

Systematic Recording and Support Documentation

There are two main types of records that enable proper inventory control: those tracking stock movements and those tracking stock levels. Both types are connected as each stock movement affects the level of stock in any given location. Records should be formally cross-referenced allowing traceability of each item from reception to dispatch.

The documenting system in place should be as standard as possible while still avoiding unnecessary complications. The system needs to be established at the onset of operations and fully understood by the staff whose job it is to put it into practice. Training of the warehouse personnel is crucial in this sense.

Recording Stock Levels

The basic purpose of inventory control is to know at any given moment what supplies are in a storage facility. There are different levels of granularity in terms of recording stock levels.

A basic tool for inventory control is the [stock card and bin card](#), both of which record any movement of physical quantities for each SKU and are stored next to the item in the warehouse, while the [inventory ledger](#) tracks inventory transactions in a central location.

Where stocks are held for different donors, it may be convenient to keep separated records for each donor. This will ease accountability and reporting processes, especially at the closure of the project.

Recording Stock Movement

All movements of stock should be recorded and supported by the corresponding documents certifying receipt or dispatch of supplies. Supplies should change hands only when the corresponding documents have been signed by the next recipient link in the supply chain. All documents involved in the exchange of goods must be duly archived.

All goods received in the storage facility should be accompanied with a [waybill or a delivery note](#) describing the supplies details and the item origin. If a supplier or transporter does not provide a waybill or a delivery note, the storekeeper should fill in a [goods received note](#). A copy of the signed document should be retained by both the recipient and person delivering the goods.

To dispatch a product from storage, a fully authorised stock release order should be provided. Without the stock release order, the storekeeper should not release any product.

All transaction documents should clearly specify the name and exact quantity of the supplies received/released, as well as names of the individuals or agencies issuing and receiving them. The reference number of the transaction should be included on the related stock cards, allowing full traceability of any goods in the stock.

It is key that all stock receipts, issues, transfers, disposals and adjustments are documented and authorised. Do not postpone any of the essential recording tasks; all stock movement records must be updated immediately. Hard copies of stock cards and waybill/delivery notes should be properly archived within the warehouse premises, and be accessible to authorised persons.