More than 214 million women in developing regions have an unmet need for modern family planning,¹ and an increasing percentage of these women cite method-related reasons for non-use,² underscoring the need for greater method choice. The Expanding Effective Contraceptive Options (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. In sub-Saharan Africa and Asia, EECO introduces promising contraceptive methods through pilot studies. Based on learning from these pilots, EECO produces roadmaps for introducing and creating demand for product lines that can fill gaps in the market for family planning.

THE EECO TEAM

**WCG Cares (WCG)** leads the team, bridging the private sector and non-profit worlds, and linking upstream product developers/suppliers and downstream marketing and distribution partners. WCG also leads regulatory and quality assurance efforts.

**Population Services International (PSI),** the social marketing and service delivery partner, works through existing healthcare and product distribution networks to promote and offer EECO products.

**Other global and local partners** work with the EECO team to register, procure, market and distribute products for each pilot introduction.

**THE EECO FOOTPRINT**

EECO pilots have been completed or are underway in the following countries:

- Benin
- India
- Madagascar
- Malawi
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Zambia
STRATEGIC APPROACH

EECO responds to women's method-related reasons for non-use of contraception. To that end, each product in the EECO portfolio has important benefits; some are non-hormonal, others are long-acting and reversible, and others are discreet and used only on demand. Several are self-use methods, which help to overcome barriers such as lack of access to healthcare providers or provider biases.

EECO takes a product-agnostic approach and relies on formative research with providers and consumers to refine market segmentation and communication strategies. As part of the planning phase, project partners identify each product's most likely users, its perceived positive and negative traits, the most relevant distribution and communication channels, and the type of training and advocacy required. The knowledge generated through EECO pilots can inform efforts to bring products to national scale and/or introduce them in additional countries.

THE METHODS

Woman's Condom: A new type of female condom, offering non-hormonal triple protection against unintended pregnancy and sexually transmitted infections, including HIV. Developed by PATH, the Woman's Condom's unique design features allow for easy insertion and removal, as well as a secure fit.

Caya Diaphragm: A non-hormonal, discreet, and reusable barrier method developed by PATH. Its one-size-fits-most design eliminates the need for a provider fitting, meaning this is the first diaphragm that can be offered at the community level. Additional design features make it easy to insert, use, and remove.

Progesterone Vaginal Ring: A vaginal ring for breastfeeding women that emits a low, steady dose of progesterone to enhance the benefits of lactational amenorrhea. Developed by Population Council, each ring can be used for three months continuously and four rings can be used for up to one year postpartum.

Levonorgestrel Intrauterine System (LNG-IUS): A highly effective, long acting and reversible method that leads to reduced monthly bleeding for many women. The device is inserted by a healthcare provider, and releases a slow, steady dose of the contraceptive hormone levonorgestrel directly into the uterus. Quality assured products offered through EECO include an unbranded LNG-IUS from the International Contraceptive Access Foundation and Medicines360’s brand AVIBELA. The method can be used for 3-5 years and can be removed by a provider at any time.

Dynamic Optimal Timing (Dot): A smartphone application that works as a fertility awareness-based method of pregnancy prevention. Developed by Cycle Technologies, Dot only requires the start date of a woman's menstrual cycle on a monthly basis to calculate which days are low, medium and high risk for pregnancy. Effective when clients use a barrier method or abstinence on days that Dot flags as fertile.


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