

In the spotlight

Coalition re-launches the Innovation Fund

The Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition has announced the re-launch of its Innovation Fund with a new call for proposals due by 1 February 2014. The Fund is the Coalition's flagship initiative for inspiring and financing new tools, research and other activities that help people access and use affordable and quality supplies, including a broad choice of contraceptive methods, to ensure their better sexual and reproductive health.

Since 2009, the Fund has played a catalytic role in bridging all the sectors – advocacy, technical, commercial – that make up the Coalition's large and diverse membership. This new round includes for the first time the following features:

- Eligibility by members of all the Coalition's Implementing Mechanisms
- Options for both competed and non-competed awards
- Funding earmarked for developing country applicants
- Technical support for proposal development.

More information on the Innovation Fund and application materials can be found [here](#).

A&A WG workstream supports new advocacy toolkit

With technical support from the Advocacy & Accountability (A&A) Working Group, the Advocacy TRT of the UN Commodities Commission has launched a new advocacy toolkit entitled [Scaling Up Life-Saving Commodities for Women, Children and Newborns](#). The toolkit provides information about the Commission, its 13 priority commodities, and its 10 cross-cutting recommendations to improve access and availability. It also provides guidance on utilizing the Commission platform to raise awareness, engaging stakeholders in addressing commodity-related gaps, and providing strategic input to advance implementation of the recommendations. The Coalition's A&A WG ensured inclusion of FP commodities in the toolkit and developed a dedicated section on these commodities, addressing barriers to their access and use, and specific advocacy needs.

Coalition on the scene

Coalition support of World Bank Institute challenge

The World Bank Institute's annual Procurement Innovation Challenge rewards innovative policy, approaches, processes or tools that have led to effective procurement reforms. Following a June SSWG meeting which discussed ways to collect, share and highlight best practices and innovation, Aron Betru of the Pledge Guarantee for Health and Yulia Johansen of Crown Agents met with the Institute to explore opportunities to work together on supply chain management innovations. Yulia, who has extensive experience in public health procurement, has now been appointed to the Challenge's Committee of Advisors, marking what is hoped will be successful future collaboration between the Institute and the Working Group. For more information, contact [Ellen T. Tompsett](#).

Getting ready to "speak the same language" on stockouts

In 2012, the Systems Strengthening Working Group launched a workstream with the aim of harmonizing stockout indicators across organizations focused on reproductive health. As the Coalition prepares to launch its Initiative on Reducing Stockouts, this work takes on new importance as our community strives to speak with one voice when it comes to discussing this important issue. The findings of an initial landscape analysis of stockout indicators currently in use were presented at the ICFP in Addis this November. It showed wide variation in how organizations are currently measuring, stockouts, making it nearly impossible to aggregate data across organizations to build a more complete picture of product availability in a country, region, or globally. The next step is to finalize a suite of recommended indicators that can potentially be field-tested and then incorporated, where not already present, into organizations' M&E plans.

Training, Advocacy and Strengthening Ties in Nicaragua

Training provision, new ways of collaborating, and strengthening ties with high-level partners were all on the cards during the recent visit to Managua, Nicaragua by the LAC Forum's Regional Facilitator, Milka Dinev. Milka trained 33 Red Cross members in project management and visited both Nicaragua's Ministry of Health's General Direction of Medical Supplies and the offices of UNFPA. She distributed copies of the new film ["Con las Manos Vacías"](#) among Nicaraguan colleagues.

Coalition furthers global conversations on stockouts, markets in Addis

Both Coalition panels at ICFP 2013 were well-attended and significantly furthered the global conversation on stockouts and market shaping. MDA Working Group Leader, Ian Askew, moderated a panel on market shaping aimed at creating a shared vision of market shaping outcomes (affordability, quality, supply, sustainability, and equity). The panel also addressed upstream elements of market shaping such as procurement, pricing, and quality; and downstream elements of distribution and capacity building. The Coalition's panel on stockouts, "Getting down to business: the critical steps to getting shelves stocked" addressed efforts underway to ensure that all stakeholders speak the same language on stockout indicators. Presentations can be found [online](#).

Coalition membership reaches 263 with six new members

November saw the arrival of six new members.

- [D.H.S Joint-Stock Company](#) (DHS), Vietnam, Social Marketing Organization
- Youth Vision Zambia (YVZ), Zambia, Civil Society

- [Cameroon Agenda for Sustainable Development \(CASD\)](#), Cameroon, Civil Society
- [Imperial Health Sciences](#), South Africa, Technical support agency
- [Club Initié pour la Lutte contre le SIDA](#), Togo, Civil Society
- Sustainable Consulting – The Netherlands – Civil Society

Highlights from the Implementing Mechanisms

SECONAF-Ouagadougou Partnership meeting

Priority actions, shared experiences and funding strategies were on the agenda at the recent meeting in Addis Ababa, co-organized by SECONAF and the Ouagadougou Partnership (OP). The meeting showcased an innovative process to streamline country action plans, and described efforts underway to finalize these plans in six of the nine OP countries. The meeting also focused attention on best practices, such as the adoption of task sharing in Guinea in accordance with WHO guidelines. The discussions highlighted the constraints affecting the availability of high quality contraceptives: inappropriate regulatory texts, the excessive costs of the products, inexistence of forecasting and contraceptive procurement plans, poor logistics and information systems, and the lack of quality assurance. Recommendations to SECONAF include provision of assistance to send reliable data to the [Procurement Planning and Monitoring Report](#) (PPMR) on a regular basis. For more information contact SECONAF Facilitator Badara Seye on bseye@rhsupplies.org.

A&A WG-supported WHO Task-Sharing Guidelines now available

A&A WG is pleased to mark online publication of the WHO's Task-Sharing Guidelines, which summarizes WHO recommendations on training and supporting lay health workers and mid-level providers to provide the following contraceptive methods safely: tubal ligation, vasectomy, intrauterine device (IUD), implants, injectables, as well as promotional activities. The process of enabling additional cadres to provide a specific health intervention is referred to here as "task shifting" but is also widely known as "task sharing". A&A was closely involved in the conception, drafting and production of these Guidelines. English and French versions of the Guidelines can be downloaded [here](#).

Upcoming events

- 17-18 Feb [International Conference on Obstetrics & Gynaecology](#), London
20-25 July [20th International AIDS Conference](#), Melbourne

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