What is surveillance?

Surveillance is the ongoing collection, analysis and interpretation of health-related data.

This data is crucial in order to plan, implement and evaluate public health programmes effectively.

A strong surveillance system enables us to track the spread of a disease and respond accordingly.

It helps us to design prevention and control measures, and acts as an early warning system for public health emergencies.

Quality data enables governments to spot trends they may not otherwise have noticed, monitor which interventions work and which do not, and act in a more targeted way.

With a strong surveillance system in place, governments can make quick, effective decisions based on hard evidence rather than hearsay.

What needs to be done

1. Governments must take ownership of data collection and use, and build sustainable data collection systems and dissemination channels.

2. By establishing these systems, governments and ministries of health will be empowered to identify and react to disease upsurges and outbreaks earlier, making planning and responses more effective.

3. Analysis and interpretation of data must be embedded across all levels of the health system, along with a culture of making evidence-based decisions.

4. Strong surveillance will help decision makers to assess whether they are on track to hit programme targets, and evaluate the impact of interventions.

5. Governments must be accountable and responsive to findings from routine malaria information systems, and global partners should encourage a culture of data-driven decision making.
Strengthening malaria surveillance
This project aims to operationalise a functional malaria surveillance system responsive to all transmission strata across Mozambique by strengthening data quality and establishing a data use and data-to-action culture.

Strengthening Uganda’s Response to Malaria
This project aims to build community-level capacity to diagnose and treat malaria. It will strengthen malaria surveillance systems and improve the quality, use and sustainability of mobile tracking within the broader electronic Health Management Information System.

USAID’s Malaria Action Program for Districts
This project aims to reduce malaria-related childhood and maternal morbidity and mortality in Uganda. It will strengthen the government’s capacity to design, plan and monitor malaria control activities.

Support to the National Malaria Programme in Nigeria 2
This project supports government efforts to further reduce Nigeria’s malaria burden. SuNMaP 2 is a performance-based programme, with robust monitoring, evaluation, accountability and learning components.

Reducing the malaria burden
This project aims to reduce the country’s malaria burden to pre-elimination levels and malaria-related mortality rate to zero by 2020. The project will ensure routine reporting of malaria cases at 80 percent of all health facilities to improve surveillance.