

Leveraging strategic purchasing to advance Universal Health Coverage



Who We Are

The Strategic Purchasing Africa Resource Center (SPARC) is a resource hub aimed at strengthening strategic purchasing capacity in sub-Saharan Africa. Our vision is to empower countries with knowledge and practical tools to make access to affordable and quality health care a reality for all. SPARC is a complementary resource and partner to the many health financing initiatives on the African continent and globally. SPARC is supported by Amref Health Africa as the institutional host and Results for Development (R4D) as the core technical partner. An advisory committee made up of key global, regional and country stakeholders provides additional input and guidance to SPARC's approach and activities.

What We Do

SPARC is not just a resource center — it is a movement. SPARC is engaging individuals from stakeholder groups across sub-Saharan Africa to understand, talk about and advocate for strategic purchasing as a way to make better use of limited resources for universal health coverage (UHC) and to hold decision-makers accountable for effective health spending. We are also working with partners to change how technical assistance is provided — tapping into and deepening regional expertise and building a coaching approach that emphasizes learning by doing. We are creating a network of regional experts who can support countries to develop practical, home-grown solutions that advance their strategic purchasing objectives.

How We Do It

SPARC is built on three pillars to increase capacity in strategic purchasing, support country systems and processes to carry out purchasing functions strategically, and add to the knowledge base of what works. SPARC operates on a hub-and-spoke model by engaging our technical partners and mobilizing our coaching community to provide technical support and share learning. SPARC can also serve as a broker connecting countries with funding sources to engage regional experts and partners to support the design and implementation of strategic purchasing approaches.

To address strategic purchasing needs in Africa, SPARC works through 3 pillars:

CONNECT

Coaching & Mentoring

Build and coach a regional cadre of experts to serve as the go-to source of strategic purchasing technical support.

MATCH

Country Engagement

Match countries implementing strategic purchasing approaches with regional experts who understand local contexts.

SHARE

Knowledge Management & Joint Learning

Serve as a resource and knowledge hub for practical tools and best practices on strategic purchasing.

Types of SPARC Country Engagements (after sources of funding are identified)

- 1 "Scoping for technical support" – demand articulation: SPARC facilitates a country stakeholder process to articulate strategic purchasing objectives and identify needs for support.
- 2 "Brokering of technical support" – package design and coordination: SPARC co-produces the package of support with the country stakeholders; provides support to identify funding sources, experts, and other technical resources and tools; and supports quality assurance and cross-country learning.
- 3 "Delivery of technical support" – SPARC provides the full package of technical support: SPARC is contracted to fully provide technical support, including co-producing the package of support with the country stakeholders; identifying, deploying and supporting experts; engaging in policy dialogue with country stakeholders; ensuring quality assurance and cross-country learning.



Type of SPARC Engagement	SPARC Activities
Scoping for technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a country stakeholder process to articulate strategic purchasing objectives and priorities • Conduct rapid mapping of existing strategic purchasing support and expertise in the country • Co-produce a high-level roadmap of priority activities and technical support
Brokering of technical support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate a more in-depth country stakeholder process to articulate strategic purchasing objectives and priorities • Conduct detailed mapping of existing strategic purchasing support and expertise in the country • Co-produce a detailed roadmap of priority activities and technical support • Draft terms of reference for technical support and identify experts • Support technical experts through quality assurance and joint learning
Delivery of technical support	<p>SPARC is contracted to fully provide technical support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-produce the package of support with the country stakeholders • Identify, deploy and support experts • Engage in policy dialogue with country stakeholders • Ensure quality assurance and cross-country learning.

Past Engagements

- **Positioning the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) as a strategic purchaser in Kenya** — A SPARC mentor guided an expert panel through a process to prioritize steps to strengthen the NHIF's purchasing functions as part of the UHC agenda, and raised awareness of strategic purchasing as a critical UHC lever in a non-technical way.
- **Planning for National Health Insurance (NHI) in South Africa** — SPARC coaches facilitated a team of stakeholders to develop an action plan and business case for support to establish strategic purchasing functions in preparation for NHI implementation.

Accessing SPARC Support

SPARC country technical support can be accessed through existing funding mechanisms (such as USAID cooperative agreements) or direct contracts between funder organizations and SPARC institutions and experts.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

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SPARC is supported by:

