# SEIVAA REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

A New Era for Sexual and Reproductive Health Markets

Strategic Vision and Plan 2022 -2027

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#### **Acknowledgments**

Persistent and historical sexual and reproductive health (SRH) market weaknesses prevent millions of people from accessing necessary SRH products. Addressing these weaknesses will require unprecedented coordination, innovation and leadership, underpinned by a radical shift in thinking that centers on consumers' needs and puts countries in the driver's seat. Shaping Equitable Market Access for Reproductive Health, or SEMA Reproductive Health, is committed to helping shape a future that does just that: a world defined by healthy, equitable and resilient SRH markets that allow people everywhere, especially women and adolescent girls, to control their health and future.

I'm thrilled to share SEMA's first official 5-year strategy. A combination of innovative thinking, meticulous work and deep dedication from a diverse set of people around the world brought this partnership to life out of a desire to change the status quo. This strategy represents a culmination of that work – learning from the past, outlining the present and building toward a new era for sexual and reproductive health markets.

As the Chair of SEMA's Governing Body, I would like to extend our thanks to the entire SEMA team and our many partners, experts and consultants who have made everything possible about this strategy. They are committed to attaining SEMA's mission over the next few years. The work is not easy, and achieving our vision will not be without obstacles. But guided by this strategy, the passion I have seen from my colleagues has given me hope that the future we are building together is within reach.

Prof. Isaac F. Adewole Chair, SEMA Governing Body

#### List of Abbreviations

**CIFF** Children's Investment Fund Foundation

**FCDO** Foreign, Commonwealth & Development

Office of the United Kingdom

**FP2030** Family Planning 2030

**GEF** Generation Equality Forum

**GFF** Global Financing Facility for Women,

Children and Adolescents

**HMF** (SEMA's) Healthy Markets Framework

**LMIC** Low- and middle-income country

**MEAE** French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs

**NGO** Non-governmental organization

**RHSC** Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition

**SEMA** Shaping Equitable Market Access

for Reproductive Health

**SRH** Sexual and reproductive health

**UNFPA** United Nations Population Fund

**USAID** United States Agency for

International Development

**WHO** World Health Organization

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

### Sexual and reproductive health (SRH) products are critical to saving lives and advancing gender equality.

SRH products – including contraceptives, medicines to manage pregnancy-related complications and supplies for safe abortion and post-abortion care – can dramatically improve people's health and well-being by reducing unintended pregnancies, unsafe abortions and maternal deaths. When women and girls can access quality SRH products, they are also more likely to stay in school, join the workforce, and help bolster their livelihoods and broader economies – key components to achieving a gender-equal world.

However, persistent weaknesses in SRH markets prevent millions of people from being able to access comprehensive, quality and affordable SRH products that fit their preferences. For example, interactions between buyers, suppliers, distributors and providers often lead to high prices, insufficient supply, inadequate consumer choice, inequitable access and poor quality. The consequences of these types of challenges are startling. 218 million women<sup>[1]</sup> in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) who want to avoid or delay pregnancy are not using modern contraceptives, and approximately 810 women<sup>[2]</sup> die every day from causes related to pregnancy, childbirth and unsafe abortion.

#### **SEMA's Vision and Mission**

In July 2021, country and global stakeholders came together at the Generation Equality Forum with the goal to transform reproductive health markets. Together they launched Shaping Equitable Market Access for Reproductive Health, or SEMA Reproductive Health.

SEMA's **vision** is a world with healthy, equitable and resilient markets for SRH products in LMICs that allow people, especially women and adolescent girls, to control their health and future.

SEMA's **mission** is to support country and global partners to design and drive coordinated data-based strategies that shape healthy, equitable and resilient SRH markets capable of meeting communities' diverse needs.

In pursuit of this mission, SEMA supports and collaborates with countries and partners to:

- Understand SRH markets and identify market shortcomings working with partners and leveraging an innovative tool designed by SEMA called the Healthy Markets Framework that assesses market conditions and ecosystem capabilities to manage country and product markets, as well as market enablers.
- **Design solutions to priority market problems** by engaging in country-led processes and/or supporting collaborative fora to proactively and strategically co-design and coordinate market strategies and solutions, while tapping into the unique strengths of existing partners and networks.

#### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- Finance and drive coordinated implementation of market solutions, supporting and collaborating with countries and global partners to finance and implement market interventions to address national, product and cross-cutting market challenges related to affordability, resilience, supply, demand, innovation and/or other market dimensions.
- **Track progress and learn** in order to make course corrections, adapt and promote continuous quality improvement and assess impact over time.

#### **SEMA's 5-Year Strategy**

In 2021, initial funding enabled SEMA to hire its leadership, establish its governance and oversight structures, develop a strategic vision and market assessment framework and scope early investment opportunities. For the next five years, SEMA will focus on three main objectives:

- **Establish its organizational structure and approach.** Our goal in the first few years is to establish the organization, including recruiting roughly 25 staff and creating internal systems, processes and partnership models. After an initial incubation period of two to three years at Amref Health Africa, SEMA aims to spin off as an independent organization. We also anticipate testing various ways to engage with country stakeholders to learn and adapt as we go and, over time, develop an effective and efficient model to engage a broader set of country and regional partners.
- **Drive improvements in country and product markets, as well as market enablers.** 2022 will focus on testing the SEMA Healthy Markets Framework in three countries (Senegal, Burkina Faso and Nigeria) as well as the product and market enabler levels to identify initial investment opportunities by the end of 2022/early 2023. By 2027, and depending on funding, we hope to conduct more than 12 market assessments and fund at least 10 market interventions per year.
- Crowd in partners to join forces and learn from each other. Markets are vast ecosystems and influencing them requires diverse partners to coordinate and align efforts and learn from each other. Therefore, SEMA aims to develop a trusted and valuable platform for country, regional and global partners to learn, share and collaborate. SEMA also aims to encourage additional SRH investors (donors, countries, others) to provide and/or align funding to finance market interventions and support SEMA expansion to new geographies and additional SRH areas including maternal, newborn and child health.

SEMA represents a new way of working that recognizes that country stakeholders increasingly are and should be the stewards of their public and private markets. The structure of SEMA includes a country-based organizational model to more effectively gather and provide country insights to guide SEMA's strategic direction and facilitate aligning activities with country agendas. SEMA also provides an inclusive platform to enable cross-country collaboration around broader product, regional and global market issues.

With the world renewing its commitment to gender equality and recognizing the need to shift global power dynamics, we have a unique opportunity to design new models to create sustainable change. SEMA's objectives for the coming years represent the promise of this opportunity, and we look forward to working with partners in countries and around the world to realize these goals.

Birth of SEMA

Despite progress to increase access to family planning services in recent years through initiatives like Family Planning 2020 (now FP2030), 218 million women<sup>[1]</sup> in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) who want to avoid or delay pregnancy are not using modern contraceptives. Unmet contraceptive needs around the world lead to approximately 121 million unwanted pregnancies every year,<sup>[1]</sup> which represents half of all pregnancies globally. Unwanted pregnancy robs girls and women of life choices, forces them to drop out of school, affects their health and that of their children and reduces their economic opportunities. What's more, pregnancy can lead to complications: approximately 810 women die every day from causes related to pregnancy, childbirth and unsafe abortion, and 90% of these women live in LMICs.<sup>[2]</sup>

Improving access to sexual and reproductive health (SRH) products, services and rights is therefore critical to generating positive health outcomes for all – especially women and adolescent girls. Unfortunately, global health markets and SRH markets in particular have been largely ineffective at meeting the needs of communities in LMICs. The manner in which buyers, suppliers, distributors and providers interact across the public and private sectors can often lead to high prices, insufficient supply, inadequate consumer choice, inequitable access, poor quality and other market shortcomings.

Over the years, global health actors have tried to remedy the situation through various tactics, such as enhancing transparency in quality assurance information and processes to coordinate long-term procurement agreements or supporting product introduction subsidies. While these efforts have produced positive impact, they have also generated criticism, including that they are too donor-driven, single-product oriented, focused on short-term wins over building systemic solutions and inefficient given a lack of coordination, especially at the country level.

Changes in the global and national landscape have also prompted opportunities to change approaches to market shaping. At the global level, for example, the reduction in SRH funding and the reliance on a small set of donors highlights the need for donors to pool funding to improve coordination and efficiency. At the country level, significant differences in local SRH markets, burgeoning entrepreneurialism and greater fiscal and political leadership underscore the opportunity to work more directly with country stakeholders to design market approaches tailored to local contexts.

#### The Birth of SEMA: Key Milestones

Recognizing these challenges and opportunities, several partners organized a multi-stakeholder Steering Committee that included country leaders, country and global technical experts, major buyers and donors. The Committee consulted over 100 stakeholders over the course of 2019-2020, asking questions such as: "What should the future model for SRH market shaping look like?" and "How could we better respond to user needs?".

These consultations led to the creation of SEMA Reproductive Health, a partnership aimed at supporting country and global partners to design and drive coordinated data-based strategies to shape healthy, equitable and resilient SRH markets capable of meeting communities' diverse needs. SEMA was launched at the Generation Equality Forum (GEF) in July 2021 and is now being incubated within Amref Health Africa. Initial funding from the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (CIFF), Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the French government enabled SEMA to establish its governing structure, hire an Executive Director and a Head of Operations, and refine its strategic vision and operational approach, which are presented in this document.

2019	2020	Jul 2021	Nov 2021	Dec 2021	May 2022
Steering Committee Initiated	First Wave Country Engagement Initiated	SEMA Announced at GEF	Amref Receives Funding to Launch SEMA	Technical Oversight Committee & Governing Body Established	Executive Director & Head of Operations Start

<sup>[1]</sup>Guttmacher Institute, 2020. Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health in Low- and Middle-Income Countries, Fact Sheet. https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/investing-sexual-and-reproductive-health-low-and-middle-income-countries

#### Vision, Principles and Governance

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#### **SEMA's Key Principles**

SEMA's key principles reflect the priorities highlighted through expert consultations conducted in 2020 and drive our decision-making and operations.



#### Consumer-centric and country-responsive

We are designing an approach that puts the needs of consumers and countries front and center



#### Inclusive and curious

We strive to be inclusive, respectful, humble and curious to learn from our partners and each other



#### Mission-driven and transformative

We want to challenge the status quo, be bold and transformative, striving for systemic and sustainable solutions



#### Platform- and partner-oriented

We believe in and invest in the ecosystem of partners, nurturing platforms for enhanced coordination



#### Results-oriented and evidence-based

We are results-oriented, guided by data, always driving for efficiency, continuous improvements and impact



#### Nimble and adaptive

We have a lean structure and entrepreneurial mindset to allow us to try new things, fail, learn and adapt

#### SEMA's Structure and Governance

To help shift the power of market stewardship to countries and leverage the ecosystem of partners, SEMA has designed a lean and nimble structure suitable for supporting country-led strategies through locally-based operations including:

**SEMA Management Team:** responsible for strategy development, execution and operations. This team of about 20-25 staff is based primarily in beneficiary countries. To keep the structure lean, SEMA also relies on outsourcing many operational services (e.g., human resources, information technology, travel, communications, etc.) initially from Amref Health Africa and over time from a mix of partners.

**Governing Body:** provides overarching governance/risk, fiscal and strategic guidance. The Governing Body currently compromises two independent country leaders and three experts from donor institutions, with the prospect to expand country leader representation if additional resources are secured.

**Technical Oversight Committee:** provides strategic and technical guidance while ensuring SEMA adheres to its principle to be country- and consumer-oriented. The Technical Oversight Committee comprises 12-15 rotating technical experts with strong representation from beneficiary countries. The SEMA Management Team and Governing Body rely upon this committee and other experts to review assessments, participate in task teams, provide feedback on recommendations and review investment proposals.

### 3 Definition of Healthy Markets

SEMA describes markets as systems where institutions engage in economic exchange. Markets engage a number of actors, including consumers, health care providers, buyers, investors, suppliers, distributors, manufacturers and developers. SEMA categorizes markets into three interconnected levels to aid market understanding, dialogue and effective intervention. All levels need to be healthy to support widespread and equitable SRH product access:

#### National

National markets comprise interactions between buyers and sellers of products, both public and private, as well as the wider flow of products, within countries. The organization of national markets is critical for product availability since they deliver to the last mile – ensuring that the right mix of products is available when and where users need them.

#### Product

Product markets are made up of the interactions between buyers and sellers of individual products/product categories across multiple countries. Products markets are integrated with national markets and influenced by market enablers to ensure affordable, quality and appropriate products reach countries.

#### Market Enablers

For national and product markets to work effectively, well-functioning support is also needed from cross-cutting, multi-country market enablers. This includes global funding and procurement mechanisms, as well as foundational functions, such as quality assurance, market shaping and product introduction support.

At these three interconnected levels, SEMA aims to shape efficient and effective markets capable of equitably promoting public health and meeting communities' diverse needs. Ideally these markets are characterized by:

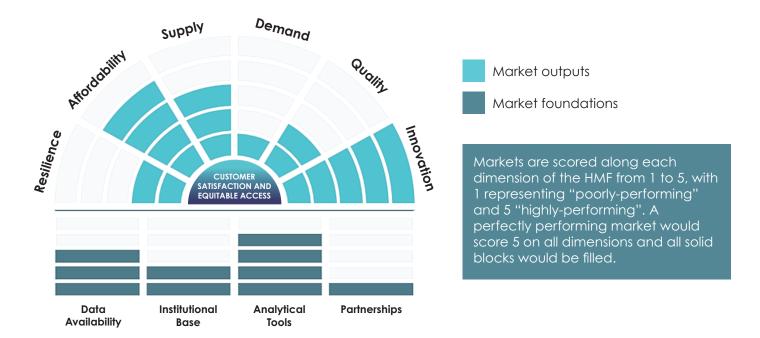
- Functioning market foundations quality data, analytics and capacity to support effective market strategy planning and execution
- **Resilience** supply and funding capable of sustaining shocks
- Affordability pricing that is equitable to buyers and sustainable for suppliers/manufacturers
- **Supply** supply that is adequate to meet projected consumer demand
- Demand consumers are aware of options and financing meets projected consumer demand
- **Quality** regulatory capacity and policies have adequate resources to provide quality assurance services and buyers and consumers are adopting quality products/services
- Innovation Research & development pipeline resourced adequately and responsive to consumer needs and trends; global and country systems support timely and equitable adoption

#### **Definition of Healthy Markets**

#### **SEMA's Healthy Markets Framework**

Markets can be challenging to objectively assess and SRH markets have unique features different from other health areas. SEMA has therefore developed the Healthy Markets Framework (HMF) as a tool to assess markets (national, product, market enablers) against the criteria described above.

Figure 1: SEMA's Healthy Markets Framework (HMF)

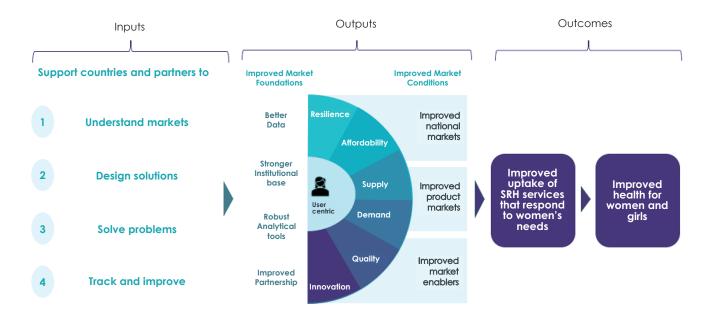


The HMF includes a separate assessment for national and product markets, as well as market enablers and different qualitative and quantitative indicators to diagnose each market dimension. SEMA commissions partners to co-lead conducting these assessments in a participatory manner consulting with various stakeholders. The assessments serve as a platform for dialogue to identify potential priorities for action and investment by SEMA and other partners. SEMA will re-commission the assessments over time, with results reported on dashboards to allow for progress to be monitored on an ongoing basis.

## 4 Key Activities

The Theory of Change framework below describes how SEMA approaches its work. The Theory of Change will guide SEMA's activities in the years to come and serves as the basis for identifying its initial 5-year goals outlined in Section 8. The column on the left summarizes the inputs or the activities that SEMA will pursue to support the understanding, design and implementation of market interventions. SEMA anticipates that these activities will generate the outputs in the middle column, which relate to improvements in market foundations and characteristics. The Theory assumes that success in these efforts will contribute to improved health outcomes, including increased effective uptake of health services and, over time, health impact.

Figure 2: SEMA's Theory of Change





#### **Step 1: Understand Markets**

The HMF will identify market shortcomings and eventually track progress:

- At the country level, SEMA will commission technical partners to conduct market assessments to understand the local public and private markets and align with partners on strategic priorities. Technical agencies will consult and participate in local processes (e.g., government-led working groups) and/or complement other efforts (e.g., consultations with private actors and/or consumer groups) to understand the market and facilitate conversation and alignment.
- At the product/market enabler levels, similarly, SEMA will commission technical partners to conduct product and cross-cutting market assessments consulting with a variety of stakeholders to present an objective market assessment and identify market shortcomings.

Expected results: Generation and sharing of country, product and market enabler assessments and insights



#### **Step 2: Design Solutions**

SEMA will work with partners to design tailored solutions:

- At the country level, once partners align on priority market shortcomings, SEMA will consult with stakeholders to understand what others are pursuing related to the priority market shortcomings and how SEMA might complement these efforts. If necessary, SEMA may organize a time-limited task team to co-design recommendations and/or develop a common workplan.
- At the product/market enabler levels, SEMA will provide a forum for relevant stakeholders to organize a time-limited task team to co-design market strategy recommendations to address critical market shortcomings. These collaborative task teams will aim to consult and align with other related activities planned or underway.

Expected results: Greater alignment among relevant stakeholders about priority solutions to strengthen country and product markets and market enablers, increased understanding of market shaping



#### **Step 3: Solve Problems**

SEMA will serve as a vehicle to fund and co-execute market solutions:

- At the country level, the SEMA Country Representative will have limited funding to respond to priority market needs. Solutions requiring more significant funding will be reviewed by SEMA leadership, and if prioritized, SEMA will mobilize funding and finance interventions.
- At the product/market enabler levels, if product, regional or multi-country market solutions are prioritized and funding is secured, SEMA will work with stakeholders to identify and finance a partner to lead implementation, ensuring that activities are coordinated with other partners and integrated into country-led strategies to facilitate an effective transition. If necessary, SEMA will organize the creation of a task team to lead the implementation of the solutions.

Expected results: Greater coordination/resource efficiency of market intervention implementation aligned with country and consumer needs, increased country stewardship of market strategy, improved market conditions/outputs/results



#### Step 4: Track and Improve

The final key activity for SEMA involves tracking, monitoring progress and ultimately improving over time:

- SEMA will monitor progress to both adapt any market intervention along the way and strengthen the learning loop to promote continuous quality improvement.
- SEMA will measure progress by conducting market assessments on a regular basis and by tracking specific outcomes and indicators related to the interventions implemented.
- SEMA will share lessons learned and best practices through collaborative processes and platforms at the global and country levels.

Expected results: Best practices documented, improved understanding of market shortcomings and effective interventions, improved understanding of market data and consumer insights

### Market Focus Areas

#### **SRH Product Priorities**

The Steering Committee that designed SEMA, as informed by extensive expert and in-country consultations, made early decisions about how SEMA should sequence focus areas among SRH commodities. SEMA will adhere to the World Health Organization (WHO) scope for SRH commodities, which encompasses a broad range of interventions such as contraceptives, sexually transmitted infection treatments, pregnancy tests, and maternal/perinatal diagnostics and interventions.

Given resource constraints, the Steering Committee used criteria related to perceived market gaps and opportunities for optimizing active donor work to arrive at its initial focus on contraceptives and other drugs/supplies to prevent and manage unsafe abortion. However, there is flexibility for a country to request support in other SRH areas if there is a higher priority. Ideally, SEMA will address market issues for these initial priorities and mobilize additional resources in order to expand into other SRH commodity areas (e.g., maternal health).

#### **Potential Market Focus Areas**

SEMA is conducting assessments of country and product markets and market enablers to identify and prioritize market shortcomings against which it would develop solutions and mobilize resources. We offer examples of potential market interventions in the next table.

Illustrative Only

#### **Country Market Shortcomings and Interventions**

**Affordability to consumer –** understanding key drivers of end prices for low-income users (e.g., distributor mark-ups) and designing and driving relevant improvements through market strategies (e.g., risk-sharing)

**Financing strategies** – partnering with public and private providers to test different pricing strategies that enable healthy, equitable and thriving markets, affordable choices for different income groups and product diversity

**Product diversity at service delivery points –** understanding economics hindering service delivery partners from providing a range of high-quality products to users and designing cost-sharing mechanisms (e.g., capital loans serving populations of diverse income levels)

#### **Product Market Shortcomings and Interventions**

**Product supply security –** implementing cost/risk-sharing strategies to enhance supply when there are limited quality suppliers (e.g., coordinating procurement strategies among buyers, incentivizing new entrants)

**Product price** – facilitating cost/risk-sharing strategies to reduce cost (e.g., new active pharmaceutical ingredient entrants, tech transfer to low-cost manufacturers)

**Product introduction (innovation) –** supporting activities to enable adoption of new innovations (e.g., product registration)

**Product introduction (efficiency)** – identifying and driving new solutions to improve the efficiency of multi-product introduction (e.g., a demand forecasting center of excellence accessible to all partners, a regional SRH counseling hub/resource)

**Consumer research platforms –** testing strategies to more efficiently gather consumer preferences to guide R&D design choices where innovation is not adequately meeting consumer wants and needs

#### **Market Enabler Shortcomings and Interventions**

**Regional supply diversification –** supporting both analytics to identify which product areas are amenable to supplier diversification and partners to develop strategies

**Sustainable financing models –** facilitating research and analytics to inform strategies for moving towards differential/tiered pricing among countries

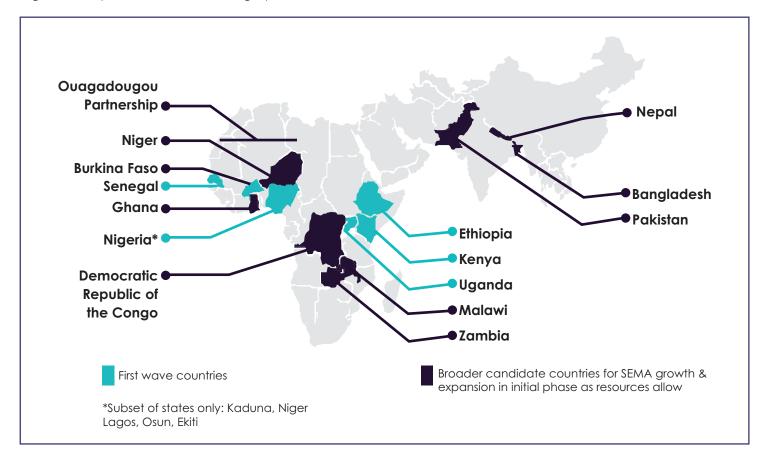
**Procurement –** providing greater transparency regarding suppliers, quality, price and lead times to support more informed procurement

**Quality promotion –** designing and introducing strategies to ensure buyers value and pay for quality supply

SEMA's work on product markets and market enablers will benefit countries globally (e.g., through market data, product market improvements, global support market improvements, documented lessons learned/best practices). SEMA will also work directly with several countries to conduct local market assessments, design market roadmaps, finance market interventions and strengthen country stewardship of markets. These country engagements will also provide local insights to ensure product market and/or market enabler interventions truly respond to local needs. The Steering Committee identified a first wave of six priority countries, per the map below, based on a series of health, economic and market factors. As of mid-2022, SEMA is in the process of initiating work with Senegal, Burkina Faso and Nigeria, where governments expressed strong interest to partner with SEMA. Conversations continue in other geographies.

SEMA will also explore other partnerships (e.g., regional, economic blocs, regional regulatory partners, civil society networks, African manufacturer association, African health economist association, etc).

Figure 3: Map of SEMA's Initial Geographic Focus Areas



### Current and Future Partners

SEMA was announced in July 2021 with country governments from Burkina Faso, Nigeria, and Uganda; financial support from CIFF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (MEAE); and strategic partnership with the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office of the United Kingdom (FCDO), United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (RHSC).

Fully capitalizing on SEMA's potential as a collaborative platform and financing vehicle that aims to support country and global partners to improve markets will rely heavily on investing in and/or working with existing and new partners to achieve its goals. Future efforts and partnerships may include:

- Partnerships to understand markets: SEMA will invest in various partners who organize public and private data (e.g., country governments, survey owners, etc.) and other technical partners to help gather quantitative and qualitative information to assess the state of markets.
- Partnerships to align on designing solutions: SEMA will collaborate with and/or invest in partners to co-design different market solutions.
  - **Country market solutions:** SEMA will need to work with country governments, NGOs, technical agencies, civil society groups, private agencies and donors
  - **Regional solutions:** SEMA may need to work with regional partners (e.g., Ouagadougou Partnership, African Union, African pharma associations, economic or regulatory regional agencies) to promote certain market solutions
  - **Product and market enabler solutions:** SEMA will likely partner with donors, buyers (UNFPA, USAID), manufacturers, country governments, social marketing organizations, WHO and others
- Partnerships to align market priorities: SEMA will seek opportunities to partner with organizations like the Global Financing Facility for Women, Children and Adolescents (GFF) and FP2030 to reinforce market priorites and reforms, and address market issues with countries.
- Partnerships to promote healthy markets: SEMA will identify possible partnerships to highlight the value of strengthening market shaping capacity and improving markets via agencies such as UNFPA, technical partners/NGOs, advocacy and civil society groups and donors.

## SEMA's Goals for 2022-2027

Initial funding has supported the launch of SEMA, including the hiring of SEMA leadership, establishment of its governance and oversight structures, development of a strategic vision and Healthy Markets Framework and scoping of several early investments. SEMA plans to continue to build this foundation with the potential to scale to additional geographies, expand its SRH scope, manage more interventions and ultimately have a broader impact.

#### For the next five years, SEMA will focus on three main objectives:

- Establish its organizational structure and approach. Our goal in the first few years is to establish the organization, including recruiting roughly 25 staff and creating internal systems, processes and partnership models. After an initial incubation period of two to three years at Amref Health Africa, SEMA aims to spin off as an independent organization. We also anticipate testing various ways to engage with country stakeholders to learn and adapt as we go and, over time, develop an effective and efficient model to engage a broader set of country and regional partners.
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