

Training workshop on Strengthening Supply Chain Coordination and Forecasting for PC-NTDs

Theme: Enhancing Supply Chain Performance and Forecasting to Accelerate Access to PC Medicines and Diagnostics and Support NTD Control and Elimination

1. Organizers

1.1. Cluster/Division

DPC

1.2. Programmes/Units

TVD/ESPEN/HSS

1.3. Collaborating Clusters/Divisions and Programmes/Units

WHO/AFRO/TVD, WHO/AFRO/HSS, WHO/HQ/PC-NTD

1.4. Collaborating Partners

Pharmaceutical donors, Supply chain technical support mechanism (SCTSM), DHL, NTD Supply Chain forum/ Global Supply Chain Enhancement Team (GSCET) working group

2. Introduction/Context

Preventive Chemotherapy (PC) donation programme represents the largest public health donation initiative globally, with more than one billion doses of medicines donated annually to support the control and elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs). Through ESPEN, WHO coordinates the end-to-end supply chain of NTD-PC medicines and diagnostics in the African region—from country applications and approval, to manufacturing, shipment, customs clearance, and final delivery to Central Medical Stores (CMS).

Supply chain coordination is a critical backbone of NTD programmes and a cornerstone of ESPEN's mandate. Ensuring the timely delivery of quality-assured medicines and diagnostics enables countries to conduct Mass Drug Administration (MDA), implement transmission assessment surveys and impact assessments, and sustain progress toward elimination targets under the WHO NTD Roadmap 2030. Efficient supply chain performance directly supports equitable access to essential medicines and accelerates progress toward disease elimination.

WHO and partners have developed standard operating procedures (SOPs), training material and tools to support forecasting, greenlight approval, shipping notification, customs clearance, and delivery. As countries advance toward elimination milestones, the focus increasingly shifts from system establishment to strengthening consistent country-level implementation, coordination, and oversight.

Persistent operational bottlenecks continue to affect timely delivery in some settings, particularly:

- Delays in greenlight approvals affecting shipment scheduling
- Customs clearance delays linked to documentation gaps or evolving regulatory requirements
- Limited clarity on national clearance workflows and escalation pathways
- Short-term forecasting data gaps affecting production planning and shipment predictability

While WHO guidance exists, country-level implementation and coordination vary. As a result, clearance delays can lead to demurrage costs, delayed Mass Drug Administration (MDA) campaigns, delayed diagnostic surveys, and reduced shelf-life at CMS level.

In parallel, forecasting and quantification processes require continued validation and strengthening to ensure that shipment requests accurately reflect programme needs and align with donor production and scheduling cycle.

3. Reason why the Workshop is so important for AFRO Impact to Public Health

The long-term success and impact of PC-NTD interventions are increasingly dependent on strong and well-coordinated supply chain systems that ensure medicines and diagnostics move efficiently from manufacturers to communities in need. While large-scale donation programmes have secured sustained access to essential commodities, the public health impact of these donations ultimately depends on timely clearance, accurate forecasting, and coordinated national oversight.

Programmes cannot maintain treatment coverage, adhere to MDA timelines, or conduct impact assessments effectively when shipments are delayed, forecasting assumptions are misaligned with programme realities, or regulatory requirements are not escalated in a timely manner. Even short delays in greenlight approval or customs clearance can disrupt carefully planned campaign schedules, increase demurrage costs, shorten product shelf-life at Central Medical Stores, and create operational uncertainty at district level.

As countries progress toward elimination milestones under the WHO NTD Roadmap 2030, supply chain precision becomes even more critical. Approaching elimination thresholds requires predictable shipment timelines, validated short-term forecasting, and strong coordination between Ministries of Health, WHO Country Offices, donors, and freight forwarders. Increased integration of digital shipment tracking tools and standardized SOPs has improved global visibility; however, consistent country-level application and oversight remain essential to translating guidance into operational performance.

In parallel, evolving programme strategies and scale-up activities require forecasting and quantification methodologies to be continuously validated. Short-term adjustments to medicine needs must be accurately reflected in shipment planning cycles to ensure manufacturers have sufficient visibility for production scheduling and distribution planning. Without this alignment, supply variability may compromise implementation timelines and strategic planning.

Ultimately, this initiative supports the broader goals of the WHO NTD Roadmap 2030, which emphasizes strengthened health systems, effective access to essential medicines, and sustained programme performance as pillars of elimination. By empowering national supply chain officers and decision-makers with practical tools to strengthen greenlight coordination, customs clearance workflows, and forecasting validation, this workshop will enhance the public health impact of PC-NTD programmes across Africa — ensuring that donated medicines and diagnostics reach communities on time and in alignment with national elimination strategies.

4. Objective and expected outcomes

4.1. General Objective

To strengthen the capacity of national NTD programme managers, supply chain officers, and WHO Country Office logisticians in the WHO African Region to effectively coordinate greenlight processes, manage customs clearance, and validate forecasting and quantification of PC medicines and diagnostics, thereby enhancing supply chain performance and accelerating progress toward the control and elimination of PC-NTDs.

4.2. Specific objectives

1. Strengthen national capacity to effectively apply global greenlight, shipping, and customs clearance guidance for PC medicines and diagnostics within country-specific contexts.
2. Enhance coordination and shared understanding among Ministries of Health, WHO Country Offices, and partners on end-to-end shipment oversight, including roles, responsibilities, and escalation mechanisms.
3. Strengthen country capacity in forecasting and short-term quantification validation to improve alignment between programme needs, shipment planning, and manufacturer production cycles.
4. Facilitate hands-on, practical sessions enabling countries to map their customs clearance workflows, validate forecasting approaches, and develop context-specific action plans.
5. Promote cross-country learning and exchange of practical approaches to improving supply chain performance and shipment predictability.
6. Strengthen dispatching from CMS to distribution point' and inventory data collection

4.3. Expected outcomes

By the end of the workshop, participants will:

1. Participating countries have developed documented customs clearance workflows for PC medicines and diagnostics, aligned with global SOPs and adapted to their national context.
2. Participating countries have clarified roles and coordination mechanisms among MOH, WHO CO, donors, and freight forwarders for shipment oversight.
3. Participating countries have reviewed and validated methodology for short-term forecasting and quantification approaches, with identified improvement actions where needed.

4. Country-specific action plans have been developed to address identified clearance and forecasting bottlenecks.
5. Participating countries have a better understanding of inventory data collection

5. Follow up

Ensuring that the knowledge and practical outputs from the workshop translate into measurable improvements in national supply chain performance requires structured and realistic follow-up. Monitoring will be embedded within existing coordination mechanisms, including JRSM review processes and the NTDeliver shipment tracking platform.

1. Short-term (within 1 month after the activity)

All participating countries have shared with ESPEN team:

By the end of the workshop:

- 80% of participating countries have developed documented customs clearance workflows for PC medicines and diagnostics.
- 80% have clarified roles and coordination arrangements for shipment oversight.
- 80% have completed a structured review of their short-term forecasting and quantification approaches and identified improvement actions.
- 80% have completed a structured collection for inventory data

2. Short- to Medium-Term (Within 6 Months)

- At least 70% of participating countries implement one agreed improvement action related to customs clearance processes or forecasting validation.
- Improved completeness and quality of greenlight forms and better alignment of forecasting submissions in the subsequent JRSM cycle for 70% of countries, reflected in reduced technical review queries and data gaps.

3. Long term (within 6 months after the activity)

- At least 70% of participating countries demonstrate measurable improvement in shipment predictability, reflected in a 15–20% reduction in avoidable clearance-related delays or improved adherence to expected shipment timelines, as monitored through the NTDeliver platform.
- Eight high-volume countries develop and technically validate a three-year rolling forecast for PC medicines, aligned with programme targets and reviewed through the JRSM cycle.

6. WHO Core Functions and/or Transformation focus areas

This workshop aligns with WHO's core functions and transformation agenda, particularly in the areas of strengthening country capacity, supporting effective implementation of global standards, and delivering targeted technical assistance to Member States. It reinforces WHO's

commitment to enabling national programmes to translate global guidance into strengthened operational systems that improve access to essential medicines and diagnostics.

By strengthening country-level coordination of greenlight processes, customs clearance, and forecasting validation, the workshop contributes to enhancing institutional capacity for supply chain oversight and programme implementation across the African Region.

WHO Core Function: Providing Technical Support and Strengthening Institutional Capacity

The workshop will facilitate the exchange of best practices and innovative strategies for improving data collection, reporting, and utilization within PC-NTD programs.

- The workshop will strengthen national institutional capacity to operationalize WHO guidance related to shipment coordination, customs clearance, and forecasting of PC medicines and diagnostics.
- By fostering structured peer exchange and practical engagement, the event will promote harmonized approaches and improved coordination across Ministries of Health, WHO Country Offices, and partners.
- The focus on strengthening shipment predictability and forecasting alignment supports WHO's role in building sustainable systems that ensure timely access to essential medicines for communicable diseases.
- The training will reinforce coordinated implementation mechanisms, enhancing programme efficiency and accountability in line with national elimination strategies.

WHO Transformation Focus Area: Smart Technical Support

This workshop exemplifies WHO's transformation agenda by offering focused, demand-driven technical support that empowers national programs and addresses identified operational bottlenecks while reinforcing country ownership and accountability. It contributes to this focus area by:

- Strengthening country-led implementation of existing global supply chain standards and procedures.
- Embedding structured follow-up within established monitoring mechanisms, including NTDeliver and JRSM processes.
- Promoting collaborative problem-solving and regional peer learning to accelerate operational improvements.
- Enhancing the linkage between programme planning and supply availability to improve predictability and performance.

7. Links to GPW14

- **Pillar of GPW4:** Improve equity and quality in health service coverage and financial protection to advance universal health coverage.
- **Outcomes of GPW14:** 4.1. Equity in access to services for noncommunicable and communicable diseases and mental health conditions improved.
- **Outputs of GPW14:** 4.1.3 WHO develops evidence-based guidance and standards, builds capacity, and supports implementing people-centred services to reduce

incidence, morbidity, mortality, and, where applicable, control, eliminate, or eradicate communicable diseases.

8. Method of work

The workshop will be highly interactive and practice-oriented, combining strategic discussions with structured hands-on sessions to ensure participants gain both conceptual understanding and practical tools to strengthen operational supply chain performance.

It will include:

- Short technical presentations on the end-to-end shipment lifecycle for PC medicines and diagnostics, including greenlight processes, shipping coordination, and customs clearance procedures.
- Guided country exercises to map and document national customs clearance workflows and identify coordination gaps.
- Practical review sessions on documentation requirements and common shipment bottlenecks affecting timely delivery.
- Hands-on forecasting validation sessions using country data to review short-term quantification assumptions and alignment with programme targets.
- Demonstrations of NTDeliver to strengthen understanding of shipment monitoring, lead time tracking, and performance trends.
- Group work to develop country-specific corrective action plans for improving shipment predictability and forecasting alignment.
- Peer exchange sessions to facilitate sharing of practical experiences, challenges, and solutions across countries.

The workshop will employ a structured and solution-oriented approach, ensuring that participants leave with documented workflows, clarified coordination arrangements, and validated forecasting improvement actions.

9. Reference Documents

- WHO Supply Chain SOPs for PC_NTDs
- JAP forms
- WHO Supply Chain SOPs for PC_NTDs App
- Forecasting tool developed under SCTSM

10. Dates, place and language

Date (tentative)	Proposed placed	Workshop language
15th to 19th June 2026 prior to (Back-to-back with) the Annual Data/JAP Workshop	AFRO, Kintele	English/French/Portuguese

11. Participants

The workshop will target supply chain officers directly responsible for shipment coordination and forecasting of PC medicines and diagnostics in selected WHO-AFRO countries.