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Expanding Effective Contraceptive Options



Expanding Effective Contraceptive Options (EECO)

More than 214 million women in developing regions have unmet needs for modern family planning¹, and an increasing percentage of these women cite method-related reasons for non-use², underscoring the need for greater method choice. The EECO project is designed to support the introduction of new contraceptive methods that will address method-related reasons for non-use and better meet the reproductive health needs of women and girls.

The EECO program's goal is to produce roadmaps for introducing and creating demand for new, woman-initiated family planning methods. Pilots in Zambia, Malawi, Madagascar, and Niger will provide women with greater choice to prevent unplanned pregnancy, through access to new product lines, including new barrier methods, a hormone-releasing intrauterine system, and an intra-vaginal ring (IVR). The products include the *SILCS* diaphragm and the *Woman's Condom* developed by PATH; *Progering*, a progesterone contraceptive vaginal ring developed by the Population Council; and a levonorgestrel-releasing intrauterine system developed by Medicines360.

The EECO Team

WCG leads the team and bridges the private sector and non-profit worlds, linking upstream product developers/suppliers and downstream marketing and distribution partners. WCG leads regulatory and quality assurance efforts, registers products, and pilots highly intensive medical detailing with providers.

Population Services International (PSI), the social marketing partner, works through existing sexual and reproductive health networks to market and distribute products.

Every1Mobile (E1M), the mobile health partner, creates mobile communities and uses mobile social networking to increase awareness about the methods.

International Center for Research on Women (ICRW), the research and gender partner, conducts consumer and provider research, focusing on product acceptability and contraceptive decision-making.

Evoform Biosciences, the biotechnology partner, develops products that are woman initiated, non-invasive, and rapidly reversible.



¹ Guttmacher Institute, Adding It Up: The Costs and Benefits of Investing in Sexual and Reproductive Health 2017, fact sheet, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2017, <https://www.guttmacher.org/fact-sheet/adding-it-up-contraception-mnh-2017>.

² Hussain R et al., Unmet Need for Contraception in Developing Countries: Examining Women's Reasons for Not Using a Method, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2016, <http://www.guttmacher.org/report/unmet-need-for-contraception-in-developing-countries>.



International Center for Research on Women

where courage and science meet

Strategic Approach

Of the women who cite method-related reasons for non-use of modern contraceptives, 26% want methods that do not cause side effects, 24% need methods appropriate for infrequent sex, 20% need methods suitable to use while breastfeeding, and 23% need discreet methods.³ EECO bridges these gaps in family planning programming through the introduction of methods that address these common reasons for non-use. Each product has important benefits; some are non-hormonal, others are long-acting and reversible, and others are discreet and used only on demand. Several of the products are woman-initiated, which helps to overcome barriers such as lack of access to health care providers or provider biases.

EECO takes a product-agnostic approach and relies on formative research and follow-up with providers and consumers to refine market segmentation strategies for each product, and to help ensure that products are well suited to local women's needs. As part of the pilot phase, the project partners identify each product's most likely users, its perceived positive and negative traits, the distribution and communication channels that have the most appeal for each method, and the type of training and advocacy required for each. These results can then be used to bring products to national scale and to introduce these or other new products in additional countries.

The Methods

Woman's Condom

A new type of female condom, offering non-hormonal protection against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including HIV and Human Papillomavirus (HPV). Developed by **PATH**, the product's unique design features allow for easy insertion and removal, a secure fit and good sensation. It has the European CE mark, UNFPA/WHO prequalification, Shanghai Food and Drug Administration Approval, and the South African Bureau of Standards certification mark.

SILCS Diaphragm

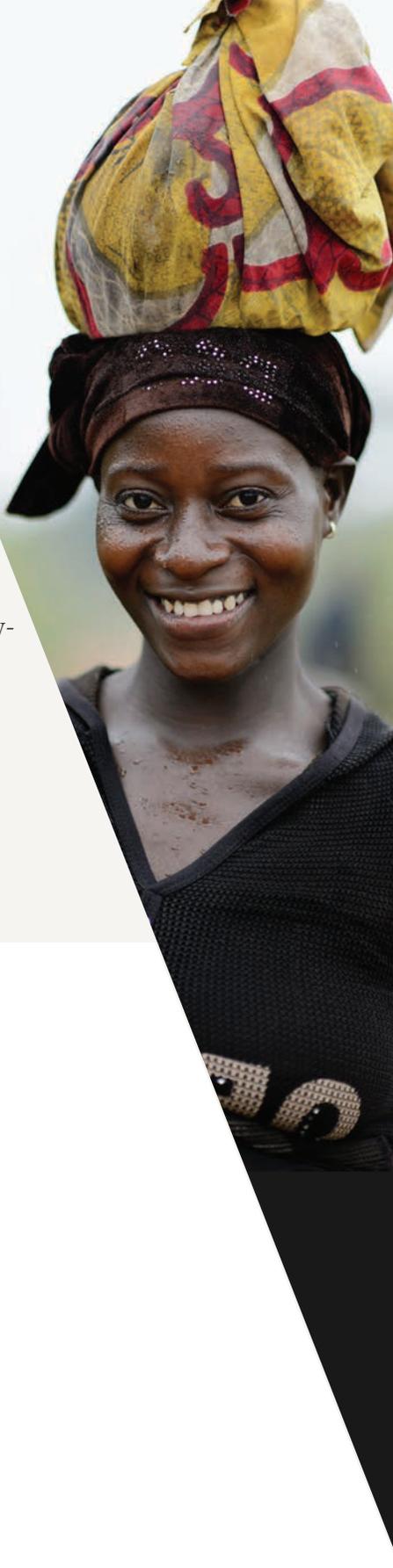
A non-hormonal, discreet, pericoital, barrier method developed by **PATH**. Its one-size-fits-most design eliminates the need for a provider fitting, while other design features make it easy to insert, use and remove. It has the European CE mark, U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) approval, and is registered in 10 European countries.

Progering

A 3-month progesterone vaginal ring designed by **Population Council**. Easy to use and discreet, the ring can be used by breastfeed-ing women for up to 1-year, replacing it every 3 months. Clinical trials have established that it is highly effective and does not affect a woman's ability to produce breast milk, nor does it harm the breastfeeding infant. *Progering* is currently registered and commercially available in eight Latin American countries.

LNG IUS

A levonorgestrel (hormone) releasing intrauterine system, available through **Medicines360**. Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), the LNG IUS is inserted into the uterus by a provider, and is proven to be highly effective at preventing pregnancy for up to 3 years.



For more information about these products or the EECO project, please contact the Executive Director, Shannon Bledsoe, at WCG: SBledsoe@wgc.org

³ Hussain R et al., Unmet Need for Contraception in Developing Countries: Examining Women's Reasons for Not Using a Method, New York: Guttmacher Institute, 2016, <http://www.guttmacher.org/report/unmet-need-for-contraception-in-developing-countries>.