



PULSE

UPDATING YOU ON HEALTH DEVELOPMENTS

TECHNICAL SPECIFICATION BANK OF HEALTH EQUIPMENT AND DRUGS

BACKGROUND

The Logistics Management Division (LMD) supports the other divisions and centres of the Department of Health Services (DoHS) to fulfil their procurement requirements. In 2012/13, LMD is planning to procure more than NPR 1 billion (USD 11 million) worth of drugs, health equipment and other health commodities under the Nepal Health Sector Programme-2 (NHSP-2).

Dr Tara Nath Pokhrel
Director, Logistics Management Division



“The main drawback of the previous system was that we had to develop and collect specifications every time we prepared bids. These specifications were not fixed and were thus open to undue influence. The databank provides an up-to-date collection of fixed specifications that don’t favour any particular brand. We have used them in all the nine bids

we have issued in 2012/13 and encourage all health authorities and independent hospitals to use them to procure standard high quality equipment and drugs.”

DoHS PROGRAMME DIVISIONS

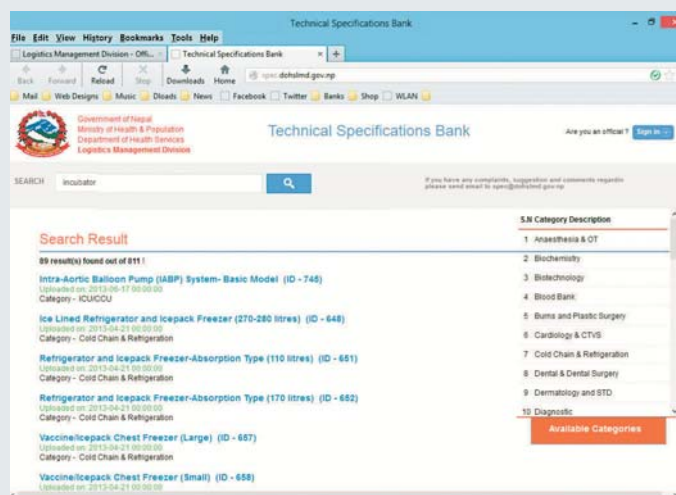
Personnel in DoHS programme divisions are advising health facilities and district health offices to use the ready-made specifications for procuring drugs and equipment. The Family Health Division has made their use compulsory for kitting out birthing centres according to the standard equipment list. Printed lists of the names and ID numbers of the specifications have been sent to all 75 district health offices to raise awareness about the databank and enable its use in those districts with limited internet access. District health offices are being advised to use the databank by specifying the name and ID number and then making potential suppliers responsible for accessing the specifications from the internet.

THE DATABANK

In line with international good practice LMD has established a bank of standard technical specifications of the drugs and health commodities that it procures. The specifications have been developed as a standard user-friendly template.

The databank went live in January 2013, and currently contains more than 800 specifications. New ones are being added and existing ones updated as information becomes available.

1. The databank is located at www.dohslmd.gov.np (click link on left panel).
2. The search engine can be used to search on key words for particular specifications.
3. Individual specifications can be downloaded.
4. The specifications are for mid-level functional and affordable grades of equipment.
5. The specifications require drugs to be produced to a high standard.
6. LMD and other divisions and centres under DoHS are the main users. Hospitals, health facilities and bidders can also use the databank.
7. Feedback to the databank can be provided through an email address that is given on the website.
8. The databank has been welcomed by officials and all types of users.



Technical databank - incubator search page

Dr Geeta Shakya
Director, National Public Health Laboratory (NPHL)

“NPHL is responsible for procuring simple testing equipment such as pipettes, colorimeters, water baths, autoclaves, incubators and microscopes for health facilities at district-level and below and more sophisticated equipment for NPHL. Many times, we also advise referral hospitals at zonal, regional and central levels on the specifications of more sophisticated equipment. The databank is very useful as it saves us a lot of time by providing off-the-shelf standard specifications to procure quality equipment. The specifications enable faster, more efficient and more transparent procurement.”

The managers of several large government hospitals reported how:

It was previously very time consuming to develop specifications for each bid by consulting health staff and the internet. Having ready-made and complete specifications that are easily accessible at one place has greatly facilitated and speeded up the preparation of bid documents. They now print out the ready-made specs and get doctors to sign off on them. And they can respond to complaints from bidders by pointing out that they are the government-approved specifications.

Andrew Gammie
Technical Specs Expert, Crown Agents, UK

“Based on my experience of the same type of work with the Government of India, I was called in to help set up the Nepal databank. I am very pleased to see that it is up-and-running. It is a practical locally owned system that enables purchasers to use the specifications directly for procurement. A key feature, which increases trust in its validity, is the robust control and monitoring protocol. Its use will result in the more appropriate supply of essential medical devices and better patient care.”

A senior official of a medical suppliers federation said:

“Previously some of our members complained about mistakes and missing information in specifications in LMD bid documents. I heard that this often caused procurement delays. The new databank provides greatly improved specifications and the specs I have seen are comprehensive and contain all the necessary information. The databank is also well structured and easily accessible. We have informed our members about it and are encouraging them to use it.”



LMD biomedical engineer(s) checking delivered health equipment against the technical specifications

THE WAY FORWARDS

LMD is:

- working towards posting about 1,000 technical specifications in the databank by 2015.
- forming subject-wise expert groups to review and update the specifications.
- encouraging feedback from DoHS's divisions and centres, bidders and all interested parties on how to improve the specifications.

MoHP and NHSSP contributions

The databank has been established by the Logistics Management Division, DoHS with advice provided by NHSSP related to experiences from similar initiatives in South Asia and elsewhere.

NHSSP (Nepal Health Sector Support Programme) is funded and managed by DFID and provides technical assistance to the Nepal Health Sector Programme (NHSP-2). Since its inception in January 2011, NHSSP has facilitated a wide variety of activities in support of the NHSP-2 objectives, covering health policy and planning; health financing; human resource management; essential health care services (EHCS); gender equality and social inclusion (GESI); procurement and infrastructure; and monitoring and evaluation. For more information visit our website: www.nhssp.org.np