

Frequently Asked Questions

Q: What is the Supply Chain Management System (SCMS)?

A: SCMS delivers essential lifesaving medicines and products to HIV/AIDS programs around the world as part of the US President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief. Through the active, hands-on involvement of 16 international team member organizations, SCMS works to strengthen supply chains to enable the scale-up of HIV/AIDS care and treatment in developing countries.

As part of our mission, SCMS:

- operates a safe, secure, and reliable supply chain to buy and distribute high-quality, low-cost essential medicines, HIV test kits, laboratory supplies and other products;
- strengthens the capacity of national supply chains to ensure long-term sustainability; and
- supports supply chain collaboration and information-sharing among global and local partners in the HIV/AIDS community.

Q: Why was SCMS created?

A: Comprehensive HIV/AIDS programs require a continuous flow of essential medicines and other products. SCMS was created to improve existing supply chains to deliver an uninterrupted, cost-effective supply of high-quality medicines and products to meet the needs of the rapid and unprecedented scale-up of AIDS treatment. SCMS focuses on better forecasting to determine what medicines are needed, aggregating demand and negotiating better prices, and improving systems for storage, transport and distribution. The SCMS supply chain is transparent, accountable and tailored to specific country needs.

Q: Who are the SCMS team member organizations?

A: The SCMS project team mirrors the organizations needed for a coordinated response to the AIDS pandemic and includes nonprofit organizations, commercial private sector corporations, academic institutions and faith-based organizations.

SCMS team members include:

- Affordable Medicines for Africa
- AMFA Foundation
- Booz Allen Hamilton
- Crown Agents Consultancy, Inc.
- The Fuel Logistics Group
- IDA Solutions
- JSI Research & Training Institute, Inc.
- Management Sciences for Health
- The Manoff Group

SCMS Project Team

- MAP International
- North-West University
- Northrop Grumman
- PATH
- UPS Supply Chain Solutions
- Voxiva
- 3i Infotech

Q: Where does SCMS work?

A: Since SCMS was established in late 2005 as part of the US President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief, we have begun delivering HIV/AIDS commodities and are helping to strengthen supply chains in more than 20 countries throughout the developing world. We have established offices in 17 countries, including: Botswana, Côte d’Ivoire, Ethiopia, Guyana, Haiti, Mozambique, Namibia, Nigeria, Rwanda, South Africa, Switzerland, Tanzania, Uganda, United States, Vietnam, Zambia and Zimbabwe.

Q: Does SCMS collaborate with existing mechanisms for procuring and delivering HIV/AIDS medicines and products?

A: SCMS is not intended to operate independently of existing supply chain systems. With the unprecedented scale-up of HIV/AIDS care and treatment, new partnerships and collaborations across industries and geographical boundaries are required. SCMS currently works with and coordinates its efforts with host-country partners, international donor organizations, US government agencies, nongovernmental organizations and faith-based organizations. SCMS constantly seeks new ways to collaborate to strengthen existing supply chains and to share lessons learned. We are committed to ensuring that sustainable systems are left in place and providing medicines to the people who need them most.

Q: Can SCMS provide technical assistance to in-country programs to strengthen their supply chains?

A: Yes. SCMS provides in-country support to national HIV/AIDS programs to strengthen their supply chains, including such areas as demand planning, procurement, freight forwarding, warehousing and inventory management, delivery, logistics management information systems and quality assurance.

Q: What kinds of products can SCMS purchase?

A: SCMS can purchase any of the hundreds of products needed for a comprehensive HIV/ AIDS care and treatment program, including:

- antiretroviral drugs
- drugs to treat opportunistic infections such as tuberculosis
- drugs and supplies for palliative and home-based care
- quality laboratory materials and equipment such as rapid test kits and reagents
- vehicles to deliver commodities.

Visit our online e-catalog for an up-to-date list of products and prices.

Q: Can SCMS purchase generic medicines?

A: Yes. SCMS can purchase any antiretrovirals (ARVs) that are approved or tentatively approved under the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) fast-track approval mechanism. Other pharmaceutical products must be registered with the FDA or with an equivalent stringent regulatory authority. For more information, visit the e-catalog on our website.

Q: Is SCMS restricted to buying only US-manufactured medicines?

A: No. SCMS buys high-quality products from reliable manufacturers in many countries. Non-US manufacturers of generic versions of ARVs who have received fast-track FDA approval are eligible to provide ARVs. SCMS procures drugs and commodities other than ARVs from both US and international sources that meet PEPFAR quality requirements of an equivalent standard to those required by FDA or other stringent regulatory authorities.

Q: How does SCMS handle procurements?

A: SCMS operates a competitive and transparent procurement system. By leveraging purchase volumes across many recipients, negotiating long-term contracts with our suppliers, and buying generic ARVs and other pharmaceuticals whenever possible, we work to achieve the lowest possible cost for the products we buy. We publish and maintain an e-catalog of all the products available for purchase through SCMS.

Q: How does SCMS ensure the quality of the medicines and other products it procures or distributes?

A: SCMS works with USAID, CDC and other US government stakeholders on the qualification of vendors and the organizations that offer to donate pharmaceuticals and other products. We test all products for compliance with specifications and can help host-country organizations create standards and systems that help ensure quality in-country.

Q: How can I order through SCMS?

A: The e-catalog on our website provides a list of available products, and for many items, price estimates. Contact us if your organization is interested in procuring these or other products through SCMS. Please provide your requirements, e.g., products needed, estimated quantities, funding source and desired delivery time. A representative will contact you to determine how SCMS can best meet your needs.

Q: How can a manufacturer supply products through SCMS?

A: Our e-catalog provides a list of medicines and products that SCMS currently offers. If your company supplies items on this list, or similar products that may be used in HIV/AIDS programs, please monitor the Request for Proposals page on our website for contract opportunities. You may also send details of your product list to the procurement unit at scmsinfo@pfscm.org. Our procurement process adheres to US federal acquisition regulations.

Q: Are PEPFAR-funded programs required to use SCMS for the procurement of needed medicines and products?

A: No. Participation is voluntary and PEPFAR-funded programs can select services based on the needs of the country and program. In countries where existing supply chains are working well, SCMS is available as an option to fill in gaps, or to help further strengthen supply chain processes.

Q: Is SCMS restricted to work with only PEPFAR-funded programs?

A: SCMS was established to serve PEPFAR programs; however the Partnership for Supply Chain Management is able to work with programs funded by other donors or governments.

Q: Can SCMS provide medication and services to humanitarian organizations providing care and treatment for HIV/AIDS patients and their families?

A: Yes. SCMS is pleased to discuss procurement needs subject to the availability of funding.

For more information:

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