

10-Year National Supply Chain Roadmap: an instrument for sustainable health supply chain financing in Uganda



Context

- Currently, development partners provide 65%-70% of public sector funding for health commodities. The Government of Uganda has made progress in strengthening national health supply chain services and committed to increasing domestic financing for essential medicines and health supplies (EMHS) from UGX 218.3B (USD 58.5M) in 2015/16 to UGX 544B (USD 146M) in 2021/22. Additionally, the fill rate of national supply chain services and health commodities management supply chain/pharmacist positions improved from 40% in 2015/16 to 50% in 2018/19. Nonetheless, weaknesses remain in EMHS management at the subnational and health facility level, with an average stock-out rate of about 35% in April 2023 (DHIS 2 monthly facility stock status report: <https://pip.health.go.ug/sites/bi/Pages/ofssr.aspx>).
- To promote local ownership and sustain development outcomes, the USAID Strengthening Supply Chain Systems (SSCS) Activity, led by Management Sciences for Health, supported the Government of Uganda in developing a multisectoral 10-Year National Supply Chain Roadmap. The 10-year roadmap aims to address short-, medium-, and long-term supply chain needs by harnessing development investments and local financing and strengthening the capacity of government ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs) to independently and efficiently plan, finance, and manage the national health commodity supply chain system.
- The roadmap leverages MDAs' capacities and maximizes existing resources to achieve Uganda's supply chain priorities. Led by a health supply chain Interministerial task force (IMTF) of ministries, donors, and development partners, this "one government" approach brings together stakeholders to share political ownership and consensus on actions. The roadmap provides a national platform and basis for coordinating resource allocation and accountability processes to achieve and sustain the roadmap objectives.

Activity Description

Development of the national 10-year roadmap and current progress:

Planning: June 2020 – September 2020

- Conducted stakeholder mapping to identify interested parties with potential influence on the supply chain system. These included MDAs, civil society organizations, private sector, health development partners, and donors.
- Developed a plan that detailed the methods of stakeholder engagement, outreach, materials, schedule, and desired outcomes. Stakeholders were oriented on roadmap objectives and how the one government approach would facilitate its achievement.

Inception: October 2020 – June 2021

- Established an IMTF subcommittee with 42 members to coordinate the writing process; defined a concept note, workplan, and timelines for developing the roadmap. The IMTF members represent the following entities:
 - MDAs: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; Ministry of Local Government; Ministry of Public Service; National Planning Authority; Ministry of Information Communication and Technology and National Guidance; National Information Technology Authority; National Medical Stores; Joint Medical Stores; and National Drug Authority
 - Development partners: USAID Uganda; US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; UNICEF; United Nations Population Fund; Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria; UK Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office
 - Civil society organizations: Uganda Coalition for Health Promotion and Social Development, Advocates Coalition for Development and Environment
- Set roadmap priorities and agenda through a series of virtual meetings that produced eight priority areas.
- Created buy-in through one-on-one meetings with MDA leaders to underscore the one government approach as key to the roadmap's success.

Writing: June 2021–October 2021

- Held consultative writing retreats and virtual meetings.
- Estimated implementation costs of USD 7.8B for implementing the 10-year roadmap (including EMHS procurement) using an activity-based costing approach.

Approval and Launch: January 2022

- Coordinated roadmap review, approval, and sign-off by MOH structures, including the top management team and IMTF.
- Convened high-level meeting to discuss multisectoral collaboration in roadmap implementation, garnering ownership among the top leadership of 10 MDAs.
- High-level government leaders launched Uganda's 10-year roadmap in January 2022, with ministries making public commitments toward reaching the government's supply chain objectives.

Implementation: January 2022 to date

- Eight MDAs have developed roadmap implementation plans for FY2023/2024 according to their commitments.

Activity Impact

The roadmap laid the foundation for using a one government approach to achieve and sustain health supply chain development outcomes. The expected outcomes and impact already achieved are illustrated below.

10-year implementation impact at one year

<p>Office of the Prime Minister coordinates MDAs to support implementation Advised all MDAs to allocate resources for roadmap commitments</p>	<p>Ministry of Local Government oversees local implementation Instructed districts to plan for 10-year roadmap supply chain activities in FY2023/24</p>	<p>Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development funds implementation Published the National Budget Call Circular advising MDAs to allocate resources to their committed priorities in FY2023/24 Committed UGX 464B (USD 123.7M) to procure essential medicines and health supplies for FY2023/24 Provided an additional UGX 24B (USD 6.4M) to procure essential medicines and UGX 50B (USD 14M) for antiretrovirals in FY2023/24</p>
<p>Ministry of Health provides technical oversight and a conducive policy environment for implementation in partnership with Ministry of Local Government, the USAID SSCS Activity and other partners Trained 615 leaders from 33 districts, cities, and municipalities and 17 hospitals in supply chain leadership, management, and governance; leaders developed 50 supply chain implementation plans Held 121 health supply chain leadership and coordination meetings in 77 districts and 27 hospitals; 814 district and health facility leaders reviewed supply chain performance indicators and mapped improvement strategies</p>	<p>Ministry of ICT and National Guidance supports health supply chain digitalization Connected 84 health facilities to national internet backbone out of 600 facilities committed over 5 years Deployed district information, communications, and technology officers to support roadmap commitments</p>	<p>Ministry of Public Service plans for adequate supply chain staff in health facilities Added critical health supply chain staff positions to the national human resources structure; district pharmacists and medical records officers</p>
<p>Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development provides electricity to health facilities Committed to providing electricity to 830 health facilities and 73 districts over 5 years Named first 400 health facilities to receive solar off-grid electrification</p>		

Expected 10-year roadmap outcomes

Key year 3 Milestones	2025
Government of Uganda funds	40% health commodities >20% supply chain operations
Supply chain staff positions filled	>55% national >50% district
Public and private health facilities connected to electricity and internet	>40%
Health products pass quality tests	70%

Key year 5 Milestones	2027
Government of Uganda funds	60% health commodities >50% supply chain operations
Supply chain staff positions filled	>80% national >70% district
Public and private health facilities connected to electricity and internet	>60%
Health products pass quality tests	85%

Key year 10 Milestones	2032
Government of Uganda funds	>90% health commodities >70% supply chain operations
Supply chain staff positions filled	>90% national and district
Public and private health facilities connected to electricity and internet	100%
Health products pass quality tests	90%

Facilitators

- Inter-Ministerial Task Force establishment:** The IMTF was established in 2019 to lead roadmap development. The task force is composed of representatives from the Ugandan government, development partners, and the private sector.
- Availability of data and evidence:** The IMTF drew on a wealth of data to inform roadmap development. This evidence was collected from a variety of sources including the Ugandan government, development partners, and the private sector.
- Participatory approach:** The IMTF engaged with a wide range of stakeholders throughout roadmap development. This included representatives from the Ugandan government, development partners, the private sector, and civil society. The IMTF used a participatory approach of engaging with stakeholders at all stages of the process, from the identification of problems to the development of solutions with technical assistance from the USAID SSCS Activity.

Challenges

- Consistency in stakeholder decision making:** The 10-year roadmap development needed decisions on various strategies and interventions. Stakeholders had different priorities and objectives that required negotiations to achieve alignment. Effective engagement and communication were essential for aligning these differences.
- Government commitment to increase funding:** The roadmap requires significant commitment to fund long-term priorities. Getting the government to commit to additional funding for those priorities was a challenge due to inadequate understanding of the roadmap and lack of transparency and accountability in allocation of funds.
- Translating/linking national decisions to districts:** The roadmap requires translation to district levels to ensure effective implementation. However, lack of coordination between national and district levels may hinder the districts' understanding of the roadmap's goal and objectives.
- Fulfilling pledges and commitments:** 10-year roadmap implementation requires sustained commitment from the government and development partners. However, political will can be fickle and may complicate stakeholders' ability to meet their commitments.
- Epidemic outbreaks:** COVID-19 and Ebola outbreaks led to several restrictions in the country that made consultations and other activities difficult to carry out.

Lessons Learned

- One government approach:** Adopting the one government approach increased the IMTF's participation in the roadmap development and strengthened partnership with MDAs engaged in its development and operationalization.
- Data-driven approach:** A strong emphasis was placed on using medicines and health supply data to inform the process including setting the agenda for and establishing ownership of the 10-year roadmap.
- Leadership, management, and accountability:** The process alone of developing the 10-year roadmap advanced health supply chain leadership, management, and accountability.
- Development of metrics for monitoring progress using data:** The 10-year roadmap aims at sustaining development outcomes by the MDAs. Clearly defined short term, medium term and long-term implementation metrics by MDA will remain critical for advocacy efforts for incremental resource allocation from GoU and partners, and other needs of the roadmap addressed as committed by the various MDAs
- Political will:** Strong political will is essential for success—without it, making major changes will be difficult. The government's commitment to the roadmap is evident in its ongoing willingness to provide resources and to work with development partners.

Evidence

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda launched the roadmap; selected implementation evidence is provided below.

MDAs, USAID, SSCS Activity and other stakeholders at the official launch of the 10-year roadmap – January 2022

Ministry of Local Government instructs districts to plan for 10-year roadmap supply chain activities in FY23/24

Public Service HR Structure 2022 approved District Pharmacist & Asst. Medical Records Officer

Government of Uganda commits additional UGX 50B (USD 14M) toward antiretroviral procurement FY2023/24 through the National Medical Stores