

# SEMA

## REPRODUCTIVE HEALTH

### Shaping Equitable Market Access for Reproductive Health

#### OVERVIEW

In 2021, a new innovative partnership was launched: Shaping Equitable Market Access for Reproductive Health, known as **SEMA Reproductive Health**. [SEMA](#) aims to transform sexual and reproductive health (SRH) markets so that people everywhere can access the SRH products they want and need to control their health and future. This fact sheet provides a summary of SEMA, including its vision, structure, and how it works with the global SRH community to advance the SRH agenda.

#### THE PROBLEM

SRH products – like contraceptives, medicines to manage pregnancy-related complications, and supplies for safe abortion and post-abortion care – are critical to saving lives and advancing gender equality. They can dramatically improve people's health and wellbeing 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 economies – key components to achieving a gender equal world.

However, persistent weaknesses in SRH markets (see box) prevent millions of people from being able to access **comprehensive, quality, and affordable** SRH products that fit their preferences. The consequences of these challenges are startling. [218 million women](#) in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs) who want to avoid or delay pregnancy are not using modern contraceptives, and approximately [810 women](#) die every day from causes related to pregnancy, childbirth, and unsafe abortion. Currently, from development to launch, new contraceptives take years longer to be introduced to LMIC markets than other global health products.

#### WE NEED A MORE PROACTIVE AND COORDINATED APPROACH TO IMPROVE SRH AVAILABILITY AND ACCESS.

SRH products are too often **unaffordable, unavailable**, or simply **don't match individual preferences** or lifestyles.

Market inefficiencies or gaps include:

- Little insight into user preferences
- Fragile procurement systems
- Overreliance on donor funding & limited country ownership of market strategies
- Slow and protracted launch of new SRH product choices
- Inadequate information flow between countries, donors, and global health organizations

**It's time for a radical shift away from business as usual.** Although global efforts in the last decade have enabled [60 million](#) additional women and girls in 69 LMICs to use modern contraception, the SRH community needs a new approach to tackle access barriers and equip more people with products they need to realize their sexual and reproductive health and rights.

## THE PURPOSE & VISION OF SEMA

SEMA Reproductive Health is an innovative partnership designed to create healthier, more equitable, and more resilient SRH markets that better meet the reproductive health needs of people around the world. With country and global partners, SEMA focuses on aligning and strengthening efforts to address market challenges across geographies and private and public sectors through a proactive and coordinated approach.

In all its activities, SEMA aims to **shift the power of market stewardship to countries** by supporting country-led strategies through locally-based operations. That way, interventions to improve access can be informed by the unique needs and priorities of each country.

The strategic plan (2022-2027) includes priorities such as working with countries to:

- **Ensure consistent availability and improve user prices** of existing SRH products, so more women and girls can benefit.
- **Generate more sustainable domestic funding** and stewardship of SRH products and market strategies to reflect country priorities and optimize global financing support.
- **Streamline the introduction of new products and interventions** to meet people's preferences and lifestyles.

## CORE ACTIVITIES

Together with a diverse set of partners, SEMA focuses on **three core activity areas**:

1. **Strengthening market data analysis and resources** – Investing in, aggregating, analyzing, and sharing market data to assess market shortcomings, build a holistic view of user demand and inform market strategies. SEMA also provides market-shaping resources and expertise to help bolster partner activities and country stewardship.
2. **Building a collaborative market strategy platform** – Providing a collaborative hub for proactively and strategically co-designing and coordinating market strategies and solutions, by tapping into the unique strengths of existing networks and country, regional, and global partners.
3. **Serving as a financing and coordination vehicle** – Supporting countries and global partners to finance and implement interventions that address national, regional, and global market challenges – such as addressing market gaps, incentivizing new manufacturers, and supporting countries' national financing and implementation plans around new and existing products.

Country focal points and teams in each of the SEMA countries will receive technical support and investment to increase local stewardship for understanding their markets, prioritizing issues, and driving solutions.

## ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE

SEMA is housed out of Amref Health Africa, the largest health development non-governmental international organization based on the continent. With the goal of being nimble and responsive, SEMA is supported and run by three main organizational bodies:

- A **Governing Board** composed of several country leaders and funders to provide broad guidance and set strategic direction.
- A **Management Team** mainly staffed out of Africa with an executive leader to oversee day-to-day operations and country leads in each priority geography.
- A **Technical Oversight Committee** of external experts, country leaders, market actors, civil society, and more to guide strategy and inform investment recommendations.

A **business and operation support team** within Amref also provides fiscal sponsorship and back-office functions to the initiative and will help facilitate a pathway for SEMA to eventually spin out as an independent organization.

## PARTNERS

Promoting healthier SRH markets will require coordination across the entire ecosystem to ensure efforts build on each other and maximize limited resources. SEMA initiated its work with country governments from **Burkina Faso, Nigeria and Senegal**; with financial support from the Children's Investment Fund Foundation (**CIFF**), the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, and the French Ministry for Europe and Foreign Affairs (**MEAE**); and with strategic partnership from the United States Agency for International Development (**USAID**), the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office of the United Kingdom (**FCDO**), the United Nations Population Fund (**UNFPA**), and the Reproductive Health Supplies Coalition (**RHSC**).

SEMA's work complements the unique roles of other critical partner institutions that form the backbone of delivering on SRHR commitments, including UNFPA, RHSC, Family Planning 2030 (**FP2030**), the Global Financing Facility (**GFF**), and more.

## NEXT STEPS

SEMA envisions a world where markets are healthy, equitable and resilient enough to meet the needs of the communities they serve – so everyone can control their health and their futures. We look forward to deepening dialogue with interested country governments, technical partners, and donors to join hands together in pursuit of this goal.