Malaria transmission is confined to the north-east part of Namibia where malaria is endemic and about 72% of the population of the country is at risk. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 36,451 with 82 deaths.
Malaria
Sustaining Essential Health Services During the COVID-19 Pandemic
The COVID-19 pandemic is putting an incredible strain on health systems across Africa. Health systems are required to maintain routine health services for other illnesses even as they handle the additional burden of COVID-19. In order to prevent widespread morbidity and mortality, it is of vital importance that we work to sustain the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during this difficult time including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent health and malaria.

WHO underlines the critical importance of sustaining efforts to prevent, detect and treat malaria during the COVID-19 pandemic. It is of vital importance to ensure the continuity of malaria prevention and treatment services including distribution of insecticide-treated nets and indoor residual spraying. Any intervention must consider the importance of both lowering malaria-related mortality and ensuring the safety of communities and health workers given the ease of transmission of COVID-19.

For Namibia, it will be of vital importance that the indoor residual spraying campaign planned for the fourth quarter of 2020 goes ahead and that the insecticides for the campaign are ordered on time, whilst taking into account physical distancing, in accordance with the recent guidance and recommendations from WHO. Without this IRS, coupled with the need to sustain essential health services including malaria case management, it is estimated by WHO that there will be an increase in malaria cases. Under the worst-case scenario, in which there is a 75% reduction in access to effective antimalarial medicines, WHO estimate that there could be a 23.3% increase in malaria cases, and a 162.4% increase in malaria deaths in Namibia. This scenario would represent a complete reversal in the substantial progress in malaria mortality reductions seen over the last 2 decades.

Progress
Namibia secured sufficient funding for the required number of ACTs, RDTs and IRS for 2020. The country has recently reported the insecticide resistance data to WHO. The country has also achieved high IRS coverage. Namibia enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms for malaria with the development of a Malaria Elimination Scorecard. The country has also shared the results of the insecticide resistance monitoring with WHO.

Impact
The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2018 was 36,451 with 82 deaths.

Key Challenges
- Maintaining malaria high on the political and funding agenda.
- There is a need to strengthen cross border collaboration with neighbouring countries.
- The increase in malaria incidence and mortality rates projected by WHO.
- Gaps in funding for LLINs.
- Sustaining the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child health including malaria.
### Previous Key Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective</th>
<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
<th>Progress</th>
<th>Comments - key activities/accomplishments since last quarterly report</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vector Control</td>
<td>Ensure the IRS programme is fully implemented before the beginning of the malaria season</td>
<td>Q4 2019</td>
<td></td>
<td>IRS was not fully implemented due to the late arrival of insecticides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that malaria services including case management and vector control are sustained and implemented whilst using COVID-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Whist the country initially experienced shortages of malaria commodities for diagnosis and treatment due to the constrained movement and transportation restrictions, there are now sufficient stocks of RDTs and ACTs. Caregivers have sufficient PPEs and are adhering to COVID-19 guidelines. IRS is planned for September/October with available stocks of DDT and the delivery of Sumishield from Japan ongoing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vector Control</td>
<td>Address the declining vector control coverage</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>The country has sufficient DDT stocks for the next season. The field assessment of Sumishield has been completed and the insecticide is being ordered from the manufacturer in Japan for the spraying season in September</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impact</td>
<td>Work to address the reported increases in cases observed in Q1 2020</td>
<td>Q2 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Following the reported increase in cases, immediately after the RDTs and ACTs were received in the country, the NMCP strengthened its disease surveillance through case detection and treatment to address the malaria upsurge which was reported in Q1 2020. Cases have since declined</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Namibia has responded positively to the recommended action on addressing the lack of data on iCCM and continues to strengthen access to treatment of malaria, pneumonia and diarrhoea.

### New Key Recommended Actions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Action Item</th>
<th>Suggested completion timeframe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vector Control</td>
<td>Ensure the IRS commodities are procured in time for the 2020 IRS campaigns</td>
<td>Q3 2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
RMNCAH and NTDs

Progress

Namibia has good coverage of the tracer RMNCAH intervention skilled birth attendants and ART coverage in the total population. The country has enhanced tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of a Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Child and Adolescent Health Scorecard.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Namibia is shown using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for schistosomiasis and soil transmitted helminths. The country has not reported on their NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage in 2018 to WHO. The country has enhanced the tracking and accountability mechanisms with the development of the NTD scorecard.

Previous Key Recommended Actions

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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH(^1): Impact</td>
<td>Ensure that essential RMNCAH services are sustained and implemented whilst using Covid-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic. Address any stock-outs of essential RMNCAH commodities</td>
<td>Q4 2020</td>
<td></td>
<td>Essential RMNCAH services were provided at all the health facilities throughout the COVID19 lockdown period. Due to restrictions especially EPI services was affected as vaccine stock outs were experienced. Caregivers have sufficient PPEs and are adhering to COVID-19 guidelines</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Namibia has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended action addressing the low coverage of vitamin A, which has recently increased.

Key

- Action achieved
- Some progress
- No progress
- Deliverable not yet due

\(^1\) RMNCAH metrics, recommended actions and response tracked through WHO