

# SIAPS TECHNICAL HIGHLIGHT

## SIAPS Provides Technical Assistance to National Malaria Control Program to Conduct Malaria Indicator Surveys

### INTRODUCTION

The US Agency for International Development (USAID)-funded Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) Program is working closely with the Ministry of Health (MoH) of the Republic of South Sudan, state Ministries of Health (with a focus on the two former states of Central and Western Equatoria), and other partners (including those funded by USAID) to improve the overall management of pharmaceuticals and medical supplies and ensure the availability of quality pharmaceutical products

and effective pharmaceutical services to achieve desired health outcomes. SIAPS also worked in partnership with the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) to strengthen the program's leadership and management capacities and improve management of malaria commodities and support malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment efforts. Staff provided technical support to revise and develop policy documents and strategic plans and to implement major activities, such as the MIS.

Malaria indicator surveys (MIS) are nationally representative household surveys conducted every two to three years to evaluate the outcomes and impact of malaria interventions. The MIS measure indicators related to a **country's national malaria strategic plan (MSP)**, the Roll Back Malaria Global Malaria Action Plan, the Millennium Development Goals, and the President's Malaria Initiative targets. Information is collected on the ownership and use of insecticide-treated mosquito nets, indoor residual spraying of insecticides, prompt and effective treatment of fever in young children, and the prevention of malaria in pregnant women.



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## MIS IMPLEMENTATION APPROACH

During both the 2013 MIS and preparations for the 2016 survey, SIAPS supported the following activities:

**Planning:** Through its advisors working in the NMCP, SIAPS served on the MIS core team, which was tasked with providing technical oversight for conducting the survey, including:

- Providing a meeting venue
- Participating in all technical discussions regarding implementation details, including timelines and budget
- Acting as the secretariat by compiling and distributing minutes with action points as well as tracking the implementation of the action points
- Reviewing and editing the survey protocol and data collection tools (e.g., questionnaires, manuals, listing forms, consent forms, control sheets)

SIAPS also supported the NMCP in developing training materials (PowerPoint presentations, training manuals, and other supporting materials) and training trainers and supervision field teams.

**Data collection, analysis, and reporting:** SIAPS collaborated with the NMCP and other partners (i.e., Population Services International, World Health Organization (WHO), United Nations Children's Fund, Malaria Consortium) to ensure completion of the survey by:

- Developing terms of reference (TORs) for a national consultant who led data collection and entry and for data entry clerks
- Hiring a data entry and processing consultant and data entry clerks in collaboration with the South Sudan National Bureau of Statistics
- Developing TORs for laboratory personnel who were then recruited to facilitate slide reading of the blood samples collected from eligible

groups (pregnant women and children under five years of age) to identify malaria parasites (parasite prevalence) and parasite species

- Working closely with WHO to send blood slide samples (all positives and 10% of negatives) to a WHO-recommended laboratory in Uganda for external quality control
- Developing TORs for an international data analysis and report writing consultant
- Supervising and supporting consultants throughout the process

**Dissemination:** SIAPS facilitated and funded the printing of 1,000 copies of the 2013 MIS report for dissemination to stakeholders, including the MoH, state MoHs, and donor and implementing agencies.

## HOW WERE THE 2013 MIS FINDINGS USED?

The findings of the 2013 MIS were used to inform decision making and resource mobilization. Data from the MIS served as a baseline for updating and developing the seven-year South Sudan MSP (2014/15–2020/21), a seven-year M&E plan as an addendum to the MSP, and a three-year malaria annual work plan (business plan) for 2014–2016.

The results of the 2013 MIS were also used to develop a concept note during the application process for the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Malaria (Global Fund) malaria grant under the New Funding Model (NFM).

SIAPS actively participated in all development processes for the key documents used for the Global Fund grant application. With this support, South Sudan was able to mobilize USD 45,788,231 for implementation of malaria control activities between January 2015 and December 2017 under the Global Fund NFM.

## LESSONS LEARNED

1. The 2013 MIS provided important information to inform the work of the NMCP and its partners in planning and mobilizing resources for the implementation of activities in the country. For example, the NMCP used the MIS information to update the seven-year malaria strategic plan and inform the Global Fund grant application process.
2. Successful implementation of the MIS requires early planning and strong collaboration among malaria partners in the country. Contributing factors to the success of the 2013 MIS included building a rapport with stakeholders; reaching consensus on modalities of implementation, including accountability for funds and assigning responsibilities among key players; and working closely with government counterparts. SIAPS malaria technical advisors were directly involved in planning, coordinating, and managing the survey on a full-time basis.
3. Although the 2013 MIS was carefully planned, the challenge of paying field teams and their supervisors during data collection was not anticipated. SIAPS stepped in, and all payment and accountability issues were amicably resolved.
4. During the field data collection period, the central-level supervisory team noticed that some field supervisors/teams were not adhering to standard operating procedures. The supervisory teams mentored the field teams on these procedures.
5. During presentation of the final report to the MoH senior management board for approval, the chair of the board (MoH Undersecretary) requested that the consultant who wrote the report be present to avoid any misunderstanding that could delay the report.

## CONCLUSION

The 2016 MIS is expected to be a follow-on activity to the 2013 MIS to evaluate the results of scaled-up implementation of malaria activities based on the 2014/15–2020/21 MSP that will inform future planning and contribute data to the national health database. The results of the 2016 MIS will also adequately prepare the country for negotiations with the Global Fund for funding beyond the December 2017 expiry of the current malaria grant under the NFM. The 2016 MIS findings will also be useful for engaging with other donors.

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**ABOUT SIAPS** | The Systems for Improved Access to Pharmaceuticals and Services (SIAPS) program works to assure access to quality pharmaceutical products and effective pharmaceutical services through systems-strengthening approaches to achieve positive and lasting health outcomes. SIAPS is funded by the US Agency for International Development (USAID) and is implemented by Management Sciences for Health.

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