data visibility and stock monitoring; and 4) improving governance and financing.

USAID Investment

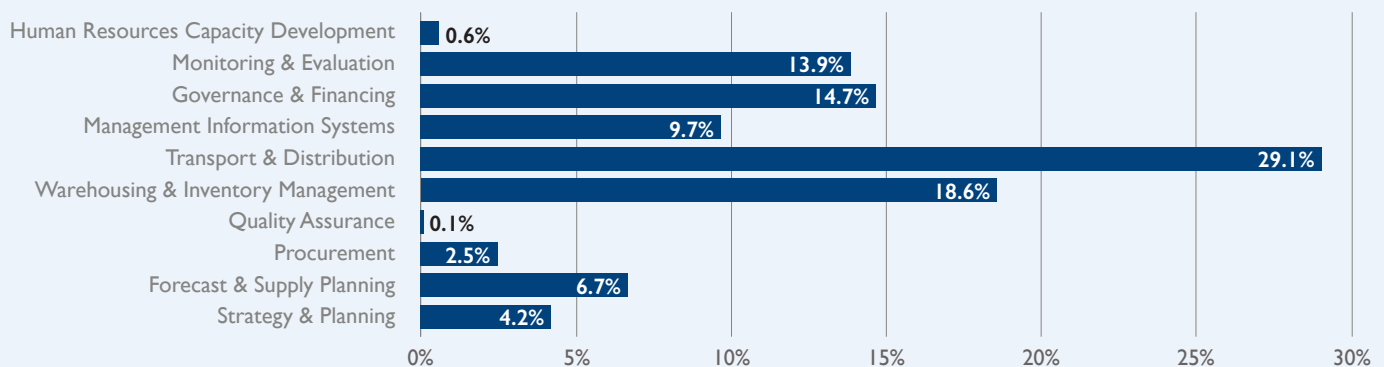
By the end of fiscal year (FY) 2022, USAID provided technical assistance valued at \$6.2 million in partnership with DRC's government to support family planning. To date, the project has used these investments for the transfer of technical knowledge and skills in key workforce development activities, transportation and distribution activities, governance and financing, and data visibility for decision-making.

Key Activities and Achievements

Through the project, USAID invested in family planning and reproductive health (FP/RH) commodities and strengthened the supply chain to help Congolese meet their contraceptive needs. Through this investment, USAID, in partnership with the regional organizations, achieved the following results:

- **Strengthening supply chain capacity at the last mile.**
 To increase access to family planning services and improve contraceptive supply logistics, the project supported the Division Provinciale de la Santé and the PNSR by training 107 health workers in conducting supportive supervision visits at service delivery points (SDPs) in 48 health zones in nine USAID-supported provinces. The supervision visits revealed several challenges related to reporting, stock management, and resupply ordering. Supportive supervision visits provided

Investment by Supply Chain Area*



*Knowledge management, program management, and office operations costs are allocated across technical subcategories based on the proportion of funding spent in each technical subcategory.

¹ Plan Stratégique National à Vision Multisectorielle de la Planification Familiale 2021-2025.

² PNAM is the body within the Ministry of Health responsible for the procurement and logistics management of all pharmaceuticals and essential medicines in the DRC.

³ DRC's national program for reproductive health.



19%

Increase in SDP reporting rate to the LMIS



22

Health workforce trained on supportive supervision



85

opportunities to address these challenges through refresher courses on correctly maintaining commodity logistics management tools, average monthly consumption calculations, logistics data analysis, and interpretation for monthly review meetings.

- **Up to a 6% reduction in distribution costs by leveraging planned distribution to health facilities.** To improve distribution efficiency and availability of commodities at the health facilities, the project launched a pilot for an integrated last-mile distribution (iLMD) approach in FY21 with a third-party logistics provider. The pilot sought to leverage the scheduled HIV/AIDS commodity delivery mechanisms by including other health commodities, such as FP/RH commodities, that were below the prescribed minimum stock thresholds through an informed push model⁴. Health facilities benefited from the iLMD pilot. They received commodities within a shorter timeframe (by four days) and reduced delivery costs, compared to facilities who received their commodities via the traditional approach. Given these promising results, the project encouraged the Ministry of Health and implementing partners to consider integrating the iLMD approach into their strategies.
- **Increase in SDP reporting rate to a logistics management information system (LMIS) improves FP data quality and confidence.** Since FY18, the project supported PNAM in developing a road map for an integrated national web-based data visualization tool, InfoMED. InfoMED

provides supply chain actors with access to data and reports that measure data completeness and timeliness from all nine USAID-supported provinces (Haut Lomami, Kasai Central, Kasai Oriental, Kwilu, Lomami, Lualaba, Sankuru, Sud Kivu, and Tanganyika). Since deploying InfoMED in FY19, reporting rates to the LMIS have increased by 19%. InfoMED provides visibility into SDP stock levels and analysis, which facilitates identification and resolution of stock management issues. Provincial logistics management units, as well as PNAM at the central level, can easily review key supply chain indicators and use the high-quality data for informed decision-making, such as identifying facilities for targeted supportive supervision visits to improve contraceptive logistics management.

Future Investment Opportunities

In collaboration with the Congolese government, the project has made significant strides in workforce development, distribution, warehousing and logistics, and data visibility and stock monitoring. There are opportunities to continue building on these achievements. Areas for future investment include 1) continuing to reinforce workforce development with quarterly supportive supervision visits at all levels of the health system; 2) rolling out the iLMD approach in all provinces to improve FP/RH commodity availability; and 3) scaling the piloted, offline InfoMED module⁵ for SDPs to improve data quality and insights for improved contraceptive security and logistics management.

Contact Us

Glenn Milano

USAID Bureau of Global Health, Office of Population and Reproductive Health, Commodities Security and Logistics Division

Tel: +1 202-916-2166

Angela Elong

Chemonics International
GHSC-TA Francophone Task Order
FrancophoneTOBillable@chemonics.com



WWW.USAID.GOV

WWW.GHSUPPLYCHAIN.ORG

⁴ An informed push model involves gathering information on the consumption of health facilities and their available usable stocks, with a view to supplementing the quantities needed for a given period.

⁵ The InfoMED offline module seeks to bridge the networking challenges faced by many SDPs in the DRC. An offline version would allow SDPs to capture and manage commodity logistics data within InfoMED and upload it once connected to a network. This management and upload of data directly in InfoMED will reduce transcription error and data entry time to provide more timely and accurate data down to the SDP level.