

# Promoting the Quality of Medicines Plus (PQM+)



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## Spotlight

### Bangladesh-based manufacturer achieves WHO prequalification for NTD treatment



In April, the World Health Organization (WHO) Prequalification Unit approved azithromycin 500mg film-coated tablets manufactured by Bangladesh-based Advancing Chemical Industries HealthCare Limited (ACI). PQM+, funded by

USAID, supported ACI with technical assistance throughout the process of seeking WHO prequalification. Azithromycin is recommended for treatment and mass distribution to control trachoma, a condition that is considered a neglected tropical disease (NTD). Trachoma is the leading infectious cause of blindness globally and a public health threat across Africa, Latin America, Asia, Australia, and the Middle East. This achievement indicates that ACI's azithromycin meets acceptable standards of quality, safety, and efficacy, making it eligible for procurement by the United Nations and donor organizations.

[Learn more](#)



## Global Highlights

### USAID launches the Diversifying Asia's Pharmaceutical Supply Chain project

USAID in May announced a new project, Diversifying Asia's Pharmaceutical Supply Chain, which will provide USD \$5 million to sustainably produce, regulate, and export quality-assured medical products and active pharmaceutical ingredients (APIs) in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The two-year project will leverage two important, but distinct, USAID programs – PQM+ and the International Development Group-led Indo-Pacific Opportunity Program (IPOP) – that will implement the project, combining unique expertise and capabilities to expand the pharmaceutical industry in Central Asia. The initiative aims to strengthen capacity in the areas of manufacturing, governance, regulatory systems, procurement, technology, and workforce development to improve the overall competitiveness of the pharmaceutical sector in the two countries, reducing reliance on imported medical products and minimizing supply chain disruptions.



[Learn more](#)

### Transforming Nigeria's informal pharmacies

For many residents of poor, rural communities, informal pharmacies called patent and proprietary medicine vendors (PPMVs) are the main point of access to medical





products and health care in Nigeria. However, the government struggles to provide proper regulatory oversight and support due to insufficient funding, staffing, and capacity to oversee all drug outlets in the country, including more than 200,000 PPMVs. The USAID-funded PQM+ program is working with the relevant government agency (the Pharmacy Council of Nigeria [PCN]), the USAID Mission in Nigeria, and other partners to change this.

PQM+ helped PCN inspect, license, and educate thousands of PPMVs to ensure the quality of the medicines they sell. The program also helped increase the number of registered PPMVs, quality of inspections, and knowledge of good drug management. These efforts have strengthened quality assurance systems in Nigeria across the local, state, and national levels, including in areas where the most marginalized populations turn to the PPMVs for health needs.

[Read the story](#)



### **Increasing demand for quality-assured health products at the last mile**

Supply-side interventions are often not enough to comprehensively improve medical product quality in low- and medium-income countries (LMICs). Educating consumers about substandard and falsified (SF) medicines and training them to identify quality medical products pushes health systems to ensure that only quality products reach patients, thereby shifting procurement and consumption behaviors.

PQM+ partnered with the USAID-



### **PQM+ conducts a rapid assessment of regulation and supply of priority MNCH medical devices in Africa and Asia**

Certain medical devices are essential for quality care of mothers and children, yet information regarding regulation, quality assurance (QA), and supply of these devices is scarce. USAID-funded PQM+ conducted a rapid assessment, gathering information on regulatory and QA systems governing medical devices, as well as the availability and use of some maternal, newborn, and child health (MNCH)

funded Breakthrough ACTION program to review examples of interventions, such as mass media campaigns directed at consumer behavior and preferences, that are designed to increase consumer demand for quality-assured health products. The exercise examined peer-reviewed articles, grey literature, and policy and advocacy documents to identify successful components of demand generation interventions. Read the fact sheet to learn about the findings.

[Read the fact sheet](#)

devices in health facilities across five countries: Bangladesh, Ethiopia, Ghana, Nepal, and Senegal. Read the fact sheet linked below to learn about the key findings and recommendations of the assessment.

[Read the fact sheet](#)



## News

### USP hosts the 2024 PQM+ global retreat

The USAID-funded PQM+ program wrapped up its five-day global retreat at USP's headquarters in Rockville, Maryland, at the end of June. More than 60 staff gathered from 16 countries to learn from the program's achievements thus far and chart the way forward into the last year of the program's implementation.



### Technical tools available on the PQM+ website

Do you work for a medicines regulator, quality control laboratory, or medical product manufacturer? Don't forget to check out the technical tools available to you from the PQM+ program. We offer free guidance documents, technical briefs, and job aids that can assist in assuring the quality of medical products from vaccines to NTD, MNCH, tuberculosis (TB), and malaria medicines.

[Technical tools](#)

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