

## Logistics Platform and Centralised Purchasing: Efficient Change in the Madrid Health Service



**[Susana Álvarez](#)**

\*\*\*\*\*@\*\*\*salud.madrid.org

Deputy Director General of  
Contracting - Madrid Health  
Service  
Madrid, Spain

[LinkedIn](#) [Twitter](#)

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The COVID-19 pandemic, following the declaration by the World Health Organisation (WHO) on 11 March 2020, which elevated the health emergency to an international pandemic, and the rapid evolution of subsequent events on a national and international scale, required the adoption of immediate and effective measures to deal with this situation.

Likewise, the Sub-directorate General of Procurement (SGC) of the Madrid Health Service (SERMAS) had to adapt to the increasing demands on the organisation in procuring supplies and services.

With the state of health emergency a new, more agile form of public procurement was needed, which focused mainly on the purchase of extraordinary materials and equipment specifically aimed at:

- Personal protective equipment (PPE) for primary health care centres and hospital workers.
- Equipment and facilities for the IFEMA COVID-19 field hospital start-up in record time and, subsequently, the Emergency Hospital Enfermera Isabel Zendal (HEEIZ).
- Equipment and services for the start-up of medicalised hotels.

The significant volume of contracts and the different contents of these contracts that we have had to deal with since Royal Decree 463/2020 of 14 March (declaring a state of alarm for the management of the health crisis caused by COVID-19) has meant an organisational effort that necessitated an increase in the response capacity to support the health care that is essential to overcome the pandemic. This situation has forced an enormous adjustment in tasks and functions previously unheard of. Its aim, first and foremost, was being able to meet the strong demand for care caused by the pandemic, in order to guarantee the healthcare demanded by the public and the protection of professionals.



We had to centralise the purchase of goods and services to meet the needs of the Organisation, necessitating modernization of our files. After the end of the state of alarm, we took over a warehouse that, in a few days, went from being a warehouse for the custody of goods withdrawn after the closure of the IFEMA field hospital to a central SERMAS warehouse from which we began to manage the strategic reserve, thus complying with the Early Response Plan, under Royal Decree-Law 21/2020, of 9 June. From this warehouse, we began the distribution of protective equipment (PPE), tests, and medical supplies to all health centres in a regulated manner.

Opening the *Hospital de Emergencias Enfermera Isabel Zendal* (HEEIZ) was another important milestone as the GSC provided goods and services. In addition to the preparation of the corresponding procurement files, we launched for the first time to all Sermas health centres medical material withdrawn from the IFEMA Field Hospital, after its closure. This first offer, successfully made at the end of 2020, was followed by four more throughout 2021 and two more in 2022, which has meant an extra supply of material for the centres that not only allowed this purchase extra-budgetary, but has also prevented the loss of these healthcare supplies due to expiry, obsolescence or simply non-use.



Next, logistics platform(QMS) has managed PPE and healthcare materials and diagnostic tests for COVID-19, and distributed to healthcare centres for campaigns by district according to the highest incidence of Covid, as well as to pharmacies for the Christmas campaign in 2021.

We created and implemented several working procedures that affected the day-to-day running of the QMS and the whole organisation. One of them is the "Procedure for the management of consultations on personal protective equipment (PPE)", which was recognised by the International

Hospital Federation under the "Beyond the call of duty for Covid -19" programme. Other specific procedures developed were the "Guide for logistics and strategic reserve management", as well as various instructions: "Distribution of surplus consumables" and "Inter-centre distribution" for the exchange of healthcare material between centres, as well as the creation of stable working groups with experts such as the Prevention Services professionals.

Meanwhile, promoting the implementation of the Unique Catalogue for all SERMAS healthcare centres meant facilitating centralised purchasing and its subsequent distribution to the healthcare centres and obtaining maximum performance from the NEXUS LOGISTICS application. To this end, we are dedicating resources to speed up the completion of this implementation as much as possible without forgetting the important task of maintaining the already established catalogue.



It has become clear that, even in non-Covid times, there is a need to speed up administrative processes that directly affect the purchase of goods and services, and even more so at this time, to guarantee not only the supply of PPE but also to guarantee the strategic reserve of those goods that will enable us to be better prepared for any emergency. The development of the current logistics platform answers this need.

On the one hand, the degree of trust developed in recent months has contributed to the fact that the centres ask us now to distribute their surplus products to other SERMAS centres. On the other hand, the events that have taken place and the sometimes-dramatic market conditions make it necessary to maintain a portfolio of solvent, responsible, innovative, and reliable suppliers. Thus, it is essential to be sensitive to the healthcare centre's needs, aiming to resolve the public procurement of goods and services centrally, resulting in a perceived improvement and greater efficiency and efficiency adequacy of resources.

All the above experiences make it imperative to intensify the coordination between different agents: Contracting, Logistics-warehouse, Hospitals, Primary Care, SUMMA 112, Suppliers and multidisciplinary work such as that carried out with maintenance technicians. All this has shown that collaboration work leads to synergies.

Finally, all these activities developed in the SGPP, made possible with the proper management of the supply chain from the central warehouse to all the SERMAS health centres, contributed to implementing best practices, guaranteeing quality and timely supply, managing incidents in real time and trying to achieve efficiencies for the entire organisation.

We did not expect the events that took place, but we must remember that events such as those experienced could happen again, which makes us at the SGPP alert and attentive.

This experience was presented at the prestigious annual Spanish Logistics Centre (Cel) awards. In the 2022 call for entries, corresponding to the XXXII edition, we were recognised as a finalist project in the Healthcare Logistics Excellent Category. We call our project: "Logistics Platform and Centralized Purchasing: an opportunity for an efficient change in the Madrid Health Service."

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This award has had an important impact on the media, notably the specialised and general press. Without wanting to be exhaustive, we collect some links about this.

[Logística Profesional](#) [Una iniciativa de gestión del SERMAS durante la pandemia, finalista de los premios CEL a la Excelencia Logística Sanitaria - Comunidad de Madrid - COPE](#) [SERMAS - Una iniciativa de gestión del SERMAS durante la pandemia, finalista de los premios CEL a la Excelencia Logística Sanitaria \(foropositores.com\)](#)

We have also been invited (in May) to the next National Logistics Congress in Santiago de Compostela to present this experience in detail.

In the SGPP team, we are delighted and proud of our work. Hopefully, it will serve as an inspiration to other public procurement units.

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