

Terms of reference

Title:	Consultancy: SMC Research Priority setting exercise
Projects:	Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention
Location of support:	Remote
Reporting to:	Kevin Baker, Research Advisor
Timeframe:	May – December 2022
Fee:	Approx. \$350 per day

1. Background and context

Seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) is a highly effective community-based intervention to prevent malaria infections caused by *Plasmodium falciparum* in areas where the burden of malaria is high and malaria transmission is seasonal. It involves the intermittent administration of an antimalarial medicine to at-risk populations during the peak malaria season. The objective is to maintain therapeutic antimalarial drug concentrations in the blood throughout the period of greatest malarial risk. A combination of two antimalarials is used: sulfadoxine-pyrimethamine (SP) and amodiaquine (AQ). WHO recommends annual SMC rounds comprising four monthly SMC cycles beginning at the start of the transmission season. Each cycle involves the administration of full courses of SPAQ to eligible children. SMC is primarily delivered door-to-door by trained community distributors. In addition to the community distribution of SMC medicines, the intervention comprises the following components: planning & enumeration, procurement & supply management, community engagement, training, case management & pharmacovigilance, supervision, and monitoring & evaluation.

The World Health Organization has recommended SMC as a malaria prevention strategy for children 3–59 months since 2012. To-date, the Sahel region has been prioritised for the scale-up of SMC, with over 30 million children in 13 countries reached in 2020. Malaria Consortium is a leading implementer of SMC. Our SMC programme supported SMC delivery to around 20 million children in Burkina Faso, Chad, Nigeria and Togo in 2021.

The SMC Alliance Research sub-group was founded in 2021 and aims to provide a platform for national malaria and elimination programmes, implementing partners, researchers and those with an interest in research on seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC) to exchange research findings and good practice, discuss evidence gaps, research priorities, and opportunities for research dissemination. The group is a sub-group of the SMC Alliance under the Roll Back Malaria (RBM) Partnership's Country/Regional Support Partner Committee (CRSPC).

Research priorities for SMC have never been formally documented and the sub-group felt they would prove valuable to donors and researchers focused on addressing unknown or unanswered research questions in relation to SMC. There are a number of formal research priority setting methods, such as eDelphi, and the group would now like to engage a consultant to select the most appropriate method and conduct an SMC research priority setting exercise.

2. Details of the technical support

Objective

The consultant will support the SMC Alliance Research sub-group in conducting a research priority setting exercise for SMC.

Key outputs

After initial familiarisation with the different research priority setting methods, the consultant would recommend to the sub-group which would be most appropriate for the SMC research priority setting exercise. Once agreed, the consultant would then develop the protocol, submit to ethics and once approved, conduct data collection and analysis. The final outputs would be a report, research brief and peer review publication.

Specific activities and schedule

June 2022

- Desk review of research priority setting methods
- Present results and recommendations at SMC Alliance subgroup meeting

June to December 2022

- Develop protocol and submit to ethics
- Lead on data collection
- Lead on data analysis
- Lead on write up of report, research brief and peer review publication.

3. Payments

- 25% of the total contract value will be payable upon signing of the contract.
- 50% of the contract value will be payable on submission of a report outlining methods and results (to be signed off by the Malaria Consortium focal point for this assignment).
- 25% of the total contract value will be payable upon submission of peer review manuscript (to be signed off by the Malaria Consortium focal point for this assignment).

4. Requirements

Essential

- Excellent understanding of public health and health economics
- Familiarity with the health system in SMC countries
- Ability to facilitate structured discussions and derive insights and conceptualisation
- Fluency in English and French
- Excellent writing skills in English and French
- Access to and familiarity with suitable communication platforms, preferably Microsoft Teams or Zoom

Desirable

- Advanced qualification in health economics
- Experience of conducting similar exercises exploring value for money in the context of large-scale health programmes
- Good understanding of the epidemiology of infectious diseases in Africa
- Experience of working with stakeholders in low- and middle-income countries
- Fluency in Portuguese

5. Application

Please submit the following to express your interest in this consultancy by May 2022:

- CV (if applying for a company or consultancy, please submit CVs for all senior staff who will be working on this assignment)
- A cover letter explaining how you meet the selection criteria
- A brief outline of the approach you intend to take for this assignment, including whether stakeholder consultations in Mozambique would be conducted remotely or in-person (2 pages maximum)
- Proposed fee in USD (inclusive of any tax), including top-level breakdown of costs

The successful applicant is required to provide proof of professional indemnity insurance prior to contracting.

6. Malaria Consortium focal point

Kevin Baker Research Advisor, Malaria Consortium, London.

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