

Meeting Report

SECOND ANNUAL COUNTRY SURVEILLANCE MEETING TO FACILITATE MALARIA ELIMINATION IN THE GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION



30 October 2019
Yangon, Myanmar

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

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GREATER MEKONG SUBREGION

Convened by:

WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION
REGIONAL OFFICE FOR THE WESTERN PACIFIC

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NOTE

The views expressed in this report are those of the participants of the Second Annual Country Surveillance Meeting to Facilitate Malaria Elimination in the Greater Mekong Subregion and do not necessarily reflect the policies of the conveners.

This report has been prepared by the World Health Organization Regional Office for the Western Pacific for the Member States in the Region and for those who participated in the Second Annual Country Surveillance Meeting to Facilitate Malaria Elimination in the Greater Mekong Subregion in Yangon, Myanmar on 30 October 2019.

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Keywords:

Malaria – epidemiology, prevention and control / Public health surveillance / Mekong Valley

ABBREVIATIONS

CNM	Cambodian National Center for Parasitology, Entomology and Malaria Control
DHIS2	District Health Information System 2
DSME	Digital Solutions for Malaria Elimination
eCDS	Electronic Communicable Disease System
GMS	Greater Mekong Subregion
iDES	integrated drug efficacy surveillance
LLIN	long-lasting insecticidal net
MEDB	Malaria Elimination Database
MIS	Malaria Indicator Survey (Cambodia)
MME	Mekong Malaria Elimination
MMS	Malaria Management System
MMW	mobile malaria worker
NMCP	National Malaria Control Programme
PCD	passive case detection
RAI	Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative
RDSP	Regional Data Sharing Platform
VMW	village malaria worker
WHO	World Health Organization

SUMMARY

On 30 October 2019, representatives from the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) countries – Cambodia, China, the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, Myanmar, Thailand and Viet Nam – met with partners to discuss strengthening surveillance for malaria elimination in the Subregion. The Second Annual Country Surveillance Meeting to Facilitate Malaria Elimination in the Greater Mekong Subregion was held in Yangon, Myanmar and organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) Mekong Malaria Elimination (MME) programme. During the meeting, representatives exchanged information on surveillance progress and challenges in their countries.

Presentations centred around two key topics: (i) surveillance updates and (ii) surveillance improvements and challenges. The outcomes from these discussions led to recommendations that aim to further strengthen surveillance to accelerate malaria elimination in the GMS towards the shared goal of malaria-free status in the Subregion by 2030.

The key conclusions of the meeting included:

- **Overview of GMS malaria elimination:** In 2018 and the first half of 2019, there has been significant progress towards *Plasmodium falciparum* (*Pf*) and mixed case elimination in the GMS. Between January and September 2019, approximately 31% of reported malaria cases were *Pf* and mixed cases, which is a reduction from 34% during the same period in 2018. Malaria is mostly concentrated in remote areas, where the disease disproportionately affects forest goers.
- **Surveillance in the GMS:** Stronger surveillance systems are critical to achieving malaria elimination in the GMS. Under the Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative 2E (RAI2E) surveillance grant, WHO manages the Regional Data Sharing Platform (RDSP) with three objectives: monitoring progress towards elimination, strengthening the surveillance capacity of national programmes and supporting countries to address cross-border challenges.
- **Regional Data Sharing Platform:** All GMS countries are currently collecting and sharing surveillance data through the web-based platform. The WHO MME programme is working with national malaria control programmes (NMCPs) and WHO country offices to continually enhance the RDSP and support training for both national and subnational focal points.
- **Challenges with the RDSP:** Although there have been major achievements utilizing the RDSP, some challenges remain that need to be addressed. These include the creation of NMCP data repositories and the implementation of national surveillance system assessments. There are also gaps in the completeness and timeliness of reporting to the RDSP, particularly concerning data collected through routine national surveillance systems. Key recommendations outlined in the meeting included the need to agree upon concise data elements and to support the integration of data from the private sector and other national partners.
- **Country updates:** The GMS countries presented the progress and challenges of their surveillance systems. In Cambodia, the new Malaria Indicator Survey (MIS) system is capturing village-level data. In the Lao People’s Democratic Republic, line-listed data have been made available since 2019. These include data from the integrated drug efficacy surveillance (iDES) pilot as well as data from the long-lasting insecticidal net (LLIN) mass distribution campaign, which was also included in the District Health Information System 2 (DHIS2). In Myanmar, case-based data are available, but some hospitals only provide aggregate data. All surveillance systems are in the process of being integrated. In Thailand, village-level data are available, and the mHealth app is now in use to accelerate malaria elimination. In Viet Nam, a new case-based reporting system was piloted in three

provinces and training conducted at the commune level. This will be rolled out nationally in early 2020.

- **Digital Solutions for Malaria Elimination (DSME):** The Clinton Health Access Initiative, along with WHO and other partners, are developing and rolling out DSME. The key technical outputs for DSME include extending the core capabilities of DHIS2, enhancing mobile tools and developing common goods (such as the common geo-registry).
- **Partner, community and civil society engagement:** Cambodia's Intensification Plan for Hard-to-Reach Populations is recognized as one example of strong collaboration between the government, partners and WHO. The Plan was developed in response to a substantial increase in cases and includes aggressive interventions for hard-to-reach populations.
- **Cross-border collaboration:** Since 2018, data from the Thai–Cambodia border and the China–Myanmar border are being shared regularly. Malaria focal points have worked together to analyse trends along with the border areas at bilateral meetings.
- **Epidemiology summary:** Consensus was not reached on increasing the publication of MME's epidemiology summaries from a quarterly to a monthly basis.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Meeting organization

The WHO Mekong Malaria Elimination (MME) programme hosts the Regional Data Sharing Platform (RDSP) under the Regional Artemisinin-resistance Initiative 2E (RAI2E) from the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. The purpose of the RDSP is to strengthen surveillance activities in countries and to facilitate data-sharing and collaboration among countries. Currently, all countries in the Greater Mekong Subregion (GMS) are sharing their malaria surveillance data monthly as part of the RDSP.

The Second Annual Country Surveillance Meeting to Facilitate Malaria Elimination in the Greater Mekong Subregion was held in Yangon, Myanmar, on 30 October 2019. The one-day meeting brought together representatives from malaria control programmes, surveillance focal points from GMS countries, as well as technical experts and partners. The meeting focused on reviewing the current status and performance of national surveillance systems as well as future priorities for the RDSP.

The main discussion points included updates and recommendations from GMS countries on the status of their surveillance systems and the RDSP surveillance data. Participants also discussed Digital Solutions for Malaria Elimination (DSME); the addition of new indicators (imported cases, the origin of imported cases, indigenous cases) to MME's existing quarterly epidemiology summaries; and recommendations for strengthening engagement between the health ministry partners, communities and civil society in the context of Cambodia's malaria elimination (intensification) plan.

1.2 Meeting objectives

The objectives of the meeting were:

- 1) to review the status of surveillance systems in the GMS and the implementation status of the recommendations from the last surveillance meeting (November 2018) to identify challenges to strengthening surveillance in the GMS and make concrete recommendations for the upcoming year;
- 2) to review the performance of the RDSP and prepare/plan activities for the coming year as well as the ways to utilize the surveillance data to accelerate malaria elimination; and
- 3) to brainstorm the future priorities for malaria surveillance in the GMS (for example further collaboration in cross-border areas).

2. PROCEEDINGS

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