



# Convening malaria experts in Burundi to better understand and address recent increases in the disease

## Background

Malaria is a significant public health challenge in Burundi, with over 8 million malaria cases reported in 2022—an increase from the 6 million cases reported in 2021.<sup>1</sup> One reason for this is the absence of a formal mechanism to share and act on routine malaria data across the multiple stakeholders that are needed to coordinate a response in the country. In addition, an evaluation of the country’s strategic plan showed that malaria data management and quality in the country’s health information system, District Health Information Software 2 (DHIS2), needed improvement.

The evaluation also highlighted the need for improved coordination among stakeholders across the health system, as well as stronger processes for data collection, management, and use to better inform and manage malaria interventions and improve health outcomes.

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<sup>1</sup> PMI. “Burundi.” Accessed May 13, 2024.

<https://www.pmi.gov/where-we-work/burundi/#:~:text=Malaria%20is%20the%20leading%20cause,6%2C758%2C569%20cases%20reported%20in%202021.>

## Steps Taken

USAID's Country Health Information Systems and Data Use (CHISU) program provides technical support to the National Integrated Malaria Control Program (PNILP). One important step was revitalizing the National Malaria Technical Working Group (TWG), which had not regularly convened because the PNILP lacked the technical and logistical capacities needed to do so. The TWG is dedicated to surveillance, monitoring, evaluation, and operational research to improve both epidemiological and entomological surveillance, as well as the quality of health service delivery data. These efforts are intended to improve the information used to make decisions about the strategies and activities to combat malaria in Burundi.

“The establishment of the technical working group for surveillance, monitoring, and evaluation, operational research and management of malaria epidemics is among the priorities of the PNILP,” said Dr. MUGISHA Landrine, the co-chair of the deputy director of the PNILP. “This is an important platform to discuss and address malaria data quality and use problems and maintain achievements.”

CHISU worked with the PNILP to organize a workshop to develop and validate the terms of reference (TOR) of the TWG and develop an action plan to coordinate efforts aimed at improving data quality. This included fostering a culture of information demand and use at both central and peripheral levels by developing tools to improve supervision and data review and analysis—including visualization of malaria data in DHIS2—to provide more actionable data.



Participants at a workshop for developing the technical working group terms of reference. Photo credit: CHISU

CHISU, in collaboration with PNILP and other partners, organized two quarterly data review and analysis meetings during which the action plan for improving data quality was developed and is now being implemented. These meetings will also be conducted at the provincial and district levels to enable these entities to detect data quality issues and correct them in a timely manner.

## Expected Results + Next Steps

CHISU is partnering with health information system stakeholders in Burundi to advance the country's HIS progression through better coordination, data management, and data use, aiming for the results below.

- The malaria monitoring, evaluation, and epidemiological surveillance TWG is regularly meeting to review data and coordinate activities

- A culture of data analysis and use across malaria partners is established
- The quality of routine malaria data reporting is improved
- The quality of malaria data at all levels is improved
- The quality of entomological data is improved
- Epidemics are detected earlier to improve the response
- Operational research is strengthened to learn from implementation

CHISU will continue to organize data review and analysis meetings and will develop data quality improvement plans at all levels of the health system. We will also work to strengthen data managers' monitoring and evaluation capacity at all levels using guides developed by CHISU to improve supervision and data quality review. This will include a peripheral-level coaching system and supportive supervision in carrying out data quality supervision visits to strengthen in-country capacity to better manage and use data.



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