




World Bank Group, UNFPA Simplify Procurement of Reproductive Health Supplies

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The World Bank Group (WBG) has released a new standard agreement form that will make it easier for World Bank Group borrowers to procure reproductive health supplies through the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA). The agreement comes as part of a coordinated effort to step up support to developing countries to improve women's health in the countdown to reach the Millennium Development Goals by the end of 2015. The new agreement is a result of an ongoing partnership between the World Bank Group and UNFPA to advance women's health. The agreement has dramatically simplified the procurement process that countries have to undertake under World Bank Group-financed projects, as well as streamlined invoicing, billing, and financial reporting. "The beauty of this new agreement is that it is no longer using World Bank-specific ordering, invoicing and payment systems. The countries can now review specifications and select reproductive health supplies from UNFPAs online catalogue to place their orders. The process is the same irrespective of whether the funding comes from the World Bank or public budget," said Christopher Browne, Chief Procurement Officer of the World Bank Group. "This is an important step in facilitating achievement of health and development outcomes and working toward seamless partnerships that ultimately benefit our clients and people who use these health supplies." Under the new agreement, the countries can place individual orders using UNFPAs online procurement portal, MyAccessRH.org, in accordance with the time schedule set in the project's procurement plan. UNFPA reviews and quotes a fixed price for the ordered items. The exact amount is then transferred from the project account within 30 days for UNFPA to commence procurement. "This arrangement can benefit a broad range of countries," said Eric Dupont, UNFPA Chief of Procurement. "Smaller countries that cannot access quality assured or competitively priced goods; governments that don't have enough staff to conduct timely procurement; and countries that need to fill supply gaps while they are conducting a local bidding process -- all can benefit. What we hear most is that AccessRH saves time and money, and, most importantly, ensures the safety and efficacy of much-needed reproductive health supplies." The simplified and automated ordering system will help countries with timely re-stocking of reproductive health supplies. Collaboration between the World Bank Group and other UN agencies in developing new forms of agreement is expected to grow. The World Bank 1818 H Street, NW DC 20433 Washington
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