

A group of smiling children in school uniforms holding insecticide-treated net packages. The children are of African descent and are wearing yellow and white uniforms. They are holding white packages with orange and blue stripes, which are insecticide-treated nets. The background is slightly blurred, showing more children in the same uniforms.

Review of the use of national consultants for supporting country-led insecticide-treated net mass distribution campaigns

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Background



hold head receiving ITNs along with education on use and care by a distribution p
and a supervisor. Photo Credit: Prince Owusu, VL Ghana ITN Lead

Who are national consultants?

- Locally-recruited, time-limited staff
- Support country coordination and technical needs
- Complement AMP TA providers in-country & at distance
- RBM: supports NCs mostly for Global Fund grant proposals
- Global Fund, IFRC: fund NCs to support ITN campaigns

Recommendation of 2021 evaluation distance-based TA during COVID-19:

- Given trend toward hybrid AMP TA, explore NC's role and value added to country-supported ITN campaigns

Methods for NC review

Review of NC TORs, 6 countries 2017-2024

Country	Campaign	Technical Scope
Benin	2017	Planning, operations
Guinea Bissau	2023	Coordination, SBCC, logistics, finances
Liberia	2021	Coordination
Sudan	2022	SBCC
Sudan	2022	Logistics
Sudan	2022	Operations/M&E
Chad	2023	Operations
Uganda	2023-2024	Digitalization

Structured individual or focus group interviews using questionnaire

- 3 national consultants
- 3 NMP representatives
- 6 AMP TA providers
- 10 partner staff (AMP, RBM, Global Fund)



NC concept not new: insights from literature

- Decrease reliance on external TA, increase local capacity
- Ensure TA better aligned with national priorities
- Improve coordination with governments
- Gain local context, travel flexibility, lower costs
- For success: define expectations, agree on priorities, establish realistic timelines, evaluate their approach
- WHO National Professional Officers (NPOs) evaluation 2019:
 - Placed in WHO offices not embedded in NMPs
 - Attributes: knowledge health system, languages, cultural fit, geographic access, network in MOH and society, personal commitment to health outcomes impacting own country

Rationale for engaging national consultants



Partners' perspectives:

- NCs = first line of support to NMPs
- Advise on campaign management
- Cost less than int'l consultants
- Longer term support
- Country context
- Established networks
- Less travel restrictions

AMP TA providers perspectives:

- Critical links with country when AMP TA providers virtual or unavailable
- Follow up actions
- Reduce management responsibilities for AMP TAPs who may lack country context

NMP staff perspectives:

- Critical when NMP addressing crises (Ebola, COVID-19) AMP TAPs can't travel
- Play the "neutral card" between AMP TA providers and NMP in advising, setting priorities

NC perspectives

- Link AMP TAPs with Global Fund staff
- Ensure campaigns don't disrupt on-going Global Fund-supported activities (e.g., grant writing)
- Support campaign sub-committees
- Facilitate division of labor between key campaign actors



Terms of reference

Coordination-strategic focus

- Partners largely viewed NC role to support NMP coordination
- Call meetings, set agendas, take minutes, follow up action items
- Develop campaign plans of action, macroplans, microplans

Technical focus

- From country TORs: planning and logistics, M&E, SBC, digitalization, financing
- Focal topic microplanning
- Updating documents, tools
- Defining evaluation indicators
- TOT participation
- Clarifying timelines and budgets
- Collecting, analyzing data



Highlighted national coordinator TOR roles

Highlighted NC roles in TORs	Observations
Training and capacity building	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply previous campaign experience • TOT participation • On-the-job management & operational skills transfer
Advocacy (re: technical strategies, fundraising, engaging stakeholders)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudan: advocated for engaging and funding national supervisors • Liberia: negotiated MOU country teams & PLAN to clarify SBC roles • Burundi: NMP saw NC as “ambassador” to AMP & GF to relay concerns
Campaign coordination mechanisms	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Members of steering, technical sub-committees • Most effective when NC in place for microplanning & guidelines development
Addressing inconsistencies global vs. national guidelines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advised on adaptations when engaged early in planning • Chad: NC recruited before guidelines modification with AMP TAPs
Data access facilitation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sudan and Liberia: data collection especially local levels • Uganda and Chad: not authorized share data outside MOH
COVID-19 mitigation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NC largely involved in implementing rather than developing COVID-19 guidelines • One country: identified inconsistencies for NMP and AMP TAPs to address

Developing and implementing NC TORs



NMP has clear responsibility for developing TORs

Liberia exception: Implementing partner coordinated TOR negotiation with multi-sectoral partners (NMP, PLAN, Global Fund, AMP)



AMP staff and TAPs, RBM CRSPC (less often) give feedback TORs

In some cases, AMP TAPs never saw NC TORs, found NCs hired lacked skills described in their TORs



TORs should clearly distinguish roles NCs versus AMP TAPs

Focus on complementarity not overlap, especially when AMP TAPs work at a distance

NC and AMP TAP collaboration strongest during campaign planning (POA development when TAP in country); then NC focus on implementation when TAPs work at a distance

Recruitment of NCs

Qualifications

REQUIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS
<p>Academic qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • University degree or advanced diploma in pertinent field (e.g., medical administration, public health administration, logistics, social behavioral communication, <u>finance and economics</u>) • <u>Bachelors</u> degree, masters preferred
<p>General country-specific public health experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-5+ years' experience in health sector, with health strategy and policy formulation • Knowledge of country health system and national context • 5-7 years field-based coordination, monitoring, and/or survey experience • <u>Bachelors</u> degree, masters preferred • Project and program development experience
<p>Malaria and ITN experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with ITN distribution campaign processes • Previous experience NMCP and funding partners • Knowledge about malaria generally and ITNs specifically • ITN campaign-related skill sets as determined by NMP (e.g., coordination, logistics, SBC, etc.)
<p>Communication and personal skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clear, concise written & oral communication skills in [language] • Excellent listening skills • Excellent interpersonal skills • Negotiation and flexibility skills • Ability work in multidisciplinary team • Demonstrated ability to follow standard practices, procedures, supervision
<p>Computer literacy and hardware:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience with Microsoft Office Suite • Access to laptop computer
<p>Other potential requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National citizen or resident • Experience working for partner such as USAID • Immediate availability once offered position

Recruitment process

- Duration range: 2 weeks – 3 months
- MOH/MOF administrative processes slowed recruitment (Chad, Malawi, Mauritania, Sudan, Uganda)
- Chad: challenge finding candidates with needed skills
- Delays if TORs questioned (e.g., Benin)
- AMP/IFRC NC recruitment: 2-4 weeks

NC orientation



Orientation important (informal, on-the-job), *not* formal training

- Assume NCs come with adequate background
- BUT NC may be hired from outside malaria/health sectors, need more background
- Opportunity build NC capacity for future country and international assignments

Illustrative orientation (over 1-2 working days)

- Review TORs with NMP, coordination committee members
- Review key campaign documents—national, AMP, RBM, WHO
- Meet key players: NMP, global & local partners, stakeholders
- Virtually meet with previous NCs and from other countries
- Discuss campaign support with AMP TAPs

NC communications & working relationships



Successful communications: depend on clear roles and supervisory relationships with NC as defined in TORs



Overall good working relationships with NMPs, AMP TAPs, partners



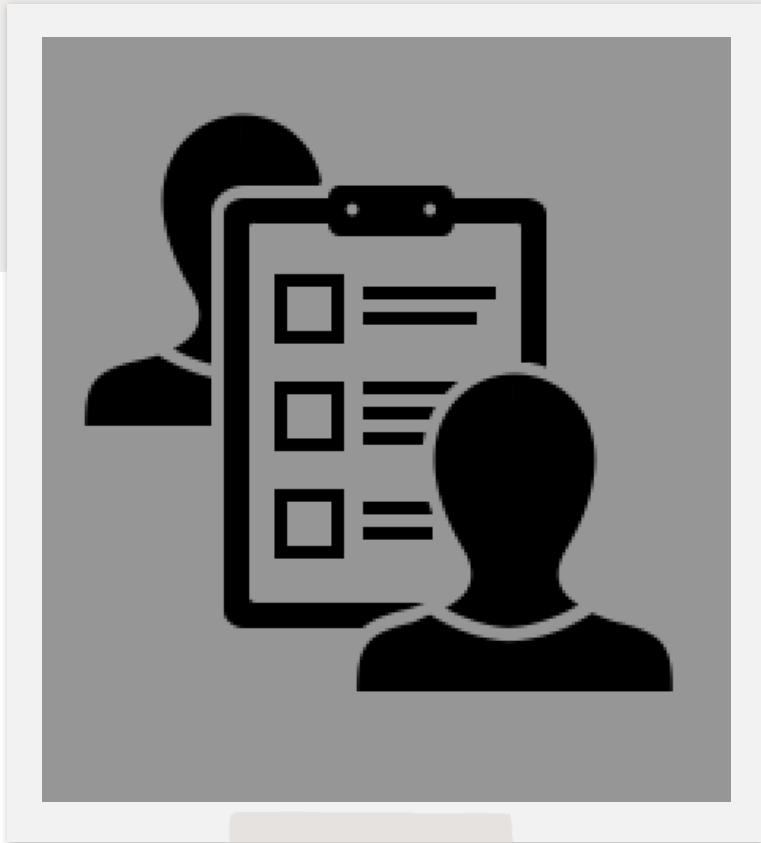
Some concerns with NC allegiance divided between guidance given by NMP versus donor partner



NC largely not speak on behalf of NMP—government function

Delegated (e.g., Liberia NC radio with Muslim community)

Supervision, reporting & evaluation of NCs



- Supervision: little response in review, NMPs largely supervise
- Reporting:
 - Usually to NMP or other MOH, coordination committee
 - Unease with reporting to funder rather than NMP alone
 - Sudan: reported to NMP and through AMP TAPs to AMP/IFRC
 - SITREP writing
 - Sensitive issues addressed offline
- Evaluation: unclear

APP L'Alliance pour
la Prévention du Paludisme
Étendre la possession et l'utilisation des moustiquaires

RAPPORT DE SITUATION (SITREP)

Pays : Bénin

Date du rapport : 27 Juin 2023

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Consultant en appui au pays : Valence Nimbona

Auteur du rapport : Valence Nimbona

Summary of strengths and challenges



Strengths

- Complement AMP TAPs & NMP
- Less costs and travel restrictions
- Independent perspective
- Link AMP TAPs with NMP, partners during distance support
- Action follow up
- Capacity building

Challenges

- NC funding forgotten in GF proposals
- Unclear TORs NCs versus AMP TAPs
- Coordination vs. technical roles
- Cumbersome recruitment processes
- Inadequate orientation
- Conflicting loyalties NMPs vs. donors

Key recommendations



General:

Promote inclusion NC funding in GF proposals

Terms of reference:

- Clarify roles NCs versus AMP TAPs
- Encourage NMPs share draft TORs with RBM, AMP TAPs, AMP/IFRC for feedback
- Include NC evaluation

Recruitment

- Recruit early (9-12 months before launch)
- Consider skilled non-malaria/health sector nationals if recruitment challenges

Orientation

- Organize structured, time-limited orientation
- Create NC-to-NC network to share lessons learned from other countries

Collaboration

- Clarify communications lines in TORs
- Ensure NMP leadership availability to authorize campaign decisions

Illustrative template to develop TORs for national consultants

<p>Annex A: Illustrative template for developing terms of reference of national consultants to support ITN mass campaigns</p> <p>Country:</p> <p>Dates of ITN campaign:</p> <p>Starting and ending dates required for NC services:</p>
<p>REQUIRED SKILLS AND QUALIFICATIONS</p> <p>Academic qualifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> University degree or advanced diploma in pertinent field (e.g., medical administration, public health administration, logistics, social behavioral communication, finance and economics) Bachelors degree, masters preferred <p>General country-specific public health experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 3-5+ years' experience in health sector, with health strategy and policy formulation Knowledge of country health system and national context 5-7 years field-based coordination, monitoring, and/or survey experience Bachelors degree, masters preferred Project and program development experience <p>Malaria and ITN experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience with ITN distribution campaign processes Previous experience NMCP and funding partners Knowledge about malaria generally and ITNs specifically ITN campaign-related skill sets as determined by NMP (e.g., coordination, logistics, SBC, etc.) <p>Communication and personal skills:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clear, concise written & oral communication skills in [language] Excellent listening skills Excellent interpersonal skills Negotiation and flexibility skills Ability work in multidisciplinary team Demonstrated ability to follow standard practices, procedures, supervision <p>Computer literacy and hardware:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Experience with Microsoft Office Suite Access to laptop computer <p>Other potential requirements:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National citizen or resident Experience working for partner such as USAID Immediate availability once offered position

<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: COORDINATION FOCUS</p> <p>Overall functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Serve as primary coordinator in NMCP to ensure implementation and coordination with partners Identify key challenges and timely solutions; <u>problem-solving</u> Support technical committee of national campaign coordination mechanism Conduct advocacy and mobilize resources with local partners Maintain, update campaign timetables Ensure continuity, progress of campaign planning and implementation despite COVID <p>Specific functions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Attend weekly coordination meetings Update campaign documents and tools Continuous logistics support on planning, management, coordination, training Monitor net positioning in distribution sites Participate in preparing weekly situation report for AMP Participate in AMP and country-specific campaign calls Support training of trainers, intermediate and peripheral level actors; supervise trainers Coordinate and help conduct workshops on campaign elements: macroplanning, microplanning, reverse logistics, campaign report writing, net distribution activities, distribution, communications, post-campaign national review meeting Technical report; summary of findings and presentation of recommendations to NMCP & partners Monitor budget implementation Develop risk management plan by campaign phase
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<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: TECHNICAL FOCUS</p> <p>Planning, prepositioning and logistics:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop micro-plan, including microplanning workshops Support and coordinate HH assessment/registration and vouchers distribution Update plan based on household registration Identify risks and mitigation for logistics planning & implementation Prepare logistics manuals Finalize training package for all cadres: agendas, presentation and supporting materials Conduct TOT for central level team Adjust micro transport plan from counties to districts to catchment areas Follow up delivery LLINs to counties to districts to health facilities Follow up storage conditions Monitor and correct bale quantities by county <p>Monitoring and evaluation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop evaluation indicators Prepare evaluation manuals and training tools Select, train independent monitors

<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: TECHNICAL FOCUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in rapid and final evaluation post-campaign Organize and participate in post-campaign review meetings federal & state levels <p>Social behavioral communication (SBC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Finalize SBC strategy, messages and dissemination plans Develop phased timeline for SBC activities Respond to partner feedback on SBC macroplan documents Finalize SBC microplanning package Train central team supporting SBC microplanning workshops Test, finalize materials/tools for implementing all SBC (agendas, media briefing materials, visual and audio supports) Identify indicators to evaluate communication aspects of campaign Train communication actors to transmit key messages Support multi-level organization of advocacy, awareness-building, social mobilization meetings Organize official launch ceremony Support media briefings Monitor community leader engagement and outcomes Support data compilation, analysis, feedback re SBC Prepare communications report with lessons learned <p>Data management & digitalization:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support NMP for digitalization of operational aspects of campaign Draft digitalization POA and timelines, budget Propose improved system architecture and processes (mobile application, middleware, web system development server and database configurations, data flow) Support system integration & development of application programming interfaces Support initial user acceptance testing Develop mobile client end user policy Recommend ways to ensure transmission of operational data to central level Develop tracking tools, including maintenance of dashboard to monitor activities and indicators Finalize data collection tools Prepare device management plans Prepare storage and transport plans for devices Develop set of technical tests for electronic data management system Identify risk and mitigation plans for digitalization Train data managers Process household assessment data Coordinate data compilation <p>Finance sub-committee support:</p> <p><i>Before the campaign:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Validate other sub-committee budgets Prepare campaign budget and identify financial gaps Mobilize additional financial resources in time Participate in preparing training modules and tools for the finance campaign Develop financial accounting instruments Ensure expenses are justified <p><i>During the campaign:</i></p>

<p>ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES: TECHNICAL FOCUS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Follow up on funding and campaign implementation Ensure justification for expenses <p>Post-campaign:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Balance financial records Document lessons learned Prepare campaign financial report
<p>DELIVERABLES</p> <p>[To be listed according to the roles and responsibilities determined for the NC]</p>
<p>ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS:</p> <p>Orientation, to include at minimum:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Time allocated for orientation (e.g., 1-2 working days) Detailed review of terms of reference with NMP, members of national campaign coordination committee, and others as identified by the NMP Document review: national campaign guidelines and tools, reports from previous campaigns, AMP guidelines, RBM and WHO technical documents, campaign documents from implementing partners Meeting key players (in person and/or virtual): MOH/NMP and other government official engaged in campaign, global funding partners, local implementing partners, campaign stakeholders Discussion with NCs in country and/or other countries with similar roles Discussion with AMP TA provider(s) assigned to support the country's campaign <p>Supervision:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> First-line supervisor Second-line supervisor <p>Reporting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to NMP/FMOH/PMU: [to whom, how often, in what format] Report to implementing partner: [to whom, how often, in what format] Report to AMP: [to whom, how often, in what format] Prepare weekly SITREPS for AMP Develop global campaign report and reports by phase <p>Compensation: [To be determined per negotiation with NMP and/or funding partner(s).]</p>

Acknowledgements & thanks!

- Thanks to interviewees (partners, AMP TA providers, NMP and NCs)
- Appreciate AMP/IFRC support for review
- QUESTIONS?



Photo: WHO