



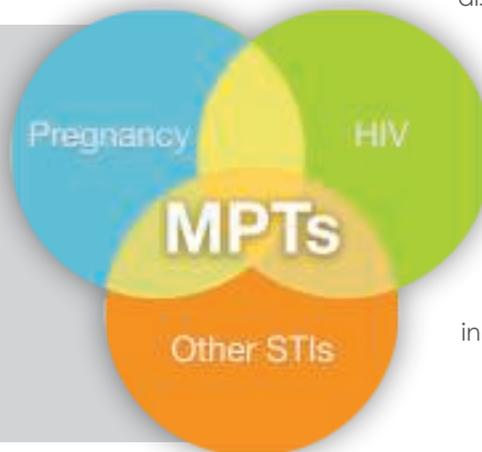
Background

Despite advances in global health, women still bear significant burdens from HIV, other sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and unintended pregnancy, which limit their physical, economic, and social well-being. Moreover, women at greatest risk of unintended pregnancy are often the ones at most risk of HIV and other STIs. In 2009, international experts involved in family planning and prevention of HIV and other STIs met and discussed how these fields could be better linked to address women's sexual and reproductive health (SRH) needs. As a result of this meeting, the Initiative for Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (IMPT) was born, with the goal of advancing the development of effective, acceptable, and affordable technologies to address the multiple reproductive health risks women face.

Since the launch of the IMPT, a coordinated effort has evolved to prioritize MPT product development; advocate for the research, regulatory strategies, and systems strengthening required to deliver this new generation of products; and build funding support to meet these needs. The IMPT Secretariat provides leadership to the IMPT, catalyzing advancements in MPT science and supporting product development and investment decisions. The IMPT has helped the MPT field grow from an idea in 2009 into a suite of products that have the potential to improve women's reproductive health. As the product neutral backbone of the MPT field, the IMPT Secretariat has created opportunities for supporting agencies (i.e., funders), researchers, advocates, and product developers to share information, discuss challenges, and agree on priorities

for the field, ensuring that stakeholders have a coordinated strategy and that best practices from HIV, STI, and contraceptive research are incorporated into the product development process. MPT research has grown into an exciting field, with close to two dozen products in development, nearly a dozen in clinical studies, and partners from 15 countries.

Multipurpose Prevention Technologies (MPTs) – products designed to deliver protection against HIV, other STIs, and unintended pregnancy in varied combinations – have evolved into an exciting field of research that holds great promise for improving SRH. Developing and evaluating MPTs is complex, and raises questions and challenges in the areas of product development, research and testing, and regulatory approval.



Technical Tools and Consultations

Since MPTs are a new area of product development and research, the IMPT Secretariat and its partners **developed presentations, resource tools, and fact sheets that helped** raise awareness about MPTs, and outlined the value proposition for these products. IMPT Secretariat staff and partners gave presentations at nearly 40 conferences and meetings since 2009, with the aim of raising awareness and encouraging developers, researchers, and supporting agencies to support this new SRH field. Moreover, the IMPT Secretariat has provided outreach assistance to SRH partners by developing presentations, educational materials, and

talking points, which are accessible through an online [MPT resource center](#) and regularly disseminated at key conferences.

In an effort to provide technical assistance, the Secretariat developed a searchable database that tracks the status of MPT candidates in the [product development pipeline](#). This is updated regularly and is used by the Secretariat, IMPT's Supporting Agency Collaboration Committee (SACC) and other partner organizations to identify gaps and redundancies in the pipeline, and in turn help inform and prioritize funding and product development decisions

to ensure the development and introduction of MPTs with greatest health impact.

From the beginning, the IMPT has been a **collaborative** venture aimed at harnessing the expertise, energy, and resources of public and private sector partners to develop and advance products that address the multiple SRH needs that most affect women's health. To that end, the IMPT Secretariat has convened **35 technical consultations** since 2009, with the aim of facilitating cross-education, assessing challenges, prioritizing next steps, and generating support among new stakeholders.

Global Expansion to Raise Awareness

The global reach of the IMPT has been broadened through the creation of **in-country task forces** in India, China, South Africa, and Kenya, which work to pave the way for MPT introduction through awareness raising, advocacy, and end-user outreach. These task forces have strengthened communications with researchers and SRH advocates to ensure that women's needs and preferences are put at the center of product development. Examples of in-country task force work include region-specific communication materials in Kenya and South Africa, a regional symposium on MPTs held in India in 2012, and a special edition of the Indian Society for Study of Reproduction and Fertility (ISSFR) Newsletter, which featured 17 articles on MPT science, advocacy, and policy.

The IMPT network has grown as a result of these coordinated awareness raising and advocacy activities. More supporting agencies are involved; more products are in the MPT pipeline; and MPTs are now included in global-level documents, such as the WHO's [Global Health Sector Strategy on Sexually Transmitted Infections](#), 2016-2021. Inclusion in national and international guidelines is an important step to create an enabling environment for future MPT introduction. Next steps being considered include **policy analyses** to assess how policies and guidelines from the family planning and HIV prevention fields may need to be adapted to facilitate future service delivery.

As the MPT field continues to grow and evolve, the IMPT will expand upon its communication and advocacy efforts,

with the aim of sensitizing key stakeholders to the potential health and social impact of MPTs. This includes nurturing the capacities and capabilities of current in-country MPT champions, and plans for launching new task forces in other locations with high unmet need for family planning and disease prevention. Moreover, the IMPT will continue to convene SRH stakeholders to advance awareness, develop new outreach strategies to engage relevant ministry of health and regulatory stakeholders, and develop articles and op-eds for strategic media outlets in priority regions around the globe. Ultimately, the IMPT seeks to develop a field-wide strategic plan for MPTs that prioritizes the needs and feedback of women to ensure that MPTs meet the diverse social realities faced by women around the world.

*This brief highlights some accomplishments from the IMPT and its partners, who have raised **awareness and advocacy** to help the MPT field grow. Separate briefs highlight accomplishments in the areas of **technical and research issues to strengthen MPT product development**, and **incorporating social-behavioral and market research into product development**.*



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