

Important Guidelines for Sending Supplies to Haiti

In an effort to maximize the impact of gifts-in-kind (GIK) donations, particularly in emergency situations, InterAction, the World Health Organization, AERDO, and several leading GIK NGOs have been advancing GIK standards for more than ten years. These standards provide guidance on the management of GIK deliveries so that emergency relief efforts, humanitarian assistance and development programs can be enhanced with product donations – and so product donations do not complicate relief efforts, overburden local supply chains with limited resources, or introduce risks for program beneficiaries.

- Products should only be sent when an explicit arrangement for acceptance by an organization or personnel operating in Haiti, confirmation that the products can be utilized effectively to support the relief effort has been received and verification has been made that the organization has the resources required to receive, store and distribute the products
- The volume of gift in kind donations should be limited to what is required to meet immediate relief needs and should be appropriate to the culture, climate, and circumstances of the recipients.
- Only products which require minimal local handling should be sent so that distribution can be quick and efficient within minimal infrastructure. Going forward, as immediate relief needs are met, be prepared to provide the funding required to staff product sorting, storing, distribution, and management activities.
- Products should only be sent which have adequate shelf life to be utilized. Because so many organizations are sending products into a system with very limited capacity and modest population, the risk of oversupply is great and therefore, products with expiry dates should have a minimum of 12 months, as stated in the InterAction and World Health Organization guidelines.
- Appropriate valuation, tracking and reporting of donations should be followed and become transparent. There will certainly be public scrutiny and evaluation following the disaster response for which we will be accountable as individual organizations and as a sector.