
**Contraceptive Procurement:
A Checklist of Essential Actions**

Guidelines for Logistics Managers

FOREWORD

Hundreds of millions of dollars annually are expended worldwide to buy new supplies of contraceptives and other reproductive health commodities. Logistics systems are designed to ensure that this replenishment of supplies imposes minimum costs while providing reliable flows. During the 1990s, programme managers increasingly recognized the critical roles that sound logistics procedures, directed by well-informed logistics managers, were contributing to the success of their programmes.

Logistics managers ensure the initiation and guidance of the procurement process by determining the appropriate quantities, types and timing of supplies that programmes require; they provide critical help to budget officers in determining the budgetary resources that programmes need to avoid shut-downs for lack of supplies; and, finally, they provide oversight of the procurement actions under way and quick corrections when unexpected problems arise. This guidebook is designed to help logistics managers working in programmes that provide family planning, acquired immunodeficiency syndrome/human immunodeficiency virus (AIDS/HIV)-prevention, and related reproductive health services improve the efficiency and dependability of their resupply systems.

The guidebook complements an earlier document. In 1993, the working group on Contraceptive Requirements and Logistics Management Needs, chaired by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA), commissioned the preparation of a guide to basic procurement options. The Program for Appropriate Technology in Health (PATH) subsequently developed this guidebook, entitled *Contraceptive Procurement: Options for Programme Managers* (UNFPA, 1993), which has since been distributed worldwide.

The purpose of this new guidebook is to provide a brief checklist of essential actions to help logistics managers worldwide ensure that service programmes always have adequate supplies of contraceptives and other products that they need for clients. The guidebook begins with an overview of the resupply systems that logistics managers must direct; it elaborates the actions that would ensure that each stage of the resupply process is completed before initiating actions that depend upon the completion of previous tasks; and it includes a list of the principal sources of technical information with which the logistics manager should be familiar.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

DMPA	Depo-provera
IPPF	International Planned Parenthood Federation
IUD	Intra-uterine device
LMIS	Logistics Management Information System
PATH	Program for Appropriate Technology in Health
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

I. OVERVIEW

Programme decision makers, budget managers and other programme officials count on logistics managers to ensure that adequate quantities of all critical goods are always available. The ultimate goal of the resupply process in any programme is to provide clients with a continuous stream of the right products in the quantities needed, always seeking to avoid the costly errors of oversupply or shortages.

A. THE LOGISTICS MANAGER'S ROLE

The logistics manager is usually the person who makes the critical decisions during the multi-step process that resupplies programmes. The steps are as follows:

1. Deciding what is needed and when

The logistics manager identifies the programme commodities that need to be resupplied; the specific products needed; the quantities required during the planning period — usually one calendar or fiscal year; any special services needed as a part of procurement, such as delivery to a specific consignee or shipment by air; and the desired timing and sequence of subsequent deliveries. Typically, the logistics manager must estimate needs for up to three years because of the long lead-times involved in the resupply process.

2. Identifying the funds to pay for needed supplies

The logistics manager, in a timely manner, advises the government office or a potential donor about the level of funding required to support the proposed resupply actions. The manager continues to work with government office or donor to obtain agreement on the level of funding available and to secure the timely release of the funds for procurement actions.

3. Overseeing procurement through delivery

The logistics manager provides the procurement agent with a clear understanding of the programme's procurement requests and ensures that the programme is ready to initiate the procurement process quickly enough to meet the desired delivery dates. As procurement proceeds, the logistics manager maintains oversight of the progress towards delivery. If problems develop, such as delivery delays, the logistics manager is usually the person responsible for taking timely actions to avoid shortages and to obtain revised delivery commitments.

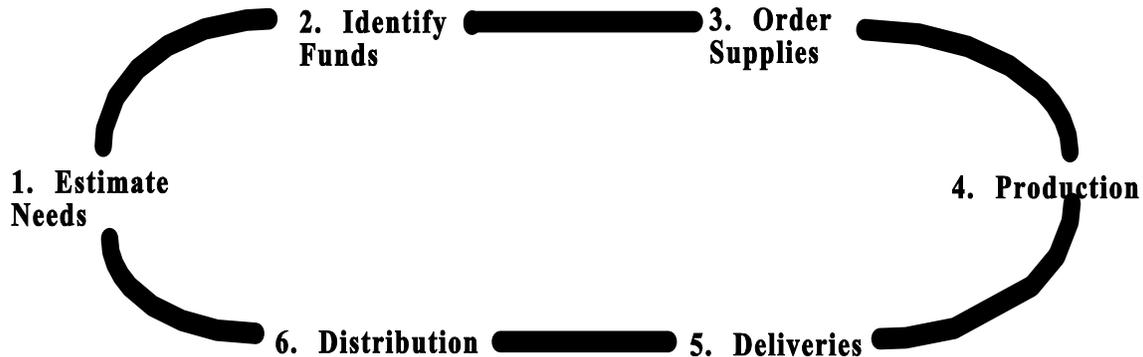
4. Assessing and reporting on the process

Finally, the logistics manager is the programme's primary source of reports on and accountability for the overall resupply process and the person responsible for assessing the process for important lessons learned.

In short, programmes count on logistics managers to use the programme resources made available for procurement effectively to ensure the continuing availability of the products that are key to the programme's successful operation.

The process that logistics managers oversee and direct is a never-ending cycle of actions that applies to each product required. Figure 1 shows the principal action areas of the cycle in sequence.

Figure 1



B. OTHER CONTRIBUTORS TO THE RESUPPLY PROCESS

In the resupply cycle in Figure 1, logistics managers are sometimes the principal actors — for example, when they estimate needs or order supplies. At other times, their responsibility is to monitor the process for unplanned events and problems that can interfere with the flow of needed supplies, which may occur during the period, for example, of production and deliveries.

Many others work with logistics managers in the resupply cycle shown in Figure 1:

- Policy makers determine the level at which programmes as a whole will be funded, they may designate the client groups that programmes are expected to serve and they may prohibit the use of some contraceptive methods;

- Programme managers decide how the programmes will achieve their objectives, which contraceptive methods will be supported and what level of programme funds will be allocated for the purchase of supplies;
- Donors may tie the use of their funds to the purchase of specific brands of contraceptives;
- Managers of distribution units inform logistics managers of the quantities they have used and their expectations for future needs as well as problems they have encountered with the products provided;
- Procurement units carry out the procurement requests of logistics managers in accord with their purchasing rules; and
- Production and delivery organizations try to reconcile the logistics manager's requests with their schedules for production and delivery to many other customers.

The logistics manager is the vital link with all of these other players in the resupply cycle. The logistics manager makes the process work effectively for programme resupply. His or her aim is to provide the right amounts of the right products at the right time to the right destinations, and all within the budget allowed.

C. TIMING

One key dimension of the resupply process is the time required to accomplish each task. Resupply actions typically take several years to complete. Funding sources — whether donors or a programme's own ministry — need advance notice of a year or more to budget the funds needed to pay for future deliveries. Suppliers need six months or more to plan and carry out both production and deliveries. Distribution systems need weeks or months to gather and analyse service data so that they can advise the logistics manager of shortages, surpluses or product failures that they are experiencing. The result is that the logistics manager, at any time, needs to look ahead several years and plan a series of resupply actions. This must be done for each product that the programme needs. Figure 2 illustrates the variety of future events that the logistics manager has to address for each product in the system.

Figure 2. Managing Future Resupply Needs: A Three-Year Example

1999	2000	2001
Forecast needs for 2001;	→ Identify funding and place orders for 2001;	→ Oversee 2001 deliveries. Assess lessons learned.
Identify funding and place orders for 2000;	→ Oversee 2000 deliveries; Assess lessons learned;	→ Forecast needs for 2003.
Oversee 1999 deliveries; Assess lessons learned;	→ Forecast needs for 2002;	→ Identify funding and place orders for 2002.

Another way to look at the logistics manager's responsibilities is to list the actions required just to provide one year's supply of one product. The lead times suggested in Figure 3 are, of course, approximate and differ from programme to programme.

Figure 3. Sequence of Actions Required to Meet One Year's Needs

1999	2000	2001
Estimate 2001 requirements	→ Request budget level for 2001	→ Secure 2001 budget. Update 2001 estimates of need. Initiate 2001 procurement.
		→ Monitor procurement process. Oversee deliveries. Record results and lessons learned.

The number and complexity of the logistics manager's responsibilities for staying on top of both present and future activities at any given time are extremely challenging. Keeping track of the movements of many products in many different time periods would be impossible without having a checklist of the most critical tasks and responsibilities. Using such a checklist, with items arranged sequentially, the logistics manager can reduce the likelihood that critical actions will be overlooked during the resupply process. Sample checklists appear in the following chapter.

II. CHECKLISTS OF TASKS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The checklists that follow summarize the diverse tasks of the logistics manager in the resupply cycle. These lists highlight, at each stage of the process, the key questions that deserve the manager's attention.

A. ESTIMATING REQUIREMENTS

Forecasting commodity needs requires the logistics manager's best answer to the questions: what is needed, how much is needed and when is it needed? In response to these questions, the first concern of a logistics manager is to develop a reliable logistics management information system (LMIS) that will provide timely and accurate information about the programme's commodity needs.

Ideally, a logistics manager would use one of the standard tools for forecasting requirements. Such a tool would enable her or him to develop and maintain regularly updated estimates of programme commodity needs for the following two to three years. Logistics managers can obtain the standard requirements forecasting tools from UNFPA, the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) and other donors. The same sources can also provide external advisers, if necessary.

The following three subsections provide basic checklists for estimating commodity needs when the standard tools are unavailable.

1. What products are needed?

In ongoing programmes, the logistics manager can reasonably assume that, in the absence of a request for a different brand of the products currently used, the task is to restock the brands that are currently used. Brand or product changes may occur, however, for a number of reasons.

A better or less expensive brand is available

Sometimes, programmes decide to change brands or to shift to generic products. The logistics manager should help programme managers take full account of the costs involved in changing brands. A new brand may represent a better product and it may even cost less. These benefits should be weighed against the costs of shifting brands. The programme will have to counsel clients that the new brand is as good as the one they have accepted and teach them how to use it properly. A brand switch has to be planned carefully so that, over a year or more, all non-expired stocks of the abandoned product are distributed in the programme before the new brand is made available.

A change in method mix is needed

Product changes may occur because programme managers and policy makers want to change the method mix of programmes to better meet the needs of clients and to enhance the quality of care provided.

- Phasing out a method requires the logistics manager to plan the use or disposal of unexpired stocks still on hand;
- Phasing in a new method requires the logistics manager to obtain the exact technical specifications for the new product and to identify any special storage or handling requirements. If the new method needs to be registered before it can be distributed, the registration process should be initiated without delay.

— **Product failures require a change**

Programme staff or clients may have complained about product failures, deterioration or side-effects to a point where automatic resupply is inappropriate. The logistics manager should maintain a record of all product complaints and, if these are significant, initiate an investigation to determine whether the problems can be corrected or whether the product should be discontinued. The systematic collection of complaints and prompt analysis of the problems is an essential component of a good logistics system.¹

— **Funding sources require a change**

Some funding sources tie the use of their funds to the purchase of specific brands. If a logistics manager expects to make purchases with such funds, it is critical to identify any brand limitations at the time when requirements are initially estimated so that clients can be prepared and stocks of the current brand can be fully utilized.

A short checklist for logistics managers: Identifying needed products

¹The U.S. Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has developed a system for encouraging and facilitating complaint reports from clients and programme officials involved in product distribution. For information on this system, see *Contraceptive Complaint Report: A System for Reporting Problems with the Quality or Conditions of Contraceptives* (Atlanta, Georgia, USA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998).

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- Should current brands be restocked?

 - Have there been significant complaints that cannot be rected and require a change of brand?

 - Is there a proposal to restock with competing or generic brands?

 - If so, are the brands equivalent in quality, are they less stly, or do they have currently unavailable features that offset a higher ce?

 - Are they registered already or is registration needed before they can be distributed?
 - How long will it take to use up existing stocks of the current brand?

-

2. How much will be needed?

The quantities needed for future deliveries are determined by three considerations: how much is currently on hand, how much is expected to be used during the period for which the estimate is being made and how much is already expected to be delivered in the meantime?

– **Amount on hand**

The sum of all of the stocks held at all levels from initial receipt to distribution points of the programme makes up the system's "pipeline". All of this product — except product that expires or is damaged or lost — will eventually become available to clients when it arrives at the distribution points. Usually, the system pipeline amounts to 6-12 months' worth of the amount distributed annually. When a new product is being introduced or when clients' current usage is increasing by more than a few percentage points, the logistics manager needs to add enough product to cover both increased distribution and the increased pipeline stocks that will support increased distribution.

If the total supply in the system pipeline is unknown, logistics managers can use the stock in the central warehouse as a substitute. Product that will expire before it can be distributed should be excluded from the count. Regular inventories of the central warehouse stock are essential for reliable measurement of the stock on hand. The logistics manager should judge the adequacy of central stocks by referring to minimum-maximum ("min-max") rules, which are designed to ensure that stocks are always adequate to meet known demand. The "minimum" level triggers orders for resupply; the "maximum" level alerts the manager to orders that cause costly overstocking.²

– **Expected future use**

Future requirements depend upon likely changes in comparison with current use one or two years into the future. Past experience can indicate the reasonable annual increases to expect. Larger increases should be questioned to ensure that the rest of the distribution system will be expanded to accommodate larger volumes of the product.

– **Deliveries on the way**

Current stocks will increase when scheduled deliveries actually arrive. The logistics manager needs to assess whether these deliveries will leave the system with a surplus or a deficit of product when the new period arrives and adjust orders accordingly.

In summary, the amount needed for any future year depends upon:

- The stock on hand *plus* the deliveries expected in the meantime

²See *Family Planning Logistics Guidelines* (Atlanta, Georgia, USA, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1993).

- Less the expected usage in the future year *plus or minus* the amount required to bring end-of-year stocks up to the desired minimum level.

If stocks in excess of a year's needs already exist, this formula may indicate that no additional shipments will be needed.



A short checklist for logistics managers:

Assessing quantities

- **What is the most reliable current estimate of central stocks?**
 - **What is the most realistic estimate of usage in the designated future year?**
 - **How much is already scheduled to be delivered in the designated future year?**
 - **How much product should be delivered in the designated future year to leave end-of-future-year stocks at the desired level?**
-

3. When will deliveries be needed?

The frequency and number of shipments depend upon the quantity to be delivered, the capacity to store it in country and the feasibility and reliability of shipping services. A logistics manager's shipping strategy is to arrange for shipments in such a way that in-country stocks are maintained within the minimum-maximum range.

- As far as possible, the ideal is to size shipments so that shipping containers are used. Shipping containers are generally more secure, better protected from damage and a more cost-effective way of moving products in international commerce;
- Shipments should not be so large or frequent that they exceed the storage capacity of local warehouses. Warehouse storage protects contraceptives and other products vulnerable to excessive heat or cold or dampness. It also reduces the likelihood of losses from theft. Storing shipments in shipping containers is a costly alternative that should be reserved for exceptional situations;
- The frequency of shipments depends upon the reliability of shipping services. It is less costly for the programme to have excess stocks in country than to risk failures of shipments that cause programme stock-outs and require high-cost emergency shipments.

A short checklist for logistics managers:

Timing deliveries

- **How many container-loads (various sizes) are needed to provide a one-year supply?**
 - **How much warehouse storage capacity will there be when scheduled shipments arrive?**
 - **How reliable are the available shipping services? Have any deliveries recently been delayed or cancelled?**
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B. REQUESTING BUDGET RESOURCES

After estimating product requirements, a logistics manager would turn to identifying and locking in the funds to pay for them as the next essential task. The needed funds may come from an external donor or from the programme's own ministry. Funding agencies plan the size and use of each year's budget one or two years in advance. The logistics manager needs to ensure that a formal request for funds is made in a timely manner. Likely costs can be derived from the current costs of donors such as UNFPA. Logistics managers can request the current UNFPA price list through the UNFPA regional Country Support Team offices or from UNFPA Representatives in individual countries.

As depicted in Figure 3 (see page 4), the funding to pay for product deliveries in the year 2001 must be requested a year or more earlier. Within each programme, the funding needs for commodities must, presumably, first be reconciled with overall funding needs before the programme submits a formal request for support. This process takes many months to complete.

A logistics manager has to couple the request for funding with appropriate justification for the requirements that are the basis for the funding request. The basis for estimates of the quantities needed, the comparison with previous requests, any waivers from competitive bidding that may be needed, and allowances for inflation must be explained and justified. New programmes that require new products will require more thorough explanations of the basis of cost estimates.

If the logistics manager seeks funding from a donor that provides "tied aid", he or she must ensure that all of the products requested are consistent with the donor's restrictions or ask for a waiver request to be approved before the request for funding resources is submitted. No procurement request should go forward if it violates a condition for its use by the funding source. In the course of negotiating an assistance agreement, a logistics manager should ask donors to specify any restrictions on the use of their funds.

While the funding source is reviewing the programme's request, the logistics manager should be prepared to provide additional justification of aspects of the request that may raise questions. For example, a request for a waiver of competitive procurement will require justification. Once decisions are made on how much will be provided and under what conditions, it can be difficult to persuade donors to reconsider their decisions in the light of information that was not initially provided.

Frequently, the funds made available are less than the amounts requested. A logistics manager should have fall-back plans ready so that reduced funding levels can be put to use within a set of established priority needs. The manager must know how to stretch inadequate supplies in a manner that minimizes the damage to distribution services. The sooner the manager learns that actual funding levels will be less than what was requested, the easier it will be to spread reductions over a longer period and reduce the size of any sudden decrease in supplies.

Requesting funding for logistics managers:

- **What is the deadline for submitting a formal request for funding? For commodities? For the programme as a whole?**
 - **What are the requirements likely to cost when procurement actually occurs? How defensible is this estimate?**
 - **Is any of the funding tied to the purchase of specific brands? Are these acceptable or must a waiver be requested?**
 - **What priority claims on resources will receive preference if funding is less than the requested level?**
 - **When will the funding decision be made?**
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C. **PREPARING FINAL PROCUREMENT REQUESTS**

Figure 2 (see page 4) indicates that, during the year before a product must be delivered, the logistics manager should update the initial estimates of need, ensure that registration and product-related specifications are up to date, determine the procurement agent that will execute the purchases and initiate the process of submitting a timely final request for procurement.

1. **Update estimated requirements**

Some of the data that shaped the original estimate of requirements will have changed in the intervening period and should be updated: some stocks may be in excess of needs, and others may require emergency resupply actions. In setting delivery schedules, a logistics manager may need to address two common complications:

- The logistics manager may have inadequate data from service units to ensure that the estimate of requirements is not overstated. If it is possible to specify the amount to be produced but to delay setting a schedule for late-year shipments and even to delay them, if necessary, until the following year, the logistics manager can reduce the risk of surplus supplies by requesting this option. By mid-year, the data will show more clearly whether all of the supplies originally expected to be required for the year should be shipped.
- Sometimes, funding sources make more funds available towards the end of a fiscal period than were originally requested. When this happens, the logistics manager needs to seek an agreement from the supplier to use the funds for production but to delay deliveries until the programme needs the supplies.

This is the last, best opportunity for the logistics manager to fine-tune the coming year's deliveries. After procurement levels have been requested and production levels are set, it becomes more costly and difficult to cancel or modify later shipments.

2. **Complete registration**

If any of the products required need registration to permit their distribution, the process should be well on the way to completion. If registration is likely to be delayed beyond the time when deliveries occur, the logistics manager will have to determine how long deliveries should be delayed so that registration can be completed and to decide whether completing registration by the time of delivery warrants moving ahead, or whether the request should be deferred.

3. **Specify standards and other conditions**

The product specifications in procurement requests should be updated to meet current international standards. Other significant specifications relating to how the product will be tested for compliance with international standards and how it will be packaged and shipped must also be brought up to date.

4. **Identify the procurement agent**

In principle, logistics managers have a variety of options for executing procurement.³ These range from a Government's own procurement agency to UNFPA or to a qualified international or local intermediary. Each procurement agent will have its own deadlines for the submission of procurement requests in order to meet desired delivery dates. The logistics manager must establish a working relationship with the procurement agent to ensure that questions concerning the request can be clarified quickly and that the logistics manager will have early warning of any problems in production or delivery.

A short checklist for logistics managers:

Preparing final procurement requests

- **What changes are needed in the original estimate of requirements? Are there indications from recent programme activity that the original estimates may have overstated the requirements?**
 - **Are additional funds now available and can deliveries be stretched out to make additional supplies available when the programme needs them?**
 - **Is registration likely to be completed by the time deliveries occur? Should any shipments be delayed for lack of registration?**
 - **Have all product specifications been brought up to date?**
 - **Is the logistics manager aware of the deadlines for action and other procedures of the procurement agent?**
-

D. OVERSEEING PROCUREMENT COMPLETION

The responsibilities of logistics managers during the period when deliveries are to be made are critical. All of the previous preparations can result in inadequate supplies unless the commodities are delivered intact and on time. The following tasks are keys to success in this final phase.

1. Monitoring the status of production and deliveries

³ See *Contraceptive Procurement: Options for Programme Managers* (UNFPA, 1993).

The logistics manager needs to check periodically on the status of requested deliveries. Production and shipment delays frequently occur, and the logistics manager needs to know of delays as soon as possible so that fall-back actions can be taken to protect programme operations. The earlier that corrective action can be put in place — for example, a selective rationing of central stocks — the more easily the programme can absorb a break in deliveries without serious disruptions to its overall distribution system.

2. Preparing to receive deliveries

First-expired-first-out procedures can be overlooked when massive new deliveries arrive. The logistics manager must organize the receipt of new stock to ensure that expiry dates are visible and that older stock is easily accessible.

3. Expediting customs clearance

The logistics manager must know the local customs-approval process and must actively monitor the process until shipments have been released for distribution. The manager should develop working relationships with customs officials and be ready to act quickly to resolve customs issues. Demurrage charges — which are often difficult to meet — can build up quickly when deliveries are stalled in customs.

4. Making final adjustments in orders

If the procurement agent has agreed to stage deliveries to avoid in-county shortages or surpluses, the logistics manager must now finalize the late-year schedule of deliveries on the basis of the latest programme information. The key rule is: small surpluses are always better than small shortages. Shortages slow down or shut down distribution programmes; surpluses reduce the deliveries during the next period.

E. GATHERING LESSONS LEARNED

The logistics manager should be the key source of continued improvements in the overall procurement system. The logistics manager ensures system accountability to funding sources and to programme management by ensuring that there is a clear summary record of each year's transactions. In addition, the logistics manager should examine the problems that occurred and the solutions applied to determine whether these experiences suggest improvements in overall system operation.

A short checklist for logistics managers:

Overseeing procurement completion and gathering lessons

- **What is the current status of production and deliveries? Is the process on schedule, or have delays developed that will require changes in in-country resupply schedules? How soon must these changes be made?**
 - **Are in-country warehousing facilities ready to receive the new deliveries? Are first-expired-first-out procedures protected by the way in which stock will be stored?**
 - **Has a working relationship been developed with customs officials so that the logistics manager receives early warning of customs problems? Does the logistics manager have access to expertise to resolve customs problems without delay?**
 - **Does the most current programme data on commodity use indicate that the schedule for late-year orders should be adjusted? What is the latest date when the procurement agent must have these changes?**
 - **What are the reports on procurement activity that best inform programme managers of the completed annual performance? Have lessons been learned that should reshape some areas of system performance in the coming year?**
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Estimating Requirements

1. What are the products needed?
 - ✓ Should current brands be restocked?
 - Have there been significant complaints that cannot be corrected and require a change of brand?
 - ✓ Is there a proposal to restock with competing or generic brands?
 - If so, are they equivalent in quality, are they less costly, or do they have currently unavailable features that offset a higher price?
 - Are they registered already or is registration needed before they can be distributed?
 - How long will it take to use up existing stocks of the current brand?
2. How much will be needed?
 - ✓ What is the most reliable current estimate of central stocks?
 - ✓ What is the most realistic estimate of usage in the designated future year?
 - ✓ How much is already scheduled to be delivered in the designated future year?
 - ✓ How much product should be delivered in the designated future year to leave end-of-future-year stocks at the desired level?
3. When will deliveries be needed?
 - ✓ How many container-loads (various sizes) are needed to provide a one-year supply?
 - ✓ How much warehouse storage capacity will there be when scheduled shipments arrive?
 - ✓ How reliable are the available shipping services? Have any deliveries recently been delayed or cancelled?

Requesting Budget Resources

- ✓ What is the deadline for submitting a formal request for funding? For commodities? For the programme as a whole?
- ✓ What are the requirements likely to cost when procurement actually occurs? How defensible is this estimate?
- ✓ Is any of the funding tied to the purchase of specific brands? Are these acceptable or must a waiver be requested?
- ✓ What priority claims on resources will receive preference if funding is less than the requested level?
- ✓ When will the funding decision be made?

(continued)

Preparing Final Procurement Requests

- ✓ What changes are needed in the original estimate of requirements? Are there indications of programme activity that the original estimates may have overstated the requirements?
 - ✓ Are additional funds now available and can deliveries be stretched out to make additional available when the programme needs them?
 - ✓ Is registration likely to be completed by the time deliveries occur? Should any shipments be delayed or for lack of registration?
 - ✓ Have all product specifications been brought up to date?
 - ✓ Is the logistics manager aware of the deadlines for action and other procedures of the procurement agent?
-

Overseeing Procurement Completion

- ✓ What is the current status of production and deliveries? Is the process on schedule, or have delays developed that will require changes in in-country resupply schedules? How soon must these changes be implemented?
 - ✓ Are in-country warehousing facilities ready to receive the new deliveries? Are first-expired-procedures protected by the way in which stock will be stored?
 - ✓ Has a working relationship been developed with customs officials so that the logistics manager can get an early warning of customs problems? Does the logistics manager have access to expertise to resolve problems without delay?
 - ✓ Does the most current programme data on commodity use indicate that the schedule for late-arrivals should be adjusted? What is the latest date when the procurement agent must have these changes?
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Gathering Lessons

- ✓ What are the reports on procurement activity that best inform programme managers of the previous year's annual performance? Have lessons been learned that should reshape some areas of system performance in the coming year?
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