



Providing Technical Support to the EVM & Hermes Health Commodities Supply Chain Improvement Workshops in Benin

Project Location:	Cotonou, Benin
Project Start Date:	July 2012
Project Duration:	2 months

Introduction:

EVM + Hermes is an approach that combines Effective Vaccine Management (EVM) assessment with a technological framework for modelling and optimising vaccine supply chains. The Agence de Medecine Preventive (AMP) has been working with the Ministry of Health (MoH) in Benin to apply the EVM + Hermes approach. The MoH requested AMP's assistance because of LOGIVAC (a joint AMP-WHO project), which was implemented to provide technical support to improve the health commodities supply chain. The AMP called upon Transaid's expertise to help them to review the current situation and provide Transport Management recommendations related to vaccine supply before they conducted their workshops. The AMP and Transaid entered into a Master Agreement:

- To assess the current Transport Management System in Benin
- To write a short report with recommendations based on observations;
 - To provide tools that could be used to measure the performance of the transportation/distribution components of the system
 - To formulate recommendations for an optimised transport system in Benin
- To participate in workshops in Benin to provide input into the discussions;
 - To present examples of innovative transport best practices that could be implemented in Benin
 - To present recommendations and solutions that could be applied in this context

Methodology:

The Transaid representative made two visits to Cotonou to take part in workshops organised by AMP with Benin's Ministry of Health (Ministere de la Sante- MS). These supported the current EVM WHO initiative using HERMES vaccine distribution modelling software.

Between the 18th and 24th July, Transaid conducted an indicative situation analysis of TMS in Benin at MS levels and produced a high level situation analysis report.

The first workshop was held on 25th July to review the current status in Benin of logistics-related activity for national vaccine distribution. This workshop also presented relevant examples of good practice from elsewhere. The second workshop was held on 20th-21st September and aimed to determine the best way forward based on preliminary modelling results by HERMES.

Transaid actively participated in these workshops. They focussed on transport management status and possibilities for the MS in relation to improving vaccine distribution. In particular, Transaid's use of TMS was seen as a focus for its contributions. Transaid also brought its extensive experience of innovative and successful transport solutions in other appropriate African contexts.

Outcomes:

As a result of the initial situational analysis, a high level situation analysis report was created, in which Transaid made a number of recommendations:

- MOH appears to lack a transport management system. Having one will support improved vaccine distribution and its overall service operations – start by developing a MOH transport policy, appointing a national Transport Manager, and introducing Key Performance Indicators (KPIs).
- If this is not desirable or possible, start with clearer accounting to show full transport costs (if only for Economic Policy Institute (EPI) operations).
- Review how vehicles are pooled, maintained and when disposed of (if only for vehicles used specifically for EPI).
- Perform a comparative transport outsourcing costs' study specifically for vaccine distribution.

As a result of the first workshop, Transaid completed a presentation on TMS high level situation analysis and examples of innovative TMS approaches. Transaid also presented the KPIs of a well-functioning TMS. They also gave advice to HERMES representatives from the University of Pittsburgh on the best way to load cold boxes into Hilux pick-up trucks.

From the second workshop, Transaid produced a full process summary of the TMS for the workshop's 'business plan' working group.

Provisional conclusion:

A lack of proper TMS within the Benin MS would mean that senior directors and department heads have no accurate record or update on how transport – at all levels of the ministry's hierarchy – contributes to vaccine distribution and management. Based on Transaid's brief initial TMS review reliable information on how transport can be more effectively and efficiently used in relation to better vaccine distribution, and improving vaccination coverage is lacking.

A lack of TMS understanding is of particular importance in such a context as for Benin's vaccine supply needs. The recognition of the combined impact of need to improve existing vaccination coverage, to introduce new vaccines, and of the all-round costs of failure to do this effectively, has led to the current demand for improved vaccine distribution modelling (through HERMES) and practice.

One option now under consideration in Benin as a result of the workshops is to omit vaccine delivery to communes in favour of the apparently more cost-effective alternative of central distribution to Zones Sanitaires, a higher up administrative level.

However, like any modelling tool, HERMES relies on the quality of the input data. Without good 'real-time' TMS data being introduced into the HERMES model, its value in relation to transport management remains limited.

The Benin TMS work so far illustrates on a wider scale how more focussed TMS work, in parallel with the on-going activity to take forward the results so far of EVM+HERMES, would improve the accuracy and validity of the modelling, and help ensure that future national vaccine distribution strategy is fully effective. Based on all Transaid's previous experience, introducing a TMS will also have a significant positive impact on all of Benin's MS operations.

The two main options to consider if a TMS is developed within a context such as MS Benin appear to be:

- To introduce a full TMS nationally (likely to take several months at least);
- To pilot TMS in one or more local areas (a significantly shorter activity than above, but still likely to take at least one month).

Tools Utilised: 2012 09 07 report on activities by Transaid to provide technical support to the EVM, Project Terms of Reference

Partners: EVM + Hermes, LOGIVAC, AMP, MoH, WHO



About Transaid:

Transaid is an international UK development charity that aims to reduce poverty and improve livelihoods across Africa and the developing world through creating better transport. Transaid was founded by Save the Children and the Chartered Institute of Logistics and Transport. Our Patron is HRH The Princess Royal. Transaid specializes in the following:

- Building the capacity of public health authorities to provide effective, safe and cost efficient transport management systems to promote equitable access to primary health care services.
- Developing and improving logistics and supply chain systems to enhance the delivery of medicines, equipment and relief services to vulnerable communities.
- Promoting effective partnerships to support and enhance community participation in developing sustainable transport solutions in rural areas.
- Developing and delivering transport and logistics training and qualifications for public and private sector operators.

Transaid has the capacity and reach to lead projects throughout the developing world, but is equally capable of providing niche technical assistance to large scale health systems strengthening projects. Transaid maintains strong relationships with a number of leading international organizations including donor agencies such as DfID, DANIDA and USAID, and implementing organizations such as Health Partners International, Options Consulting, John Snow Inc. and Management Sciences for Health.

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