

NATIONAL PRODUCT CATALOG: ENABLING EFFICIENT DATA EXCHANGE AND BARCODE SCANNING

Product Master Data includes important information about pharmaceutical commodities, such as details about the manufacturer and product origins, as well as product strength, dosage and shelf life. Access to accurate, consistent and standardized product information is critical for manufacturers, donors, ministries of health, drug regulatory authorities, procurers, logistics providers, medical stores and health facilities to verify the quality or authenticity of products at each level of the supply chain. This is necessary for ensuring patient safety.

In addition, inconsistent, inaccurate and non-standardized product information can contribute to incorrect planning and forecasting, resulting in stockouts or overstocking as well as costly inefficiencies. For instance, if central medical stores in countries need to manually enter details into operational systems to receive medical products from manufacturers and distribute them to downstream facilities, this limits the ability to track, trace and verify the products. Consequently, health supply chains suffer from a lack of end-to-end visibility and this ultimately affects decision making and patient safety.



An online National Product Catalog can help address these challenges that low- and middle-income countries face by facilitating the use of standardized product information in all supply chain operations and eliminating the need for manual interventions. This will help improve collaboration across supply chain entities, processes and systems, thus providing end-to-end visibility of medical commodities.

Standardized product information will also improve planning and help mitigate supply chain exceptions, such as stockouts, by eliminating duplicate and inaccurate representations of product data.

Warehouse and health facility personnel will be equipped with the ability to scan barcodes that include standard references to product information, thus automating processes such as receiving, shipping and dispensing medicines. This improves operational efficiency and data quality. Use of standardized data across all supply chain levels and entities within the country results in enhanced ability to track, trace and verify products, as well as better decision making to help ensure patient safety.

To learn more, contact: GHSC-PSM-NPC@ghsc-psm.org

Global standards (GS1)-compliant National Product Catalogs were implemented in Malawi and Rwanda by the USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program-Procurement and Supply Management (GHSC-PSM) project in 2020. Each of the catalogs has more than 200 global trade item numbers mapped with country identifiers and is continuing to grow as more manufacturers embrace global standards. A mobile app that integrates with the National Product Catalogs enables patients to verify that medicines are genuine.

“Implementation of the NPC will help to establish a safer and more accurate supply chain, provide greater data accuracy and visibility, and provide a single source of product information, resulting in supply chain efficiencies and ultimately improving the health care system in Rwanda.”



Jose Edouard Munyangaju
Food and Drugs Inspection
and Compliance Division
Manager, Rwanda