

Report

GOVERNMENT OWNERSHIP OF PREPOSITIONING OF EMERGENCY SUPPLIES IN THE PHILIPPINES

Good Practices from IASC Task Force 5

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Government ownership of prepositioning of emergency supplies in the Philippines

Leadership of, and resourcing by, national and sub-national government entities in the Philippines to boost preparedness by prepositioning supplies to enable provision of lifesaving sexual and reproductive health services. and to mitigate and respond to gender-based violence

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Geographical coverage

The Philippines including Eastern Visayas, Bicol, Calabarzon, Catanduanes, and Laguna regions



Actors and Stakeholders

Department of Health, Department of Social Welfare and Development, and select Local Government Units from Eastern Visayas, Bicol, Calabarzon, Catanduanes, and Laguna



People of Concern

Women and girls, in all of their diversity, affected by natural hazards, conflicts and disasters, including pregnant and lactating women, adolescents and youth, and survivors of gender-based violence



Gender

The interventions aimed to ensure that women and girls are provided with lifesaving sexual and reproductive health (SRH) services, as well as mitigation and response to gender-based violence services during emergencies through the strategic prepositioning of relevant supplies at national and sub-national level funded by the Government.



Context

The Philippines ranks 13 out of 191 assessed countries in terms of overall risk from natural hazards. Looking at exposure to natural hazards alone, the Philippines is the world's most at-risk country, according to the [Inform Risk Index 2023](#). The climate crisis is causing more frequent and intense hazards and disasters. In order to prepare to meet the increasing needs of women and girls exposed to hazards and disasters, there is a need to strengthen overall preparedness. This includes expanding prepositioning of critical and lifesaving supplies that support the continued provision of quality SRH services, and the mitigation and response to gender-based violence, as well as strengthening ownership by the government in doing so. Addressing the SRH, gender-based violence, and protection needs of affected women and girls is a lifesaving priority in humanitarian action, and is considered a lifesaving criterion for the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF).

This good practice was identified and documented through a template developed on the basis of the [2021 IASC Guidance on Localization](#), which aims at supporting efforts to strengthen the meaningful participation, representation, and leadership of local and national humanitarian actors (L/NAs) within IASC humanitarian coordination structures. Its objective is to share knowledge and inspire progress and positive change regarding the meaningful participation of local actors in Humanitarian Coordination platforms. The original draft of this good practice template was developed by the [KORE \(Knowledge Platform for Emergencies and Resilience\) team](#) in the Office of Emergencies and Resilience of the [Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations \(FAO\)](#) and was tailored to the needs of this IASC initiative.



Implementation and objective

- Objective: Expanding and strengthening national and local ownership of prepositioning of lifesaving supplies that support the provision of SRH services, and the mitigation and response to gender-based violence.
- Prepositioned supplies include:
 - *Interagency Reproductive Health Kits*, which support the implementation of the [Minimum Initial Service Package \(MISP\) for SRH during crisis](#). The contents of the kits support health workers to implement the MISP to prevent maternal and new-born deaths, sexually transmitted infections, unintended pregnancies, and to meet the needs of survivors of gender-based violence.
 - *Dignity Kits*, which focus on promoting mobility and safety of primarily women and girls by providing age, gender, and culturally appropriate garments (such as headscarves, shawls, whistles, torches, and underwear). Dignity Kits enable women and girls to maintain their personal hygiene and sanitation, and to ensure they can leave their homes, evacuation centres or camps to access other humanitarian aid and lifesaving services.
 - *Tents*, which can be used as temporary health facilities providing SRH services including basic emergency obstetric and new-born care. Tents can also be used as women friendly spaces, which is a key strategy for the protection and empowerment of women and girls as they are places where women and girls can come to feel physically and emotionally safe and to receive critical services.
- The good practice was the result of more than a decade-long collaboration on a multitude of projects and programmes implemented by UNFPA Philippines as part of the overall implementation of the Country Programme, including through the Regional Prepositioning Initiative and the Bilateral Prepositioning Initiative, both projects funded by the Government of Australia through the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade.
- It is not possible to specify the cost of the interventions.



Methodological approach

The combined approaches of capacity building; policy advocacy; technical assistance; systems strengthening; and demonstrating the value add of prepositioning to the Government paved the way for the Government at national and sub-national levels to take ownership and leadership of prepositioning. Further details of the methodological approach are as per the below:

1. Policy advocacy

Policy advocacy centred around the importance and lifesaving nature of providing SRH services and gender-based violence mitigation and response services during emergencies. This included advocacy on the criticality of preparedness, including prepositioning. Policy advocacy was carried out using a multi-pronged approach, both as a stand-alone activity and integrated throughout all the below interventions.

2. Capacity building

To support policy advocacy, UNFPA invested significantly in capacity building of policy makers, programme managers, health workers, and the legal workforce including police on the MISP for SRH during crises, gender-based violence in emergencies, and supply chain management. Capacity building varied from the standard introduction to any given topic to workshops where Local Government Units and key stakeholders integrated SRH and gender-based violence into municipal action plans, preparedness plans, and disaster risk reduction plans.

One example of such capacity building is from the Catanduanes province where municipal anticipatory action plans were developed by five Local Government Units in Baras, Bato, San Andres, San Miguel, and Virac. An action planning workshop was facilitated on 10 December 2021 in coordination with the Provincial Health Office. The workshop was attended by staff of the municipal Local Government Units, including the municipal Disaster Risk Reduction and Management Offices, the Offices of the Municipal Health Officer, as well as the Offices of the Municipal Social Welfare and Development.

Linking the municipal anticipatory action plans with the overall municipal disaster risk reduction and management plans enhanced the ownership of the activities by the Local Government Units. This exercise was complemented by a workshop on 28 December 2021 with the Provincial Disaster Risk Reduction Management Office where participants integrated SRH, and gender-based violence components and services, into the provincial disaster risk reduction and management plan.

3. Systems strengthening

To further build on capacity development progress, UNFPA and partners developed a Leadership course on the MISP for Reproductive Health During Crisis to support the Government of the Philippines in the institutionalization of the package. The participating Local Government Units developed multi-year, cost plans integrating SRH and gender-based violence in their local disaster risk reduction and disaster risk management plans.

The mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III (2021-2024) found that there are early signs of institutional change exemplified through bridged leadership, memorandums issued, coordination teams established, and intersectoral collaboration. For example, a joint memorandum issued in 2017 mandates the local government to implement the MISP. The mid-term review received further feedback from local officials in provinces showing that the MISP was institutionalised and standardised in local health systems and youth development programmes.

Another example of systems strengthening is the SRH surveillance system or “SRH Watch” initiated in early 2021 to track maternal deaths and high impact practices for family planning in select disaster-prone and high burden provinces. The SRH Watch produces output data on critical SRH gaps, including humanitarian indicators, [viewable online](#) in near real time. The SRH Watch assembles relevant data which can be used by provincial teams to develop priority action plans. To track family planning commodities, a logistics management information system ([barcode track and trace](#)) was also linked to the SRH Watch to track stockouts and overstock of family planning commodities to enable programme coordinators to push and/or redistribute commodities.

4. Technical assistance

To complement capacity building, systems strengthening and policy advocacy, UNFPA Philippines provided technical assistance to the Government. This includes providing technical expertise in integrating SRH and gender-based violence in key preparedness, disaster risk reduction, and disaster management policies, strategies, frameworks, and plans. As outlined in the final evaluation of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase II (2016-2020), and according to the Directorate of Health in the Philippines, the technical support provided by UNFPA Philippines was and still is instrumental in supporting the Government’s policy issuance in terms of SRH.

Technical assistance was also provided to support implementation of priority activities. UNFPA Philippines developed technical roadmaps, score cards and cost implementation plan as well as holding coaching and mentoring sessions with local health leaders during the roll-out followed by assessments to take stock on progress.

5. Demonstrating the added value of prepositioning supplies

Through the Regional Prepositioning Initiative and the Bilateral Prepositioning Initiative, UNFPA Philippines was able to demonstrate the criticality of prepositioning to the Government as well as to strengthen the partnership and trust between the two parties. Having supplies prepositioned has been a game changer for UNFPA enabling faster, more efficient, and accountable responses. Through the projects, UNFPA was able to demonstrate to the Government how prepositioning leads to:

- **Faster response** to the lifesaving needs of women and girls affected by emergencies;
- **Improved quality** of supplies that are available at the onset of the emergency; and

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- **Reduces transportation cost** from costly freight options in the immediate aftermath of an emergency as supplies are strategically prepositioned in proximity to disaster prone areas



Results and impact

As a result of UNFPA Philippines and partners' interventions, policies and frameworks have enabled the prioritization of SRH, mitigation and response to gender-based violence, and prepositioning of supplies. As captured in the external mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III (2021-2024), government officials from the Philippines expressed that UNFPA's support brought SRH and gender-based violence higher on the national agenda. Discussions with provincial government staff during the mid-term review further showed progress on SRH as a result of the advocacy and capacity building efforts by the project.

The commitment and progress can be exemplified by how in 2016 the Philippines Department of Health started to preposition Dignity Kits and how in 2017 the Department of Social Welfare and Development started to preposition tents to be used as Women Friendly Spaces - both using the national government budget. This good practice continues to date, led and financed by the Government.

Increasing regional allocations to procure SRH and protection supplies have also been observed, especially in post response/recovery regions including Calabarzon (following Taal response), Bicol (following Super Typhoon Goni) in 2021, and 2022 in Eastern Visayas (following Super Typhoon Rai). The mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III furthermore illustrated how budget allocations have been made at the Laguna province's health office.

In 2021, UNFPA and the Philippines Government designed the Women's Health on Wheels—a mobile van furnished to provide safe deliveries and other reproductive health services. This activity was initiated to address delays in setting up emergency maternity tent facilities during humanitarian responses and to advocate with the government to further prioritise maternal health. To date two Women's Health on Wheels have been donated by UNFPA to the Government. During Typhoon Rai, the Province of Eastern Samar deployed their Women's Health on Wheel to the province of Southern Leyte. During Typhoon Nalgae, the Department of Health Eastern Visayas Regional Office deployed their Women's Health on Wheels to the province of Maguindanao to augment SRH services in the spirit of local cooperation during emergencies. In 2022, the Department of Health expressed interest to procure Women's Health on Wheels for prepositioning, however this is not yet formalised. Based on the Women's Health on Wheels experience, the Department of Health has requested UNFPA to assist in the development of the National Guidelines for Mobile Health Service Delivery Units presenting a good opportunity to ensure inclusion of the provision of SRH services as part of mobile health services.

The above results have been verified by the 2022 audit of UNFPA's prepositioning of supplies, where the audit noted in its meeting with three government partners that UNFPA Philippines has successfully advocated with the government on the prepositioning of SRH and gender-based violence related supplies at national and at local government levels. The audit went on to conclude that using its own budget, the Department of Social Welfare and Development and the Department of Health prepositions SRH and gender-based violence related humanitarian supplies.



Sustainability

- Having the government take ownership and commit national resources to prepositioning of supplies ensures sustainability of prepositioning over the long-term.



Replicability and upscaling

- The Mid-term Review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III highlighted potential areas for replicability beyond the Philippines:
 1. Institutionalization of the MISP for SRH during crisis through capacity building, system strengthening, and ownership creation (see page 33-34 of the document linked below named *External mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III (2021-2024)*). Institutionalization is an important foundation to increase government will to preposition supplies using the national budget.
 2. The technical assistance approach can be replicated in countries where political will is emerging, supported by a South-South cooperation approach. The technical assistance approach in this case study included the development of technical roadmaps, score cards, and budgeted implementation plans, as well as holding coaching and mentoring sessions with local health leaders. Also important are assessments to take stock of progress (see page 23-24 of the document linked below named *'External mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III (2021-2024)*). Technical assistance is another tool to ensure quality while capacity is being built at the national and sub-national levels.



Key learning

- Prepositioning of supplies saves lives as it enables critical services to be provided to women and girls in a timely manner following an emergency. Supplies used to provide lifesaving SRH services and to mitigate and respond to gender-based violence should be included in the list of items for prepositioning in all locations where national and local governments are prepositioning supplies and should form part of the essential emergency package.
- Government ownership and resourcing is key for sustainability, as highlighted in the mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III.



Related resources

Evidence can be accessed through the below documents:

- [External mid-term review of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase III \(2021-2024\)](#) - please refer to pages 23-24, 33-34
- [External final evaluation of the Regional Prepositioning Initiative Phase II \(2016-2020\)](#) - please refer to pages 23, 35, 50, 58
- [Audit of UNFPA prepositioning of supplies good practices sheet](#)



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