



RBM Partnership To End Malaria
Annual Report
2023

Introduction

Since its launch in 1998 by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF, and the World Bank, the RBM Partnership to End Malaria has been a leading force in the global fight against malaria, saving lives and transforming communities. According to WHO's most recent World Malaria Report, the number of global malaria cases and deaths in 2022 was significantly higher than before the global pandemic in 2019, with 249 million cases and 608,000 deaths, revealing an urgent need to address the growing malaria emergency.

This annual report provides a comprehensive overview of the RBM Partnership's efforts and achievements in 2023.

With a mission to support countries, communities, and regions in malaria prevention and control, the RBM Partnership ensured that effective interventions reached those most in need.

Malaria is both a result and cause of inequity, and in 2023, the RBM Partnership worked to address the disease not only as a health issue, but also as a developmental challenge that perpetuates poverty in affected countries. Efforts were focused on eliminating malaria and strengthening health systems, which aimed at ultimately expanding Universal Health Care and building resilient health systems capable of addressing other diseases.

During the Global Fund grant application process, the RBM Partnership supported 43 countries with their proposals, ensuring that each country completed proposals tailored to their needs, resulting in all applicants securing approval for their grants. These funds are critical enablers for countries to implement vaccine programmes, but also for continued research and development into new tools, such as efficacious vaccines and longer-lasting insecticides.

Collaboratively with malaria endemic countries, the RBM Partnership addressed obstacles in malaria prevention and control, achieving significant milestones, such as 84% of Insecticide Treated Net campaigns and 95% of Indoor Residual Spraying campaigns completed or on track with provided goals. Technical Assistance (TA) provided to 15 countries on their National Strategic Plans (NSPs) afforded countries an opportunity to refine their current malaria control programmes, tailored to the needs of the country based on their current malaria status. Through this work, the RBM Partnership enhanced the capacity of health systems globally in their ability to combat malaria.

The RBM Partnership strengthened and facilitated cross-border collaboration and cooperation to leverage knowledge sharing, developing regional alliances amongst endemic countries to share best practices. Additionally, key advocacy efforts during events such as World Malaria Day and the 5th Anniversary of the 'Zero Malaria Starts With Me' movement brought partners together and saw the development of new messaging to guide communications strategies in the months to come.

Despite significant progress made against malaria over the last decade, biological threats, such as drug and insecticide resistance, significant ongoing funding gaps, and climate change, which displaced vulnerable populations and weakened unsustainable health systems, continued to challenge global efforts in 2023. The RBM Partnership's response – its focus on resource mobilisation, particularly the development and deployment of vaccines and other tools, to protect the most vulnerable populations – remained unwavering.

Recognising the urgent need for renewed efforts, the End Malaria Council initiated the "Big Push" towards the end of 2023, a country-driven, multi-stakeholder effort to develop a comprehensive five-year plan, which aims to align global partners and streamline efforts toward malaria eradication. The "Big Push" will coordinate the efforts of major organisations, including the RBM Partnership, to strengthen the foundations needed to eradicate malaria within the next five years.

The RBM Partnership's commitment and collaborative efforts in 2023 laid a strong foundation for future progress in the fight against malaria. Despite the challenges posed by drug resistance, climate change, and stalled global progress, initiatives like the "Big Push" offer a renewed and coordinated strategy to overcome these obstacles. The RBM Partnership remains dedicated to its mission, ensuring that effective interventions reach those who need them most, and continuing the momentum towards eradication.

Executive Summary

In 2023, the RBM Partnership supported the global fight against malaria through strategic partnerships, technical expertise, and advocacy initiatives. Through strengthened collaboration at the global and community levels, the RBM Partnership advanced comprehensive approaches to malaria prevention and control. The multisectoral approach integrated innovative strategies to combat biological threats like drug and insecticide resistance, emphasising resource mobilisation and increased funding for malaria vaccines and tools.

Key achievements and impact

Technical assistance and country collaboration

Throughout 2023, the RBM Partnership supported 15 countries with critical Technical Assistance, which facilitated the incorporation of new tools and strategic interventions, the updating of National Strategic Plans, and the conducting of Malaria Programme Reviews. In addition, the RBM Partnership's proactive approach to coordinating early warning systems and rapid response mechanisms aided countries in overcoming implementation challenges. The RBM Partnership aided nine countries, in addition to three Regional Economic Communities (RECs), with implementation bottlenecks and reduced stock-outs of case management commodities by over 70% since 2021.

Country support ahead the of Global Fund Replenishment

Building on the momentum from the 7th Global Fund Replenishment Cycle, the RBM Partnership provided comprehensive support to 43 countries in developing high-quality funding proposals. Each application was tailored to the needs of the specific country, ensuring that grants would be deployed as effectively as possible. The support, coupled with mock technical review panels, reinforced the RBM Partnership's role as a key partner in securing resources for endemic countries.

Harnessing data for action

The RBM Partnership's [Global Malaria Dashboard](#) has continued to keep internal and external stakeholders informed about ongoing activities and campaigns globally. In 2023, the dashboard continued to provide live insights into programmatic gaps and successes, which ensured that countries received tailored support in line with their specific needs, contributing to the successful completion of key malaria prevention campaigns.

Targeted malaria advocacy and communications

Throughout 2023, the RBM Partnership engaged in targeted advocacy campaigns to elevate malaria on global health agendas, including World Malaria Day and World Mosquito Day. Partnering with stakeholders, the RBM Partnership's campaigns reached over 1.47 billion people, amplified key messages and mobilised support for continued investment and innovation in malaria prevention and control.

Looking ahead, the RBM Partnership is committed to building on these achievements and continuing to work towards the 2030 global targets for malaria, including the 90% reduction in mortality rates compared to 2015 levels, set out by the Sustainable Development Goals. Together with partners, communities, and teams, the RBM Partnership will strive towards a world free from malaria and to improve health outcomes for the most vulnerable populations globally.

CEO Foreword

The last year has shown immense progress in the global fight against malaria. Leading the RBM Partnership throughout 2023 was both a profound privilege and a deeply personal commitment for me. We made great strides and reached milestone achievements, such as the announcement of the world's second malaria vaccine, the R21/Matrix-M. However, emerging threats, such as climate change and growing resistance, reminded us that we must remain steadfast in our commitment, focus, and determination to combat malaria and aid communities that are most at risk.

In 2023, our technical assistance efforts reached 15 countries and ensured that national strategic plans were not just updated, but tailored to each community's unique needs and contexts. We also successfully aided 43 countries in the development of their Global Fund funding proposals, which underscored our belief that effective solutions must be locally driven and community focused.

In many of our partner countries, the journey to eliminate malaria is fraught with obstacles. Yet, the resilience and determination of these communities inspired us daily. Malaria knows no borders, and neither should our efforts to combat it. Our focus on strengthening regional cooperation was, and will continue to be, vital in ensuring that our collective efforts are synchronised.

In 2023, we supported the Regional Economic Communities, East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and West African Health Organisation (WAHO) in enhancing cross-border coordination, and achieved results that strengthened knowledge sharing and the cross-border collaboration of malaria control efforts.

We took several steps in the right direction. Our Global Malaria Dashboard continued to harness live data to tailor our support more effectively, avoiding and addressing bottlenecks in local communities. Our advocacy campaigns reached over 1.47 billion people, spreading the urgent message that our fight against malaria is far from over. The development of our online Community, Rights, and Gender (CRG) training module also empowered local consultants and national malaria programmes, helping us focus on the humanitarian aspect of this disease.

However, despite this progress, we have experienced significant setbacks in our fight against malaria in recent years. Funding has continued to be inadequate, with less than half the required funding to achieve Sustainable Development Goals having been committed. Climate change – recognised as one of the biggest threats and challenges to human health – has had profound impacts on health systems in vulnerable populations and continued to pose direct and indirect threats to malaria. Growing insecticide and antibiotic resistance has further jeopardised the efficacy of existing tools.

To achieve a world free of malaria, we must collectively invest in new tools, focus on strengthening existing health systems, and develop sustainable solutions to withstand upcoming challenges. We must continue to build on our achievements, driven by the knowledge that our work saves lives and transforms communities. Each statistic we celebrate represents lives saved, families kept whole, and futures secured. I look forward to celebrating several more milestones in the years to come as we work towards a world without malaria.

By Dr Michael Adekunle Charles, CEO of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria

Elevating Malaria Programme Impact Across Countries & Regions

The RBM Partnership recognises that countries, communities, and regions are essential in reducing the global malaria burden. In 2023, the RBM Partnership actively provided Technical Assistance (TAs) to help identify and solve bottlenecks in malaria prevention programmes, ensuring optimal planning and implementation.

National Strategic Plans (NSPs)

National Strategic Plans (NSPs) guide countries in reducing their malaria burdens, and are periodically updated to improve control and elimination efforts. In 2023, the RBM Partnership supported 15 countries (Angola, Benin, Botswana, Chad, Comoros, Equatorial Guinea, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Sao Tome and Principe, Sierra Leone, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Tanzania, and Zanzibar) and the East African Community in updating their NSPs and conducting Malaria Programme Reviews. This assistance enabled the integration of new tools and strategies aligned with current implementation contexts and prepared countries for their Global Fund funding applications for Grant Cycle 7.

The RBM Partnership also coordinated an early warning system and rapid response mechanism to resolve implementation challenges. In 2023, it helped nine countries (Angola, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Chad, Madagascar, Mauritania, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda) and three Regional Economic Communities (EAC, IGAD, SADC) address bottlenecks. With RBM's support, Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC) campaigns were completed as planned, over 84% of Insecticide Treated Nets (ITN) campaigns and 95% of Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) campaigns were completed or on track, and stock-outs of case management commodities reduced by over 70% compared to 2021.



Examples of support provided to Countries

Angola - The RBM Partnership and ALMA jointly supported Angola by providing grants to host the 2023 SADC Malaria Day event, a high level ministerial advocacy event. The country was also supported to launch their “Zero Malaria Starts with Me” campaign during the SADC Ministerial meeting.

Botswana - To facilitate an assessment exercise, the RBM Partnership provided a grant to Botswana. The exercise focused on IRS with the objective of finding out why the annual IRS target of 85% spraying is not achieved each year, to get a clear insight of all matters related to IRS delivery (planning, logistics, training, community mobilisation, community acceptance and any other aspects) and provide necessary guidance to the programme. It will also enable the programme to make informed decisions that will improve the IRS coverage and ultimately reduce the burden of local malaria cases.

Burkina Faso - Technical support was provided to Burkina Faso to conduct the analysis of financial gaps post submission to grant cycle 7 as part of the mobilisation of financial resources from other sources such as the International Development Agency of the World Bank. The support included developing short project concept notes detailing malaria needs in the context of UHC/PHC and the preparation of an advocacy brief for use in high-level advocacy, including for increasing IDA resources for malaria in the framework of UHC and integrated PHC.

Chad and Mauritania - These nations were enabled to participate in the Sahel Malaria Elimination Initiative meetings.

Madagascar, Tanzania and Uganda - The RBM Partnership helped these nations facilitate engagement of the private sector in malaria case management.

Togo - With support from the RBM Partnership, Togo launched the Zero Malaria Starts with Me campaign, in addition to conducting epidemiological stratification of malaria, and assessed the barriers to access malaria interventions using the Malaria Matchbox tool.

Championing A Human Rights-based Approach to Malaria Prevention

Ensuring the highest level of health is a fundamental right for all, regardless of race, religion, ethnicity, political beliefs, economic or social status. A rights-based approach to malaria focuses on the needs of the most marginalised to promote health equity and ensure universal access to malaria prevention and treatment, aligning with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Universal Health Coverage.

The last two decades have seen an estimated total of three billion mosquito nets shipped to malaria endemic countries for the prevention of malaria amongst vulnerable populations, with the majority being shipped to sub-Saharan Africa. In 2023, the RBM Partnership, in collaboration with the Alliance for Malaria Prevention, provided technical assistance to 14 countries (Benin, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Guinea Bissau, Haiti, Liberia, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Nigeria, Pakistan, Sierra Leone, Togo and Uganda) through a total of 56 Technical Assistance programmes to support the planning and implementation of their Insecticide Treated Net (ITN) mass distribution campaigns.

To expand this human rights-based approach to multilateral stakeholders, the RBM Partnership developed an online Communities, Rights, and Gender (CRG) training module targeting the consultant pool. A total of 33 consultants have since completed the module online. Furthermore, two in-person training sessions were conducted during the year targeting National Malaria Programmes from endemic countries.

ITN Campaign Digitalisation: In recent years, more and more malaria-endemic countries have been leveraging digital platforms to support their net distribution campaigns. The proven advantages of these digitised campaigns include improving cost efficiencies, enhancing distribution efficiency, increasing coverage, and providing greater access to mosquito nets. These benefits make digitalisation an attractive option for programme planners and policymakers. During the past year, out of the thirty-four countries that reported their long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLIN) distribution campaigns, 64.7% (22 countries) adopted digital tools and technologies to streamline their efforts. This shift towards digitalisation reflects a broader trend in public health, where technology is harnessed to optimise resource allocation, track progress in real-time, and ultimately, achieve better health outcomes for populations at risk of malaria.

The RBM Partnership provided technical support to ten countries (Bangladesh, Benin, DRC, Ethiopia, Indonesia, Malawi, South Sudan, Tanzania, Togo, and Uganda) to conduct Community Rights Gender (CRG) assessments with the Malaria Matchbox tool, an equity assessment tool used to improve the effectiveness of malaria programmes. These assessments helped identify and address barriers to malaria prevention, leading to the inclusion of targeted programmes in the National Malaria Strategic Plans of each country.

Leveraging Regional Alliances for Optimum Malaria Cross-Border Coordination

Cross-border cooperation and coordination is essential to successfully eliminate malaria. By fostering regional alliances and facilitating cross-border cooperation, the RBM Partnership enhances the effectiveness of malaria control efforts, ensuring that countries exchange critical information, share best practices, and align policies. Such coordination is crucial for tackling malaria, which often spreads across national boundaries. In 2023, RBM Partnership advisors continued to support the Regional Economic Communities, East African Community (EAC), Southern African Development Community (SADC), and the West African Health Organisation (WAHO) Secretariats in coordinating the cross-border malaria control efforts in the region and worked to mainstream malaria into the political agenda. With support from the RBM Partnership, some achievements in 2023 included:

East African Community

- The EAC finalised the Malaria Surveillance & Information Sharing Framework and the Multi-sectoral Malaria Action Framework 2023-2030. The member states are reviewing these strategic documents prior to adoption.
- A joint intercountry resource mobilisation and planning meeting delivered a detailed activity matrix to guide implementation and resource mobilisation.

Southern African Development Community

- The SADC developed the SADC Cross-Border Malaria Framework, which was accompanied by the 2023 SADC Malaria work plan. This plan was implemented to strengthen regional coordination and cross border collaboration.
- The SADC Annual Malaria report was also developed to support malaria high level advocacy at the Regional Health Ministers meetings.

West African Health Organisation

- The Sahel Malaria Elimination Initiative technical committee meeting, held in Cabo Verde in March 2023 with the participation of eight countries, focused on reviewing the region's progress in malaria elimination. Action points were drafted during the meeting to develop the future roadmap for the region.
- The 28th Ordinary Session of the Assembly of Health Ministers of ECOWAS took place in Bissau, in May 2023. National malaria programmes in the Sahel Malaria Elimination Initiative countries participated. One of the recommendations in the final communiqué of the Ministers meeting was to "strengthen resource mobilisation for the implementation of priority programmes including the elimination of malaria".

South East Asia Region

- The South East Asia Region facilitated bilateral meetings for India with Bangladesh, Bhutan, and Nepal throughout the year to support effective coordination of cross-border malaria elimination activities.
- The region conducted a situation analysis within the cross-border programme which resulted in an update to the cross-border strategy, with an operational plan for strengthening coordination at subnational level.
- The region also developed and launched an e-learning module to aid programme implementation management, monitoring, and supervision among key stakeholders in the border districts.

Sub-regional National Malaria Programmes & Partners Annual Meetings

The RBM Partnership held the Eastern and Southern Africa National Malaria Programmes and Partners Annual Meeting in Kampala, Uganda in October 2023. National Malaria Programmes from 24 countries in the region, including Yemen, participated in the meeting together with partners. A total of 205 participants joined the meeting.

The Western and Central Africa National Malaria Programmes and Partners Annual Meeting in Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, was held in November 2023. National Malaria Programmes from 21 countries in the region participated in the meeting together with partners. A total of 201 participants joined the meeting.

Participants in both meetings included representatives from countries, partners, governmental bodies, non-governmental organisations, civil societies, local partners, private sector, academia and international agencies, who came together with a shared commitment to combat malaria.

Countries had the opportunity to share best practices and to collaboratively share ideas to address bottlenecks and challenges. Further, countries and partners co-created the priorities and actions for the RBM Partnership for the remaining two years of the strategic plan.

The meetings were also used to update countries on technical issues, including the introduction of the new R21/Matrix-M malaria vaccine and new commodities and interventions in the pipeline.



Maximising Funding for Malaria-Endemic Countries' Programmes

The Global Fund is a critical entity in supporting malaria programmes, providing 65% of all international financing for such programmes. Following the successful 7th Global Fund Replenishment cycle in 2022, in 2023, the RBM Partnership provided a comprehensive package of support to Global Fund-eligible countries to aid the development of their proposals. This comprehensive support package included technical assistance, in-country dialogue facilitation, and the organisation of mock technical review panels and expert reviews of country proposals. This approach, grounded in a proven country-led methodology, ensured the timely submission of high-quality funding requests to the Global Fund.

Technical Assistance was extended to 43 countries to aid in the development and timely submission of robust proposals. The RBM Partnership also established a platform for comprehensive peer reviews of funding applications, involving expert guidance, ahead of submission to the Global Fund.

With the exception of two countries that chose to submit in the next window, all countries successfully submitted the funding request and moved on to the grant making stage, and some have already signed their grants.

Countries supported in their Global Fund Proposal application processes

The following countries were provided technical assistance by the RBM Partnership to develop, finalise and successfully submit their funding requests to the Global Fund: Afghanistan, Angola, Benin, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cabo Verde, Central Africa Republic, Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Djibouti, Eritrea, Eswatini, Ethiopia, Gabon, Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, India, Kenya, Liberia, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, Nepal, Niger, Nigeria, Pakistan, Rwanda, Sao Tome & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, Solomon Islands, South Sudan, Sudan, Suriname, Tanzania, Togo, Uganda, Zambia, Zanzibar, and Zimbabwe.



Harnessing Data for Action

The RBM Partnership's Global Malaria Dashboard hosts a total of 17 Dashboards that publish a range of information serving the diverse needs of our multiple stakeholders. These dashboards publish information on the supply chain status of essential malaria diagnostic and treatment commodities amongst the countries, country programmatic and financial gaps, country progress in implementing various malaria campaigns (SMC, ITNs, IRS), vector control commodity forecasting, malaria behaviour survey results among countries, short and long term projections of need and demand of case management and vector control commodities, and the status of implementation of technical assistance among countries.

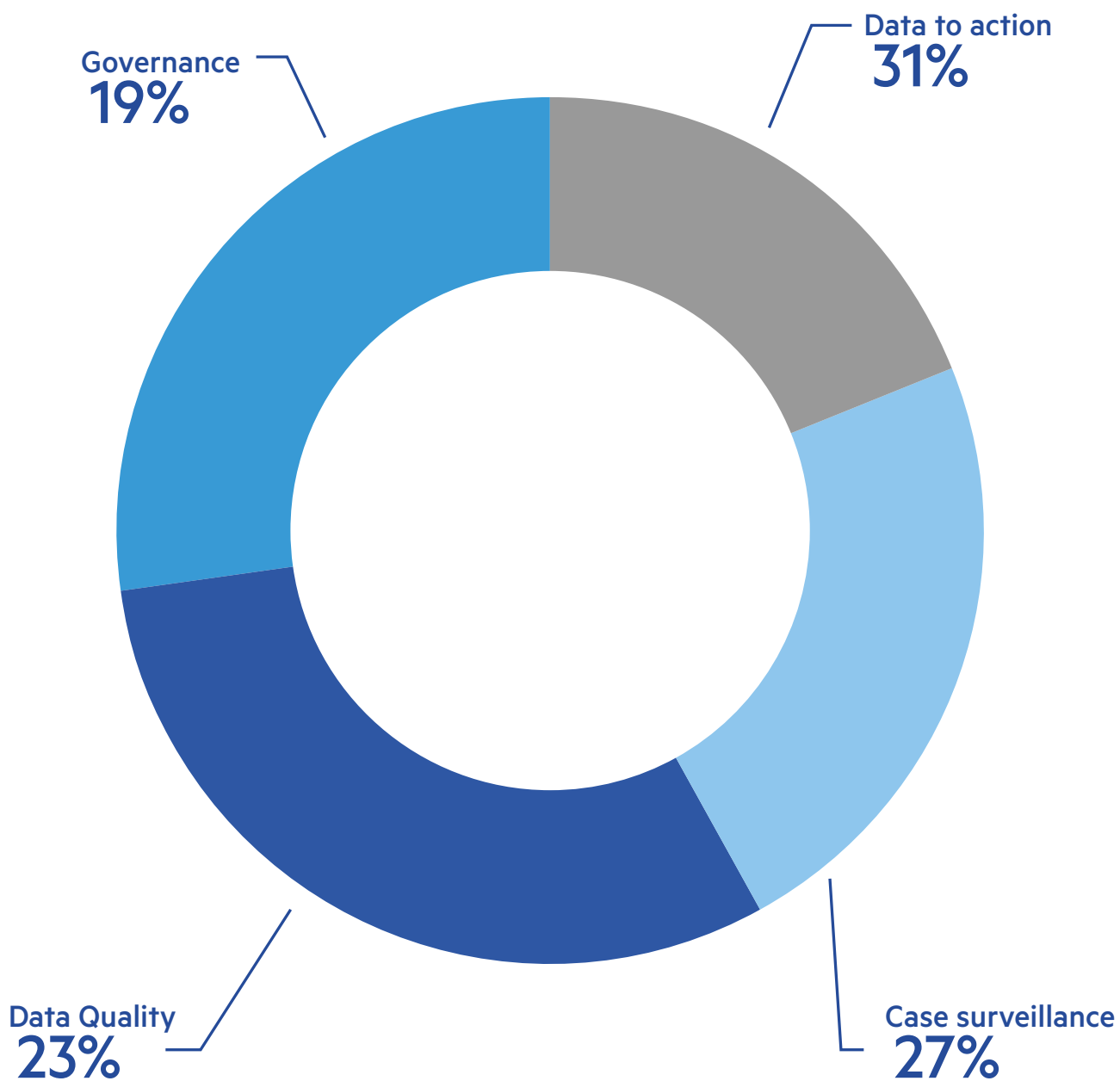
In 2023, the Global Malaria Dashboard was instrumental in allowing the RBM Partnership to adequately support countries at risk of stock-outs of essential life-saving malaria commodities, countries with malaria prevention health campaigns at risk of going off-track, and countries with programmatic and financial gaps. The outputs from these dashboards, updated on a quarterly basis to reflect near real time status of essential malaria prevention interventions, supported the RBM Partnership to tailor its aid approach to countries in need of support. In 2023, the dashboard tracked an average of 66 Campaigns (26 IRS, 25 ITNs, 15 SMC), and by the end of the year, 54 (81.8%) campaigns were either complete or on track. Additionally, between 2021 and 2023, the number of countries reporting less than three months of stock of RDTs and or ACTs decreased from an average of 13 per quarter to around four. This is partly due to the consistent use of the dashboard as an early warning system for country commodity statuses.

The Global Malaria Dashboard continued to evolve into a one-stop malaria information hub that met the needs of the RBM Partnerships' diverse stakeholders.



Malaria Surveillance Dashboard

There are currently 49 projects that are focused on strengthening in-country malaria surveillance in 52 countries, supported by 25 implementing partners and 17 donors.



Fostering Collaborative Partnerships for a Malaria Burden-Free World

In the collective endeavour to free the world of the debilitating burden of malaria, partnerships emerge as the cornerstone of innovation and progress. The fight against malaria demands concerted efforts, drawing upon the competitive advantage and resources of diverse stakeholders united by a common goal. Within this collaborative spirit, the RBM Partnership strongly asserted the vision of a world free of malaria through the strategic alliances forged, the collaborative initiatives undertaken, and the transformative impact achieved through the power of the RBM Partnership.

New Constituency Based Board

In May 2023, a new constituency-based board, consisting of 23 voting members and one non-voting, ex-officio member commenced its duties. The new board was established in response to the changing global health landscape and followed an extensive consultative process which was conducted in 2022 and concluded early 2023. The composition of the board is as follows:

Constituency	Members
Affected Countries	9 (Africa - 6, Asia - 2, Latin America - 1)
Civil Society/ Affected Communities	2
Funders	5
Private Sector	2
Science & Innovation	1
WHO	1
Unaffiliates	2
Board Leadership	1
Host (UNOPS)	1

Partner Committees

Working Group Highlights

Throughout 2023, working groups conducted several webinar series to share lessons learned and new innovative means of deploying malaria interventions. Some of the highlights are detailed below:

a. Case Management Working Group (CMWG)

The 12th Annual RBM CMWG meeting, conducted in Accra Ghana from 22-25 August 2023, was attended by around 80 participants with 21 representatives from National Malaria Programmes (NMPs). The annual meeting focused on panel discussions with NMP representatives to share lessons learned, with field visits conducted at Shai Osudoku District Hospital, Agomeda Health Center and Ayikuma CHIPS Compounds in Accra. The topics discussed during the meeting included drug resistance, diagnostic testing- hrp2/3 deletions, severe malaria, quality improvement of malaria CM and Perennial Malaria Chemoprevention PMC and other drug-based approaches and M&E of malaria case management.

b. Vector Control Working Group (VCWG)

The VCWG worked with key stakeholders in the vector control community to identify research priorities, capacity building initiatives and key activities to help raise awareness of the *An stephensi* problem in support of a more accelerated response. It also worked with the Malaria Eradication Scientific Alliance (MESA) to perform a landscaping review to track *An stephensi* research and investment.

The VCWG additionally launched a Massive Open Online Course on 'The Resistant Mosquito: Staying Ahead of the Game in the Fight against Malaria', which has already attracted over 3000 learners worldwide. The course can be found here: <https://tales.nmc.unibas.ch/en/the-resistant-mosquito-43/>

c. Social Behaviour Change Working Group (SBCWG)

The SBCWG participated in a task team led by WHO to develop resources for Social Behaviour Change for the introduction of the malaria vaccines. The guidance document is being finalised for publication and will include a demand planning guide, coordination and planning gathering and use of data instructions, and behavioural interventions.

In 2023, the SBCWG published the Malaria Behaviour Survey dashboard. This dynamic and interactive dashboard takes users along the journey of investigating care seeking behaviours, net care and use behaviours, and antenatal care related behaviours by country. The dashboard is very informative for programme planners as they plan interventions for implementation.

d. Surveillance Monitoring & Evaluation Working Group (SMEWG)

The 34th annual meeting for the SMEWG working group was conducted from 22–24 May 2023 in Bangkok, Thailand and brought together 32 members and representatives of national programmes from 12 countries. The main theme of the meeting was surveillance of malaria elimination in Southeast Asia. It had a specific focus on documenting successes, challenges and lessons learned, in the context of the need for systems resilience to potential threats, and to inform monitoring practices in other countries in the African region, particularly those developing a disposal programme.

e. Malaria in Pregnancy Working Group (MiPWG):

In 2023, the MiPWG assisted in the dissemination and country adoption of the updated guidance from WHO, recommending the use of artemether-lumefantrine for the treatment of uncomplicated malaria in the first trimester of pregnancy. The working group contributed to the development of the science as well as the literature review which allowed WHO to move forward with this recommendation.

In 2023, the MiPWG supported the rollout and application of the updated WHO guidelines through the development of a technical brief drafted by a small task force of researchers and malaria experts, including WHO. Dissemination included a technical webinar with presentations from WHO, researchers, and NMCP representatives from countries already implementing these guidelines. Subsequently, the WG continued to provide support to countries for the adoption of this new guidance.

The working group continued with the SpeedUp ScaleUp IPTp campaign to advocate for increased IPTp3 coverage. This included developing a series of champion videos and circulating an advocacy letter to influence top-level decision-makers to increase their efforts to protect more pregnant women from malaria. This letter, along with a book of more than 1,000 signatures, was delivered to African leaders at the African Union Summit on February 18, 2023.

f. Multi-Sectoral Working Group (MSWG)

The 5th RBM MSWG annual meeting took place on February 9-11, 2023 in Accra, Ghana. This innovative meeting included panels of city mayors and private sector (mining) participants, as well as project planning for both Healthy Cities Healthy People Initiative and Pathfinder. More details can be found at:

The MSWG disseminated two frameworks in 2023: the Multisectoral Action Framework and the Global Framework for the Response to Malaria in Urban Areas. The Global Framework for the Response to Malaria in Urban Areas is a crucial document that provides guidance to countries on how to undertake a comprehensive malaria response in urban areas. This is in light of the invasion by vectors adapted to breeding in urban environments and the ongoing rural-to-urban migration, which is expected to result in the majority of the population living in urban areas in the coming years.



Targeted Malaria Advocacy and Communications

To keep malaria high on the global health and development agendas, the RBM Partnership develops materials for partners around the globe, convening action and equipping partners with the necessary tools and messaging to present a coordinated call for increased action to end malaria.

The RBM Partnership focused strategically on several events throughout the year to unify partner voices for a shared cause. Toolkits were created for various events containing bespoke social media assets and posts, in addition to key messaging focused on implementation, innovation, and investment, to align partner activity. Key highlights and activities included:

- 4,600+ partners viewed The Zero Malaria Starts With Me 5th Anniversary toolkit
- 7,500+ members received the 2023 World Malaria Day toolkit
- The launch of the Zero Malaria Football Club (ZMFC), a team of globally renowned footballers to increase malaria awareness, urge greater action against this deadly disease, and work with the RBM Partnership to advocate for a coordinated malaria response, co-captained by Mr Luis Figo and Mr Khalilou Fadiga
- A high-level press conference during the United Nations General Assembly to highlight the urgent need to address the malaria emergency
- A high-level event, in partnership with WHO and the International Organization of the Francophonie, on 27 April aimed at informing and raising awareness in French-speaking countries on progress to date in the fight against malaria and the challenges to overcome
- The celebration of five years of the Zero Malaria Starts With Me movement, celebrating the momentum of the campaign and the 28 countries that had launched the ZMSWM campaign by the end of 2023.
- The development of the RBM Partnership's first COP advocacy briefing with key asks agreed with the Global Fund, focusing on the link between climate change and malaria

Activities such as these are vital to ensure that global activity amongst partners is aligned under a common cause. Convening country representatives, health ministers, press, key stakeholders, and partners ensures that malaria is raised on the agenda to better support and advocate for an end to malaria.

In 2023, the RBM Partnership reached an estimated 1.47 billion people across 134 pieces of media coverage and social media activity. Key highlights included comments from CEO of the RBM Partnership to End Malaria, Dr Michael Adegunle Charles, included in various target media outlets such as POLITICO, CBC, The Guardian, Reuters, and SciDev.

Where we stand

The year 2023 was defined by pivotal activity including strategic innovation, community engagement, regional cooperation, and a more humanised approach to tackling malaria. The achievement of supporting 43 countries with Global Fund applications underscored the RBM Partnership's commitment to using country specific approaches in its sustained progress towards a malaria free world.

Efforts to fight malaria successfully avoided 549 million cases and 2.82 million deaths in 2022, according to the 2023 World Malaria Report and the rollout of the world's first malaria vaccine and WHO's recommendation of a second safe and effective vaccine lays the foundations for renewed hope in the fight against malaria.

However, new challenges continue to present themselves. It has never been more critical for the global community to come together and advocate for a malaria free world. Although 2023 has shown significant progress, there is more to be done.

What lays ahead

Malaria continues to devastate communities across the world. For the first time, the 2023 World Malaria Report identified climate change as a significant threat to malaria and ongoing efforts to combat the disease. Extreme weather events, such as the 2022 floods in Pakistan and warming temperatures, resulted in large epidemics in diseases such as malaria, as well as population displacement and socioeconomic displacement. In addition to this new threat of climate change, growing insecticide and drug resistance continue to threaten the progress made against malaria to date, and global funding shortfalls are holding back the pace of our innovation and research, impeding our ability to develop and deliver lifesaving tools at the speed needed to stop malaria in its tracks.

There are several crucial areas where the RBM Partnership must focus its efforts over the next twelve months to ensure progress is made in the face of these obstacles.



Funding

The funding gap between the amount invested in malaria control and the resources needed continues to grow, from US\$ 2.3 billion in 2018 to US\$ 3.7 billion in 2022. It will be crucial to advocate for increased funding and to continue to provide the ongoing technical support to countries, ensuring they receive adequate support to secure funding, in addition to continued and increased funding towards research and development to fuel the evolution of existing tools.

WHO malaria-free certification

Despite a lack of progress in countries heavily affected by malaria, an increasing number of countries with a lower incidence are making consistent strides towards eliminating the disease. Next year, the RBM Partnership will focus on assisting more countries across endemic areas as they strive towards WHO malaria-free certification, like Cabo Verde did in 2023.

Developing resilient health systems

It is essential to ensure that malaria responses are sustainable and climate-resilient. The threat to malaria progress must be addressed within the broader context of climate and health, aligning with initiatives such as the Alliance for Transformative Action on Climate and Health convened by WHO. This global platform aims to secure political commitment to build climate-resilient and low-carbon sustainable health systems. Efforts should also prioritise decarbonising health systems and enhancing their climate resilience and environmental sustainability. Health systems globally contribute nearly 5% of greenhouse gas emissions, making it imperative to reduce emissions while maintaining quality care. Sharing best practices and implementing high-performance, low-cost, low-emission healthcare services, including improvements in the supply chain, are essential steps. A resilient health system capable of anticipating, responding to, and recovering from climate-related shocks and stresses is vital.

Building on the “Big Push”

The “Big Push” initiative marks a pivotal next step in the global fight against malaria. Over the next five years, this country-driven, multistakeholder effort will develop and implement a comprehensive plan to reignite progress towards malaria eradication. The strategy will focus on strengthening collaboration among key partners, including the RBM Partnership, WHO, the African Union, and other regional and global organisations. By fostering alignment and shared objectives, the “Big Push” aims to address the stalled progress and set a clear roadmap for achieving the GTS targets by 2030. This initiative will leverage political support, technical expertise, and strategic guidance to fortify the foundations necessary for eradicating malaria.



Multisectoral approach

To effectively eliminate malaria, it will be crucial that the RBM Partnership continues to focus on deploying a multisectoral approach. This involves coordinating efforts across a range of sectors, including health, education, and economic development to confront the root causes and broader impacts of malaria. Prioritising a holistic approach and response to malaria will result in a more resilient and equitable outcome to coordinated efforts.

Tools and innovation

The approval of the world's second malaria vaccine, the R21/Matrix-M, represented a significant step towards the ultimate goal of eliminating malaria globally. Global organisations must invest heavily in the development of new tools to continue to grow the toolbox against a disease that is rapidly evolving and outsmarting current defence mechanisms. Prioritising vaccines, amongst other tools such as Insecticide Treated Nets, will be key to maintaining current progress against malaria, especially as climate change continues to drive the disease to new locations and put new populations at risk.

Gender focused approach

It is also imperative to address the gender-specific impacts of malaria, as women bear a disproportionate burden of malaria globally. Women make up 70% of community health workforces that are instrumental in controlling malaria incidences and deaths in remote and rural communities over the last twenty years. In 2020 alone, catastrophic health expenditures – costs surpassing 40% of a family's income – affected over 47% of households in low- and middle-income countries, including 1.9 billion people living in high-risk malaria areas. Women are oftentimes the un-thanked and selfless individuals who sacrifice themselves to the informal "care economy," preventing them from entering the workforce or education system. Moving forward, strategies must prioritise gender inclusivity by ensuring that women have equitable access to malaria prevention, treatment, and resources.



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