

AMP The Alliance for Malaria Prevention

Expanding the ownership and use of mosquito nets

Situation report – LLIN campaign in the Central African Republic

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Dates covered by report: September 12th – October 3rd, 2017
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Background: The Central African Republic is planning to undertake a mass campaign distribution between now and the end of the year. The entire campaign is funded by the Global Fund (net procurement and operational costs) and will be implemented through partners with access and capacity in the targeted areas.

Initially, the campaign aimed to cover health regions 4, 5 and 6 that were not covered in the 2014 – 2015 campaign, as well as Bangui in order to replace nets distributed in 2014. The security situation in the interior of the country is fluid, with a number of districts experiencing fighting between various armed groups, as well as between armed groups and MINUSCA soldiers. Prior to the microplanning, an updated security mapping was done to assess the access and feasibility for implementing the LLIN distribution in the targeted health regions (districts). Based on that assessment, it was determined that partners were still able to work in 18 of the 32 districts initially targeted and the microplanning workshops took place in July. Bangui's eight arrondissements are all accessible.

Partners identified for the LLIN campaign are largely national NGOs, an advantage in a context where iNGOs may pull out in times of extreme crisis. However, each of these organizations has been assessed and there are capacity limitations, particularly in terms of financial management systems.

The campaign is one phase, with household registration/distribution of LLINs happening simultaneously. Teams of two volunteers will go door-to-door to distribute nets, reaching approximately 25 – 30 households per day. In order to allow supervisors to supervise, mobile warehouses have been introduced to reduce burden on the supervision team. A contingency plan is in place if the D2D does not work over the first days.

As the IFRC will discontinue its role as the PR on the GF grants for CAR (HIV/TB and malaria) as of end of December 2017, there are new and different risks for both the PR and the GF as the year comes to an end and feasibility of the campaign is continually assessed and updated for all targeted areas and all partners.

Situation September 12th – October 3rd:

The situation on arrival is that while a lot of planning has taken place, not enough decisions have been taken in a concrete manner to move the distribution forward towards the date set for the launch, which is proposed to be led by the President. On arrival, the date set for the launch was October 25th, but the state of preparedness would have made this date impossible to meet if the distribution should start the following day. As the dossier submitted for

review by the President's office was returned for modification, it was possible to revise the proposed launch date to November 3rd, which will still be a rush to meet.

The time in country has been dedicated to accelerating the planning for the campaign. Key activities include:

- **Microplanning** – while the microplanning workshops took place in July, there were no finalized microplans and budgets as the strategy for the door-to-door distribution and how it can be best arranged has been in flux. There was a need to update and revise the microplans for Bangui due to a strategy change (e.g. introduction of “mobile warehouses” to supply door-to-door distribution teams), which has been accomplished, including a full revision of the central level budget.

For the 18 districts in the interior of the country, microplanning is complete but the microplans remain to be cleaned and validated based on a change in roles and responsibilities (e.g. partners will now take responsibility for LLINs at the level of the district warehouse versus the level of the pre-positioning site). Work is continuing on macro budgeting for the logistics costs to be included in partner contracts.

Overall, the microplanning quality is weak (population numbers essentially aligned to population projections from a census done in 2003 and what was done for the grant submission) in terms of accurate data collection from health facility and other levels. As this is likely linked to government planning (e.g. population numbers dictate number of health facilities, etc.), it is not surprising, but creates a problem in terms of planning, particularly for enough teams to achieve campaign objectives in the time allocated. For this reason, a 25% addition was applied to the population of Bangui (due to movement towards the capital for security reasons and based on a projection from the previous campaign in 2014) to ensure sufficient teams and nets are available.

- **Review of data collection materials** – the intention during the campaign is to use Maggi to rapidly enter data. This system is currently used in CAR for monthly routine reporting from health facilities and NMCP focal points in each district.

All data collection materials for Bangui and the regions have been revised and updated in collaboration with the M&E team. The current plan is that door-to-door distribution teams will summarize data, which will be aggregated first by community supervisors and then by “groupement” supervisors. The “groupement” supervisors will submit all data collection forms to the data manager for the arrondissement (equivalent to district in this context), who will verify and send the data by SMS to the database for immediate analysis. Feedback will be sent to supervisors before the following morning to allow reinforcement in terms of quality of activities.

This system will only work in Bangui and modifications will need to be made for the regions.

- **Review of communication materials** – the radio messages did not include any type of “call to action” and were more designed as “infomercials”. These have been revised and updated to provide both information and a call to action (hopefully!). The spots have been produced and validated. There are 6 spots (3 phases – door-to-door distribution, use and maintenance – in 2 languages (Sango and French)) that will be aired for 6 weeks. They will begin 10 days in advance of the door-to-door distribution. Pro forma received for three radio stations.
- **Review of training materials – program and logistics** – all agendas, job aids, practical exercises and the training materials have been reviewed and finalized. Final versions are being printed now. Extensive work has been done to ensure that the trainings are participatory and simulation exercises have been developed. The training manual from the previous campaign, plus the revised manual developed earlier in the year, have been reviewed and a consolidated manual has been produced. Due to time constraints, this module is more heavily based on the previous versus the new manual.

- **Review of advocacy and media briefing materials** – the advocacy presentation, key messages, dossier de presse, FAQs have all been revised and are either in the course of printing or already delivered. The packaging activity has commenced, with all packages for the advocacy meetings already prepared. Advocacy packages include t-shirts, posters, key messages, the advocacy presentation, etc. In total, 12 advocacy meetings will take place on October 9th and 10th. While there are 8 arrondissements in Bangui, certain ones are experiencing more tension than others and all leaders will not attend the same meeting. For this reason, in 4 of the 8 arrondissements, there will be two advocacy meetings versus one.
- **Rapid monitoring during the door-to-door distribution** – the protocol, sampling framework and questionnaire are all in draft form to be finalized. The objective of the rapid monitoring is to ensure coverage and quality of the door-to-door distribution. As per the other data, Magpi will be used for the data analysis. This will allow for comparison with program and logistics data.
- **Logistics planning** – the planning has continued for the pre-positioning of the nets and the necessary repairs to ensure the security of the nets during storage. Contract negotiations and signing are under way with all logistics actors, but a number of things need final decisions from the PR management team, which will hopefully happen tomorrow. The context of Bangui, in terms of the sites identified for pre-positioning nets, is complicated. The introduction of the mobile warehouses (at least 1 per pre-positioning site based on number of teams working from the PPS) created another wrinkle and the team has been working on moving all information from the microplanning into a micro transport and storage plan.

All of the logistics tools have been finalized (for training and implementation).

Printing of all materials is taking place and at a much faster pace than in 2014 – 2015.

- **Finance planning** – there are enormous complications and risks associated with the volume of people to be paid where (1) many will not have identification to cash cheques; (2) the bank does not have capacity to pay the number or people needed on time and (3) mobile money is a very limited option. This is a situation remaining to be resolved.

The Week Ahead –

The schedule moving forward is incredibly tight:

- ✚ Week of October 9th – packaging (ongoing), training of the data managers for all arrondissements (Monday to Wednesday), engagement meetings in all arrondissements (Monday and Tuesday), briefing of the media (Monday), training of the logistics team (Wednesday to Friday), planning for TOT for implementation, development of plans for D2D team movement
- ✚ Week of October 13th – Training for implementation