



Decide whether to undertake an assessment

Determining whether to undertake an assessment is an important step. Planning and implementing assessment(s) will require time and dedicated person hours to design the protocols and questionnaires, collect,

compile, analyse, report and map data, as well as for supervision of the overall process. An **ITN campaign assessment decision tree** to support the review of key information to make this decision is included in [Annex 2](#).

3.1. Review ITN campaign assessment needs and resources

It is important to clearly define the relevance and benefits of planned assessments alongside estimates of required costs and resources, the overall calendar for other health interventions or surveys, and availability of human and financial resources at sub-national levels to support the assessment and any associated corrective actions. In reviewing data from previous campaign implementation, as well as planned information and data sharing during HHR and ITN distribution supervision and monitoring, national malaria programmes may identify geographic areas that have data showing ITN

access below or above what is expected. Key MOH staff, partners, campaign donors and other stakeholders need this detailed information so that they can give their feedback to inform decision-making and possibly prioritization of geographic areas for assessment activities.

The questions below and illustrative replies taken from AMP's [General guidelines for process evaluation for a mass ITN distribution campaign](#) provide elements to consider for decision-making on whether to undertake HHR and/or ITN distribution assessment.

Table 3: Examples of information that assessments provide

<p>What do you need an assessment to show?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● How well the HHR and/or ITN distribution is working ● The extent to which the HHR and/or ITN distribution is being implemented as designed ● Whether the registration and ITN distribution teams are accessible and acceptable to target populations ● Reasons why the campaign (due to HHR, ITN distribution or other broader aspects) may not be reaching its targets
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A campaign assessment may help to identify specific implementation challenges that are leading to failures in achieving priority targets. These challenges may include for example:

- Insufficient mapping of the intervention area, weak daily route planning, or poorly located fixed distribution points
- Lack of access or inequitable access to HHR and/or ITN distribution by vulnerable groups or wealth quintiles, possibly due to insufficient attention to these elements during macro and microplanning
- Inaccurate numbers of ITNs allocated and/or distributed to each HH and/or ITN distribution or pre-positioning sites due to the non-adjustment of ITN needs based on microplanning and/or HHR data

Table 4: Examples for uses of assessment information

Why would an assessment be useful?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provides an early warning for potential problems● Allows for changes to be made in subsequent phases or activities to improve service delivery● Allows for targeting of limited resources available for mop-up or intensified SBC efforts
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An assessment can identify challenges for HHR and ITN distribution that may necessitate corrective action during the activity and/or mop-up post-activity. To do this, sufficient resources need to be available to hold daily

review meetings during key activity phases, to be able to take decisive action to revise ITN campaign plans if necessary and to implement corrective action.

Questions:

- Is a dedicated budget available for the assessment of HHR and/or ITN distribution?
- Are sufficient human/physical/administrative resources available for the assessment? ([Annex 13](#) provides a list of assessment budget considerations)
- If the assessment determines a need for corrective action during HHR or ITN distribution, will there be available time in the campaign implementation calendar and are sufficient budget, human, physical and administrative resources available to undertake those corrective actions?
↳ During recruitment and training, HHR teams should be told there is an assessment and if work is of sub-optimal

quality they will be asked to correct the errors in line with MOH and campaign norms without additional payment. Alternatively, a budget should be set aside for any needed mop-up based on the assessment findings. What skills do those staff that will plan and implement the assessment already have (including those involved in developing the protocol and questionnaire(s) or overseeing or conducting the assessment)? (Step six provides recommended skills for assessment staff)

- Are mobile phone and internet network coverage sufficient to support a digitalized assessment?

If sufficient budget, staff time and capabilities, physical and administrative resources are in place, this supports the feasibility of conducting the assessment. If these elements are in place but would only cover one assessment, then the M&E sub-committee will need to consider each option and select the assessment most likely to support campaign quality. As the assessment of HHR activities identifies challenges that may lead to households not receiving ITNs,

this assessment is of greatest importance for ensuring that ITN campaign objectives are met. Results of previous campaigns may be helpful in identifying specific challenges which the current campaign may also face. This review of previous campaign challenges may assist in pinpointing areas where the assessment should focus, for example on HHR coverage, allocation of the correct number of vouchers per HH, or ITN distribution gaps.

3.2. Key considerations

It will be important for the M&E sub-committee to examine the points below when determining whether to undertake assessment(s):

- **Geographic scope of the assessment.** It is ideal to implement the same assessment method uniformly across all geographic zones nationally. However, in cases where resources or context do not allow this, national malaria programmes may decide to conduct the assessment only in specific sub-national areas, possibly to assess areas where there are greater concerns, according to the results of previous campaigns or current contextual challenges due to security issues, or weaknesses noted during past ITN or other health campaigns or activities.
- **Plans for DHS, MIS, MICS or other surveys that can incorporate assessment of ITN coverage.** Often, if these surveys will be occurring within one year of the ITN distribution, then national malaria programmes may decide that a post-campaign ITN assessment is not needed and resources could be allocated to HHR in-process assessment.
- **Identification of the data analyst.** The data analyst is a key member of the ITN campaign M&E sub-committee and will work closely with other sub-committee members and the assessment coordinator to finalize the mobile application questionnaire including

the skip and calculation logic; set up the coding in preparation for data cleaning and analysis; develop the summary data tables; share the results of data collection for corrective action and provide the final report at the end of the assessment. The role of the data analyst is further described in Step six. National malaria programmes will need to consider internal capacity, expertise within other MOH departments or campaign partner organizations, or whether to engage an external consultant for this important role.

- **Corrective action during or after HHR and/or ITN distribution activities.** If corrective actions will be taken, it will be important to define the roles of health facility directors as well as district and regional health teams, to ensure standardized review of data and decision-making as assessment results are shared. Actions may include communication regarding the importance of key SBC messages which should be reinforced, or providing additional voucher booklets to HHR teams, or in rare cases may include re-conducting some or all HHR and/or ITN distribution activities in progress. Generally, it will be important to ensure that sufficient resources for rapid communication of any changes have been considered during the macro budgeting process. Budgeting for costs for addressing the potential range of results should be explored.

3.3. Summarize key reasons and resource needs for the National Coordinating Committee to make and validate decisions

The responses to these priority questions and considerations, particularly reasons for the assessment and availability of required resources, should give national malaria programmes and their partners sufficient information to decide on undertaking assessment(s) or not. It is important

to clarify how the results of the assessment(s) will be disseminated and used both for immediate action and to feed into future campaign planning. The M&E sub-committee should present plans to National Coordinating Committee members for review, discussion and validation.

3.4. Decide

If the decision is reached to move forward with an assessment, the M&E sub-committee should then review available information and documents, including these procedures, as well as other tools and resources, and develop an overall plan and timeline for designing and implementing the assessment(s) and corrective actions as needed. The **ITN campaign assessment planning checklist** in [Annex 3](#), can be adapted to country, campaign and assessment contexts; used to track each of the

key steps listed below; and used to identify which activities may be on- or off-track. This checklist includes a Gantt chart to track the timing and responsible parties for key milestones, activities and sub-activities. It can be edited and adapted to each campaign and context.

If a decision is reached not to go ahead with an assessment, the national malaria programme should inform stakeholders.

3.5. Consider forming an assessment technical working group

Once the decision has been made and validated to proceed with the assessment, the M&E sub-committee may decide to form an **assessment technical working group (TWG)**. The assessment TWG can take the lead in conducting Steps four to ten below, including development of the assessment protocols, tools and financial plan, and oversight of

implementation, in collaboration with and reporting to the M&E sub-committee. All plans and results should be validated by the National Coordinating Committee. An assessment TWG may not be needed where the M&E sub-committee is small and composed of individuals with experience and expertise to lead Steps four to ten.

The assessment TWG may include:

- A staff member identified by the national malaria programme coordinator to oversee and manage HHR and/or ITN distribution assessment(s) and report to her/him on a regular basis. This person is referred to as the “**assessment coordinator**” in this document and is a member of the M&E sub-committee. The roles of the assessment coordinator are further described in Step six.
- **External or independent assessment experts**, who may provide expertise and support the assessment coordinator. These independent experts are typically outside the national malaria programme and may

be based, for example, at the national statistics office, within implementing partner organizations, or operate within the structures of bilateral or multilateral donor organizations (such as the Global Fund, the Gates Foundation, or the United States President’s Malaria Initiative [US-PMI]), technical (such as WHO) or external evaluation agencies. Funding to support external or independent assessment experts may be provided by their organizational resources or may be included in the assessment budget, resources permitting.

Roles of the M&E sub-committee are listed below. The M&E sub-committee may decide to delegate some or all roles to the assessment TWG.

- Understand and align with key deadlines and dates in the ITN campaign timeline, as assessment(s) will either occur during or shortly after HHR or ITN distribution are implemented
- Support timely quality data analysis and use of the assessment results
- List the full range of technical and programmatic expertise needed to design and conduct the assessment; identify in-country expertise that could be engaged; identify where complementary external assessment expertise may be needed; and consult with in-country, regional and global research experts and technical partners to establish plans for any technical assistance (TA) that may be required
- Propose the methodology, approaches, data collection and analysis, financial plans and timelines for assessments for validation by the National Coordinating Committee
- Support the national malaria programme to submit the assessment protocol for review by national or local institutional review boards, as further described in Step four
- Develop terms of reference to clarify the responsibilities of all organizations and actors involved in the assessment(s)
- Identify key decision-makers and users of the data and collect information on their needs and planned use of the data
- Organize regular meetings to coordinate assessment planning, design, implementation, analysis, reporting and dissemination of results

During the assessment, the M&E sub-committee and/or assessment TWG should review assessment results from the data analyst daily and coordinate with the national malaria

programme technical staff, sub-national MOH authorities and supervision teams regarding corrective actions needed during the HHR and/or ITN distribution activities.