

PROJECT PROFILE

Combating Counterfeit Medicines and Supporting Good Governance in Benin's Health Sector



PROJECT NAME

Benin Blanket Purchase Agreement (BPA) - Combating Counterfeit Medicines

CLIENT

USAID/Benin

PRIME CONTRACTOR

Resonance Global

COUNTRY

Benin

TIME PERIOD

Jun. 2018 – Jun. 2021

Challenge

Worldwide, counterfeit medicines are on the rise and make up at least 10-15% of the world's pharmaceutical market. Counterfeit medicines are medicines of inferior quality – sometimes even sugar water – or containing low levels of active ingredients, in order to bypass detection. They are estimated to kill more than 100,000 people across Africa each year. Benin, as the second-largest point of entry on the continent, is of particular strategic importance in the fight against counterfeit medicines. Approximately 25% of all such medicines pass across Benin's borders.

The Government of Benin has initiated landmark crackdowns on counterfeit medicine trafficking. The first operation in February 2017 seized 100 tons of counterfeit medicines, and in December of the same year a second seizure confiscated 150 tons at the home of a high-ranking parliamentarian. A simultaneous investigation revealed that the corruption was directly linked to the formal pharmaceutical sector. This caused shock waves and outrage in Benin: counterfeit medicines had long been considered a problem of the poor, who bought their medicine through informal channels. The crackdown and subsequent fallout reinforced the notion that this is a broader societal and institutional problem that affects all citizens.

Solution

In partnership with the Government of Benin, USAID/Benin seeks to combat the scourge of counterfeit medicines and support good governance in the health sector. The Ministry of Health's Department of Pharmacy, Medicine, and Diagnostic Exploration (DPMED) regulates the national pharmaceutical industry in Benin. Resonance provides technical assistance to DPMED to help plan, coordinate, and implement its program to combat counterfeit medicines.

Key Results

- In partnership with Beninese pharmacists and Ministry of Health officials, Resonance helped the DPMED draft a workplan to fight the corrupt infiltration of counterfeit medicines into formal pharmaceutical channels.
- Our local expert consultant provides on-demand technical assistance to the DPMED regarding tracing and destroying seized counterfeit and expired medicines and health products in Benin.
- Resonance has engaged an international counterfeit medicine expert to provide targeted advisory services and recommendations for the DPMED. To date, this expert has provided institutional recommendations for the DPMED, supported the upkeep of a database of counterfeit medicines within Beninese borders, and aided in the seizure and physical destruction of counterfeit and expired medicines and health products during governmental raids.
- In 2019-2020, the DPMED became the Beninese Agency for Pharmaceutical Regulation (ABRP), a specialized branch within the Ministry of Health. Resonance experts provided technical assistance throughout this transition, including developing an operational roadmap to launch the ABRP.