

Nigeria Work Plan

FY 2022

Program Year 4

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Waging Peace. Fighting Disease. Building Hope.



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ACT | EAST PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The U.S. Agency for International Development Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) | East Program supports national NTD programs in reaching World Health Organization goals for NTD control and elimination through proven, cost-effective public health interventions. The Act to End NTDs | East (Act | East) Program also provides critical support to countries on their journey to self-reliance, helping them create sustainable programming for NTD control within robust and resilient health systems. The Act | East Program is being implemented by a consortium of partners, led by RTI International and including The Carter Center (TCC); Fred Hollows Foundation; Light for the World; Results for Development (R4D); Save the Children; Sightsavers; and Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law (WI-HER).

In Nigeria, Act | East Program activities are implemented by TCC in Plateau, Nasarawa, Edo, Delta, Enugu, Imo, Abia, and Ebonyi States and by RTI International in Cross River State and at the federal level.

COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT ON ACT TO END NTDs | EAST (ACT | EAST) ACTIVITIES AND WORK PLANS

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact neglected tropical disease (NTD) programs. On April 1, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued guidance to NTD programs, recommending that almost all in-person activities be postponed until further notice. With the support of USAID, Act | East stopped all activities that matched the criteria outlined.

On July 27, 2020, WHO issued further guidance on assessing whether NTD activities could restart safely. Act | East, in collaboration with Act | West and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), developed activity restart guidance and resource documents to support each country to adapt activities appropriately.

Decisions on all supported activities continue to be made in close coordination with ministries of health and are context-specific, varying by country, region, and activity type, and are subject to changes in COVID-19 dynamics. Act | East continues to provide regular updates to USAID on the plans for specific activities through the submission of monthly updates.

Unless noted, work plans for fiscal year 2022 assume a full year of activities and are written with the best information available at the time of submission. Nevertheless, the situation may change in some countries and will result in adjustments to work plans. Act | East will continue to communicate with USAID to discuss these changes as the situation evolves.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACRONYMS LIST	5
NARRATIVE.....	7
1. NATIONAL NTD PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND SUPPORT	7
2. Intermediate Result (IR)1 PLANNED ACTIVITIES: LF, TRACHOMA, OV.....	8
Lymphatic Filariasis	8
Trachoma	9
Onchocerciasis	9
3. IR2 SUSTAINABILITY AND Health System Strengthening STRATEGY ACTIVITIES	9
a. Improving Core NTD Program Functions	9
Data Security and Management	9
Drug Management	10
b. Achieving Sustainability: Mainstreaming and Health Systems Strengthening (HSS).....	11
4. IR3 PLANNED ACTIVITIES: SCH, STH	11
Soil -Transmitted Helminths	11
Schistosomiasis	11



FY22 Learning Activities are marked with this icon throughout the narrative.

ACRONYMS LIST

AE	Adverse Event
ALB	Albendazole
APOC	African Programme for Onchocerciasis Control
ASCEND	Accelerating Sustainable Control and Elimination of NTDs
CDD	Community Drug Distributor
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
CRS	Cross River State
DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
DHIS2	District Health Information Software-2
DSA	Disease-Specific Assessment
FCDO	Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office
FMOH	Federal Ministry of Health
FTS	Filariasis Test Strips
FY	Fiscal Year
HMIS	Health Management Information System
HSS	Health System Strengthening
IDEC	Importation Duty Exemption Certificate
IR	Intermediate Result
IVM	Ivermectin
JAP	Joint Application Package
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
LGA	Local Government Area
LLIN	Long-Lasting Insecticide-Treated Net
LOE	Level of Effort
M&E	Monitoring and Evaluation
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MERLA	Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning, and Adapting
NGDO	Non-Governmental Development Organization
NOEC	National Onchocerciasis Elimination Committee
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
OV	Onchocerciasis
PC	Preventive Chemotherapy
Q	Quarter
R4D	Results for Development
SAC	School-Age Children
SAE	Serious Adverse Event
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCM	Supply Chain Management
SMOH	State Ministry of Health
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminths
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
TCC	The Carter Center
TF	Trachomatous Inflammation–Follicular
UNICEF	United Nations Children’s Fund
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WASH	Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene

WHO

World Health Organization

NARRATIVE

1. NATIONAL NTD PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND SUPPORT

Nigeria is the most populous African nation, with an estimated 207.8 million people, expected to reach 260 million by 2025. The country is divided into six zones comprising 36 states and the Federal Capital Territory. The 774 Local Government Areas (LGAs) serve as the primary implementation units for the neglected tropical disease (NTD) control and elimination program. The National NTD Program in Nigeria focuses on five diseases: lymphatic filariasis (LF), trachoma, onchocerciasis (OV), soil-transmitted helminths (STH), and schistosomiasis (SCH).

In 2007, Nigeria established integrated NTD programming to improve collaboration among partners. The Federal Ministry of Health (FMOH) leads and coordinates the National NTD Program in collaboration with non-governmental development organizations (NGDOs), United Nations agencies, and other stakeholders, including the private sector. The FMOH is responsible for defining the criteria for partnership, expanding the partnership base, and streamlining partners' activities to avoid duplication of efforts. The FMOH encourages partners to work in an integrated approach, particularly where diseases are co-endemic. The state ministries of health (SMOHs) are responsible for establishing state NTD programs and appointing NTD focal points. The SMOHs ensure that policies and guidelines are adapted and implemented to meet the LGAs' needs, including the provision of sufficient technical and supportive supervision so that NTD activities are integrated into state and LGA health facilities.

Service delivery and activity reporting at the LGA level rely on a collaborative relationship between the Education Secretary and the LGA NTD coordinator, with the latter leading. This coordination occurs at the lowest level of operations in the schools and communities. Teachers play a role similar to that of community drug distributors (CDDs); both are responsible for operationalizing interventions to ensure impact. The teachers support all activities relating to mobilizing school-age children (SAC) for school-based deworming; water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) education; and data reporting from the schools to the Education Secretary. Community-selected CDDs ensure that mobilization, medicine distribution, and data collation and reporting to the health facility level are conducted efficiently. These frontline workers are critical to the success of intervention activities.

In addition to the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), major donors for NTD control and elimination efforts in Nigeria include the Children's Investment Fund Foundation and the End Neglected Tropical Diseases Fund. The U.K. Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office (FCDO, formerly the Department for International Development [DFID]) was a major funder through its Accelerating Sustainable Control and Elimination of NTDs (ASCEND) project, which came into effect in May 2019 through a consortium led by Sightsavers, in partnership with several organizations. As of 2021, the U.K. government discontinued the ASCEND project. It is unclear what program closure will mean for the five states supported by this program.

Nigeria has a strong coalition of NGDOs providing technical and capacity-building support to the FMOH. RTI, Sightsavers, CBM International, Health and Development Support, Helen Keller International, The Carter Center (TCC), Amen Health and Empowerment Foundation, and Mission to Save the Helpless are the major NTD-focused NGDOs in the country. They draw their funding from various donors. These NGDOs meet twice a year, before the National NTD Program's steering committee meetings, with the FMOH and SMOHs to facilitate coordination.

2. INTERMEDIATE RESULT (IR)1 PLANNED ACTIVITIES: LF, TRACHOMA, OV

Lymphatic Filariasis

In FY22, Act | East will continue to provide support to the Nigeria LF program for MDA, surveys, and dossier development. Specific activities are detailed below.

- **LF MDA:** Act | East will support MDA in 40 LGAs (TCC: 39, RTI: 1), 3 of which are re-MDAs following pre-TAS failure in FY21. Act | East will support cascaded training, transportation of drugs, social mobilization, drug distribution, and supervision.
 - **Improving Yala, CRS re-MDA:** In FY22, Act | East will support SMOH to address all operational issues identified during the DSA outcome investigation and the last MDA, sustain the use of electronic data capture in the supervision of MDA, train CDDs and health workers on use of the MDA rejection form, and improve the training content for health workers on health education and management of MDA rejection.
 - **TCC re-MDA in 2 districts of Ebonyi:** Extensive work has been done to ensure that each village has CDDs assigned who are recognized and respected by village leadership. The NTD program has collaborated with the malaria program to facilitate increased usage of LLINs. Health education materials have been reviewed for messaging on LLIN compliance; the current materials are from 2018, and new guides are planned but have not been deployed due to insecurity. Increased supportive supervision is planned for FY22, when the security situation may be better. More CDDs will be recruited and trained when it is safe to do so. The supervisor’s coverage tool will be used in these LGAs, focusing not only on sentinel and spot-check sites, but also on at least one other community. Furthermore, all efforts will be made to check coverage in nomadic or migrant populations in time to conduct needed mop-up treatment.
- **LF pre-TAS:** Act | East will support pre-TAS in 39 LGAs (TCC: 38, RTI: 1).
 - 34 LGAs were originally planned in FY21.
 - 2 LGAs will implement pre-TAS following a successful fifth round of MDA in FY22.
 - 3 LGAs will implement re-pre-TAS following a successful second round of re-MDA in FY22.
- **LF TAS1:** Act | East will support TAS1 in 37 LGAs (TCC: 37). These LGAs passed pre-TAS in FY21. Surveyors will capture data electronically using the TCC Next Generation Evaluation and Monitoring (NEMO) system.
- **LF pre-TAS Training (RTI):**) Act | East will support two days of training for 25 participants in Calabar.
 - Following completion of the survey, Act | East will host a one-day debriefing meeting of stakeholders for 20 participants in Calabar.
- **FY22 LF Dossier Support (LOE only):** In FY22, Act | East will build upon previous efforts and continue to provide targeted technical support for dossier preparation.

Trachoma

In FY21 Q4, the National Trachoma Program will conduct trachoma surveillance surveys in these five LGAs with Act | East support. Act | East anticipates that all five surveys will demonstrate sustained TF prevalence below 5%; therefore, FY22 trachoma activities are limited to Act | East participation in the National Trachoma Task Force Meeting.

Onchocerciasis

In FY22, Act | East will continue to provide support to the Nigeria OV program for MDA. Specific activities are detailed below.

- **OV MDA:** Act | East will support one round of OV MDA in 98 LGAs (TCC: 83, RTI: 15). Act | East will support cascaded training, transportation of drugs, social mobilization, drug distribution, and supervision.

Based on lessons learned from FY21 MDA and the recommendations from the 2020 annual review meeting, Act | East has proposed a change in the structure of training in CRS from the LGA level to a senatorial districts-based training in a three-level sequence to improve the quality of training and the monitoring of MDA implementation.

- **National OV Elimination Committee Meeting (NOEC) (TCC):** Act | East will provide support for one three-day NOEC meeting.

3. IR2 SUSTAINABILITY AND HEALTH SYSTEM STRENGTHENING STRATEGY ACTIVITIES

a. Improving Core NTD Program Functions

Data Security and Management

In FY22, Act | East will support the following:

- **Annual State Data Validation Meetings for Eight States (TCC):** There will be eight two-day meetings, one in each TCC-supported state, convening the states and LGAs to check mid-year on the progress of MDA data collation. Approximately eight participants will attend each meeting, comprised of state NTD coordinators, the LGA coordinators, state data managers, and the TCC data manager. The purpose of these meetings is the annual compilation and cross-check of LGA-level data. This hands-on, collaborative approach will help address data issues, improve data quality and data management, and facilitate better response to data inquiries by Act | East.
- **Data Validation Meeting for USAID-Supported States Workbooks Entry of Annual Treatment Data (Enugu) (TCC):** Act | East will partially support a five-day data validation meeting for the nine states supported by USAID. This meeting provides clarity and data quality checks for both the RTI Monitoring, Evaluation, Research, Learning, and Adapting (MERLA) Specialist and TCC Data Manager, to help them understand the conditions affecting reported data in each state across all LGAs. This process will result in reporting of high-quality data in the workbooks. It will ensure that data are ready for submission to the FMOH for the Joint Application Package (JAP) process in timely manner. Act | East, through TCC, will support attendance for 32 participants, comprised of 24 persons at 3 per state (State Program Manager, Data Manager, Driver) and 8 TCC staff. In addition, RTI will support costs for all five days for 2 RTI staff members.

Drug Management

In FY22, Act | East will support the following:

- **Quarterly virtual intra-zonal review meeting (level of effort [LOE] only):** Act | East will continue to support quarterly meetings of zonal offices of the FMOH and set up zoom links in addition to other technical guidance for improved coordination, inventory management, and accountability of states to track performance of the supply chain pipeline.
- **FMOH supervision and monitoring of SCM across Nigeria (RTI):** Act | East will support four supervisory visits, one to the federal store and one visit to each of the three Act | East supported zones (North Central, South East, and South South). These visits are intended to help the National NTD Program verify accurate medicine inventories.
- **Biannual SCM stakeholders review meeting (RTI):** These one-day meetings (held twice per year) are aimed at providing coordination within different government agencies responsible for facilitating issuance of the Importation Duty Exemption Certificates (IDEC) and the ease of clearing donated medicines into Nigeria. Act | East will support hall rental, refreshment, and transport refund to 25 participants for two meetings in Abuja. Participants will include representatives from FMOH, WHO, Ministry of Finance, National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control, Nigeria Immigration Services and Nigeria Customs Services, FMOH and its subsidiary departments, the private sector, clearing agencies, and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF).

The thrust of this meeting comes from the tremendous success of the pioneering meeting held on November 27, 2020. The meeting convened the above-mentioned partners to seek solution to the long delays in approval of IDEC and eventual inflow of NTD medicines and test kits into the country after several months of delay and medicine stockouts for the program. The benefit to the program was significant when officials of customs, finance, and immigration agencies understood and embraced their roles in NTD efforts, coming from organizations which had not previously engaged with NTDs. To ensure that approval of IDEC and clearance of donated medicines would flow smoothly into the national medical stores, this quarterly meeting would serve to bring every stakeholder up to speed on donated medicines, commodity inventory, inflow, and storage nationwide in a timely, transparent, and accountability-oriented manner.

The Nigeria NTD program does not currently have a well-established protocol concerning MDA harm reduction and SAE reporting. This has resulted in adverse event (AE)/SAE reporting and investigative procedures that are not well understood by state-level NTD focal persons or implementing partners.

In FY21, in partnership with the Task Force for Global Health, Act | East supported a National NTD Safety Workshop. The workshop convened national, zonal, and state NTD stakeholders; implementing partners; and pharmacovigilance staff. Participants reviewed the draft WHO guidance and training modules on NTD safety, providing feedback for revisions and adaptations for the Nigerian context. Workshop participants also worked together to identify major challenges surrounding MDA safety.

In FY22, Act | East will support the FMOH, through no-cost, ad-hoc meetings, to ensure recommendations from the workshop are implemented and that the guidance recently published by the WHO are disseminated to all SMOHs. Act | East is also currently working with the FMOH to design a plan to weave this guidance into existing activities such as annual and zonal review meetings, MDA trainings, post-MDA meetings, etc.

b. Achieving Sustainability: Mainstreaming and Health Systems Strengthening (HSS)

Planned Activities

- **Health financing landscape and fund flow analysis, CRS:** In FY21, Act | East, with financing partner Results for Development (R4D), began a health financing landscape and fund flow analysis of the CRS health sector. A protocol and questionnaire for this activity were completed and received RTI Institutional Review Board approval and are pending national Board submission. In FY22, R4D will complete this activity and use the findings to inform activities in CRS. A consultant will be hired to support data collection and transcription.

4. IR3 PLANNED ACTIVITIES: SCH, STH

Soil -Transmitted Helminths

In FY22, Act | East will provide financial support for supervision of the school-based MDA for STH in 120 LGAs in the TCC-supported states. All other costs associated with the school-based distribution platform are covered by other TCC funding sources. As stated previously, the FMOH is still seeking support for school-based deworming in CRS.

Schistosomiasis

In FY22, Act | East will provide financial support for supervision of the school-based MDA for SCH in 90 LGAs in the TCC-supported states. All other costs associated with the school-based distribution platform are covered by other TCC funding sources.