

Policy

CHANGING THE ENVIRONMENT TO
FOSTER PRIVATE SECTOR DELIVERY OF
QUALITY REPRODUCTIVE HEALTHCARE.



COMMERCIAL MARKET STRATEGIES
NEW DIRECTIONS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH





What is policy?

At the Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) project, policy is broadly defined to encompass “*the environment for sustainable delivery of family planning and other health products and services through the private sector.*”

Policy, therefore, includes both the *policy regime* — the laws, policy statements, regulations, and procedures on record in a given country — and the *policy environment* — the real implementation and attitudes that affect the private sector. CMS recognizes that although the government controls some elements of policy, other key actors, such as medical associations or religious leaders, also profoundly affect policy. While the vision of policy at CMS is expansive, our policy activities and interventions focus on achieving those changes that can directly improve the environment for private sector delivery of family planning and reproductive health products and services.

Why is policy important?

Experience from past projects demonstrates that often policy is the primary constraint to a vibrant and viable private sector. If ministry of health facilities offer highly subsidized or free contraceptives to all clients, for example, the private sector cannot effectively compete and attract those consumers who would be willing and able to pay for their contraceptives. If the policy of government or a medical association restricts whether nurses and midwives can be trained and permitted to insert IUDs, then the potential for private provision is constrained. If private providers of family planning and reproductive health are to reach their potential contribution to health impact, they must operate in an environment that facilitates their involvement.

What can CMS policy activities achieve?

CMS policy activities (outlined below) contribute to improving the environment so that private providers will sustainably deliver family planning and other health products and services. Research, networking and advocacy activities can lead to a more facilitative policy regime by changing laws, regulations and policies to be more favorable to the private sector. Activities that foster a greater recognition of the potential contribution of the private

sector by government colleagues and consumers lead to more receptive attitudes toward private providers. Public-private dialogue improves the policy environment and increases opportunities for public-private partnerships. Coalitions among public and private actors or within the private sector can lead to more effective approaches to pursue new opportunities and achieve public health goals.

What can CMS do in policy?

To improve the environment for private provision of family planning and other health products and services, CMS can undertake a variety of activities, singly or in combination.

- CMS can conduct a **stakeholder analysis** to determine who are the important organizations and individuals affecting a particular issue. The analysis examines the stakeholders' interests and position regarding the issue. This type of information identifies potential supporters and opponents and facilitates developing a strategy to mobilize support for a new program or policy change.
- CMS can undertake a **legal and regulatory analysis** to document and clarify pertinent laws and regulations in a country. This information helps direct project efforts. For example, private providers, advertisers, and others in a country may believe that advertising health services is prohibited, even if no such law or regulation exists. CMS would focus on educating relevant actors and increasing their confidence so they are willing to advertise, rather than lobbying decision makers to change the law.
- CMS can conduct **policy research** on a proposed policy to help determine whether it would achieve its desired outcome. Research could include a literature review, a review of experiences of similar policies in other countries, focus groups to determine likely responses to the policy change, financial and economic analyses of expected impact, etc.
- CMS can facilitate **networking** among key actors either within the private sector or among public and private sector organizations. Networking can be used to create informal alliances, formal coalitions, or other types of associations that collaborate to plan and implement new approaches, lobby governments for reforms, or sponsor a campaign to educate consumers.

SENEGAL: Although condoms in Senegal could be legally distributed in non-pharmacy outlets prior to 2000, the vast majority of sales were in pharmacies. CMS, in trying to expand condom distribution, faced social, cultural and religious barriers, but primary opposition came from the Union of Pharmacies, which wanted to protect its market. CMS won the support of many pharmacists through direct negotiations, although a small but strong group continued to resist. CMS successfully enlisted the involvement of the Cabinet of the Ministry of Health after presenting solid arguments favoring expanded distribution. The Ministry asked opposing interests for written arguments stating why condoms should not be sold outside pharmacies. When no one chose to respond, it became a moot issue. Now, condoms are available in nightclubs, grocery stores, restaurants, hotels, etc., significantly increasing accessibility and demand.



In Senegal, the Protec brand of condom is promoted through community events such as musical concerts and parades; with hundreds of supporters wearing the Protec logo on their t-shirts.

Commercial Market Strategies (CMS) is a USAID-funded project that aims to increase access to and demand for reproductive health and family planning in developing countries through the private sector.



COMMERCIAL MARKET STRATEGIES
NEW DIRECTIONS IN REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

If you would like additional information about Policy initiatives at CMS please contact us at:

Commercial Market Strategies
1001 G Street, N.W. Suite 400W
Washington, D.C. 20001

Telephone: (202) 220-2150
Fax: (202) 220-2189
website: www.cmsproject.com

- CMS can foster dialogue to encourage new **public-private partnerships**. Cooperation between the public and private sectors — in contracting for health services or agreeing to serve complementary market segments, for example — can more efficiently and effectively meet the populations' health needs. Establishing such partnerships, however, requires coordination and negotiation to define relationships that are mutually beneficial.
- CMS can assist private sector colleagues with all aspects of **advocacy** — from understanding the policy process, to setting advocacy objectives, to defining audiences, messages and means of communication, to implementing advocacy activities and monitoring the results. Advocacy, which encompasses a variety of activities directed at changing the opinions and behaviors of key actors, is critical for improving the environment for the private sector.

Contact CMS

Contact CMS to explore how our policy expertise can increase the health impact of your current programs. Visit our web site, www.cmsproject.com, for more information about the project, our current country programs and CMS research publications (available for download).

JORDAN: Prior to 2001, import duties on condoms in Jordan were more than 30 percent and sales tax was another 13 percent. Through the persistent lobbying efforts of CMS staff and a sympathetic colleague in the Ministry of Finance, Cabinet agreed to eliminate duties on condoms in early January. The successful elimination of import duties created momentum for the removal of sales tax. CMS staff successfully argued that condoms should be reclassified with all other contraceptives that were free from tax, instead of their previous classification with rubber gloves. In late January, the sales tax department agreed.

