



A Review of the Transport System of the Ministry of Health and Social Services Namibia

Project Location: Namibia

Project Start Date: April 1997

Project Duration: 1 month

Introduction:

In 1997, The Ministry of Health and Social Services in Namibia recognised that its transport system was not meeting the requirements of service delivery so it carried out a number of steps in an attempt to improve the management of transport as a resource. These steps included the development of a national transport policy, regional directorate transport strategies and improved control systems. Additionally, they employed artisans in a number of locations to improve liaison with outside workshops.

At this point in system development it was considered appropriate to review progress and to identify the way to move forward. Transaid was requested to produce a report after a one month consultancy that intended to review all major areas of transport management and use in the Ministry, identify best practice and make concrete suggestions to enhance the process. The report was intended to assist in the improvement process rather than to criticise the great work the Ministry already had done. Recommendations were made in each of the key areas of policy, management structure, management systems, maintenance, vehicle allocations and disposal, budgets and training needs.

Methodology:

Transaid representatives visited Namibia and conducted a research study to assess the transport system and, based upon this research, concluded upon a series of recommendations that could further improve the transport system.

Whilst the representatives were there, they aimed to assist and encourage the District Transport Officer to-

- Provide day to day management of vehicles
- Keep an up to date district inventory of vehicles
- Keep vehicle records
- Plan weekly and monthly vehicle use in line with priorities and service delivery aims
- Provide input to the directorate transport budget
- Consolidate district vehicle performance summaries and copy to the management team and the directorate
- Ensure that vehicle log-sheets are kept accurately for all vehicles
- Keep vehicle maintenance schedules and coordinate maintenance requirement with the directorate transport officer
- Keep maintenance records
- Monitor performance against approved budget

- Provide district health coordinating committee with information on vehicle performance and act as focal point for transport matters

They also assisted and encouraged the Regional Directorate Transport Officer to-

- Carry out the district transport officers tasks for the vehicles based at the directorate
- Coordinate maintenance requirements and facilities for the directorate
- Supervise and advise district transport officers on transport related matters
- Coordinate and arrange transport training for all relevant staff (management teams, transport officers and drivers)
- Keep an up to date directorate vehicle inventory
- Ensure all vehicle documentation and registrations are current (including road licenses)
- Prepare vehicle replacement plans in line with national policy and prepare case for new vehicles based on vehicle use statistics
- Prepare directorate transport budget
- Monitor performance against budget
- Collate directorate vehicle statistics and submit to HQ
- Provide advice and expertise to the directorate team on the cost effective running of transport
- Liaise with the central transport section on the development of transport policy management and maintenance systems
- Provide assistance for the transportation of stores
- Report regularly to the management team on any transport issues
- Provide feedback on vehicle performance to the districts

Outcomes:

A report was produced that assessed the Ministry of Health Namibia's transport system. This report dealt with six different areas of the transport system- policy, management structure, management systems, maintenance, vehicle fleet, allocations, disposals and costs and training and implementation support.

Policy-

- The national policy must urgently be finalised and published with set clear guidelines for the operation of transport in the Ministry. Policy must be regarded as dynamic and changed when circumstances require.

Management structure-

- Ministry headquarters must provide leaderships and support for the management of transport.
- The Ministerial Transport Committee should be reformed with senior managers as members so that policy decisions can be taken and implemented.

- The responsibility for the operational management of transport must rest with the managers responsible for the delivery services. For this to be successful, budgets and the authority to commit resources must also be delegated to this level.

Management systems-

- The management system in the Ministry could be enhanced so that they can provide relevant simple information to the non-technical manager. Good quality information is key to effective management decision

Conclusion:

The following recommendations were concluded as a result of the report-

- The basic management system outlined in the transport handbook should be implemented for all Ministry vehicles
- Key performance indicators should be calculated on a monthly basis, discussed by the management team and submitted to the next level. This information should form the basis for all decision making on replacement, allocations, budgets etc.
- Vehicle logbooks should be implemented for all vehicles and staff trained in the importance of accurate completion of information
- An accurate vehicle inventory should be available at all levels of the organisation
- Written requests for transport must be implemented at all levels
- A review of clinic communications should be carried out and a plan developed to install appropriate equipment in those areas without communications
- An assessment of the Save the Children/Department of Health in South Africa computer information system should be undertaken once the manual system is implemented

Tools Utilised: A review of the transport system of the ministry of health and social services Namibia

Partners: Ministry of Health Namibia, Save the Children Fund, National Institute of Health Policy (NIHP)

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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