

Setting the stage for long-term success: Applying sustainability planning and execution for malaria in pregnancy programs

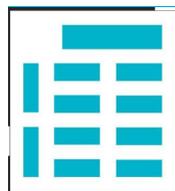
TIPTOP

The Transforming Intermittent Preventive Treatment for Optimal Pregnancy (TIPTOP) project introduced and expanded an innovative, community-based approach with an aim to dramatically increase the number of pregnant women in malaria-affected countries in sub-Saharan Africa receiving at least three doses of of intermittent preventive treatment (IPTp) with quality assured SP. Community IPTp (C-IPTp) is complementary to antenatal care, affording all eligible pregnant women more opportunities to receive IPTp, thus saving the lives of thousands of mothers and newborns. The five-year project generated evidence, across four countries (DRC, Madagascar, Mozambique, Nigeria) to inform a World Health Organization (WHO) global IPTp policy review, potential global policy update, and potential subsequent update of country policies. TIPTOP is also setting the stage for scale-up across sub-Saharan Africa, supporting ministries of health (MOHs) to pilot-test C-IPTp, lending to program learning and creating a foundation for the sustainability of best practices.

From the start, TIPTOP has been designed with keeping the end in mind, working closely with MOH and malaria partners with a focus on sustainability of C-IPTp beyond the life of project. TIPTOP leverages opportunities for MOH engagement to build country ownership and key partnerships to promote long term success through the eventual transition of project activities to MOH and partners.

TOOL DESCRIPTION

Introduced during and applied from project start up, the TIPTOP sustainability tool¹ helped countries monitor their progress and define actions to address bottlenecks toward sustainability. The tool, simple and easy to use, consists of a sustainability plan matrix and a sustainability assessment template.



MATRIX: Identifies incremental steps along a pathway towards sustainability for each specified indicator; used to guide Technical Working Group (TWG) discussions



ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE: Tool to record status of progress towards sustainability for each specified indicator, as well as document planned action items to advance progress

¹ The TIPTOP draft matrix was adapted to from the scale-up of the C-IPTp approach from the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID)-supported Maternal and Child Health Integrated Program's malaria in pregnancy (MiP) scale-up framework that has been used in multiple countries to monitor progress, track key areas of implementation, and prioritize actions toward scale-up.

The five-year TIPTOP project is implemented and managed by Jhpiego. This is in partnership with the Barcelona Institute for Global Health (ISGlobal), which leads the research and evaluation components of the project. The two organizations also collaborate with the World Health Organization (WHO) and Medicines for Malaria Venture to achieve the desired results.

The tool and process also support planning and prioritizing actions to sustain TIPTOP outcomes, while setting the stage for scale-up. Used by MiP technical working groups (TWGs) the matrix provides key stakeholders, including ministry of health managers, implementing partners and donors, the opportunity to review and assess the status of country readiness according to the following dimensions: policy, commodities, quality assurance, capacity building, community-based MiP programming, monitoring and evaluation (M&E) / health management information systems (HMIS), and finance.

SUSTAINABILITY INDICATOR SCORES

- 1: **THINKING**: Awareness of need
- 2: **PLANNING**: Initial Start-up
- 3: **ACTION**: Partially implemented
- 4: **MAINTENANCE**: Fully implemented

HOW IT'S USED



Step 1: Assess

Assign score of 1-4 to each indicator based on country readiness to sustain C-IPTp approach



Step 2: Plan

Develop action items based on identified gaps to strengthen country foundation for sustainability

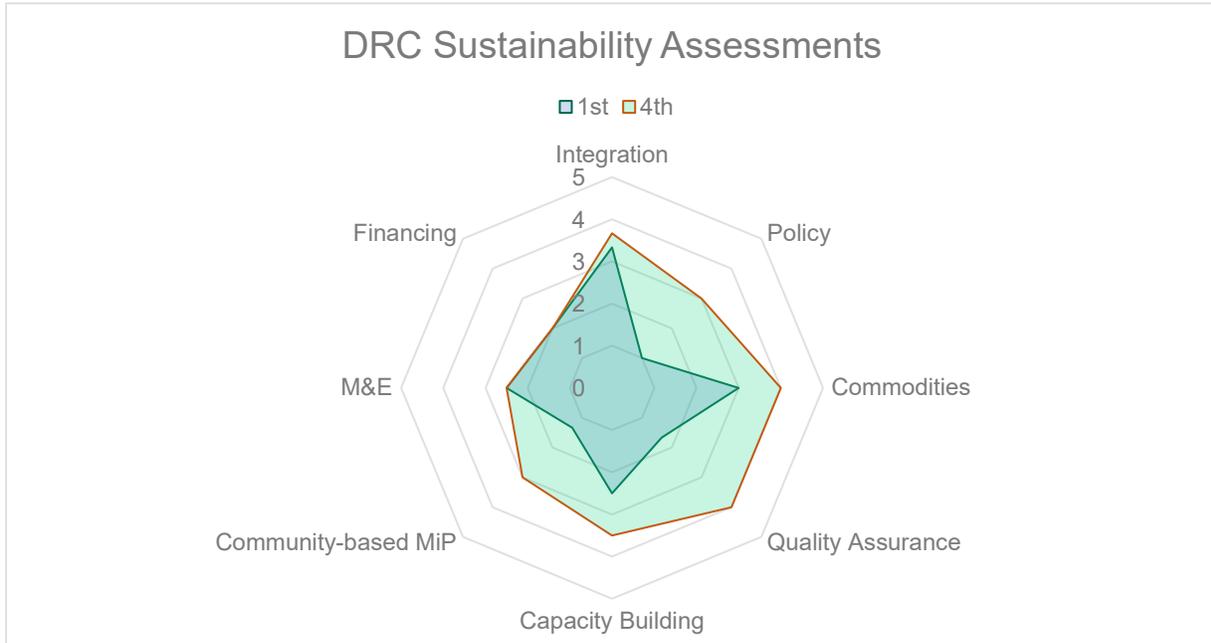


Step 3: Monitor

Review and update tool bi-annually to assess progress towards sustainability

CHARTING COUNTRY PROGRESS USING THE SUSTAINABILITY TOOL

Figure 1: Sustainability scores by assessment round



The above is an illustrative radar graph of assessment findings in DRC. The first and fourth rounds of assessments are shown in different colors. The graph shows progressive improvement in the number of indicators reaching full implementation (level 4) at the time of assessment. Where gaps are identified, TWGs discussed and listed actions to be taken to improve the score prior to the next assessment.

"THE SUSTAINABILITY TEMPLATE IS GUIDING US IN IDENTIFYING AREAS THAT NEEDS ATTENTION AND ACTION BEFORE THE NEXT ROUND OF ASSESSMENT. THE TOOL IS A LIFE TOOL THAT IS ENSURING POTENTIAL FUTURE REQUIREMENTS TO BE MET IN THE INTERVENTION, THEREBY FOSTERING STABILITY AND BETTER SERVICE DELIVERY FOR THE COUNTRY"

DR. NNENNA OGBULAFOR, DEPUTY DIRECTOR, CASE MANAGEMENT – NATIONAL MALARIA ELIMINATION PROGRAM



SUSTAINABILITY AND SCALE-UP ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE

Directions: Review the Sustainability and Scale-up Matrix and select appropriate Stage to complete column 4 for your country

Country: _____ Date: _____ Person completing: _____

Key Element Type	Indicator	Desired Status (Stage 4)	Current Country Status (select from Sustainability Matrix Stages 1-4)	Action Plan			
				Action(s)	In-charge	Timing	Partners
	Central-level MiP materials are harmonized between RH, Malaria Control and HIV programs	National level RH, malaria and HIV materials have been harmonized.					
	Central-level MiP	National level established in					

IMPLICATIONS

LEARNINGS

- Breaking sustainability pathway into small, tangible objectives helps countries map actions to reach readiness for full sustainability
- The success of the tool depends on availability and commitment of MOH/stakeholders to review progress on a regular basis
- Regular assessments need to continue to be prioritized during other health crises in order for sustainability to be achieved
- Use of the tool should start in the earliest project stages in order to provide enough time for actions to be taken to set the stage for sustainability

OPPORTUNITIES

- Tool is generic and can be applied to other projects/technical areas serving as an incentive for MOH decision makers to invest in learning/utilizing the tool
- Assessment scores can be used to advocate to MOH/key stakeholders to advance progress towards sustainability
- Numeric scale serves as motivator to advance progress and basis for collective decision making on appropriate courses of action

CONCLUSION

The TIPTOP sustainability tool is a helpful mechanism for gauging country readiness to sustain C-IPTp activities. The tool's numeric scale provides a concrete measurement of progress on key elements needed to create a foundation for full sustainability and helps countries identify gaps and actions for advancement. The assessment findings helped inform the development of transition plans outlining steps for the handover of C-IPTp implementation to Ministries of Health. Use of the tool can be beneficial for countries looking to scale-up many types of public health interventions and can help set the stage for sustainability.