VSAC Code System Inclusion Evaluation Criteria and Background Questions

Version 1.1

To consider a new code system (also known as source vocabulary, or terminology) for inclusion into the Value Set Authority Center (VSAC), the National Library of Medicine (NLM) needs to understand details about your code system and why you would like NLM to add your code system to the VSAC. Answering the questions below will provide NLM with a better understanding of your code system and if it meets the criteria for inclusion. Please provide as much information as possible to assist NLM in making an informed decision regarding the inclusion of your code system into the VSAC. NLM reserves the right to change these questions and criteria at any time.

Submit the completed document to [NLM Customer Support](https://support.nlm.nih.gov/).

Code System Name:

Code System Authority or Sponsoring Organization:

Code System Point of Contact:

Brief Code System Description:

# Inclusion Evaluation Criteria

## Value to VSAC

NLM wants to understand the use cases for your Code System and its user communities.

* What are the use cases for your code system?
  + Which user communities will the code system serve?
* How will adding your code system to the VSAC contribute to interoperability among the currently available electronic resources?
  + For example, will the addition of your code system help link currently available electronic resources, such as patient records, journals, texts, etc.?
* Is there significant overlap between your code system and other VSAC code systems?
  + Will your code system bring new or unique content to the VSAC?
* In addition to VSAC, NLM maintains the Unified Medical Language System (UMLS). The UMLS is a large biomedical thesaurus with nearly 200 different vocabularies and is updated twice a year. Many code systems included in VSAC are also included in the UMLS.
  + Considering the content of your vocabulary and its update frequency, would your vocabulary be a better fit in the UMLS?
  + Why should your vocabulary be included in VSAC instead of in the UMLS?
* Is your code system required by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid (CMS) electronic Clinical Quality Measure (eCQM) program?
* Is your code system required by the HL7 Consolidated Clinical Document Architecture (C-CDA) program?
* Is your code system critical for representing an emergent health situation, for example, the COVID-19 pandemic?

## Code System Content

NLM wants to understand your code system content, including the organizational principles and editorial guidelines used to create your code system.

* Are thesaurus characteristics and principles used to create your code system?
  + Is it concept-oriented (i.e., organized by meaning)?
  + Are there preferred terms or synonyms?
  + Do you have codes/identifiers associated with names?
  + Is there a principled hierarchy?
  + Do explicitly defined relationships exist between the terms, such as broader than/narrower than relationships?
  + Are there definitions or other associated information?
  + Are there mappings or connections to other vocabularies?
* Are the meanings of your terms clearly distinct when seen alone, rather than in the associated context?
  + Will there be many cases where the ‘face’ meaning of a term is different from the meaning of the same term in other areas of biomedicine?
* Do you follow other code systems’ content?
* What parts of your code system would NLM be permitted to include in the VSAC?

# Technical Process and Development

NLM wants to understand the technical aspects of your code system.

* Is the code system available in a well-structured, computable electronic format?  
  (NLM cannot accept printed publications, nor convert them.)
  + What is the URL for your code system?
  + What is the official name for your code system?
  + What is the short name, or abbreviation, of your code system?
  + What is the [HL7-registered object identifier (OID)](https://www.hl7.org/oid/) for your code system?
  + What is the official canonical URL (for [HL7 FHIR](https://www.hl7.org/fhir/terminologies-systems.html)) for your code system?
  + What is the format?
  + What is the data size of your code system?
  + How many terms are in your code system?
  + Is a sample set of files and documentation available?
  + Is there a technical contact person for questions about the files?
  + What is the release frequency, or the update frequency, of your code system?
  + Describe your standard for naming your code system versions:
* Will you provide your code system data files to NLM free of charge?
  + If yes, how will you provide your data files to NLM?
  + Will there be an automated download capability?

# Background Questions

NLM wants to understand additional details about your code system.

* Is your code system actively maintained?  
  (The VSAC will only accept code systems that are actively maintained.)
  + What type of ongoing support does your code system receive to ensure that it will remain a viable asset to the VSAC?
  + Is your code system and its updates officially sponsored?
  + If so, please describe by whom and how they would be sponsored?
* How often do you update your code system content?
  + What is your update model?
* Who is the responsible party or parties for your code system?
  + Who is the code system author?
  + Who creates your code system?
  + Who owns the code system?
* Do you have a mechanism to maintain the integrity of your code system?
  + How do you maintain the integrity of your code system?
* Is there a point of contact if there are content related questions?
* Is there a mechanism in place to provide timely feedback or resolution to content-related questions?
* Do you have an online browsing resource that NLM staff can use to access your code system data or additional data about the information in your code system?

# Terms of Agreement

Code systems included in the VSAC follow the terms of the UMLS Metathesaurus License Agreement. Please examine the [UMLS Metathesaurus License Agreement](https://www.nlm.nih.gov/research/umls/knowledge_sources/metathesaurus/release/license_agreement.html) and resolve any questions about copyright ownership. Source vocabularies must accept the UMLS Metathesaurus License Agreement in order to be included in the VSAC.

* According to Appendix 1 and section 12 of the UMLS Metathesaurus License Agreement (and outlined on the [License Category Help](https://uts.nlm.nih.gov/uts/license/license-category-help.html)page), what have you determined your license restriction level to be (0, 1, 2, 3, or 4)?
* Would you allow a subset of your code system data to be published in the VSAC at a lower restriction level?
* Would you allow your code system to be exposed to users through open web interfaces and tools and/or open downloads and APls without user authentication?