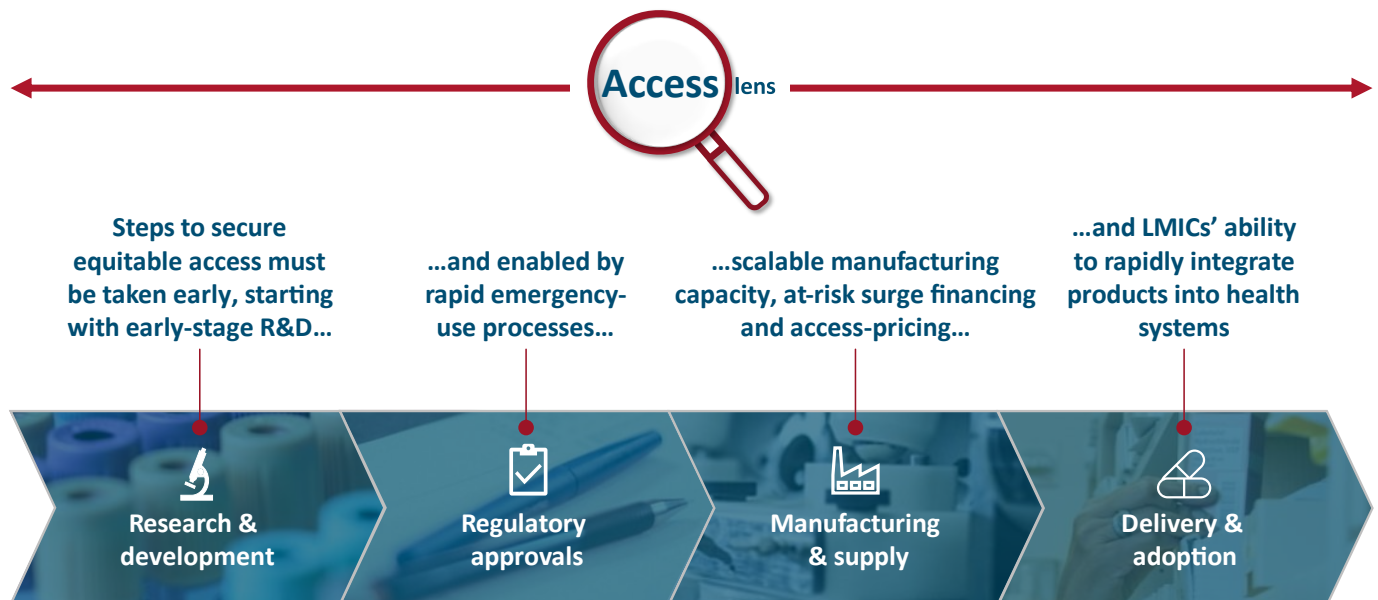


## Pandemic prevention, preparedness and response: Access is not an afterthought



Access was a critical issue during the COVID-19 pandemic: Low- and middle-income countries lacked rapid, equitable access to lifesaving health products. In therapeutics, years of underinvestment constrained the pipeline of viable candidates, and antivirals for COVID-19 were not widely available at the height of the pandemic. More investment is needed now – in advance of the next pandemic – for both research to identify potential health products, and for proactive steps to ensure access is “built in” from R&D to delivery. Unitaid has a strong track record of identifying and resolving access issues so that they don’t become barriers to product introduction and scale.

Below, Unitaid outlines essential components of pandemic preparedness for equitable access to therapeutics during a future response:

**Equitable access to a lifesaving product requires that the product is developed in the first place.** Unitaid sees the lack of early research as a critical and urgent gap. Without it, there will be no lifesaving products for which to ensure equitable access.

**Start early and start now.** Set strategic priorities for therapeutics and other relevant health tools from the outset. Guide R&D by access-oriented target product profiles that reflect the priorities of countries and communities. Access-oriented products are designed for use in low- and middle-income countries, priced affordably and transparently, and distributed fairly.

**Secure access-focused financing.** Funding early-stage R&D in the years preceding the next pandemic will help develop a healthy pipeline of candidates. At-risk surge financing support will facilitate manufacturability and eventually low and middle-income countries’ access to promising therapies in times of scarcity.

**Fill in capacity gaps now to avoid delays.** Establish sustainable capacity for clinical trials, regulatory processes and manufacturing at regional and global levels, addressing major public health in pre-pandemic periods. Improve and sustain capacity in low- and middle-income countries to rapidly integrate therapeutics at scale, including involvement of communities.

**Ensure strategic coordination across health tools, and within the therapeutics value chain. Dynamic** scenario planning of need for the different emerging health products, combining data for all MCMs, from evidence on use-case and supply.