

Statement on Accounting for Existing Nets
August 30, 2012

Quantifying the numbers of LLINs needed for national scale Universal Coverage campaigns is critically important to ensure that a sufficient number of nets are procured to meet the objectives of the campaign and to protect the whole population at risk from infection and reduce transmission of malaria. Recent field experience has documented that physically accounting for pre-existing LLINs through household registration of previously distributed nets is difficult, costly and may not yield accurate information on the location and availability of functional LLINs, especially where population coverage of nets is low. Through household registration, it is difficult to distinguish between households that are inaccurately identified as needing additional nets and those that genuinely have a net need. Results from Senegal and Nigeria indicate that only about 50% of the expected number of nets, calculated from the number of nets previously distributed and adjusted for assumed net loss over time, are actually identified in households visited by registration teams. Additionally, attempts to account for existing nets in quantifying the LLIN needs for a planned mass distribution campaign may underestimate the actual net need because nets that are functional but close to the end of their useful life at the time of household registration are counted against the household net need. Consequently, there is a significant risk that too few nets are procured to reach stated campaign objectives. Furthermore, since LLIN quantification estimates for campaigns are at the administrative area level (district, region, etc), it becomes operationally difficult to know how to allocate LLINs in campaigns to those households that truly need them.

Thus, it is the opinion of the Alliance for Malaria Prevention workstream of the Harmonization Working Group, that when universal coverage LLIN mass campaigns are carried out at any scale, programs should only consider taking existing nets into account (by not replacing existing LLINs in good condition with new LLINs) if the population coverage of LLINs is greater than 40% and the average (mean) age of existing LLINs is less than two years. In circumstances when the LLIN population coverage exceeds 40% and the mean age of existing LLINs is less than two years (at the time of the projected distribution) then a more careful cost analysis should be undertaken. This analysis should include the feasibility of identifying existing LLINs in households and assessing their condition accurately, as well as the additional costs of adding these activities to the net registration process.