



STRENGTHENING PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEM GOVERNANCE

The MTAps Program is from the American people through USAID

Based on its decades of expertise in strengthening health systems to save lives and improve the health of people in low- and middle-income countries, USAID supports better governance and integrated, innovative, and sustainable strategies to strengthen pharmaceutical systems.

WHY IS STRONG PHARMACEUTICAL SYSTEM GOVERNANCE NECESSARY?

Poor governance in pharmaceutical systems can reduce access to pharmaceutical products, inflate medicine prices, and waste scarce health system resources. Pharmaceutical systems are vulnerable to corruption due to the high economic value of medicines and the variety of stakeholders involved. Conflicts of interest, another key governance concern, pose a particular threat to public decision-making at numerous points in the medicines supply chain. Strong governance minimizes opportunities for corruption and helps improve and maintain medicines access, quality of care, sustainable use of scarce health system resources, and trust in health systems.

MTAPS' APPROACH TO STRENGTHENING GOVERNANCE

MTAPS uses a wide range of approaches to assist countries in strengthening their governance of pharmaceutical systems, including:

- Increasing transparency and accountability throughout the pharmaceutical system
- Improving and enforcing evidence-based medicines policies, laws, regulations, guidelines, norms, and standards
- Increasing stakeholder engagement and empowerment, including civil society and consumers
- Working with country stakeholders to identify areas in need of reform in the pharmaceutical sector

Support includes:

- Analysis of transparency policies and procedures
- Guidance for improving and monitoring transparency mechanisms
- Evaluation of governance bodies' performance and functionality
- Instituting auditable tracking systems for publicly procured medicines and finances
- Developing policies, legislation, and guidelines to support priority health programs
- Assessing and clarifying roles and responsibilities of regulatory authorities
- Developing capacity-strengthening toolkits
- Mapping stakeholders
- Mobilizing stakeholders and providing advocacy for governance strengthening reforms



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GUIDANCE ON MANAGING CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

In collaboration with MTaPS, the World Health Organization developed the manual *Managing Conflicts of Interest: A How-to Guide for Public Pharmaceutical Sector Committees in Low- and Middle-Income Countries*.¹ Practical recommendations in the guide for managing conflicts of interest come from a 10-country study examining how conflicts of interest are managed in public pharmaceutical decision-making. Recommendations entail strategies that strengthen policy and implementation mechanisms and prevention and management processes and procedures. The guide identifies and further elaborates on the 10 key steps that are outlined in Figure 1.

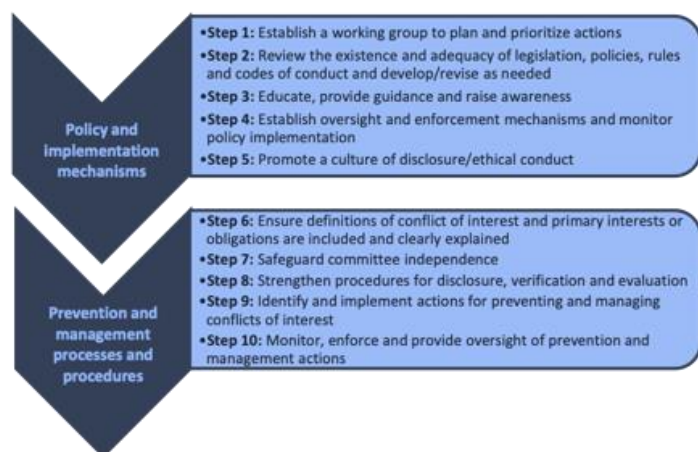


Figure 1. Steps for improving the prevention and management of conflicts of interest¹

BURKINA FASO

MTaPS supported the Burkina Faso government to establish a multisectoral coordination mechanism on antimicrobial resistance (AMR) that promotes representation from a variety of sectors involved in One Health activities. This entailed supporting the drafting of a ministerial order that defines the roles, composition, and functioning of the One Health Platform and the ministerial focal points. MTaPS also supported the AMR Technical Thematic Committee of the Platform to develop an operational plan, budget, and monitoring and evaluation plan for antimicrobial stewardship.

Through this mechanism, the Ministry of Animal Resources with MTaPS' support was able to develop guidelines for the rational use of antimicrobials in livestock that apply to health professionals, agriculture, farming, the environmental sector,

and the research sector. Operationalization of the One Health Platform was necessary to facilitate the development of the national action plan on AMR and strengthen the regulatory framework for AMR containment.

NEPAL

In Nepal, MTaPS supported the Ministry of Health and Population to strengthen its capacity at the provincial level in public essential medicines management. This involved piloting the Supervision, Performance Assessment, and Recognition Strategy (SPARS) that was previously implemented in Uganda by another USAID program with Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance. By pairing supervision and on-the-ground training with performance assessment and recognition in a two-week residential program, SPARS was able to strengthen the capacities of 30 medicine management supervisors who work with health facilities' staff in their respective provinces to strengthen medicines management down to the facility level.

MTaPS is also supporting the Nepal government to review options for reconfiguring the Department of Drug Administration's organizational structure, with the aim of optimizing human resources and improving accountability. Support included a review of the legislative framework to address weaknesses in legal provisions and regulations for medicines.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Grundy, Q., Parker, L., Wong, A., Fusire, T., Dimancesco, D., Tisocki, K., Walkowiak, H., Vian, T. & Kohler, J. (2022). Disclosure, transparency, and accountability: a qualitative survey of public sector pharmaceutical committee conflict of interest policies in the World Health Organization South-East Asia Region. *Globalization and Health*, 18:13.

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¹ WHO. (2022). *Managing conflicts of interest: a how-to guide for public pharmaceutical-sector committees in low- and middle-income countries*. Geneva: World Health Organization.



The USAID Medicines, Technologies, and Pharmaceutical Services (MTaPS) Program enables low- and middle-income countries to strengthen their pharmaceutical systems, which is pivotal to better health outcomes and higher-performing health systems. The program is implemented by a consortium of global and local partners, led by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), a global health nonprofit.

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