The entire population of Gabon is at high risk for malaria. Transmission is intense throughout the year in the northern part of the country and more seasonal in the south. The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 127,500 with 224 deaths.
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. 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, Neglected Tropical Diseases and malaria.

For Gabon, the country is encouraged to sustain the delivery of essential health services including malaria case management, during the COVID-19 pandemic. 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 1.5% increase in malaria cases, and a 117% increase in malaria deaths in Gabon. This scenario would represent a complete reversal in the substantial progress in malaria mortality reductions seen over the last 2 decades.

WHO estimates that there were an additional 47,000 malaria deaths globally in 2020 due to service disruptions during the COVID-19 pandemic, leading to an estimated 7.5% increase in deaths.

It is essential to ensure the continuity of malaria, RMNCAH and NTD services in 2022 as the COVID-19 pandemic continues to impact our continent. This may include the implementation of any necessary catch-up activities and ensuring timely planning to account for potential delays in procurement and delivery. Any intervention must ensure the safety of communities and health workers given the ease of transmission of COVID-19.

The country has been affected by the continent-wide restriction of access to COVID-19 vaccines and had only been able to cover 8% of their population by the end of 2021.

Malaria

Progress

Gabon has recently submitted the results of insecticide resistance testing to WHO. The country reports that the majority of the population access RDTs and ACTs through the health insurance scheme.

In line with the legacy agenda of the ALMA chair, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta, the country has planned for the launch of the Gabon End Malaria Fund

Impact

The annual reported number of malaria cases in 2020 was 127,500 with 224 deaths.

Key Challenges

- Insufficient resources to achieve high coverage of essential malaria interventions.
- Sustaining the delivery of essential life-saving interventions during the COVID-19 pandemic including for Reproductive, Maternal, Newborn, Adolescent and Child health, malaria and Neglected Tropical Diseases.
## 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>Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Provide data on the scale up iCCM implementation country wide</td>
<td>Q1 2017</td>
<td></td>
<td>The country plans to scale up iCCM with the training of 2,000 CHWs countrywide, however, there is a need to mobilise 2.9 million Euros in order to implement this. The country is hoping that the launch of the End Malaria Fund will contribute to filling some of the identified gaps including for iCCM.</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 2022</td>
<td></td>
<td>The country has noted some reductions in access to health facilities during the COVID-19 pandemic. Gabon distributed over 80,000 LLINs to pregnant women and children under 1. Resource mobilisation is ongoing to fill gaps in malaria programming with the launch of the Gabon End Malaria Council under development. The country reports that there are adequate supplies of ACTs and RDTs.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gabon has responded to the recommended actions addressing financing of anti-malarial commodities and continues to track progress as these actions are implemented.

### RMNCAH and NTDs

#### Progress

Gabon has achieved high coverage of the tracer RMNCAH interventions of skilled birth attendants and has recently increased coverage of ARTs in children.

Progress in addressing Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) in Gabon is shown using a composite index calculated from preventive chemotherapy coverage achieved for lymphatic filariasis, onchocerciasis, schistosomiasis, and soil transmitted helminths. In 2020, preventive chemotherapy coverage was 41% for soil-transmitted helminths and 0% for schistosomiasis, lymphatic filariasis, and onchocerciasis. Overall, the NTD preventive chemotherapy coverage index for Gabon in 2020 is zero, with no change compared with the 2019 index value of 0.
## Previous Key Recommended Actions

<table>
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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</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No progress reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RMNCAH(^1): Optimise quality of care</td>
<td>Investigate and address the reasons for the lack of reported data on vitamin A coverage</td>
<td>Q2 2019</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>No progress reported</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NTDs</td>
<td>Recognising the negative impact of COVID-19 on the 2020 MDA coverage, ensure that NTD interventions including MDAs, vector control and Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention are sustained and implemented whilst using Covid-19 sensitive guidelines during the pandemic. This includes prioritizing key necessary catch up activities including mobilizing resources for NTDs including for community based distribution</td>
<td>Q4 2022</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>The country is conducting NTD routine activities whilst respecting COVID-19 preventive measures and is in the process of preparing a confirmation mapping of lymphatic filariasis as well as the MDA for Soil Transmitted Helminths, Schistosomiasis and Lymphatic Filariasis to be conducted early next year</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Gabon has responded positively to the RMNCAH recommended actions addressing low coverage of exclusive breastfeeding and continues to track progress as this action is implemented.

### Key

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

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