

PLANNING AND OPERATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MULTI-PRODUCT ITN CAMPAIGNS

AMP The Alliance for Malaria Prevention

Expanding the ownership and use of mosquito nets

Many countries are planning or implementing insecticide-treated net (ITN) campaigns that include more than one type of ITN targeted to specific areas in the country¹. This may include pyrethroid-only nets, pyrethroid-PBO² nets, and/or new types of ITNs containing pyrethroid insecticide and other active ingredients being piloted under the New Nets Project.

This document summarizes some key issues that National Malaria Control (or Elimination) Programmes and partners will need to consider when planning a multi-product ITN campaign. It will be updated based on country experiences and best practices. It supplements existing guidance for planning and implementing mass campaigns that can be found in the Alliance for Malaria Prevention Toolkit 2.0 and updated resources (<https://allianceformalariaprevention.com/amp-tools/amp-toolkit/>).

The information contained herein is specific to operational aspects of ITN campaigns and their planning. It does not touch on issues of strategy such as net type selection or the linkages to insecticide resistance data or monitoring.

1. Note that net "type" does not refer to brand. "Type" refers to different technical types of nets used in ITN campaigns and continuous distribution.

2. Piperonyl butoxide.



Coordination and early planning

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Establish the national coordination structure for the campaign early, bringing together all key stakeholders and partners (including the relevant government line ministries and departments).
 - Reach alignment on the approaches needed to achieve success.
 - The national coordination structure should oversee the planning and implementation of the campaign, in particular management of communications concerning different net types.

- Update continuous distribution plans in line with the decisions made on targeting of different types of nets, including the management of any leftover campaign nets (see logistics section below). Ideally, planning should aim to have the same type of net being distributed through both campaign and continuous distribution channels in any one area.
- Ensure that planning for transition of net types within the continuous distribution supply chain takes into account arrival dates of nets of different types and existing stocks within the supply chain.
- For areas transitioning from one type of net to another, consider doing the following:
 - Inform all levels that continuous distribution of existing nets should carry on until other nets are provided. There should be no halt in continuous distribution due to differences in net type.
 - Inventory existing ITN stock at all health facilities where a change in net type is planned. Ideally existing stock should be left in place and continue to be distributed, with stock of the new net type being used once the existing stock is depleted. However, if there is more than three months stock of existing nets, programmes may want to consider whether to move these to other locations where the net type aligns. Costs and effort involved should be considered.
 - Inform health facility staff that the nets must be managed and accounted for separately by type (i.e. separate stock sheets, specification of nets on distribution reporting tools).

RATIONALE

To ensure all stakeholders and partners understand and support the rationale for a multi-product campaign and the net type targeting decisions.

To maximize coverage, and potentially impact, in the specific geographical locations.

To help prevent stock ruptures or problems with reporting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Order (or instruct procurement agent to order) different bale colours (by preference) or different coloured labels on bales for each net type.
 - Note that net “type” does not refer to brand and should be linked to the “type” of nets differentiated within your ITN campaign and continuous distribution planning (i.e. pyrethroid-only, pyrethroid-PBO or new types of ITNs containing pyrethroid insecticide and other active ingredients). It does not mean that each different brand of nets of a specific “type” should be differentiated.
 - Ensure that any accessories that pair with the ITNs, such as hanging supports or educational materials, are coded the same way.
 - Ensure that bales have the same quantity of nets (e.g. all bales with 50 nets) to ensure that the colour coding of the bales or labels does not create confusion where the net type is the same but the bale packing is different.
 - Differentiate the bales by large visual markings (paint or labels) if it is not possible to procure with different coloured baling or labelling. Budget for what will be used to differentiate the bales of different types of nets if it will be done on arrival in-country.
 - Ensure pre/post shipment quality assurance/quality control (QA/QC) standards for new nets are understood and identify any steps required for importation to the country that may be different from pyrethroid-only nets.
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- Track net orders to ensure estimated dates of arrival for all net types align with campaign timeline.
 - Shift timeline of activities as needed or consider phased distribution if there are delays in net arrival.

RATIONALE

To allow differentiation during storage and transport, particularly if different net types will be mixed in warehouses.

The QA/QC pre/post shipment standards may be different from a standard pyrethroid-only net.

To avoid last minute planning and allow timely modifications if certain nets arrive later than others.



Macro and microplanning

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Develop or update the campaign plan of action (POA) to include multi-product campaign modifications.
- Review all macroplanning documents (POA, logistics plan, communication plan, monitoring and evaluation [M&E] plan, timeline, budget and risk assessment and mitigation plan) to reflect the guidance provided in this document. Finalize documents for validation 9 – 12 months before the planned distribution date.
- Develop a detailed risk assessment and mitigation framework that includes the potential risks of a multi-product campaign and identifies mitigating approaches. Examples of specific multi-product campaign risks may include delivery to the wrong area, misinformation or rumours, delays to the campaign that lead to higher costs, insufficient nets of a specific type following microplanning or household registration, etc.
- Develop district-level risk assessment and mitigation plans during microplanning, based on the national level risk and mitigation planning. Ensure that local health facility staff and community members provide inputs, especially in areas that will use a new net type.
- At the macroplanning stage, do not set caps (maximum number) on the number of nets that a household should receive. The quantification used for procurement should be sufficient to meet the needs of the entire population.
- Following compilation of the microplans, review the data regarding population and ITN needs. If necessary, decide whether caps are needed and develop justification for the cap(s) to be set, where and why.
- Do not set a cap in intervention and comparator areas in New Net Project countries where evaluations will be taking place to look at the effectiveness of the new nets.

RATIONALE

To:

- i) align approaches, strategies, needs and budgets
- ii) identify and mitigate against the potential risks involved with a multi-product campaign
- iii) reduce the chance of delays in rolling out activities
- iv) ensure early implementation of mitigation strategies based on the timeline established

To allow for district-specific mitigation of risks to be built into the social and behaviour change communication (SBCC) operational plan and budget on time.

To ensure maximum coverage with ITNs available and, where necessary, determine caps to be applied, including where and how, based on data collected.

To facilitate high coverage of newly distributed nets in all areas where pilot evaluations are conducted.

Logistics: transport, storage and tracking

RECOMMENDATIONS

RATIONALE

- Decide on the management of leftover campaign nets and ensure clear communication on these decisions to the regional, district and sub-district Ministry of Health personnel and government authorities. Options for leftover nets include:
 - Lateral or reverse logistics to fill gaps in other areas receiving the same type of net.
 - Transfer to continuous distribution channels.
 - Reverse logistics to a higher level (such as district or region) for inventory and subsequent deployment, etc.
- Ensure that an inventory of existing nets (if any) is done in advance of transferring the leftover campaign nets to the stock for continuous distribution.
- Ensure that stock and distribution reporting tools at all levels allow for identification of net type (see updated stock sheets on AMP website).

To avoid problems with final reconciliation and reverse logistics at the end of the distribution due to unclear roles and responsibilities regarding "ownership" of the nets.

To avoid a lack of accountability from mixing products on stock management and ITN distribution reporting forms.

- Develop detailed, costed micro-transport plans that will minimize chances of mixing different types of nets.
- Ensure adequate budget for lateral or reverse logistics, which may involve higher costs due to smaller quantities of a single product in a vehicle.

To allow for an adequate budget for transport and avoid a "field-fix" that creates more problems due to insufficient resources.

- Ensure storage space planning includes additional storage space where multiple products will be stored together. Estimate an additional 20 – 25 per cent (above the 20 per cent already recommended for single-product campaigns) space required when looking for appropriate warehousing.
- Ensure that warehouse evaluation and verification (including access, security, etc.) take place in advance of ITN arrival.

To avoid mixing types of nets in storage and allow for regular physical inventories of nets in stock.

- Update logistics training materials to reflect needs of multi-product campaign, including documentation in warehouses, storage and stacking practices to avoid accountability problems and management of multiple products in a single warehouse as applicable.
- Ensure that logistics training includes the plans for leftover nets and how these should be managed and accounted for.
- Develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for management of different types of nets for continuous distribution and ensure the SOPs are brought to the attention of district and health facility staff in case training is organized infrequently.

To ensure full accountability through correct use of tracking tools and appropriate ITN management for all nets of all types delivered to the country for distribution.

Additional training may be needed to ensure the different ITNs are recorded separately and correctly.

Documenting procedures will allow for standardization and facilitate reporting.

- Avoid unloading/loading different types of nets at the same time. Logistics training should specify unloading one container (or truck or boat) at a time for ease in counting and appropriate stacking.

To ensure appropriate accounting for each type of net and minimize risk of mixing different products.

➤ Budget for the logistics sub-committee and national/regional supervisors to undertake spot checks, with purposeful sampling of locations where different types of nets should be delivered, as well as at different points during the logistics operation.

➤ Ensure ITN reconciliation and reverse (or lateral) logistics take place as per the decisions taken early in the planning period and per communication that has been sent to the district and regional Ministry of Health teams.

➤ Report immediately to NMCP/NMEP any challenges with the management of leftover nets to avoid accountability problems.

➤ In almost all settings, it is not recommended to remove old nets from households when providing new nets, even if the two are different types.

To ensure high accountability through correct use of tracking tools during loading and unloading. To verify that the right type of net is arriving in the right location in the right quantity.

To minimize the risk that nets are not returned at the end of the campaign or are “lost” in terms of their accountability on the tracking tools, etc.

Removing existing nets may create coverage gaps and lead to unneeded waste management challenges.



Communication

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Decide whether communication messages will include that different nets are going to different places and, if so, at which levels, when, to which audiences and through which channels.
 - If the decision is taken to communicate the differences, make sure the messaging includes that the nets are targeted based on the epidemiological and entomological profile of different areas and that all nets being distributed are effective. Use maps or other visual communication materials that facilitate understanding by non-technical audiences.
- Do not refer to certain nets as “better” or next generation.
- Modify subnational communication plans, if necessary, depending on the decisions taken around the communication messages and channels.
- Develop a rumour control plan during macroplanning that addresses different possible sources and content of rumours, and which can be adapted and deployed quickly by Ministry of Health staff, government authorities and partners. Ensure that the management of issues/rumours is reflected in the terms of reference of the coordination committees at all levels.

- Ensure that advocacy meetings with political leaders, influential persons and key partners and stakeholders at the national level include information about the different types of nets that will be distributed and why (as per above).
- Decide if advocacy meetings at lower levels with the same target groups should include information about multiple types of nets.

- Promote immediate hanging of the newly distributed nets, particularly for pregnant women and children under five.
- Emphasize that all nets being distributed through the campaign are effective for malaria prevention and must be hung and used by the entire family, every night, throughout the year.
- Reinforce the importance of using all available nets, including nets received prior to the campaign (from a previous campaign or through continuous distribution), to cover everyone in the household.

- Develop communication messages around “old nets” and their appropriate disposal as part of the campaign communication plan to encourage the immediate hanging and use of the newly distributed nets.

RATIONALE

Countries may or may not want to communicate that different nets are going to different areas for a variety of reasons including:

- Preference to simplify messaging (e.g. to communicate a simple message about net hanging and use without specifying different net types).
- Perceptions, hanging and use (e.g. people not receiving a “new” or “different” net may decide that the net they received is not as good, leading to low hanging and use rates).
- Transparency on the part of the government and avoidance of rumours (e.g. some countries may communicate about different nets and clearly explain why they are being distributed to avoid rumours starting).
- Political interference (e.g. for countries with upcoming elections or political sensitivities, there are risks that the different net types become politicized as part of campaigning).

Despite all efforts, rumours may arise, and it is critical to be prepared to address them in a timely manner.

To develop high awareness and sufficient engagement of key leaders at the national level which will be important for ensuring a coordinated response in the case of rumours beginning or other issues arising.

To ensure that campaign and country targets are met in terms of ITN use by the entire population at risk of malaria.

Nets currently hanging may be in good condition and may create coverage gaps if removed. Consider encouraging households to use the newly distributed net(s) for pregnant women and children to prompt immediate use. Ensure messages about repurposing of old nets are given to beneficiaries during household registration and/or ITN distribution. **Consensus Statement on Repurposing ITNs.**

Supervision and monitoring

RECOMMENDATIONS

- Review the previous campaign reporting in terms of the effectiveness of the supervision and monitoring (internal and external) to ensure that weaknesses are addressed and successes are reinforced during the planning and budgeting for the campaign.
- Ensure that quality control of the household registration, preferably external, is planned and budgeted.
- Plan and budget for end process monitoring immediately post-distribution to allow for any necessary mop-up activities to take place (e.g. areas that were not covered during registration or did not pick up nets, areas where nets received are not being aired and hung, etc.). Ensure that monitoring questionnaires include differentiation by net type.

- Determine NMCP/NMEP and stakeholder evaluation questions and possible evaluation methods for answering such questions. Assess whether any long-term research or evaluation of the different ITN types, associated distribution processes, and perceptions and usage is required. Plan and budget for evaluation or research before ITNs are distributed.
- Include qualitative questions around attitudes and behaviour during post campaign assessments to determine if there are differences in utilization between areas in terms of type of net.
- Note that countries included in the New Nets Project will have a study and evaluation component that will be discussed early in the planning period.

RATIONALE

Supervision and monitoring are critical to ensure high-quality implementation of activities. Quality control of the household registration will help to catch problems in real time so that they can be immediately addressed (such as splitting of households to receive more nets, over or underallocation of nets, duplicated registration). End process monitoring will allow for changes to be made to improve ITN coverage and use³.

Discuss with technical and financial partners if an evaluation is required based on already planned surveys (for example, Demographic and Health Survey, Malaria Indicator Survey, Multiple Indicator Cluster Survey, etc.; survey sampling plans may need to be adjusted to answer certain evaluation questions) and ensure it is budgeted from the outset to avoid delays related to gaps.

³ The evaluation methodologies for the different studies planned under the New Nets Project, as well as proposed key study questions, will be discussed on a country-by-country basis.



RECOMMENDATIONS

- Ensure that the campaign report includes a summary of the number of nets distributed, by district and by type.

RATIONALE

To allow for accurate tracking of all nets distributed.



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