

Strengthening malaria surveillance in Madagascar using data dashboards

Background

In the fight against malaria in Madagascar, having the right information to understand how to target resources is critical. While the country has made significant progress over the past few years, malaria data was incomplete and analysis was not always optimized—making it difficult for the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) to measure progress toward crucial milestones related to effective implementation of malaria treatment and prevention interventions and achieving the objectives of the National Strategic Plan (2023–2027).



The Division Chief of NMCP's SM&E Division Team in December 2023. Photo credit: CHISU

Steps Taken

To ensure timely delivery of information packaged in a way to guide decision making, USAID's Country Health Information Systems and Data Use (CHISU) program developed a weekly malaria surveillance dashboard to improve the analysis and communication of surveillance data. The dashboard brings data together to support early detection of

Country Health Information Systems and Data Use (CHISU) is USAID's flagship data and information system program to strengthen host country capacity and leadership to manage and use health information systems to improve evidence-based decision-making. www.chisuprogram.org

epidemiological trends and rapid adaptation of interventions—critical improvements for a more effective fight against malaria.

“The weekly surveillance dashboard proves to be a true strategic asset,” said Davy Ratovondramamy, head of the NMCP surveillance unit. “With the CHISU team, we have developed this essential tool that not only allows for regular analysis of the malaria situation, but also timely preventive measures to counter any resurgence of the disease, down to the level of health facilities.”

To strengthen data collection, analysis, and use, CHISU and the NMCP hosted three workshops across three regions: Atsimo Atsinanana, Boeny, and Vatovavy, which included 76 trainees from 25 districts.

Results + Next Steps

Following the training, the proportion of primary health facilities in these regions reporting complete data increased from 92 percent to 98 percent. NMCP’s Harimisa Randrianaivalona said that with these changes, the NMCP is now more motivated to use data to guide decisions.

“The collaboration with CHISU has greatly enhanced my personal capacity as well as that of NMCP teams, particularly in the areas of program management, surveillance, and malaria monitoring and evaluation within my division,” he said. “I have observed a significant change: the motivation of NMCP teams, especially my teams and regional coaches, has seen a noticeable increase—not only encouraging them to appreciate the data, but also to actively integrate it into our decision-making processes. Regional coaches who are at the central level are now much closer with regional malaria managers.”



The NMCP team during the malaria M&E plan development workshop in February 2024. Photo credit: CHISU

Following the training, NCMP staff also identified and corrected discrepancies in reporting using a monitoring tool that CHISU introduced to detect data anomalies in real time. The NCMP surveillance team quickly identified several data anomalies during the systematic check of the weekly surveillance report, and now the weekly surveillance dashboard tool detects all abnormal situations across national, subnational, and facility levels. The analysis of the data made it possible to set priorities on the actions to be taken.

Urbain Rabibizaka, the NMCP database manager, explained how the dashboard and training has impacted his work. “The NMCP initiatives supported by CHISU have bolstered our efforts and motivation to delve deeper into the management and analysis of malaria data,” he said. “For example, we have been able to refine and enhance existing tools to the extent that anomalies detected in malaria data are now automatically flagged.”



The NMCP SM&E division data manager in February 2024. Photo credit: CHISU



This publication was produced with the support of the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) under the terms of #7200AA20CA00009. Views expressed are not necessarily those of USAID or the United States government.

