

## SIMS 4.2 AND ALTERNATIVE QA/CQI PROGRAMS FOR FY23 FAQ

### A. SELECTING A QA METHOD FOR PEPFAR-SUPPORTED SITES

#### **Q1A: Can OUs decide in FY23 if they will use SIMS Tools or another approach for their QA activities?**

For FY23 (Oct 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022) OUs will be able to decide if they will use SIMS 4.2 Tools and Guidance or an alternative QA approach to fulfill Minimum Program Requirement (MPR) #11. All OUs will however be required to report results of site assessments using SIMS 4.2 for Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) designated CEEs. OUs do not need to request a waiver from SGAC to opt out of SIMS if they fulfill MPR #11 using another method.

- **MPR 11:** *OUs assure program and site standards, including infection prevention & control interventions and site safety standards, are met by integrating effective Quality Assurance and Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) practices into site and program management. QA/CQI is supported by IP work plan, Agency agreements and National policy*

#### **Q2A. If the decision is made by an OU to opt out of SIMS, should all the Agencies in this OU use the same alternative tool/process?**

Agencies can use alternative tools and processes in FY23. To avoid any potential confusion, we recommend that agencies operating at the same sites ensure that they are coordinating their QA assessment and reporting processes. Agencies using different QA approaches should coordinate their assessment processes to avoid confusion when reporting results at the OU level. QA approaches should be aligned with the national (MOH) own QA to avoid creating parallel QA systems.

#### **Q3A: Do we need to notify what the OU/Agency decision will be in FY23, even if our OU has an existing waiver from SGAC?**

OUs do not need to request a waiver from SGAC to stop using SIMS for QA. OUs, nevertheless, should ensure they have the tools and guidance in place to assure program and site standards, including Infection Prevention & Control interventions and site safety standards, are met at PEPFAR-supported sites (MPR #11). OU/Agencies should notify SGAC of their intended approach for QA during FY23. Please send an email to [SGAC\\_SIMS@State.gov](mailto:SGAC_SIMS@State.gov) and copy Agency HQ SIMS Leads by **November 15, 2022**, with the following information:

- a) Country and Name of the QA program
- b) Agency, POC name and contact information
- c) How long the planned QA program has been in use
- d) Description of the program (2-3 lines if not using SIMS)

## B. REPORTING QA DATA FOR PEPFAR SUPPORTED SITES

**Q1B. Do we need to report on SIMS data if our OU will be using SIMS approach?** Yes. SIMS data will continue to be managed and displayed at the Agency level to support QA activities and to drive quality improvement at the site level. If your OU/agency has decided to continue using SIMS tools for QA, follow the SIMS 4.2 guidelines and continue reporting on your findings to your respective agency using existing agency systems and processes. SIMS data will however not be reported to SGAC with the current exception of IPC SIMS Data.

**Q2B. If we are not using SIMS approach for QA, do we still need to report our QA data?** Yes. OUs/agencies using a comparable QA approach still will report their QA data to their agency. Agencies should be able to present their results, use of QA data to identify gaps in compliance with standards and CQI activities conducted for improvement.

**Q3B. Do all OUs need to report SIMS data on Infection Prevention & Control (IPC), including those not using the SIMS tool for QA in FY23?** Yes. S/GAC is requiring IPC data to be reported starting in FY23. Eight SIMS 4.2 Core Essential Elements (CEEs) have been identified in the SIMS 4.2 Master Site CEE Library. SIMS 4.2 CEEs and guidance have been reviewed and cleared by the interagency SIMS STTT, Deputy Principals, and SGAC leadership. OUs with a comparable QA process and tools should assess these 8 IPC CEEs as described in the SIMS 4.2 tool to be able to report in a standardized manner to SGAC. CEE for Lab Biosafety would be assessed only in those sites whose laboratory is supported by PEPFAR:

- TB Infection Control (S\_01\_06)
- Waste management (S\_01\_07)
- Injection Safety (S\_01\_08)
- Lab Biosafety (S\_10\_02)
- Infection Prevention and Control Program(S\_01\_27). *NEW*
- Environmental Cleaning Procedures (S\_01\_28). *NEW*
- Availability of Personal Protective Equipment (S\_01\_29). *NEW*
- Decontamination and Reprocessing of Medical Devices (S\_01\_30). *NEW*

**Q4B. How many sites need to be assessed for IPC standards?** All OUs will be required to report on IPC standards using the 8 IPC SIMS CEEs. The interagency IPC STTT will determine the site sample methodology and sampling timeframe for IPC assessments.

**Q5B. What type of assessment will be used for IPC?** The SIMS 4.2 update includes a new type of assessment called the Concentrated Assessment. The SIMS 4.2 Concentrated assessment provides greater flexibility in CEE selection allowing for selection of specific CEEs of interest. IPC CEEs can be assessed remotely without the need for USG or IP staff to be present at the site during the assessment.

**Q6B. What happens after a SIMS IPC assessment?** IPC CEEs that score below standards (red/yellow scores) in the assessment will be included in an action plan for improvement with specific remediation actions and timelines. Low scoring CEEs will be re-evaluated within 6 months of the initial assessment.

**Q7B. Will SIMS IPC data be available in Panorama?** Yes. SIMS 4.2 IPC CEEs need to be reported to S/GAC in FY23. A new IPC dossier in Panorama will provide analysis and visualization of IPC assessment data from PEPFAR supported sites.