AMP The Alliance for Malaria Prevention

Expanding the ownership and use of mosquito nets

General guidelines for process evaluation of a mass insecticide-treated net (ITN) distribution campaign

NOTE: The guidelines refer to a mass ITN distribution campaign but can equally be used for process evaluation of a continuous ITN distribution programme.

Introduction

A process evaluation is a systematic assessment of the design, implementation and results of a complex activity or programme in its entirety or in its key stages for learning and/or future decision-making purposes. Process evaluations are often conducted at critical periods to assess implementation of a programme or project, in this case a mass ITN distribution campaign. Process evaluations are also needed when new strategies are being implemented or new products are being introduced. A process evaluation will require the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data for analysis of how well (or not) the new strategy or product is working and how acceptable they are to the target population.

Objectives of process evaluation of a mass ITN campaign

The national malaria programme may have a number of objectives for a process evaluation of a mass ITN distribution, for example:

- To understand the performance of the campaign (is it as planned or not as good) and where the strengths and weaknesses are
- To find out whether the campaign is accessible and acceptable to the target population
- To find out whether new strategies are effective or whether new products are acceptable
- To assess which aspects of the campaign work and which do not work so well

The overall objective of a process evaluation in a mass ITN distribution campaign may be to understand and document the planning and implementation stages of the campaign, in particular differences between the macroplanning and microplanning documents and the implementation of activities, in order to identify successes, challenges and lessons learned.

At the same time, the planning process itself may be an objective of scrutiny for the process evaluation.

To make sure that the evaluation focuses efforts on the specific objectives, a series of questions needs to be developed at the planning stage of a campaign. The national malaria programme and partners should then ensure that data collection activities are tailored to the specific evaluation questions needing a response. This requires careful planning to collect data which will provide those answers.

The specific objectives of any process evaluation of a mass ITN distribution campaign must be developed and validated with the national malaria programme and other stakeholders to ensure that they are aligned with global best practices and appropriate for the country context (e.g. priority issues identified previously or foreseen in the upcoming campaign). The lessons learned from the evaluation can be used for the next campaign in a country and may also inform planning in other countries where similar strategies are being adopted.

Depending on what is being evaluated, process evaluation can take place at any stage of the campaign.

Monitoring performance of an ITN mass campaign

Monitoring and evaluation form important parts of an ITN mass campaign plan and strategy and are key for ensuring a process is in place to regularly look at the targets that have been set and assess progress towards their achievement.

Monitoring campaign performance is an assessment of process (how well the various activities are being carried out versus how they were planned) and outcome (whether the process is producing the planned results and achieving objectives). Process assessment can cover monitoring campaign inputs and activities during three parts of the overall campaign timeline, (1) pre-campaign (2) during the campaign and (3) post-campaign.

Process evaluation may include review of documents, agendas and lists of attendees for meetings/trainings/orientations, review of data and reports or direct observation for any of the elements listed below. Note that the elements listed below are not exhaustive and should be reviewed and adjusted by national malaria programmes or partners undertaking process evaluations to align with the campaign strategy and key activities.

For pre-campaign assessments, examples might be to check the planning and development process, quantity and quality of:

- Core campaign macroplanning documents, such as campaign plan of action (including M&E and social and behaviour change (SBC) plan), logistics plan of action, risk assessment and mitigation plan, timeline and budget
- Microplanning trainings and workshops, final microplans for M&E/logistics and SBC (and risk assessment and mitigation where decentralized)
- Procurement plans, to ensure that all materials are adequately planned and accounted for in the quantification and timeline, particularly for procurement of transport and storage, as well as transport of campaign materials to decentralized levels in a timely manner
- Planned storage sites, through direct observation (are there enough and are they of sufficient quality based on the selection criteria?)
- For multi-product campaigns, reviewing whether the right product went to the right target population

During the campaign, monitoring visits with checklists, rapid monitoring surveys, direct observation, key informant interviews, focus group discussions, review of agendas, reports or database analyses are examples of methods that might be used to assess the quality (and quantity, where applicable) of:

- Training sessions
- SBC activities
- Advocacy and coordination meetings
- Household registration activities, including daily review of the database and reports received

- Logistics activities, including accountability during storage and transport through review of tracking tools
- ITN distribution activities, including daily review of the database and reports received, as well as management of waste and management of leftover ITNs
- For multi-product campaigns, reviewing whether the right product went to the right target population
- Supervision activities
- Daily debriefing meetings
- Monitoring, whether internal or independent (either in or end process or both)
- Interviews or discussions with campaign personnel (staff, people recruited) about the ITN campaign, how the implementation was managed and whether the strategies were adapted to the operational context

Post-distribution assessments might include:

- Verifying data from campaign tally sheets, distribution or pre-positioning site stock sheets and summary data sheets, including physically verifying ITNs remaining at storage locations versus those theoretically remaining on stock sheets
- For multi-product campaigns, reviewing whether the right product went to the right target population and that reverse logistics was managed according to procedures in place
- Reviewing and summarizing observations from supervision and monitoring reports and data to identify lessons learned
- Observing ITN reconciliation and reverse logistics and making data spot checks to assess accountability
- Observing implementation of post-distribution SBC activities
- Conducting interviews or discussions with key informants or groups about malaria, the ITN campaign and the ITNs received
- Conducting interviews or discussions with campaign personnel (staff, people recruited) about the ITN campaign, how the implementation was managed and whether the strategies were adapted to the operational context
- Conducting end-process monitoring about the ITN distribution using quantitative and qualitative data collection from household members (household perspective of accuracy and conduct of the ITN registration and distribution process)
- Conducting review and feedback meetings at all levels (central, regional, provincial, district)

Main activities targeted in process evaluation

A process evaluation for a mass ITN campaign can target different activity phases but, depending on the questions developed at the planning stage that require answers, the most important phases are:

- **Microplanning**, where decisions will be taken around operationalization of the macroplanning strategy or strategies on the basis of the context in each implementation area[1]
- **Household registration**, which is shown to be the most important phase for ensuring that households have access to ITNs by being registered and receiving a form of identification to later exchange for nets (where this is the strategy)

[1] See AMP guidance: Microplanning guidelines: https://allianceformalariaprevention.com/amp-tools/tools-resources/ and also Microplanning in the COVID-19 context under the heading Microplanning on: https://allianceformalariaprevention.com/about/amp-guidelines-and-statements/

- **ITN distribution**, which is the most important phase for ensuring that households obtain their ITNs and understand how to correctly hang and use ITNs, as well as for reconciliation of ITNs received for distribution for high accountability
- **Post-distribution**, particularly in situations where new or different products are being introduced, existing data show that ITNs are not used or are misused, or the campaign has a different distribution strategy or strategies from previous campaigns

Process evaluation of microplanning

Microplanning is the first step towards implementation of the campaign and represents a critical phase of activity for ensuring high-quality implementation. During the microplanning, the macroplan and budget are revised into an operational plan that reflects the actual context in implementation areas.

The microplans also represent the documents from which the sub-national level are planning and implementing their activities, such as developing their training or payment plans, so their work should be evaluated against the final, validated operational microplans and budgets.

The review of the microplans should focus on:

- The geographical areas identified by the national malaria programme as priorities for the process evaluation. The review should primarily focus on what has been included in the microplans (key information about health facilities and the villages and population per village that they serve, roads situation, transportation costs, workforce cost/labour cost, quantification of required campaign personnel for household registration and distribution, incineration or burial options for waste management, etc.) and pre-positioning plans
- The agenda and tools used for microplanning to ensure that they are comprehensive (e.g. include an SBC template) and focused on the microplanning, versus including everything for all phases
- The process for the microplanning and the outputs

The review of the microplans will provide:

- A solid basis on which to evaluate the implementation as to whether it is aligned to the context of the area being evaluated and get deep information on:
    - When the microplans were finalized and approved and if the required period for adjustments of identified gaps was sufficient
    - Who was in charge of developing logistics or SBC microplans and the strategy used
    - Who participated in the microplanning exercise, in particular from the operational levels
    - How staff from sub-district levels were involved and consulted and how the information they gave was included in final microplans
    - How good the quality of training at the central level was for workshop facilitators
    - How well organized the workshops were and whether sufficient time was planned for high quality outputs (maps, microplanning templates, risk planning, etc.)
    - The standards used for micro positioning, micro transport and micro budget
    - The challenges, strengths and weaknesses of microplanning
    - Whether there is a significant or abnormal difference between population planned in macroplanning and in microplanning. And if yes, what decisions were made to verify the population data received and mitigate against insufficient resources during implementation
    - The timeline (if it was realistic and dates respected)
    - How information was validated

- An idea of changes that may have taken place after microplanning (for example, to align with the budget available) that may affect quality of implementation
- A solid basis for key informant interviews at the district and sub-district level

Process evaluation of household registration
To have a successful ITN distribution campaign, households must be appropriately registered to receive the correct number of nets. In many cases, the household will receive a voucher or other identifying material during the registration to exchange for ITNs during the distribution phase. Registration ensures that distribution points have a sufficient quantity of nets pre-positioned for the ITN distribution, and that households receive enough nets to cover all household members (or sleeping spaces), based on the allocation criteria adopted during the macroplanning phase or, where ITN need exceeds ITN availability, after the microplanning.

The importance of the household registration cannot be overstated: evidence has shown that the most common reason for households not receiving a net during an ITN campaign is that they were not registered or did not receive a coupon to exchange for a net at a distribution point[2].

The quality of the household registration process can be assessed through:
- Observing and assessing training
- Reviewing registration form summaries for accuracy and checking plausibility of numbers (total population, ITNs needed, etc.)
- Reviewing microplans to compare with registration data *(*total population, households, ITNs required based on the two sources of information)
- Conducting quality control activities to identify areas missed by registration teams for follow-up
- Reviewing the effectiveness of social mobilization activities around household registration delivered both pre and during the registration period
- Reviewing supervision and/or internal/external monitoring reports
- Meeting supervisors and officials to discuss successes and challenges (in order to refine strategies)
- Undertaking in- or end-process monitoring of households to assess percentage of households that received the correct number of vouchers during registration

Implementing strong supervision and monitoring mechanisms is critical to allow for real-time follow-up and to improve the quality of the registration. A rapid evaluation survey of household registration can provide objective and timely data to inform any corrective actions required before finalizing and validating registration data. This approach complements rather than replaces strong internal supervision and monitoring during registration.

Some specific examples for household registration that may be considered include:
- Criteria for identification and selection of household registration personnel and community supervisors (adherence to criteria)
- Training for the household registration personnel and community supervisors, as well as other supervisors (level of competence of trainers and participants, adherence to agenda, balance between presentation and practice, participants per session/facilitator, etc.)

[2] See: Zegers de Beyl, C., Koenker, H., Acosta, A. *et al.* Multi-country comparison of delivery strategies for mass campaigns to achieve universal coverage with insecticide-treated nets: what works best?. *Malar J* **15,** 58 (2016). https://doi.org/10.1186/s12936-016-1108-x

- Assessing effectiveness and reach of SBC tools and key messages about household registration
- Quality of household registration materials, e.g. communication guide, standard operating procedures (SOPs), etc.
- Data collection, including tools, verification process, circuit, timeliness of data transmission, completeness of data, missing reports, etc.
- Supervision and monitoring, including quality control of the household registration related to coverage, correct ITN allocation and SBC activities
- Payment approach for campaign personnel working during household registration

Process evaluation of ITN distribution
Evaluating the ITN distribution is important to ensure that the process at distribution points or for door-to-door distribution is smooth, that the population is mobilized to either attend the right distribution points or stay at home and wait to receive ITNs, and that data collection and ITN accountability are prioritized. A poorly organized distribution may lead to low uptake of ITNs from the distribution point or many missed households in a door-to-door distribution, either due to a lack of information, frustration with wait times or inconvenient days and times for the distribution or poor route mapping to reach all households. In addition, with hundreds of distribution points or pre-positioning sites where nets will be stored and managed, the risks for poor ITN accountability are high.

The quality of the ITN distribution process, including the preparatory activities, can be assessed through:

- Reviewing the micro transport plans to ensure that they have been updated using household registration data
- Observing and assessing training
- Verifying, through spot checks on logistics tracking tools, for example, the transport of the ITNs to the distribution points or pre-positioning sites
- Observing how the distribution site is set up and managed (e.g. separate entry and exit points, ITN hanging demonstration)
- Reviewing vouchers and distribution tally sheets, including daily summaries, for accuracy (e.g. correct numbers of ITNs distributed, or if cap was set, was this exceeded)
- Household visits by mobilization teams and supervisors to identify households that have not come to the distribution points
- Assessing effectiveness and reach of SBC tools and key messages about distribution
- Reviewing supervision and monitoring reports
- Meeting supervisors and officials to discuss successes and challenges (in order to refine strategies)
- In- or end-process monitoring of distribution

Some specific examples that may be considered include:

- Criteria for identification and selection of logisticians and logistics personnel at all levels (adherence to criteria)
- Training of logisticians and logistics personnel at all levels
- Tools for ITN accountability (within the supply chain) and their utilization
- Advocacy and SBC activities to encourage high uptake and subsequent use of ITNs
- Transport and warehousing of ITNs through the supply chain, including to and at distribution points, including timeliness

- Criteria for identification and selection of ITN distribution team members and community supervisors (adherence to criteria)
- Training for the ITN distribution team members, the community supervisors, as well as other supervisors (level of competence of trainers and participants, adherence to agenda, balance between presentation and practice, participants per session/facilitator, etc.)
- Data collection, including tools, verification process, circuit, timeliness of data transmission, completeness of data, missing reports, etc.
- Supervision and monitoring, including quality control of the ITN distribution related to coverage, correct ITN allocation and SBC activities
- End-process monitoring results (where this is part of the strategy)
- Payment approach for campaign personnel working during ITN distribution

Post-distribution household level process evaluation
The household is the last step or stage in the process of ITN distribution so it important to understand the processes and outcomes related to the household and its inhabitants. To assess whether the campaign has achieved its objectives, the evaluation needs to include:

- Did households receive ITNs?
- Did households receive the right number of ITNs according to the number of people in their household?
- If not, why not?

The quality of the SBC messages can also be evaluated as to whether the right messages got through to the right people at the right time.

Methodology

Process evaluation is largely qualitative, looking to identify strengths and weaknesses of different ITN mass campaign activities and provide recommendations for future efforts. These evaluations often include efforts at the implementation level – typically sub-district – in order to identify successes to be reinforced, challenges to be addressed and recommendations for a better-quality campaign in the future.

Process evaluations are typically external, carried out by people independent of the campaign planning and implementation, thus providing an objective perspective of the quality of the implementation in the targeted evaluation areas vis-à-vis the descriptions provided in the validated campaign documents (macroplans, training manuals, data collection forms, SBC and M&E plans, logistics supply chain organization, etc.).

The process evaluation methodology is essentially based on:

- Observing and documenting different campaign activities in the field *(*training, SBC, household registration, ITN distribution, warehousing practices, movement tracking of ITNs, etc.). The evaluator can report on what is successful, what needs some improvement, and where programmatic changes might be made.
- Interviews[3] with key campaign personnel and stakeholders to supplement the observations from the field visits. An innovative approach is to use an online questionnaire to take the place of key informant interviews[4].

[3] See the Resources for guidance on conducting key informant interviews.
[4] See the Resources for an example questionnaire adapted from one used in 2020 in Mali. Note that this questionnaire is focused on ITN distribution in the COVID-19 context.

Focus group discussions[5] can be organized, where possible, to bring more information and varied perspectives into the evaluation process.

Evaluation of the last stages of the process (SBC, registration, distribution of ITNs to households) is an important component of the full process chain. There are four opportunities to gather household information: during (in-process) and after (end-process) registration and during and after distribution.

Briefly, assessments "during" (in-process) registration or distribution are meant to quickly discover errors at the beginning of the registration or distribution process to take corrective action. There are two general methods to evaluate the process ending at the household: probability and non-probability (convenience) sampling of communities/villages and households. The interviewing methods would be quantitative (questionnaire) or qualitative or both. Quantitative interviewing (via a questionnaire) is the most common, but qualitative interviewing is very useful for "why" questions as responses can give an indication of attitudes towards and effect of the intervention. Qualitative interviewing may be especially useful if new types of nets or new procedures (e.g. door-to-door distribution where previously fixed site distribution was used) are being brought in.

Household and community selection can be done using probability and non-probability (convenience or purposive) sampling or a combination of the two. Convenience sampling can be done by taking a convenient selection of communities in just high-risk areas or it can be done to limit workload (sample two villages in two regions, for example). High-risk comprises areas or sub-populations that are at higher risk of having an inadequate result from the mass ITN distribution or ITN use (e.g. marginalized or hard-to-reach communities). The disadvantage of convenience sampling is that the data are not representative at the district, region or national level. Convenience[6] sampling could provide rich information about a population sub-group of interest.

The least resource-intensive method of probability sampling is likely to be a clustered lot quality assurance survey (LQAS) involving six communities (interviewing ten households in each of six communities)[7]. Usually, the questionnaire is very short in LQAS—for example, five to nine questions about SBC, registration and distribution.

Five to nine questions are sufficient to provide key process and outcome data on the three important phases of ITN mass distributions: SBC, registration and distribution. Two short LQAS questionnaires from Sierra Leone in 2019 and Bangui, Central African Republic in 2017 provide examples as follows:

Sierra Leone, 2019:

- Was the household reached by the registration team (yes or no)?
- Was the household population correct (yes or no)?
- Did the household receive the correct number of vouchers based on the number of people in the household (yes or no)?
- Was the household correctly marked (yes or no)?

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[5] See the Resources for guidance on conducting focus group discussions.

[6] Convenience sampling: subjects for sampling are selected because they have specific characteristics known to the manager, e.g. hard-to-reach population.

[7] Assessing Vaccination Coverage Levels Using Clustered Lot Quality Assurance Sampling Field Manual (2012). http://polioeradication.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/Assessing-Vaccination-Coverage-Levels-Using-Clustered-LQAS_Apr2012_EN.pdf

- Did you hear messages about the ITN campaign registration prior to your house being visited to be registered (yes or no)?
- From which channel of communication did you receive the messages about household registration? (choose one or several options)

Bangui, 2017:

- Permission to ask questions of household member (yes or no)?
- Has the household received a visit from a distributor of ITNs during the last two days (yes or no)?
- Number of persons in a household (number that sleep regularly in the household)?
- How many ITNs did the household receive during the distribution?
- Did the household receive messages about the distribution of ITNs (yes or no)?
- If yes, which channel (radio, social mobilizers, door-to-door volunteers, others)

Other questions can be added, such as “went to distribution point”, “how many nets were hung last night”, “how many persons slept under ITN last night”, etc.

Although there are many possibilities, there are two LQAS models in common use:

1. Clustered LQAS lots using six communities and ten households per community
2. 19—20 households in a single community or location

Clustered LQAS has advantages for probability sampling over large areas (national, sub-national, regions, districts, and sub-districts). Sampling 19—20 households in one location also works well for high-risk convenience-sampling monitoring, especially in-process monitoring. Households still need to be randomly sampled within the location in order to avoid bias.

LQAS can provide a three-level response (pass/intermediate/fail) for each question or indicator. A pass/intermediate/fail status will be recorded for the national, regional/provincial or district level for each indicator depending on the sampling frame. Qualitative interviewing (including focus group discussions) can be done in those same six communities/villages, thus providing a very robust assessment of the final stage of registration and distribution.

Another advantage of clustered LQAS is that four or more lots of six communities each (around 24 communities total) can be combined to provide point estimates of indicators (for example, percentage of households that received the correct number of ITNs during the distribution) with reasonable confidence intervals.

Since household-level information is so critical to a robust evaluation, some method of sampling (probability, convenience, purposive, or all) of households and gathering of quantitative and qualitative data is necessary. Gathering of quantitative and qualitative data using clustered LQAS is an efficient method for data collection at low levels of effort and cost.

Steps to successful process evaluation

After the national malaria programme and stakeholders have defined the evaluation domains and questions, the key steps to be followed for undertaking a successful process evaluation include, but are not limited to (each context will identify different needs):

Step A: Review of macroplanning package validated prior to campaign implementation

The macroplanning package should include the core documents for the campaign. These documents should describe the overall strategy for the campaign, how that strategy will be implemented and the roles and responsibilities of different campaign actors. They will describe the training cascade, the tools to be used at all levels for the different activity phases and how activities will be supervised and monitored. The only basis on which a campaign process evaluation can take place is that on which the planning was done.

A process evaluation to look at coherence between planning and implementation necessitates that a full and detailed review of the approved, validated macroplanning takes place. It is expected that the macroplanning package consists of:

- ***Campaign plan of action or implementation guidelines*****:** this document describes the overall strategy for the campaign, the roles and responsibilities of different actors and provides an overview of the strategies and activities across all technical areas (SBC, M&E, logistics, etc.). It provides information about training sessions and data collection, as well as supervision and monitoring.
- ***Logistics plan of action (LPoA)***: this document provides details of the supply chain and how it will be managed from the time that ITNs enter the country through their distribution, reconciliation and reverse logistics. The LPoA describes the roles and responsibilities at each level of the supply chain, as well as the tools and training that will be needed to ensure high accountability for the ITNs.
- ***SBC plan of action (SBC PoA)*****:** often, to show how the SBC activities will support achievement of the overall campaign objectives, SBC activities are included in the campaign plan of action or implementation guidelines. Where this is the case, it is important to review the planning for the specific phase of activities being evaluated to be able to observe the actual implementation in the field of the different approaches adopted. Where a separate SBC PoA exists, it should describe the strategies, channels, activities and messages that will be used to ensure high participation of targeted households during all phases of the campaign. The SBC PoA should describe roles and responsibilities of different partners, as well as training, supervision and monitoring in support of high-quality implementation.
- ***M&E plan*****:** to show how the M&E activities will support achievement of the overall campaign objectives, they are often included in the campaign plan of action or implementation guidelines. Where this is not the case, it is important to review the M&E-specific planning for the phase of activities being evaluated to be able to observe the actual implementation in the field of the different approaches adopted.
- ***Risk assessment and mitigation*****:** this is a recently introduced “core” macroplanning document that has become increasingly critical with the different challenges arising with mass ITN campaigns, in particular those distributing multiple ITN types. Some countries will not have adopted this, though results of the process evaluation may indicate that it is important in future. Where a risk assessment and mitigation plan has been developed, it is important to review what is there in terms of categories and details, as well as the frequency of the updating since the time of macroplanning, including at what levels the risk planning was updated (e.g. implementation or central, etc.).
- ***Timeline*****:** the timeline is a core planning document and must be made available for review to assess progress against planned targets. It will be important to look at the number of times the campaign timeline has been “updated” to account for delays in implementation of critical activities. Where delays are significant, it may be important to refer back to the campaign plan of action or implementation guidelines to look at roles and responsibilities when the report is put together.
- ***Budget*****:** the budget is a major factor defining the strategies that countries adopt. It is important to review the validated budget against the microplans, as well as the implementation of activities.

During the review of the validated macroplanning package, the various supporting documents for review need to be accessed, including:

- Procurement and payment plans (e.g. to ensure timely availability of goods and materials such as warehousing, transport, data collection and SBC materials or to ensure that campaign workers receive payments in the correct amounts and on time to avoid delays for future phases of activities, etc.)
- Training manuals and materials (e.g. scenarios for role-plays, practical exercises, agendas, etc.) to ensure they align with their descriptions in the macroplanning documents
- Data collection and summary forms and materials, including job aids that may have been produced
- Supervision and monitoring (internal) terms of reference and tools that will be used
- Quality control or evaluation tools, such as protocols for independent monitoring of the household registration or for end process monitoring of the ITN distribution
- Roles and responsibilities of different actors, including the Ministry of Health, at all levels to ensure that these are being respected
- Any other campaign reports, including reports (internal, external, final) from the previous campaign that may include issues that have not been addressed from one campaign to the other

The outcome of the review of the macroplanning documents should allow for issues to be identified and questions to be raised that can become part of the process evaluation as it is implemented.

Step B: Determination of the scope, scale and methodology of the process evaluation

The decisions on the scope, scale and targets of the evaluation should be taken with the national malaria programme at the beginning of the development of the terms of reference for the evaluation itself. Once scope and scale and targets are determined, the methodology can be defined. See Methodology section above.

It is important to identify the key issues to be looked at (e.g. SBC during ITN distribution, including advocacy to local leaders, training of distribution point teams, implementation of health education at distribution points and post-distribution follow-up activities), as well as the geographical targets that will be focused upon (e.g. looking at urban, rural or remote locations, areas with known problems for uptake of health campaigns, etc.).

Based on the decisions taken, the evaluator should take note of the different criteria that were used to determine the areas to be evaluated to include these in the later report. The same applies to the issues to be looked at and the target groups (individuals, households, focus groups) that have been agreed. Often, decisions on scope, scale and methodology will be based on where the national malaria programme identifies that there may be challenges, but at times, the decisions will be taken on alternative criteria (such as not wanting the evaluator to visit certain problematic areas) so it is important that the selection process is detailed in the process evaluation report.

The scope, scale and methodology will also be determined based on the budget available (e.g. organized focus group discussions may not be feasible with budget restrictions, while exit interviews with people attending distribution points can be implemented with no budget). Depending on the decisions made about scope, scale and methodology, it may be necessary to budget for, recruit and train additional personnel. Some activities can be carried out by a single person (document review, key informant interviews, etc.) while other activities (e.g. qualitative data collection at the household level, LQAS) would need more trained staff.

Step C: Review of microplans
The microplanning needs to be reviewed as, in principle, the macroplans have been adapted to the operational reality of the areas where the campaign will take place.

The macroplans, during the microplanning period, were translated into operational plans and budgets reflecting the context and reality of each sub-district area targeted for the campaign. The microplans also represent the documents from which the sub-national level is planning and implementing their activities, so their work should be evaluated against the final operational plans and budgets validated.

The review of the microplans should focus on the geographical areas identified by the national malaria programme as priorities for the process evaluation and should primarily focus on what has been included in the microplans, the agenda and tools used for microplanning (to ensure that they are comprehensive and focused on the phase of microplanning, versus including everything for all phases), the process for the microplanning and the outputs.

The review of the microplans will provide:
- A solid basis on which to evaluate the implementation in terms of whether it is aligned to the context of the area being evaluated
- An idea of changes that may have taken place after microplanning and prior to validation of microplans (for example, to align with the budget available) that may affect quality of implementation
- An understanding of changes made during implementation that are not aligned with microplans (either because of changes made to the budget or because of microplans not being aligned to the context)
- A basis for key informant interviews at the district and sub-district level

Step D: Review and finalization of the tools to be used for the process evaluation
The review of the tools to be used for the process evaluation must be based on the scope and scale, as well as methodology, as determined with the national malaria programme. A process evaluation may include:
- Direct observation tool
- Key informant interviews tools (central, regional and district level)
- Household interviews tool
- Exit interviews with household representatives at distribution points tool
- Focus group discussions tool
- Data quality verification tool

Each of the different areas requires specific tools that must be developed and agreed upon with the national malaria programme prior to departure for implementation of the process evaluation. For example, some areas may be introducing new net types while others are distributing ITNs as per previous campaigns and this may require additional questions to be added to the standard tools developed.

Step E: Implementation of the process evaluation
The data collection during the process evaluation will be based on the scope, scale and methodology, as well as the finalized tools and timelines for work in the field.

As previously mentioned, process evaluations are typically external. For this reason, it is important that the external evaluator is paired with one or more individuals from the campaign coordination team and other stakeholders. Examples may be a national monitor or supervisor, or a representative of the National Coordinating Committee or the Country Coordinating Mechanism. Pairing the external evaluator with a national representative will allow for better planning (including availability of people targeted for interviews), local knowledge and language assistance and for a means to verify the information in the planning documents versus what is observed during the evaluation implementation.

Standard data collection tools should be used to ensure that a single approach to selecting people for interviews or focus group discussions, for observations and for reporting is respected to avoid confusion during the reporting period.

Step F: Providing immediate feedback during the process evaluation

Feedback is a critical part of the process evaluation process when it takes place during the implementation of activities versus post-distribution. While the evaluator has no authority to take direct corrective action, s/he must provide information that is critical to the quality of the campaign during the daily review meetings where s/he is working so that supervisors can follow up directly and take corrective action with their teams.

Feedback should be provided immediately in the areas where the process evaluation is taking place. For example, if the evaluator notes that all of the distribution points visited do not have a health education area set up, this information should be communicated during the daily review meetings. While the evaluator has no role in providing feedback to teams or taking corrective action, s/he does have a role in ensuring that supervisors are aware of the issues that have been observed.

Step G: Reporting on the process evaluation

At the end of the process evaluation, the evaluator will write a report detailing the successes, challenges and recommendations for future phases or campaigns. The report must highlight successes as well as challenges – it is very easy to criticize, but more difficult to see the good. Both must happen during process evaluations to ensure that the national malaria programme understands not only what went wrong, but also the myriad of things that went right.

The evaluation report should contain the following elements:

- A brief résumé of the evaluation and of the roll-out of the campaign
- The objectives and results of the evaluation
- The limitations of the evaluation (constraints or restrictions)
- The methodological approach
- An evaluation of the inputs utilized by the campaign
- An evaluation of the outputs
- An evaluation of the context of campaign implementation (main strengths, weaknesses, threats and opportunities)
- Conclusions, recommendations and lessons learned
- Appropriate annexes: work plan, questionnaires for interviews and focus group discussions, analyses

See the Resources for an outline of the main body of the report (template).

The recommendations in the report should be put into the form of a timeline or work plan to allow for timely follow up by the national malaria programme and technical, financial and implementing partners in advance of the next campaign.

Adapting the questions for multi-product ITN distributions[8]

Many countries are planning or implementing ITN distribution campaigns that include more than one type of ITN (technically different). The different nets may be targeted to specific areas in the country depending on the epidemiological and entomological profile of each area. When this is the case, the process evaluation will necessarily require some adaptation. In particular, when observing and asking questions about:

- **Coordination:** verify whether the continuous distribution plans and supply chain are updated in line with different types of ITNs, including a transition plan from the existing to new ITN type
- **ITN procurement:** verify whether procurement took into account differentiation of bales per ITN type, compliance on standards of quality assurance/quality control and ensure that estimated dates of arrival for all net types align with campaign timeline
- **Macro and microplanning:** with focus on risk assessment and mitigation (national and district level) related to logistics management of different ITN types, rumours and misinformation about the ITNs being distributed and why people are receiving the types of ITNs they are, etc.
- **Logistics: transport, storage and tracking:** example adaptations might include:
    - Did stock and distribution reporting tools at all levels allow for identification of ITN type?
    - Did micro-transport plans allow minimal mixing of different types of ITNs?
    - Did space storage planning include additional storage space where multiple products will be stored together and were these adhered to?
    - Were logistics training materials updated to reflect the needs of a multi-product campaign?
    - Were standard operating procedures (SOPs) developed and brought to the attention of districts and health facilities for management of different types of nets for continuous distribution?
    - Was logistics training clear on the fact that unloading/loading different types of nets at the same time must be avoided?
    - How were the leftover campaign nets managed, specifically during the transfer of the leftover campaign nets to the stocks for continuous distribution?
- **SBC:** it is important to know what kind of information, if any, households were given about the different types of ITNs. Decisions will have been made during macroplanning about whether SBC messages should provide information about the different ITNs being distributed and, if so, at which levels. If households were not provided information about the type of net they were provided, it should not be an issue probed during the process evaluation. Questions should be aligned to what the messages actually were. Verify the following points:
    - Whether the decision was taken to communicate on differences in ITNs, and if so, whether SBC personnel communicated the messages correctly.
    - Were subnational SBC plans modified depending on the decisions taken around SBC messages and channels?
    - Was a rumour control plan developed during macroplanning to address different possible sources and content of rumours?

[8] See also AMP guidance: *Planning and operational recommendations for multi-product ITN campaigns*. https://allianceformalariaprevention.com/amp-tools/tools-resources/

- Did advocacy meetings with political leaders, influential persons, key partners and stakeholders at the national level include information about the different types of ITNs to be distributed and why (as per above)?
    - Was it decided that advocacy meetings at lower levels with the same target groups should include information about multiple types of ITNs?
    - Was SBC carried out to 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? Alternatively, was SBC carried out to encourage households to prioritize use of the new ITNs and to put older, existing ITNs into storage for use at a later date?
- **Supervision, monitoring and evaluation:** this is carried out in the same way as per standard ITN but ensures that post-campaign evaluation, if any, includes qualitative questions around attitudes and behaviour to determine if there are differences in utilization between areas in terms of type of ITN or differences in perceptions around the effectiveness of the ITNs distributed. Extra interest from health ministries, partners, funders, and manufacturers is likely. Potentially additional resources for process and outcome evaluation may be available.
- **Reporting:** ensure that the campaign report includes a summary by district of the number of ITNs distributed, by type.

Qualitative assessment should be increased at implementation levels, especially community/village and household levels. When new products are distributed, it is very important to get qualitative information from community/village and household levels about the new type of net. Qualitative methods are well suited for exploratory investigation of new topics and for answering "why" questions.

A list of questions for individual interview or focus group discussions and guidance on individual key informant interviews and on conducting focus group discussions can be found in the Resources.

Resources

- Sample online questionnaire: data collection for process evaluation of a mass ITN campaign distribution in the COVID-19 context
- Process evaluation report template
- Guidance on conducting key informant interviews
- Guidance on conducting focus group discussions