What do you do when you need four million condoms quickly?

Partnerships can maximize efficiencies in avoiding stockouts of life-saving supplies. Plan Benin, an NGO focusing on improving the lives of youth, partnered with UNFPA to address contraceptive supply needs.

Partners in development
As part of a Global Fund project, Plan aims to improve prevention of HIV and unwanted pregnancy among adolescents by providing male condoms. In 2012, however, Plan faced the very real threat of running out of condoms.

To avoid the situation, they needed to secure a new order as soon as possible. Purchasing four million high-quality condoms is, however, not an easy task. The process can be lengthy, with production times of up to 16 weeks and quality assurance a concern. So what did Plan do?

“Global Fund recommended that we use UNFPA Procurement Services (formerly AccessRH) to order our condoms,” says Oyinda Dedegbe, Procurement Specialist at Plan Benin. “We knew that this would allow us to access products that were quality assured according to UNFPA and WHO standards, so we didn’t need to worry about the quality.”

Getting it there: contraceptives directly from stock
UNFPA keeps certain key contraceptives in stock for urgent situations. Standard male condoms are among the most demanded products, and more than four million of these were shipped to Benin to prevent the looming stock out.

UNFPA Procurement Services (formerly AccessRH) enables governments and NGOs to buy hundreds of high quality reproductive health products at UNFPA negotiated prices.

With this approach, the overall wait time was shortened significantly, because the condoms had already been produced and undergone pre-shipment quality inspection. The condoms are held at WHO/UNFPA prequalified suppliers’ premises, ready to be packed and shipped.

For Plan, the order process was also quicker because UNFPA establishes long-term supplier agreements through a competitive, international bidding process so that orders can be placed immediately.

“We were also able to get the condoms for a reasonable price, so combining that with the quality guarantee and the shorter wait time was a huge benefit for us,” says Oyinda. “Now we have enough condoms available for distribution, and were able to avoid disruptions in our programmatic work.”

To learn more visit www.UNFPAprocurement.org