

Vaccination Supplies Stock Management (VSSM)

PAHO has been a pioneer in introducing computer applications for vaccine stock management. CLM (Commodities, Logistics Management - developed by Management Science for Health), a DOS-based application, was the very first software tool introduced by PAHO in several countries during the latter part of the 1980's. CLM was the only software tool made specifically

for the Ministries of Health for use in managing inventories of commodities used in public health programs. It was designed to be used in any vaccine stores at any level.

With the advent of Windows, CLM became obsolete and could no longer be easily used. Vaccination Supplies Stock Management (VSSM), a new tool for stock management, was initially

developed in the WHO's Eastern Mediterranean Region (EMR) and was later augmented and adopted by WHO. New and costly vaccines introduced to the programs during the recent years justify investment on developing effective and easy to use tools for management of stock.

PAHO, in collaboration with the WHO HQ, initiated a pilot project to field test VSSM in Nicaragua in January 2010. VSSM was installed in the National Vaccine Store in Managua and a plan was

prepared to install VSSM in all of the 17 SILAIS (the equivalent of sanitary regions). Thirty three Ministry of Health staff were in attendance, as well as two staff from Bolivia.

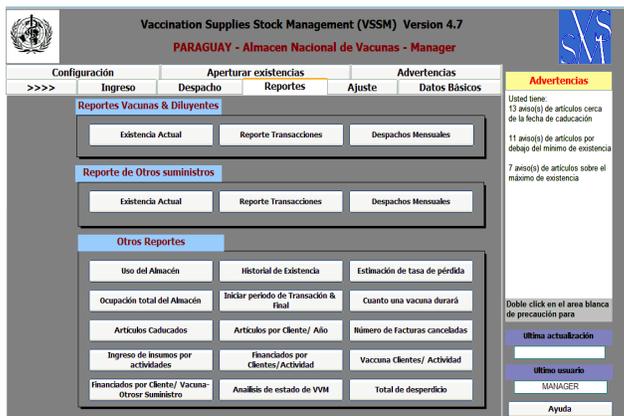
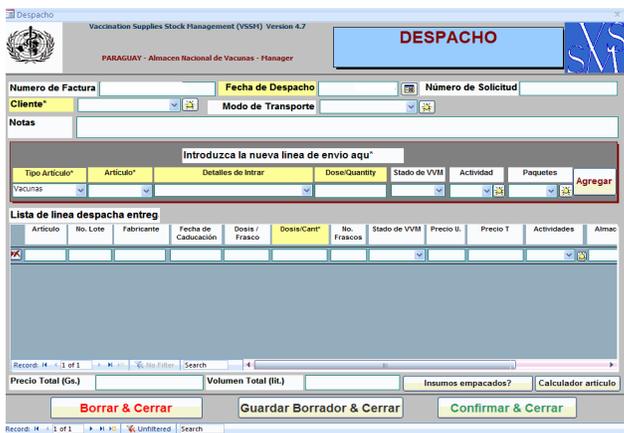
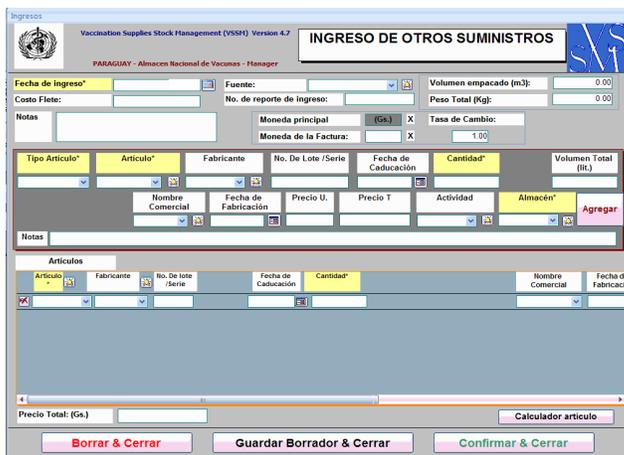
In March 2010, a VSSM workshop was conducted in La Paz, Bolivia. The Ministry of Health invited 35 participants, also in attendance during the training course in La Paz were two staff from the Ministry of Health of Paraguay.

Paraguay held a workshop to train users in 5 of its regions. VSSM was installed at central level and in 5 regional stores.

As a result of the two workshops PAHO and country participants identified enhancements to the development of VSSM. New features and functions were added and reports were changed to suit the store staff and program managers. The Users Guide and Software for VSSM version 4.2 has been translated into Spanish by PAHO.

In November of 2010, the Ministry of Health in Honduras also conducted a Workshop to pilot test the VSSM. Two participants from de Ecuador were invited to attend.

PAHO will develop a check list for monitoring and documenting the experience, utility of VSSM and the follow-up of the progress countries are making in using VSSM. ■



VSSM is an inventory management tool whose overarching goal is to improve management of the supply chain in order that vaccines and diluents and other related commodities neither suffer from being over stocked and avoid that any item is out of stock. It provides 40 different reports to help program managers to plan ahead and have up-to-date information about all stock levels for all items in the stores. It also provides the managers with a remaining net capacity for different storage areas.

VSSM is a computer tool to assist vaccination program managers and storekeepers to organize and manage the stock of vaccines and other related supplies. VSSM's focus is on vaccines and diluents; however, it also caters for all other supplies.

VSSM uses open source software based on Microsoft Access and all codes are provided to users. Anyone familiar with MS Access can modify VSSM, add new fields, and manipulate reports to suit their specific situation.

VSSM is a multilingual tool and supports switching from English to French, Arabic, Russian and Spanish without affecting data. It has already been translated into Mongolian and Persian (Farsi) languages.

VSSM is a fully customizable tool and all coding is left to users, as they can select the language of their choice for coding. VSSM structure is mainly based on WHO/ UNICEF training on vaccine management in developing countries and with consideration for common field practices.¹

1. The WHO Training Manual has not been made publicly accessible as of yet, but can be obtained upon request.