

SUSTAIN: A Sustainability and Transition Readiness Assessment Tool for Malaria

Key messages

- Many national malaria programs are facing declines in or the end of donor financial support as a result of reductions in global health funding, shifting priorities among development agencies, and changes in the health and economic landscape of recipient countries.
- Without adequate planning, the transition from a donor-supported to a fully nationally financed and managed malaria response can disrupt essential program activities and undermine progress towards elimination. At the same time, transition offers an opportunity to build the long-term sustainability of an effective and efficient malaria program embedded in strong national health systems.
- To successfully navigate transition, countries will need to adopt new financing, governance, programmatic, and policy approaches to malaria elimination. SUSTAIN is an assessment and planning tool that guides national malaria programs through the process of preparing for a sustainable transition from donor support.
- SUSTAIN helps countries by assessing transition readiness across a full range of malaria and health system functions, identifying the challenges that may occur during transition, and identifying and prioritizing solutions for addressing identified challenges.



About the Toolkit

The MEI Malaria Elimination Toolkit is a set of proven tools and approaches to help malaria endemic countries accelerate progress toward malaria elimination. Developed by the Malaria Elimination Initiative (MEI) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), the toolkit addresses the unique challenges faced by national malaria programs in heterogeneous transmission settings. These tools have been used successfully at the national and/or subnational levels, leading to important changes in malaria policy and practice.

The MEI recognizes that implementing any new tool or approach can be challenging. Technical assistance is available to support the tailoring and implementation of all MEI tools. Please visit our website shrinkingthemalariamap.org or contact us for more information at mei@ucsf.edu.

What is transition and sustainability?

Transition is the process by which a country moves towards fully financing, managing, and implementing its health programs independent of donor support. This often includes integrating donor-supported programs, health workforce, technical, and other resources into the public health system. A transition is successful when national malaria programs are able to maintain and improve equitable coverage and uptake

of services through resilient health systems. Sustainability is the ability of country to strategically implement public health activities that ensure the long-term prevention of public health challenges, including achieving and maintaining malaria elimination. In many cases, this will include enhancing the integration of the vertical malaria response into the general health system.

What is the SUSTAIN tool and why is it useful?

Successful transitions are often hindered by a lack of awareness among government health and finance leadership about transition needs, limited coordination across donors, government programs, and implementing partners to strategically address transition priorities, and insufficient evidence about best-practice sustainability strategies. The SUSTAIN tool is designed to close these gaps by facilitating a multi-stakeholder consultative process to assess program strengths and weaknesses as they relate to sustainability, and prioritize strategies and actions for the transition period. SUSTAIN focuses on generating dialogue and facilitating priority-setting and problem-solving discussions across key stakeholders at the national and sub-national level – essential components of sustainability and transition planning and implementation.

Transition impacts not only a program's financing, but all aspects of a program's governance, management, and implementation. SUSTAIN therefore takes a holistic approach to assessing transition readiness, by evaluating sustainability and transition vulnerabilities in each of the core domains of the malaria response, including epidemiological surveillance and response, vector control, case management, and information systems. In each of these areas, SUSTAIN assesses sustainability in financing, leadership and management, health workforce, integration, and health product management.

Who should use this tool and how?

SUSTAIN is intended to be used by national malaria programs in collaboration with their donor, technical, implementing and research partners. National program managers will lead the

development of the SUSTAIN goals and strategy, engaging the program's technical partners, Ministry of Health leadership, collaborating departments within the Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, and other governmental, non-governmental and civil society, and donor agencies. A dedicated assessment team, comprising leadership of the national malaria program and an external technical partner, leads the conduct of the SUSTAIN assessment.

The SUSTAIN tool is intended to be used during the early stages of a country's anticipated transition from donor support, ideally in advance of any reduction in donor financial or technical support to the malaria program. In this way, the tool can be used to identify potential problems prior to transition and proactively implement strategies to mitigate any anticipated challenges that may be faced during the transition period. Designing and making the programmatic and policy adjustments necessitated by transition take time, and will require new and different strategies and investments by all partners. The tool seeks to facilitate the evidence generation, consultation, and prioritization processes needed to elevate discussions of sustainability and transition and prepare the program for managing necessary changes.

Implementation of the SUSTAIN tool is best followed with steps to develop and implement a sustainability and transition plan, and can be used alongside other tools in the MEI toolkit including the Malaria Budget Advocacy Framework and the LEAD Framework.

The Malaria Elimination Initiative (MEI) at the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) believes a malaria-free world is possible within a generation. As a forward-thinking partner to malaria eliminating countries and regions, the MEI generates evidence, develops new tools and approaches, disseminates experiences, and builds consensus to shrink the malaria map. With support from the MEI's highly skilled team, countries around the world are actively working to eliminate malaria.

shrinkingthemalariamap.org