



Optimising malaria surveillance

Conducting a multi-country review of malaria surveillance approaches, tools and interventions to inform innovative surveillance strategies

Background

Routine surveillance is an effective but underused tool for monitoring changes in malaria epidemiology, identifying outbreaks, targeting interventions and monitoring their effectiveness. Barriers to optimal surveillance include inaccurate or biased data collection and interpretation, and limited uptake into decision-making. Research is currently lacking into the impact of interventions that are designed to improve routine data quality and use.

To address some of the issues surrounding data quality and uptake in Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda, Malaria Consortium is carrying out a comprehensive exploration of context-specific surveillance system challenges, intervention deployment and impact measures at the national level through the Optimising Malaria Surveillance project. In parallel, Malaria Consortium's Local Decisions project in Mozambique and Uganda is evaluating surveillance and data use at community and health facility levels. Findings from both studies will feed into the co-design of context-specific interventions.

Country

Mozambique
South Sudan
Uganda

Funder

Malaria Consortium US

Length of project

January 2025 – December 2026

Partners

Mozambique Ministry of Health
South Sudan Ministry of Health
Uganda Ministry of Health

Project outline and objectives

The Optimising Malaria Surveillance project aims to enhance the availability, quality and use of routine surveillance data to improve decision-making and efficiency in malaria programmes.

Mozambique, South Sudan and Uganda have been selected for their different contexts and surveillance system models. Malaria Consortium is bringing the country teams together to share their knowledge through the presentation of results, identification of similarities and differences, and discussion of the different intervention options. Lessons from all three countries are feeding into the co-design of context-appropriate prototype interventions that address challenges in the quality and use of routine malaria data.

Project objectives are as follows:

- Evaluate the malaria routine surveillance systems in the target locations. This includes their associated quality and use statistics, approaches, tools, challenges and interventions, as well as their associated impact or success metrics.
- Support national malaria staff to design and select intervention options that address identified gaps and challenges appropriate to the specific context.

Activities

The project team is carrying out a desk review to collate, review and analyse relevant data. Key stakeholders from the national government and implementing partners are being engaged in qualitative interviews to identify contextual challenges and enablers. Critical analysis of the results will help to determine the effectiveness of routine surveillance improvement initiatives, and any research requirements to address key programmatic gaps.

A cross-country learning workshop to disseminate the evaluation findings and share insights and recommendations from all three countries is taking place ahead of country-specific co-design sessions.

During the final prototype design sessions, the countries' malaria programme staff are developing several intervention prototypes that can address key gaps identified through the review stage. This ensures alignment with national strategic plans and promotes ownership for learning uptake and sustainability. The interventions are being ranked according to feasibility, achievability, effects and available resources.

Malaria Consortium is engaging key stakeholders and advocating for governments, donors and partners to evaluate the effectiveness of newly designed interventions.

Outcomes and impact

A deeper understanding of existing surveillance systems for each country. Evaluating the barriers and enablers to routine surveillance and data-informed decision-making within each setting allows country malaria teams to identify research gaps and develop interventions that can be applied and evaluated within the specific context.

Tailored interventions designed with long-term stewardship in mind. By engaging national malaria programme staff and stakeholders in the surveillance evaluation and intervention design processes, Malaria Consortium is supporting local stakeholders to embed effective surveillance interventions within national policy and practice to ensure a sustained, context-specific approach to malaria.



References

1. Malaria Consortium. Advancing local decisions in Mozambique. Project brief. Malaria Consortium; 2024. Available from: www.malariaconsortium.org/resources/advancing-local-decisions-in-mozambique
2. Malaria Consortium. Advancing local decisions in Uganda. Project brief. Malaria Consortium; 2025. Available from: www.malariaconsortium.org/resources/advancing-local-decisions-in-uganda

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Cover image: Integrated research team carries out data quality analysis at Pequenos Libombos Health Centre in Maputo province, Mozambique.

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