

Assessing the National Oral PrEP Implementation Plan Jan 2022 – Jan 2024

EVALUATION REPORT
APRIL 2024

Overview

The Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) through the National AIDS and STDs Control Programme (NASCP), in collaboration with stakeholders, developed the National Oral PrEP Implementation Plan to provide clear direction for integrating oral Pre-Exposure Prophylaxis (PrEP) into Nigeria's healthcare system. This aligned with Government of Nigeria (GoN) efforts to enhance HIV prevention among populations with a high likelihood of HIV acquisition. The plan spanned from January 2022 to January 2024 and outlined strategies for the nationwide rollout and expansion of oral PrEP, progressing from phased approaches to wider implementation.

The plan was structured around five objectives:

1. Utilize existing HIV management and coordination platforms to deliver PrEP interventions.
2. Build the capacity of providers at all levels to improve access to PrEP services.
3. Increase demand creation and uptake for oral PrEP services.
4. Ensure continuous availability of safe medicines and associated laboratory commodities for PrEP.
5. Integrate the generation, coordination, and implementation of strategic information for PrEP into the existing HIV information management system and research.

Purpose of assessment

The purpose of the evaluation was to assess the achievement of priority activities stipulated in the National Oral PrEP Implementation Plan (Jan 2022–Jan 2024) against the intended objectives. The findings of the assessment will support the development of the next iteration of the PrEP Implementation Plan.



Approach

The assessment was conducted by reviewing anticipated deliverables within each priority area as outlined in the budgeted tracker of the implementation plan. Nine (9) respondents across both government and implementing partner organizations provided responses and narrative context to activities listed within the priority areas. A scoring system was employed: each objective in the plan had sub-objectives with priority actions that needed to be undertaken for each objective to be achieved. For each priority area, questions assessing the completion of activities were asked and answered by the entity responsible for or had oversight over the activity. For each priority action, a response of "No," OR "Partially," OR "Yes" was assigned to questions related to activities carried out with each response carrying 0, 1, or 2 points, respectively. Final scores for each objective were presented as a percentage using Excel spreadsheets. An analysis report highlighting successes and limitations within activity priority areas was developed; the report added narrative context to scores and mapped future considerations for the next implementation plan. This analysis report was presented to the PrEP Sub Committee in PowerPoint format for validation and adoption.

Limitations

This approach was comprehensive, but not without minor limitations. Some stakeholders did not respond to NASCP's outreach regarding the evaluation questions. In addition, only objectives listed in the activity budget were considered for this evaluation. Objective 5 was mentioned in the implementation plan but was not captured in the activity budget; thus, we were unable to score it in the assessment.

Overview of Results

Objective 1: Utilize the existing HIV management and coordination platforms to deliver PrEP interventions	40%
Objective 2: Build capacity of providers at all levels to improve access to PrEP services	81%
Objective 3: Increase demand creation and uptake for oral PrEP services	75%
Objective 4: Ensure continuous availability of safe medicines and associated laboratory commodities for PrEP	75%

KEY:

When value is below 33%
When value is greater than or equal to 33% but less than 67%
When value is greater than or equal to 67%

Objective 1: Utilize existing HIV management and coordination platforms to deliver PrEP interventions.

Objective 1 included one sub-objective, three priority actions, and 10 subsequent activities. The activities were geared towards:

1. Strengthening coordination and managing structures for PrEP at National, State and LGA levels,
2. Mobilizing and tracking resources and
3. Creating an enabling policy environment to support PrEP implementation.

The assessment revealed that there is a structure for management and coordination of PrEP services at the national level, led by the FMOH-NASCP and National Agency for the Control of AIDS (NACA). With the support of the PrEP subcommittee, there is coordination that facilitates policy formulation, technical assistance, target setting, operational planning, monitoring, and evaluation (M&E). Fitting examples include the development of policy documents integrating PrEP into the HIV response, such as the oral PrEP Implementation Plan (Jan 2022- Jan 2024) and the integration of oral PrEP into the National Guidelines for HIV Prevention, Treatment, and Care (2020-2024; 2024-2028). However, there is currently no established mechanism for coordinating PrEP services at the state level, and there has been a lack of concerted efforts for advocacy and resource mobilization both nationally and at the state level.

Recommendations

There is room for improvements in aligning more closely with NACA to align coordination and the larger National Prevention Technical Working Group (NPTWG) as those meetings involve state actors. NASCP will need to intensify activities geared towards establishing the coordination mechanisms at the state level, working closely with the State AIDS and STDs Control Programme (SASCP) across the 36 states of the federation.

Objective 2: Build capacity of providers at all levels to improve access to PrEP services.

Objective 2 included three sub-objectives, four priority actions, and eight subsequent activities all geared towards capacity building for different cadres of the health workforce, strengthening PrEP Service delivery and commodity security. NASCP successfully developed the national oral PrEP training resource materials, including provider and trainee manuals and training slide decks, for standardized capacity building in service provision nationwide. A National Training of Trainers was conducted, and Partners supported the step-down training across donor-supported states in Nigeria accelerating nation-wide scale-up of oral PrEP in Nigeria. Monitoring and Supportive Supervisory Visits (MSSVs) for continuous quality improvement of PrEP service delivery were conducted in at least 13 states from 2021–2023 to facilities providing PrEP services. Site assessments were done using the National PrEP site monitoring checklist; these visits identified best practices and gaps in service provision of oral PrEP to be presented to PrEP service delivery partners at quarterly meetings for adoption and/or improvements. Due to funding constraints more facilities and states could not be visited, hence it was not always possible to get a holistic view of the national oral PrEP programming via these visits. There is an established mechanism to ensure PrEP commodity security through the national HIV Procurement and Supply Management (PSM); PrEP is quantified by the PSM as part of the overall HIV Prevention and Treatment supply chain system.

Recommendations

FMOH through NASCP has worked to provide the latest guidelines and update policies with the changing trends in prevention. As there is the intention to expand biomedical HIV prevention options in the coming year, it is important to keep relevant plans and policy documents up to date to include guidance for the implementation of these new options. With continued technical assistance from partners and stakeholders, national training resources need to include updates on PrEP service delivery as well as the provision of new PrEP options and choice counseling for all available PrEP options. Updates, refreshers, and re-orientation for National Master Trainers are needed as well as cascade trainings for health service providers.

Objective 3: Increase demand creation and uptake for oral PrEP services.

Objective 3 included five sub-objectives, five priority actions, and 22 subsequent activities to increase demand and uptake of oral PrEP. NACA and partners developed and disseminated the National PrEP communication strategy as well as other demand generation materials. There were also efforts at the national level to foster mass media collaboration by conducting media training for up to 40 participants. Radio jingles and promotional media messages have limited circulation in only locations of supported intervention. The reach of these campaigns has not been evaluated as circulation is mostly online. Print and mass media circulation is limited. The efforts to coordinate and engage with communities are coordinated at the national level; however, there are sporadic efforts taking place at the state-level where funding support allows implementing partners to conduct community mobilization around PrEP.

Recommendations

There is marked success in the development and production of relevant print, electronic, interpersonal communication (IPC), and social media materials. Still, there is a need for concerted efforts on national and state-level dissemination and roll out of the materials through the most appropriate channels. NACA and NASCP should collaboratively sustain the practice of co-creating demand-generation material with the target audience.

Objective 4: Ensure continuous availability of safe medicines and associated laboratory commodities for PrEP.

Objective 4 included one sub-objective, two priority actions, and 8 subsequent activities to ensure continuous availability of PrEP and associated laboratory commodities through national and sub-national target setting. NASCP led the national target-setting effort for oral PrEP utilizing the PrEP-it tool¹ to finalize the national implementation plan. The PrEP-it tool is vital for strategic planning, enabling the establishment of national and subnational targets throughout the lifespan of an implementation plan. Additionally, it ensures the ongoing availability and sustainability of PrEP products. NASCP also monitored implementation by conducting biannual data quality assessments (DQAs); however, no harmonized report on the DQA exercises was produced by NASCP.

¹¹ PrEP-it is a web-based tool that helps users set targets, estimate costs and impact associated with targets, identify priority areas for PrEP, and forecast needed commodities.

Recommendations

It is imperative to ensure PrEP commodity security by sustaining target setting, forecasting and quantification, geographic prioritization, supply chain, and other logistical considerations. PrEP-it can also be expanded to new PrEP options building on existing expertise. The new PrEP methods, long-acting injectable cabotegravir (CAB PrEP) and potentially the dapivirine vaginal ring (PrEP ring), will need to be integrated into the existing supply chain and pharmacovigilance systems for ARVs. With guidance from the PSM, PrEP consumption data and other parameters can be used to inform quantification and guide the supply and distribution chain for all PrEP drugs, as well as other associated commodities such as laboratory tests, needles, syringes, etc. In developing the next iteration of the PrEP implementation plan, NASCP can determine the importance of sustaining DQA exercises if the reports are not useful for policy and/or programming.

Conclusion

The National Oral PrEP Implementation Plan, spanning from January 2022 to January 2024, has been a critical tool for guiding oral PrEP Implementation in Nigeria. This evaluation reveals significant strides made in expanding access to oral PrEP across diverse populations through detailing strategies for coordination, capacity strengthening, demand generation, supply chain and strategic information. Evidence of the laudable gains yielded is the nation-wide scale-up of oral PrEP. Whilst successes are noted in the 2-year period, some areas where improvements can be made have been highlighted. These insights are useful as NASCP begins the development of a new 4-year (2024 – 2028) strategic plan that will encompass new PrEP options including CAB PrEP.