

FROM MARKET PREPARATION TO ACCELERATED IMPACT:

Spotlights & Achievements from Lenacapavir Early Adopters

Introduction

Early adopters are moving quickly to introduce lenacapavir (LEN). In this memo, we share key highlights and early insights from four key market movers: **Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia**. This memo focuses on early spotlights and achievements, with implications for scale: what we are learning about who is accessing LEN, how delivery is working in practice, and what early system-building efforts signal for broader rollout across sub-Saharan Africa and beyond.



Through rapid activation of flexible support from **Unitaid through Project PrEP, CHAI and Wits RHI** are working in partnership with countries to accelerate LEN. See [Project PrEP Brief](#) for more information.



Product Introduction Cascade

Key achievements from Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia are presented across the new product introduction cascade:



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

▶ See page 3



PROCUREMENT PLANNING & SUPPLY CHAIN

▶ See page 6



FORECASTING, QUANTIFICATION & BUDGETING

▶ See page 4



MONITORING & STRATEGIC INFORMATION

▶ See page 6



PRODUCT ADOPTION, DECISION-MAKING & POLICY

▶ See page 2



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

▶ See page 4



SERVICE DELIVERY & FACILITY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

▶ See page 7



REGULATORY

▶ See page 3



DEMAND GENERATION & COMMUNICATIONS

▶ See page 5



REGIONAL LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

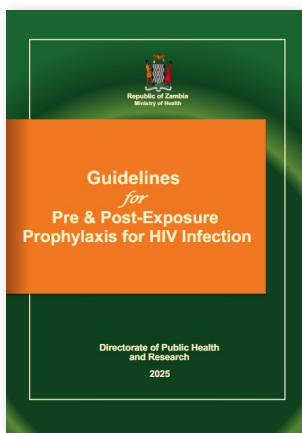
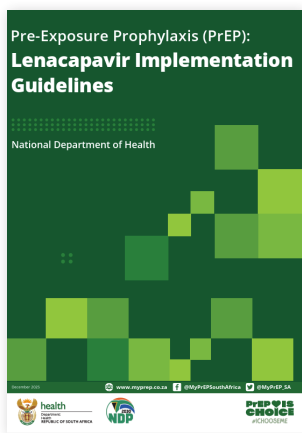
▶ See page 8



PRODUCT ADOPTION, DECISION-MAKING, & POLICY

LEN policy updates were developed in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia in record-time

The governments of Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia rapidly updated national policies for LEN, building on Unitaid-supported WHO guidelines, released in mid-2025. Key enablers for effective policy development included rapid formation of government-led LEN-focused sub-committees, high-level political support, and community participation and consultation.



Guidelines from South Africa and Zambia

LOOKING AHEAD:



Some countries leveraged mechanisms for rapid, interim guideline updates where full national guideline revisions were not feasible. For example, Nigeria developed a “rapid advice” to support LEN implementation. Over the next year, CHAI and Wits RHI will be working with governments to ensure integration of LEN in all appropriate policy documents and plans, including national strategic plans and broader health sector guidance documents.

Kenya launched LEN in February 2026, and quickly emerged as a leader in the region with over 5K initiations by the end of April 2026

What did it take to go from preparation to launch?

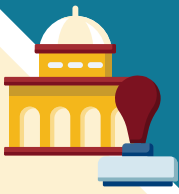
- ▶ In early 2026, Kenya selected 15 highest burden counties for the first phase of rollout using epidemiological analysis to enable an evidence-based prioritization process.
- ▶ Within each county, 10 facilities were selected to implement LEN. This includes a diverse set of facilities reaching key populations (sex workers, men who have sex with men, people who inject drugs, and transgender people), adolescents and young people, and pregnant and breastfeeding women.
- ▶ NASCOP conducted baseline site assessments, is developing training and implementation materials, and is training providers across all 15 counties.
- ▶ A communications sub-committee to create demand generation materials and prepare the media for launch was established. Following national launch in Nairobi, county officials also planned county-level launch events, mobilizing awareness through local media events and community engagement.
- ▶ With over 58,000 LEN initiations planned in 2026 across 150 facilities, continued focus on rigorous stock management with analysis of consumption data to avoid stockouts will be critical.



The first LEN initiator in Kenya

“Lenacapavir represents a paradigm shift ... offering a long-acting injectable option administered only twice a year to address adherence challenges and support sustained protection.”

— CABINET SECRETARY, HON ADAN DUALE



REGULATORY

Regulatory approvals secured at unprecedented speed, outpacing even emergency-era timelines

Coordination with national stakeholders and regulatory agencies has secured the prioritization required to unlock accelerated review timelines.

- ▶ **South Africa:** South African Health Products Regulatory Authority (SAHPRA) approval in record-time, 26 days shorter than the accelerated precedent set by COVID-19 vaccines during the national state of disaster.
- ▶ **Zambia:** Second LMIC to approve LEN after South Africa in November 2025, completing their regulatory processes in record time (12 days) through the World Health Organisation’s (WHO) Collaborative Registration Procedure (CRP), supported by Unitaid.
- ▶ **Kenya:** Approval from the Pharmacy and Poisons Board (PPB) in January 2026 after an accelerated review time of less than 3 months.
- ▶ **Nigeria:** National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) waiver secured to enable first shipment ahead of launch in March 2026.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Communities are at the center of PrEP choice and LEN introduction planning

- ▶ **Community-centered prevention:** Wits RHI and CHAI are supporting countries to strengthen community engagement approaches that place people and communities at the center of PrEP choice.
- ▶ **Experience from South Africa:** This work builds on Wits RHI’s experience in South Africa, where community engagement models have been developed to support informed prevention choices and promote non-stigmatizing communication.
- ▶ **Regional collaboration:** With Unitaid support, Wits RHI and CHAI are working with Ministries of Health and partners in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia to strengthen community engagement approaches for HIV prevention.
- ▶ **Practical tools for engagement:** The initiative has supported development of toolkits and resources—including dialogue guides, health talk cue cards, non-stigmatizing communication principles, and community-led monitoring tools—to enable informed, respectful conversations about PrEP choice.

"Science is the engine of success but communities are its conscience."

– STEVE LETSIKA, SANAC





FORECASTING, QUANTIFICATION & BUDGETING

In partnership with the Global Fund, Unitaid's investment supported critical evidence-based forecasting across early adopters

- ▶ Following Global Fund Grant Cycle 7 (GC7) eligibility notification beginning in June 2025, CHAI and Wits RHI rapidly activated support to develop three-year demand forecasts due to the Global Fund within one month. These forecasts informed Global Fund supply plans and ordering timelines for **Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia**.
- ▶ CHAI also supported **Kenya** and **Zambia** to revise forecasts based on additional LEN volumes from PEPFAR.

LOOKING AHEAD:



Based on confirmed volumes from PEPFAR and the Global Fund, countries expect to initiate >600K individuals on LEN across LMICs in 2026. CHAI and Wits RHI are working with countries to develop longer-term forecasts accounting for generic market entry in 2027. These forecasts will inform generic manufacturing and supply planning, Global Fund Grant Cycle 8 (GC8) planning, PEPFAR implementation planning, and domestic procurement.



STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENT

Nigeria's LEN training curriculum was developed through cross-sector engagement to address gaps and challenges in current PrEP programming

- ▶ Like many other LMICs, **Nigeria** faced significant disruptions to PrEP programming following funding cuts from the US government in 2025.
- ▶ LEN training has enabled Nigeria to re-activate PrEP service delivery, building capacity on LEN and broader PrEP implementation to increase PrEP choice.
- ▶ The integrated training approach has also included extensive community consultation and representation in curriculum development to ensure inclusion of person-centered, locally-acceptable language that resonates with end users.



LEN training in Akwa-Ibom state

LOOKING AHEAD:



LEN arrived in country on March 10, and through Unitaid support, CHAI and Wits RHI supported the government with a successful launch in late March.

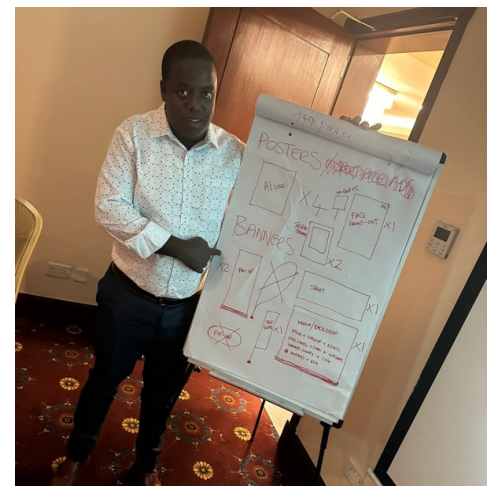
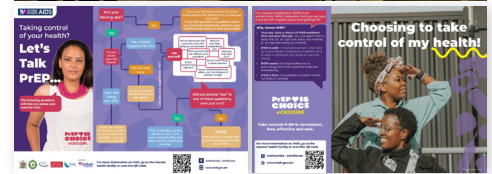


DEMAND GENERATION & COMMUNICATIONS

With strategic demand generation, LEN is expanding PrEP choice

Wits RHI, in collaboration with CHAI, is supporting Ministries of Health across Africa to strengthen strategic demand generation for the introduction of LEN as a new HIV prevention option within the PrEP choice landscape. With support from Unitaid, this work is helping countries prepare for innovative prevention tools while expanding meaningful PrEP choice. Engagements in **Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia** have supported national stakeholders to plan community-centered, empowering, and responsive introductions of new HIV prevention technologies.

- ▶ **Strategic engagement:** In Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia, Ministry of Health, implementing partners, and community representatives explored how LEN can be introduced within the broader PrEP choice landscape through participatory workshops and discussions on integrated demand generation strategies.
- ▶ **Communication readiness:** Rapid development of IEC materials and communication assets in Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, and Zambia introduced LEN clearly and positively as an additional HIV prevention option. These materials are publicly available and can be leveraged and adapted for other countries. In Kenya, the Ministry of Health, and the National AIDS and STI Control Program (NASCO) developed launch materials and IEC resources tailored to the realities, aspirations, and concerns of potential users.
- ▶ **Media readiness:** A media sensitization training package was developed to equip journalists and media representatives to report accurately and responsibly on LEN as a new HIV prevention option ahead of its launch.
- ▶ **National strategic planning:** In Nigeria, the Ministry of Health and the National AIDS, Viral Hepatitis and STIs Control Programme (NASCP) convened a three-day national workshop focused on demand generation and strategic planning for LEN introduction within the PrEP choice framework.
- ▶ **Innovative demand generation:** Workshops in Nigeria and Zambia enabled government and partners to explore people-centred approaches prioritising user preferences, emphasising positive, non-stigmatising communication and drawing on private-sector marketing lessons to inspire innovative strategies that expand interest in HIV prevention options.



LOOKING AHEAD:



Wits RHI and CHAI will continue to focus efforts on strengthening national capacity to design and implement demand generation strategies that go beyond awareness and instead support informed choice, trust in prevention services, and sustained engagement with PrEP options. Efforts are also underway to disseminate demand generation support more broadly, including via a virtual LEN learning clinic series.



Nigeria demand generation workshop



PROCUREMENT PLANNING & SUPPLY CHAIN

Zambia, the second LMIC to launch LEN, successfully moved up a second shipment to avoid stockouts in January 2026

- ▶ **Zambia** fully consumed their first shipment of 500 LEN doses by mid-January across initial launch sites (University Teaching Hospital and Chawama Hospital).
- ▶ Given the global mismatch between LEN supply and demand, active monitoring of stock has helped identify shortage risk early. The Ministry was able to successfully request Global Fund to adjust the supply plan and move up their second LEN shipment of 9,600 initiation packs and 4,200 continuation packs, which arrived at the end of January.
- ▶ Initiations are expected to continue to increase rapidly over the next several months as Zambia expands LEN implementation across all 10 provinces.

“Having sex with multiple partners always leaves me in fear. This [injection] is a relief.”

— PEACE LAWRENCE, 23-YEAR-OLD SEX WORKER



Zambia launch event on December 1, 2025 (World AIDS Day)

LOOKING AHEAD:

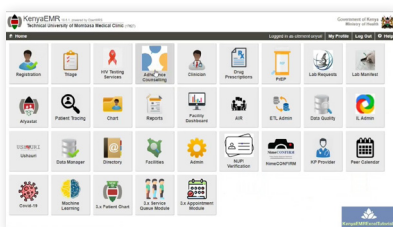


Zambia is in the process of **expanding LEN access from 3 launch sites to 159 sites in 2026 and then 500+ facilities nationwide thereafter**. This includes Unitaid-supported pilot sites that will receive additional LEN commodities outside the Global Fund and PEPFAR commitments. The Unitaid-supported pilot will investigate decentralized and community-based delivery approaches. In partnership with MoH and with support from Unitaid, CHAI will continue to monitor uptake and continuation trends by population, informing demand generation approaches and communication strategies for broader scale-up in consideration of current limitations in supply.



MONITORING & STRATEGIC INFORMATION

Kenya's electronic medical record (EMR) system offers a gold-standard model for program monitoring



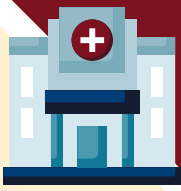
KenyaEMR screenshot

For the first phase of implementation, Kenya is prioritizing LEN rollout across sites using KenyaEMR coupled with robust M&E training.

LOOKING AHEAD:



Through the Unitaid investment, CHAI will be working closely with NASCOP to monitor uptake and use through KenyaEMR as implementation progresses. This will be complemented by in-person supportive supervision and mentorship visits.



SERVICE DELIVERY & FACILITY-LEVEL IMPLEMENTATION

With >1,800 providers trained and systems primed for delivery, South Africa is set to become the largest LEN program in the world once shipments arrive

South Africa has completed its product introduction preparation through an accelerated pathway:

- ▶ National guidelines, job aids, client-facing, and demand generation materials were rapidly developed and shared across the region for easy adaptation to country contexts
- ▶ Facility selection and baseline assessments completed by December 31, 2025
- ▶ >1,800 providers trained across 24 priority districts and an additional 300 M&E staff to ensure accurate data collection, monitoring, and reporting



LOOKING AHEAD:



Wits RHI and CHAI will continue to support MoH to optimize LEN delivery at facility and community level, including supporting provider mentoring and supervision, reviewing rollout strategies and approaches in reaching those most in need, and conducting refresher trainings for providers and implementing partners.

Early LEN rollout in Zambia shows integration into maternal health care is feasible and in high demand, redefining where and how injectable PrEP can reach women

How is Zambia reaching pregnant and breastfeeding women?



Zambia LEN poster

- ▶ Collaboration with communities to develop materials focused on LEN use during pregnancy and breastfeeding to build user and provider confidence
- ▶ Integration of focused material on HIV risk and use of LEN during pregnancy and breastfeeding within the national training curriculum on LEN
- ▶ Definition of clinical pathways that support efficient, convenient LEN uptake through integrated delivery channels

22% of female LEN clients in Zambia are pregnant or breastfeeding women

This challenges assumptions about who seeks injectable PrEP and signals that LEN can reach women at highest risk through existing maternal health touchpoints – without requiring additional visits.



Pharmacist offering LEN through maternal and child health care at Chawama Hospital

LOOKING AHEAD:



Unitaid-funded implementation science in Zambia implemented by the Ministry of Health/University Teaching Hospital is supporting community and decentralized delivery models to make LEN accessible beyond clinical settings. This is critical for reaching the diverse populations that are highly affected by HIV across the country and generating evidence to support scale-up in other countries.



REGIONAL LEARNING & KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

Country-specific engagement and robust technical expertise are facilitating learning to catalyze regional impact

Wits RHI and CHAI are leveraging **cross-country lessons** and Unitaid-supported implementation science to strengthen shared learning on LEN rollout.

- ▶ Through peer-to-peer knowledge exchange, Wits RHI and CHAI are supporting Ministries with rapid adoption of effective approaches, documentation of country case studies, and adaptation of tools and materials in real time to respond to emerging insights from early implementation of new prevention options.
- ▶ In **South Africa**, the Project PrEP LEN4PrEP study is already generating early insights on uptake, delivery, and provider training are already informing other countries, with Wits RHI supporting rapid translation of implementation learnings into national programmes.

LOOKING AHEAD:



Wits RHI and CHAI, with support of Unitaid, will host regional LEN learning exchanges, in collaboration with WHO, PSI, and other partners. These meetings will bring together Ministry representatives from early adopter countries to share cross-country learnings and unpack priority questions to accelerate LEN programmatic rollout.

There is a strong vision for regional learning exchange, enabling countries to share experiences, lessons, and innovations as they prepare communities for the introduction of new HIV prevention options and expand meaningful PrEP choice across the region.

