

## Procurement and Supply in Emergencies

### Overview

Procurement in emergencies and proper handling of supplies require organizational structure to ensure efficient management and utilization of resources while at the same time ensuring compliance with general procurement principles. These are:

- Best value for money;
- Fairness, integrity and transparency;
- Equal opportunity and open competition; and,
- In the interest of IOM.

In the event of an emergency and the immediate response, the Country Office might be under significant pressure to respond immediately. Before making any commitments, the Procurement Officer in coordination with the Chief of Mission (COM)/Department of Financial and Administrative Management (DFM) Emergency Support Unit will need to at the very least send a written request and obtain an approval from the Director of the Manila Administrative Center (MAC) to accelerate the procurement process by using sole sourcing and low value procurement. In the long-term and once the situation has stabilized and there is no necessity to react immediately, the normal procurement procedures including the competitive bidding process should be followed unless there are justifications on the ground that would otherwise prevent the delivery of goods and services in time.

The Procurement Officer must understand the procurement rules and regulations in place (as stated in the IOM Procurement Manual) to ensure accountability and maintain thorough supporting documentation as these procedures maybe be overlooked under the pressure of an emergency. Additionally, maintaining a strong procurement operations plan will include contingencies enabling continued procurement activities during an emergency. Contingency planning where appropriate will allow for the provision of goods and services. The Procurement Manual is available in the Guidance Documents and Tools for Procurement and Logistics entry.

All procurement must be within the authorized budgetary limits. An inventory list must be maintained for proper administration of these property items. Procurement shall be undertaken in the most economical manner based on equivalent quality and availability.

Refer to the following definition of terms as you read this section:

**Procurement** - The acquisition of goods, construction works, services by IOM either for use in the procuring field office or for use in another field office, to cover both project operational and organizational needs.

**Goods** - All items, supplies, materials, equipment and furniture, computer, IT and telecommunications equipment; software, office supplies; household appliances and furniture; and, equipment needed in the project implementation (e.g., medical equipment and supplies, blankets, tents, and materials for construction, printed materials, and other similar equipment and materials).

**Works** - Include infrastructure projects to construct, improve, rehabilitate, demolish, repair, restore, or maintain buildings, roads and bridges, etc., or civil works components of information technology projects, irrigation, flood control and drainage, water supply, sanitation, school buildings, health clinics, reception centers, etc.

**Services** - Include intellectual and non-intellectual services not covered under goods and works.

**General Services** - Include services such as repairs works and maintenance of equipment/furniture, trucking, hauling, janitorial, security, lease of office space, etc.

**Bidder** - A local or foreign company that takes part in the tendering or consignment of goods and provision of service.

### Key Points

- Procurement and Supply combine all activities. Therefore, coordination between different departments is required, from the identification of materials and services that are needed and by whom to procurement, transport, storage,

distribution, maintenance and reporting.

- Assess capabilities of existing staff to cope with the emergency situation. Immediately seek additional staff if necessary and be prepared to train the staff on IOM's procurement rules and procedures.
- Plan all procurements; set up a monitoring system to ensure all requirements are met as quickly as possible.
- Ensure that all purchases and procurement-related transactions are properly documented.
- Ensure segregation of duties in the performance of the procurement function.
- Exceptional advances during emergencies should be a consultative process involving the Procurement Officer, Resource Management Officer (RMO) and the Emergency Coordinator/Chief of Mission. Refer to the Procurement Manual for more details on advance payments in emergencies.

## Scope and Application

Emergency procurement must be undertaken in compliance with IOM procurement rules and regulations, and any other directives and administrative instructions relevant to procurement processes as outlined in the Procurement Manual.

The Procurement Officer, in coordination with DFM Emergency Support Unit, should take into consideration different factors following assessment such as who will be responsible for performing what tasks, who will be in charge of the overall procurement and logistics coordination, resources available, analyze transport systems, assess potential supplies and distributions centers and review government policies and plans for example agreements that can provide tax exempt status for humanitarian supplies (rebates).

At the onset of an emergency the COM/DFM Emergency Support Unit should consider the recruitment of a procurement officer to establish and maintain all procurement and logistics infrastructures for administration and operations especially in complex emergency operations.

## Key Considerations

- Clarify that the situation meets the criteria for treatment as an 'emergency'. Deviations from the normal procurement process should be fully justified by the Procurement Officer in coordination with the COM, DFM Emergency Support Unit, and the Regional Office.
- Identify, specify and prioritize the immediate procurement activities required for the initial wave of the emergency.
- Consider the operating environment and the conditions on the ground.
- Find out which other UN agencies and NGOs are operating on the ground and, where possible, collaborate especially in the Logistics Cluster.
- Consider options for sourcing and the contracts/long term agreements (LTAs) that may already be in place. If no contract exists, the Procurement Officer should identify the suppliers able to deliver immediately.
- Act within the established delegated authority; consult with DFM Emergency Support Unit in case of doubt.
- Always obtain financial approval from the COM/ Resource Management Officer (RMO) for budget availability to proceed prior to purchase.
- Advance Payment procedures applicable to L1, L2, L3 Emergencies are not to be confused with applicable Procurement Thresholds.

## Relevance to IOM's Emergency Operations

Emergency responsiveness can be viewed at three different levels (Level 1, 2 and 3). In coordination with the COM/DFM Emergency Support Unit the Procurement Officer should apply the best procurement practice given the circumstances and the immediacy of the need to respond. SOPs for Level 3 response has been developed, and guidelines are available for Level 1 and Level 2. See the IOM Corporate Emergency Activation entry for more details on procedures in L3 emergencies.

The COM and Procurement Officer must ensure there is good communication between the Country Office, Regional Office, and

DFM Emergency Support Unit involved in the supply chain and timely information exchange regarding logistical capacities and constraints. Logistical support can be disrupted by unpredictable events which could lead to many obstacles beyond IOM's control including: customs delays, logistics and transportation challenges and political developments.

Transport and storage arrangements must provide for spare capacity: things often do not go according to plan, while needs and the demand for supplies, may increase. Seek technical assistance from Regional Office/ DFM Emergency Support Unit when necessary.

Coordinate with the Supply Chain Division (SCD) and the DOE RTS and request urgently needed supplies from the IOM Global Stocks if items needed are not available locally.

Prior to initiating any procurement process, the Procurement Officer should submit a procurement plan based on the initial assessment conducted to determine in advance which supplies are most likely to be needed based on the situation as identified on the ground. In addition, the plan should also outline the distribution efforts and the logistics required to deliver the goods up to the final warehouse or beneficiaries, as well as include funds availability. The plan should be reviewed by the COM/Regional Office/DFM Emergency Support Unit before it is approved.

## Other Entries in this Topic

- [IOM Corporate Emergency Activation](#)
- [Shelter and NFI](#)

## Contacts

For more information or guidance please contact the Supply Chain Division ([SCD@iom.int](mailto:SCD@iom.int)) and/or DFM Emergency Support Unit ([DFMES@iom.int](mailto:DFMES@iom.int)).

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