

SMC ALLIANCE

Learning Report

April 2025



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The SMC Alliance has a great success story for providing support to countries for implementation of SMC campaigns and some actions can be taken to strengthen the Alliance.

What is the current offering and model of the SMC Alliance?

- **The Alliance has a strong and valuable offering:** The SMC Alliance serves as a collaborative platform that provides countries, donors, and partners with tools, technical assistance, and opportunities to share knowledge and expertise.
- **The Alliance's strategy has been flexible, organic and successful thus far:** Over the last decade, the Alliance's informal and adaptive strategy has allowed it to respond effectively to emerging needs. However, there is expressed concern that the current informal approach may not foster sustainability.
- **SMC delivery and Alliance engagement is primarily country-driven:** Country representatives drive sustained interest in SMC and therefore value the Alliance for its flexibility, allowing them to engage as needed to share learnings, access funding, and enhance program delivery.

So what are stakeholder perceptions on the role of an SMC convening platform?

- **The Alliance could increase value by strengthening implementation support:** Stakeholders highlight the need for increased logistical guidance and support, particularly in the distribution of commodities to hard-to-reach areas.
- **There are opportunities for the Alliance to support countries with innovation in SMC:** There is significant potential to leverage digital tools, predictive modeling, and cutting-edge research to improve campaign tracking, enhance implementation efficiency, and address emerging challenges like drug resistance and climate-related malaria peaks.
- **There is a need for additional communication and engagement pathways:** The annual meeting plays a critical role in SMC campaign planning and identification of peer and expert support. However, stakeholders expressed uncertainty about how and when to engage with the Alliance outside of the annual meeting.

Now what are the associated implications & recommendations?

- **Explore expanded collaboration to improve coordination across malaria chemoprevention strategies:** Stakeholders see potential in expanding the Alliance's focus to include other malaria chemoprevention strategies, such as PMC and IPTsc. However, this expanded collaboration must balance barriers like limited resources, operational complexity, and risks of dilution, with enablers like the Alliance's trusted reputation.
- **Co-create a strategic approach to align the Alliance around evolved member needs:** To respond to the evolved needs of the Alliance members, the Alliance should consider articulating and formalizing its strategy to align goals, priorities, and activities.
- **The Alliance could enhance stakeholder engagement through more formal governance mechanisms and structures:** The Alliance should consider clarifying roles and responsibilities in light of the Alliance's evolving scope, building on best practices while embracing new opportunities.

Background & framing

Through this project the SMC Alliance aimed to document its history and outputs, assess stakeholder needs in malaria chemoprevention, and develop recommendations to enhance coordination and explore broadening its scope.

Project purpose

To document and analyze the SMC Alliance’s working mechanisms and successes, ensuring stakeholder needs are addressed and providing actionable recommendations to strengthen collaboration and coordination within the global malaria chemoprevention community.

Project objectives

- What?** Document the history, structure, and outputs of the SMC Alliance, capturing best practices and lessons learned.
- So what?** Assess the needs, challenges, and priorities of stakeholders engaged in malaria chemoprevention, including SMC, PMC, PDMC, and IPTsc.
- Now what?** Develop actionable recommendations to enhance coordination and explore the potential expanded role of the Alliance’s mandate to support other malaria prevention strategies.

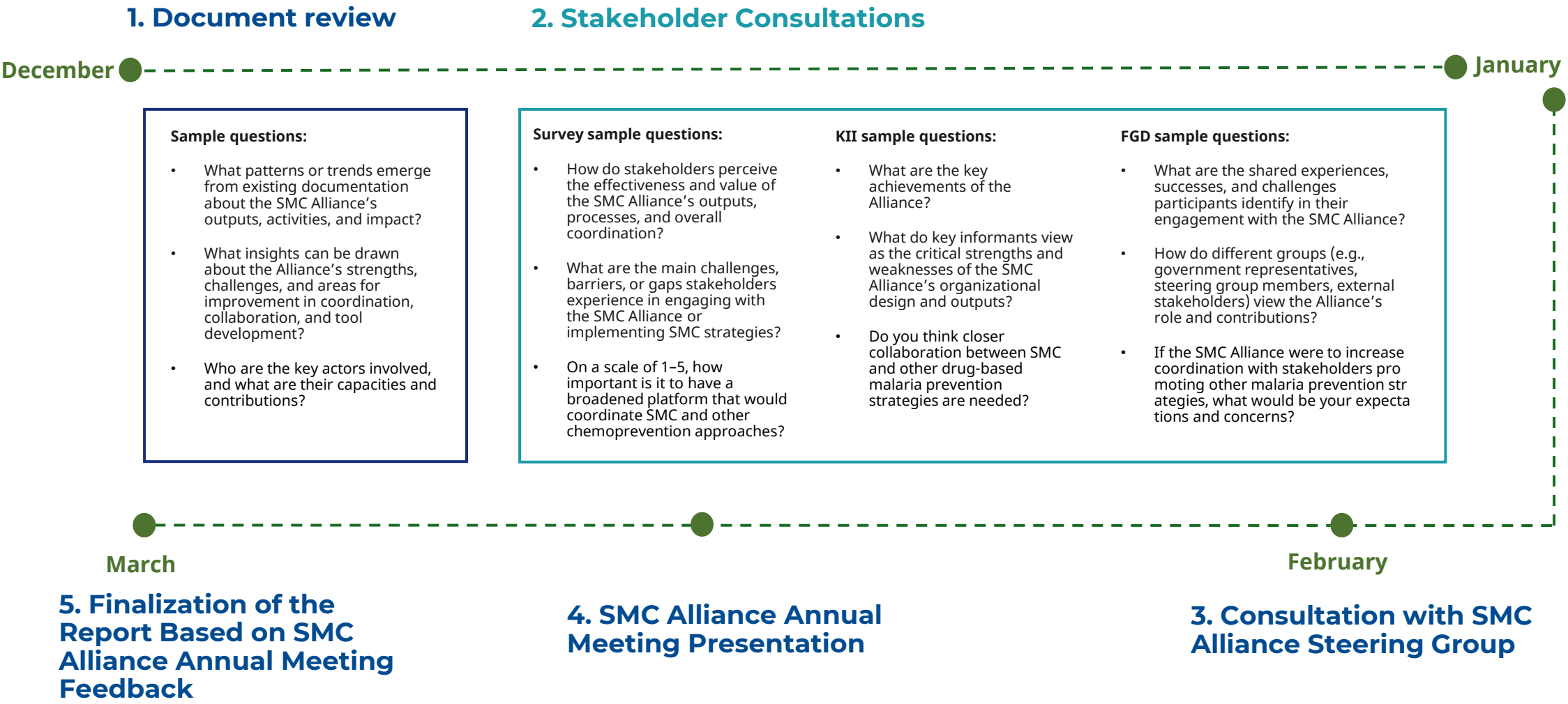
SMC Alliance

- A coordination group was formed to enhance coordination and capacity building for Seasonal Malaria Chemoprevention (SMC) following WHO’s 2012 recommendation to scale up SMC. In 2019, the group evolved into the SMC Alliance.
- The Alliance has facilitated the development of key tools, including the WHO SMC field guide, operational guidance for adapting SMC during COVID-19, and the SMC M&E Toolkit.
- As interest grows in other malaria prevention strategies, such as perennial malaria chemoprevention (PMC), post-discharge malaria chemoprevention (PDMC), and intermittent preventive treatment of school-aged children (IPTsc), the SMC Alliance is exploring an expanded role to coordinate efforts, share lessons, and address challenges in implementing multiple drug-based interventions.

Key considerations

- It is important to capture best practices and lessons learned in coordination and tool development to inform future efforts.
- Stakeholders have expressed interest in broadening the scope of coordination to include additional drug-based malaria prevention strategies.
- There are opportunities to refine existing approaches and explore expanded collaboration across malaria chemoprevention strategies.
- A Steering Group provided strategic oversight of the project and quality control on deliverables produced.

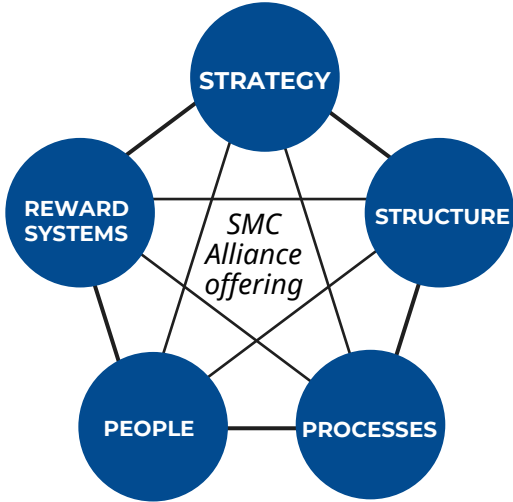
The learnings were captured through diverse consultation methods, capturing various perspectives on the Alliance’s achievements and areas for improvement.



The following frameworks were used to collect and analyze insights gathered from key informant interviews and focus group discussions.

WHAT

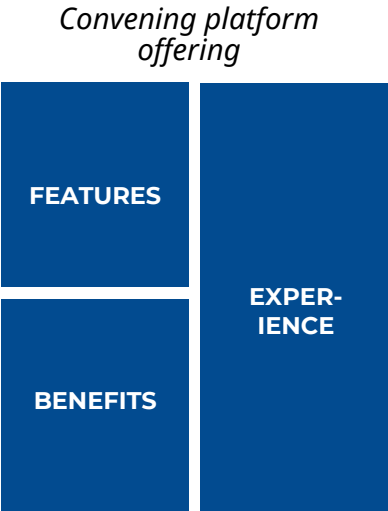
What is the current offering and model of the SMC Alliance?



Assessment

SO WHAT

So what are stakeholder perceptions on the role of an SMC convening platform?



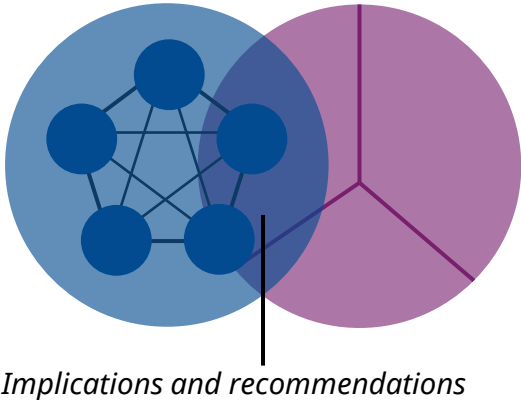
Synthesis and analysis

Stakeholder expectations



NOW WHAT

Now what are the associated implications & recommendations?



Documentation

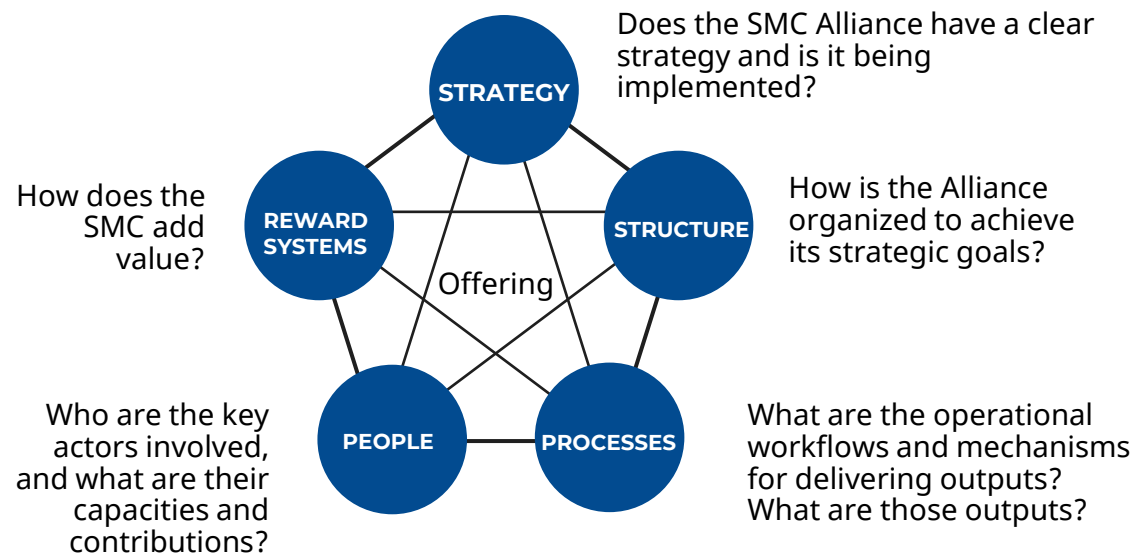
The “What”

Documenting the story of
the SMC Alliance

The SMC Alliance serves as a collaborative platform supporting country-led malaria prevention efforts. Its flexible approach has enabled adaptation and growth, but there is an ongoing exploration of how formalizing its strategy and engagement mechanisms could strengthen its impact and address future challenges.

Framework

The Galbraith Star provides a structured analysis of the SMC Alliance's offering, examining its strategy, structure, people, reward systems, and processes. It highlights the key areas where the Alliance has excelled while also identifying opportunities for improvement. The framework offers a comprehensive view of how the Alliance operates to achieve its goals and deliver value to stakeholders.



Key findings

- 1. The Alliance has a strong and valuable offering:** The SMC Alliance serves as a collaborative platform that provides countries, donors, and partners with tools, technical assistance, and opportunities to share knowledge, align on priorities, and advocate for funding.
- 2. The Alliance's strategy has been flexible and organic thus far:** Over the last decade, the Alliance's informal and adaptive strategy has allowed it to respond effectively to emerging needs.
- 3. SMC delivery and Alliance engagement is primarily country-driven:** Country representatives drive sustained interest in SMC and therefore value the Alliance for its flexibility, allowing them to engage as needed to share learnings, access funding, and enhance program delivery. This country-driven approach fosters trust and relevance, though opportunities remain to enhance its structured engagement mechanisms.

The SMC Alliance stands as a powerful collaborative platform, driving coordinated action, amplifying impact, and fostering trust to combat malaria through seasonal chemoprevention.

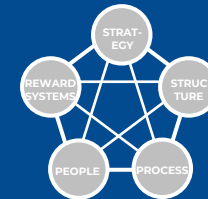
What is SMC?

- A public health strategy to prevent malaria in children under five during high-transmission seasons.
- Involves administering monthly doses of antimalarial drugs (Sulfadoxine-Pyrimethamine + Amodiaquine, SP+AQ).
- Targets Sahelian and sub-Saharan regions of Africa, where malaria is highly seasonal.



Countries included: Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon, Ivory Coast, Chad, The Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea Bissau, Kenya, Madagascar, Mali, Mauritania, Mozambique, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, South Sudan, Togo and Uganda

The SMC Alliance offers a collaborative platform with targeted working groups, knowledge sharing, and advocacy efforts that drive impact, strengthen relationships, and scale SMC coverage across eligible regions.



FEATURES

The SMC Alliance provides key features that facilitate collaboration, coordination, and learning for malaria chemoprevention stakeholders:



Platform for Collaboration: A convening body for country malaria programs, donors, researchers, and implementing and funding partners.



Annual Meetings: In-person, virtual and hybrid gatherings that facilitate sharing experiences, lessons, and best practices among all stakeholders for the benefit of countries.



Working Groups:

1. **Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E):** Focuses on providing guidance to countries on tracking implementation and outcomes.
2. **Advocacy & Communications:** Promotes SMC successes and learning and advocates for funding for SMC programs.
3. **Research:** Generates evidence on SMC that can be used to inform policies, recommendations and guidelines.



Knowledge Sharing: Repository of guidance documents, data, and country success stories complemented by webinars that foster information exchange and collaboration among stakeholders.



Funding Connection: A mechanism to highlight funding gaps and ensure effective resource mobilization.

BENEFITS

The SMC Alliance has delivered practical and strategic benefits that have contributed to strengthen SMC expansion and impact :

- **Supports scale-up:** Plays a critical role in achieving SMC coverage in eligible regions e.g. by mobilizing commodities and technical assistance.
- **Catalyzes funding:** Successfully advocates for resource optimization, bridging funding gaps
- **Amplifies voice:** Provides a global platform to advocate for SMC, keeping it high on the global malaria agenda.

EXPERIENCES

The stakeholders' experience of engaging with the SMC Alliance is characterized by:

- **Approachable:** Members view the Alliance as a supportive and approachable platform. Stakeholders actively seek guidance, fundraising support, and implementation advice.
- **Country-driven:** Strong participation from SMC-implementing countries ensures the Alliance remains country-driven.
- **Nurtures trust-based relationships:** Members feel a genuine sense of collaboration, focused on shared goals and achieving greater public health impact.

The SMC Alliance’s organic strategy, which has focused on adaptability and responsiveness to emerging needs, has served it well in scaling impact and fostering collaboration to date. However, aligning goals, priorities, and activities under a cohesive and well-communicated framework could unlock its full potential for long-term sustainability and growth.

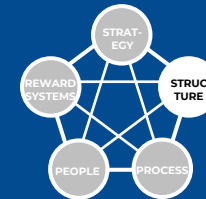


The SMC Alliance does not have a documented strategic framework

- The SMC Alliance focus and priorities are primarily outlined through the Alliance's terms of reference and the agenda for the annual meetings.
- While the Alliance has **successfully implemented activities like monitoring and evaluation, advocacy, and procurement support**, these efforts are not underpinned by a cohesive, overarching strategy, which may hinder long-term alignment and impact assessment.
- Stakeholders acknowledge the **need for a formalized strategy to guide the Alliance’s future direction**, especially if it expands into broader chemoprevention platform and integrates other chemoprevention interventions.
- The strategic framework presented in Figure 1 is a draft emerging from the consultation process.
- To date, the Alliance has worked toward expanding SMC reach, strengthening country capacity, and promoting research and innovation to address emerging challenges and ensure equitable access to high-quality interventions.

WHY?	To eliminate the burden of seasonal malaria in vulnerable populations through collaborative, innovative, and sustainable chemoprevention strategies.		
	Expand the reach and impact of SMC Ensure that all eligible populations in endemic regions have equitable access to high-quality, effective SMC interventions.	Strengthen country capacity Strengthen the technical and operational capacities of NMPs to lead, implement, and sustain SMC interventions effectively.	Enhance research and innovation Promote operational research and innovation to address emerging challenges, optimize and improve SMC delivery, and adapt to evolving malaria contexts.
WHAT?	Operational excellence: Enhance the quality, efficiency, and sustainability of SMC programs through better planning, implementation, and monitoring. Collaboration and advocacy: Strengthen partnerships, identify gaps and make connections to funding, and ensure alignment with global health strategies. Innovation and research: Invest in operational research and innovation to improve SMC delivery and address emerging challenges such as drug resistance.		
HOW?	1. Collaborate with NMPs in microplanning to identify and address gaps. 2. Advocate for increased funding to reach underserved populations. 3. Develop targeted communication strategies to improve community engagement and participation.	1. Provide technical partnership for procurement, training, and data management. 2. Facilitate peer-to-peer learning exchanges between NMPs. 3. Develop tools and manuals to support implementation, including SMC field guides and M&E frameworks.	1. Facilitate research to explore new drug formulations and delivery mechanisms. 2. Monitor drug resistance trends and coordinate global responses. 3. Publish and disseminate research findings to inform policy and practice.

The SMC Alliance's structure—centered on annual meetings, working groups, and the Secretariat—effectively drives collaboration and progress, but its reliance on informal leadership highlights the need for greater sustainability and formalized governance.



The SMC Alliance is driven by a secretariat and working groups

- The Alliance holds **annual meetings** that serve as a platform for shared learning, planning, and collaboration among NMPs, donors, and implementing partners. These meetings help align stakeholders on priorities, share best practices, and address emerging challenges in SMC implementation.
- The Alliance includes **subgroups** (Monitoring & Evaluation, Advocacy, and Research) that focus on specific priorities such as data collection, technical guidance, and funding advocacy. However, these subgroups operate as quasi-autonomous entities without a formal accountability structure that connects them directly to overarching Alliance governance.
- The **Secretariat and informal Steering Committee** play a pivotal role in organizing the Alliance's activities, managing relationships, and driving operational coordination. While effective, this structure is currently informal and heavily reliant on individual leadership, which presents a risk for long-term sustainability.
- The Alliance has informal **knowledge management and communications processes**, including the development and dissemination of technical tools (e.g., field manuals, M&E frameworks). However, these tools are sometimes difficult to access.



Figure 2: SMC Alliance structure

The SMC Alliance thrives on strong individual leadership and collaborative relationships, but there is need for broader leadership development and sustained engagement.



The SMC Alliance is built on strong leadership

- The Alliance benefits from dedicated individuals whose leadership and coordination are pivotal. The reliance on a few key actors poses a risk to long-term sustainability if transitions are not planned.
- National Malaria Programs (NMPs) play a central role in implementation but face capacity constraints (e.g., time, resources, and competing priorities), limiting deeper engagement in Alliance leadership roles.
- While the subgroups (M&E, Advocacy, and Research) are functional, participation of NMPs outside of annual meetings can be inconsistent, often due to competing workloads or lack of clarity in roles.

Category	Role
Secretariat	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Acts as the central coordinating body providing day-to-day management, technical assistance, and leadership for the SMC Alliance.• Organizes annual meetings and facilitates communication between countries, donors, and partners.• Plays a key role in sustaining the Alliance’s operations through strategic guidance and resource mobilization.
National Malaria Programs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Act as active members of the SMC Alliance, sharing practical field experiences and country-specific challenges to shape strategies and frameworks.• Provide feedback and data on Alliance activities, ensuring that tools, guidance, and decisions are aligned with implementation realities.• Participate in annual meetings and subgroup discussions to contribute to cross-country learning and advocacy efforts.
Donors and funding partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide financial support to sustain the SMC Alliance’s operations, including funding for annual meetings, the Secretariat, and cross-country technical initiatives.• Actively engage in advocacy and strategic discussions to prioritize funding gaps and ensure that SMC interventions align with broader malaria prevention goals.
Research partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Support the SMC Alliance by contributing operational research, evidence generation, and technical expertise to inform decisions and optimize delivery mechanisms.• Play a critical role in subgroups by leading studies on drug efficacy, resistance monitoring, and program innovations.• Provide data and evidence to shape the Alliance’s technical guidance and advocacy efforts.
Implementing and TA partners	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Provide direct implementation support for SMC campaigns, including training, supervision, and coordination of field activities to ensure high-quality drug delivery and adherence to best practices.

The SMC Alliance adds value through knowledge sharing, resource mobilization, and trusted collaboration, encouraging stakeholders to sustain participation.



Value and rewards are offered to SMC Alliance members through various mechanisms

The SMC Alliance adds value to participants, and therefore has sustained participation over the years, through the following mechanisms:

- Provides a **platform for countries** to share experiences, challenges, and successes, fostering peer-to-peer learning that directly improves program implementation.
- Offers **guidance documents, tools, and technical assistance** through the **subgroups** and annual meeting, helping address implementation gaps and optimize delivery.
- Participation in the Alliance **amplifies countries' voices**, giving them access to global platforms to showcase their achievements, advocate for funding, and gain visibility for their SMC efforts.
- Plays a key role in **connecting countries to funding opportunities** and advocating to bridge resource gaps, ensuring sustained program support.
- Fosters a **supportive, collaborative environment** where members feel a sense of shared purpose, motivating continued participation and engagement.

Participation is sustained through:



Technical support



Access to funding



Collaboration

The SMC Alliance leverages strong collaboration and country-led priorities to drive impactful malaria prevention efforts, but formalized strategies and governance structures are needed to sustain and scale its success.

Category	Strengths	Areas for improvement
Strategy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unique Position in the Malaria Space: The SMC Alliance has carved out a distinctive role by amplifying country voices and addressing implementation needs in a crowded field. • Country-Led Focus: Priorities are shaped by countries themselves, fostering ownership and relevance, unlike many other global working groups. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of a Formalized Strategy: There is no documented overarching strategy to align goals, priorities, and activities, limiting long-term impact.
Structure / Process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functional Subgroups: M&E, Advocacy, and Research working groups address core priorities and deliver critical outputs. • Effective Annual Meetings: The annual meetings provide a valuable platform for aligning stakeholders, sharing knowledge, and planning collaboratively. • Targeted Country Implementation: SMC is implemented in a limited number of countries, making coordination simpler. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Informal Governance: The structure lacks formalized processes and accountability mechanisms, leading to uneven implementation of priorities. • Lack of Clarity on Mandate Beyond Annual Meetings: The broader scope and long-term role of the Alliance remain unclear.
People	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strong Leadership and Coordination: Individuals provide exceptional leadership, driving progress and fostering collaboration across stakeholders. • Trust-Based Collaboration: Stakeholders appreciate the supportive and approachable nature of the Alliance, which strengthens relationships and engagement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over-Reliance on Key Individuals: The heavy dependence on specific leaders risks instability if transitions are not planned. • Limited Capacity for Engagement Beyond Annual Meetings: Many members struggle to engage with Alliance activities outside of the annual meetings, which limits sustained collaboration and progress.
Rewards	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Knowledge Sharing and Technical Support: The Alliance adds value by providing tools, guidance, and a platform for peer learning to improve implementation outcomes. • Global Recognition and Funding Opportunities: Countries gain visibility and access to critical funding and resources through Alliance advocacy efforts. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Suboptimal Knowledge Sharing: Knowledge dissemination is inconsistent, and access to key resources is not always streamlined.

The “So What”

Analyzing the needs of key stakeholders

Stakeholders seek greater logistical support for implementation, innovative tools to address emerging challenges, and clearer engagement pathways. Addressing these needs will enhance the Alliance’s capacity to scale efforts and ensure effective stakeholder participation.

Framework

The Value Proposition Canvas provides a detailed analysis of what stakeholders require to engage effectively with the Alliance, their fears or risks that may prevent full participation, and the additional benefits or enhancements they value. The framework also evaluates the features, benefits, and experiences that stakeholders desire in an alliance for SMC. It presents a summary of subjective capture and interpretation.



Key findings

- 1. The Alliance could increase value by strengthening implementation support:** Stakeholders highlight the need for increased logistical support, particularly in the distribution of commodities to hard-to-reach areas. Strengthening operational assistance and consolidating best practice guidance is seen as critical for scaling and sustaining SMC campaigns effectively. Improving access to essential tools can further enhance implementation and ensure resources are effectively utilized.
- 2. There are opportunities for the Alliance to support countries with innovation in SMC:** There is significant potential to leverage digital tools, predictive modeling, and cutting-edge research to improve campaign tracking, enhance implementation efficiency, and address emerging challenges like drug resistance and climate-related malaria peaks.
- 3. There is a need for additional communication and engagement pathways:** The annual meeting plays a critical role in SMC campaign planning and identification of peer and expert support. However, stakeholders expressed uncertainty about how and when to engage with the Alliance outside of the annual meeting. Clearer communication channels and structured engagement mechanisms are required to maximize participation and ensure stakeholders can effectively access the Alliance’s resources and platforms.

By securing consistent funding, strengthening technical capacity, and empowering advocacy efforts, the Alliance can support countries in overcoming key implementation barriers.



Operational needs

- Consistent and sufficient **funding** to scale and sustain SMC campaigns.
- **Coordination mechanisms** to harmonize implementation across regions and countries.
- Improved **logistical support for delivering commodities** to hard-to-reach areas.

“The Alliance plays a critical role in ensuring countries have the necessary commodities for SMC campaigns by assisting with quantification and procurement planning.”

Technical needs

- Access to tools to **standardize data collection**, monitoring, and evaluation processes.
- Guidance on integrating SMC with other interventions, such as ITNs or vaccines.
- Technical assistance for **digitalization and data analysis**.
- Strategies for **addressing hesitancy** from countries or partners in adopting and scaling up SMC.

“We are digitizing campaigns and need tools that make data collection easier, not more complicated.”

Advocacy needs

- Access to platforms that amplify voices for **mobilizing funding and resources**.
- Support in showcasing the impact of SMC campaigns to secure donor commitment.

“The Alliance could help with advocacy to guide us and some partners who can help us expand SMC in the other eligible districts that haven’t been covered yet.”

Strengthening communication platforms, fostering cross-sector collaboration, and embracing innovative tools are key to improving knowledge sharing, integrating malaria prevention strategies, and driving the Alliance's impact.



Communication

- A more accessible website with a clear space to find tools and documents.
- A **centralized, real-time platform** for sharing updates and addressing challenges.
- Regular webinars, annual meetings, and workshops for **knowledge sharing**.

“Webinars and annual meetings have been very impactful for knowledge exchange and learning best practices.”

Collaboration

- Opportunities to engage with a **broader network**, including government, NGOs, and community stakeholders.
- Clearer pathways to access **international and regional expertise**.
- Increased collaboration and coordination with **other malaria prevention initiatives** (e.g., ITNs, PMC, IPTsc, PDMC, MDA, malaria vaccines) to enhance integrated approaches.

“We need regional networks to communicate between border countries and collaborate on strategies to prevent malaria transmission.”

Innovation

- **Digital tools and dashboards** for real-time campaign tracking.
- Access to **cutting-edge research and innovations** in malaria prevention.

“The Alliance should support innovations like predictive systems to anticipate malaria peaks due to climate change.”

Limited operational presence, decreasing technical support, and unclear engagement pathways hinder stakeholder participation, necessitating a focus on inclusivity, capacity-building, and real-time collaboration to maintain momentum.



Operational

- Lack of in-country presence of **operational support** for implementation.
- Limited **access to meetings** due to scheduling conflicts and poor connectivity.

“There is a lack of in-country experts to provide hands-on support, which can slow down operations.”

Technical

- Lack of **sufficient technical and resource support** to address digitalization and resistance monitoring challenges.

“We need additional technical support, particularly for integrating digital tools and handling emerging resistance issues.”

Engagement

- Limited **clarity in communication pathways** for engaging with the Alliance and accessing resources.
- Not enough **inclusivity in representation**, particularly for community voices and underrepresented regions.
- Limited tools for **real-time collaboration** and immediate data sharing.

“Expanding membership to include more countries and community representatives would be beneficial.”

Stakeholders envision an Alliance that enhances collaboration, offers cutting-edge technical support, broadens advocacy efforts, and prioritizes inclusive, localized knowledge-sharing to drive sustainable progress.

Overall, stakeholder descriptions of the ideal features, benefits, and experience align with the current offering of the Alliance. The following additional asks were highlighted:

Features

- Enhanced integration and collaboration with other malaria chemoprevention efforts.
- Increased technical support in areas like digitalization, resistance monitoring, and predictive tools.

Benefits

- Broadened advocacy and fundraising efforts to secure sustainable funding streams.
- Strengthened communication pathways to improve real-time updates and engagement.

Experience

- Expanded inclusivity in knowledge sharing, including local voices and diverse regional contexts.

“We learn a great deal from each other’s experiences, and it helps us improve our strategies.”

The Alliance has the opportunity to strengthen its impact by improving logistics, embracing digital innovations, and fostering inclusivity, but must tackle operational and data challenges to sustain momentum and achieve long-term goals.

Category	Opportunities	Challenges
Operational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commodity Logistics: Reintroduce logistical systems for timely delivery of commodities to remote areas. • Synchronize Cross-Border Campaigns: Coordinate efforts to address shared challenges across regions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited In-Country Presence: Lack of operational support for implementation.
Technical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop Digital Tools: Create systems for real-time data collection, tracking, and predictive modeling. • Strengthen Capacity Building: Address resistance and improve monitoring and evaluation efforts. • Foster Integration: Collaborate with other malaria chemoprevention strategies like ITNs and vaccines. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data Reliability Issues: Incomplete or unreliable data affects program impact assessment.
Engagement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase Inclusivity: Incorporate local community voices and underrepresented stakeholders. • Improve Website: Update and streamline SMC Alliance website to improve accessibility and use. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unclear Communication Pathways: Limited clarity in how stakeholders engage with the Alliance.

The “Now What”

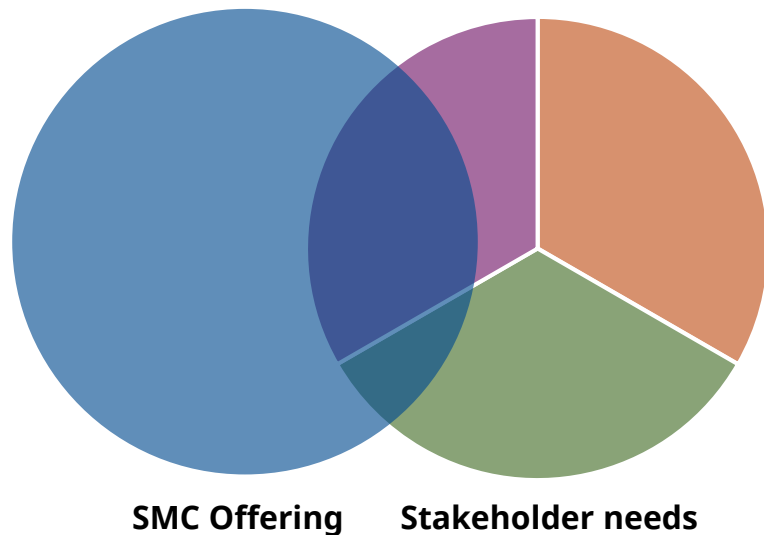
Synthesizing implications
and proposing
recommendations

To strengthen its impact, the SMC Alliance must formalize its strategic framework, explore opportunities for expanded collaboration while addressing associated barriers, and enhance stakeholder engagement through structured and inclusive communication pathways.

Framework

This section explores:

1. **Alignment:** Where do the features/benefits/ experience insights align with stakeholder needs?
2. **Misalignment:** Where do the organizational design insights fail to meet stakeholder needs, wants, or address fears?
3. What actionable steps can the SMC Alliance take to better align its organizational design with stakeholder needs, wants, and fears?



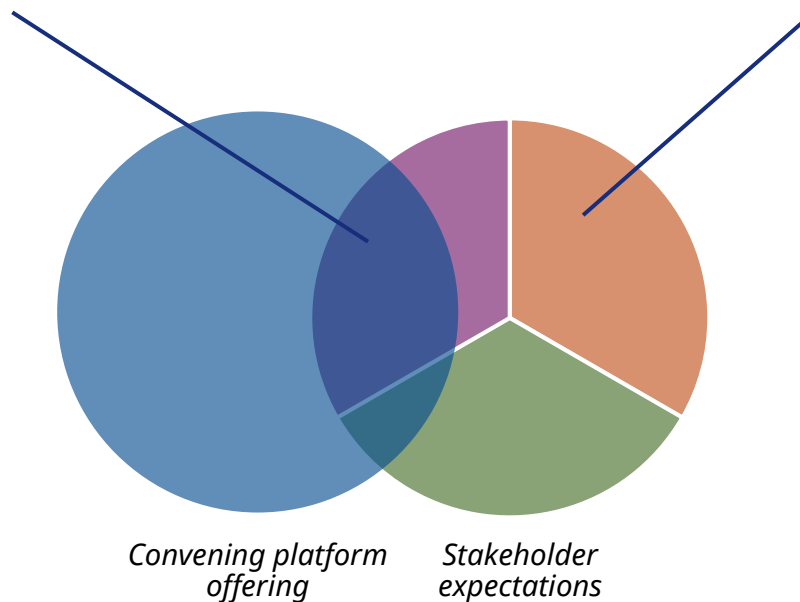
Key findings

1. **Explore expanded collaboration to improve coordination across malaria chemoprevention strategies:** Stakeholders see potential in expanding the Alliance's role to include collaboration with organisations working on other malaria chemoprevention strategies, such as PMC and IPTsc. However, this expansion must balance barriers like limited resources, operational complexity, and risks of dilution, with enablers like the Alliance's trusted reputation, existing frameworks, and overlapping target populations and implementers.
2. **Co-create a strategic approach to align the Alliance around evolved member needs:** To respond to the evolved needs of the Alliance members, the Alliance should articulate and formalize its strategy to align goals, priorities, and activities, ensuring consistent support and readiness for future challenges and opportunities.
3. **The Alliance could enhance stakeholder engagement through more formal governance mechanisms and structures:** Clarify the role of the subgroups in light of the Alliance's evolving scope, building on best practices while embracing new opportunities.

The Alliance effectively meets stakeholder needs in collaboration, technical guidance, and advocacy, but governance gaps, limited representation, and a lack of formal strategy hinder its ability to fully align with expectations and sustain impact.

Alignment

- **Collaboration and Knowledge Sharing:** Stakeholders value the Alliance as a platform for peer-to-peer learning, best practices exchange, and collaborative problem-solving.
- **Technical Guidance:** The Alliance provides critical tools, like the M&E toolkit and field guides, that address implementation challenges.
- **Advocacy and Resource Mobilization:** The Alliance helps highlight funding gaps and advocates for sustained donor support, aligning with stakeholder priorities.



Misalignment

- **Governance and Leadership:** The reliance on informal structures and key individuals (e.g., Secretariat leadership) poses risks to sustainability.
- **Broader Representation:** Limited inclusion of community voices and underrepresented regions in decision-making processes may reduce engagement.
- **Communication Gaps:** Stakeholders find it challenging to access clear pathways for real-time feedback or tailored support.
- **Lack of Long-Term Strategy:** The absence of a cohesive, formalized strategic framework creates uncertainty about the Alliance's future direction and ability to expand.

The Alliance's trusted reputation, strong implementation record, and adaptable frameworks create opportunities for expanding its scope, but limited resources and risks of operational dilution must be carefully managed to avoid compromising its focus on SMC.

The SMC Alliance has considered expanding its scope to include coordination of other malaria chemoprevention interventions. The following make the case for and caution against this direction.

Enablers

- ✓ The SMC Alliance is well-known and trusted among stakeholders for its coordination, knowledge sharing, and technical guidance.
- ✓ Strong track record of implementing large-scale, coordinated interventions, with clear systems for planning and execution.
- ✓ Existing overlap in target populations and delivery mechanisms (e.g., SMC and malaria vaccine campaigns).
- ✓ Donors and implementing partners recognize the potential value of integrating interventions to improve impact.
- ✓ The Alliance's frameworks, such as monitoring and evaluation systems, can be adapted to include other interventions.

Barriers

- Limited funding and human resources may hinder the ability to expand effectively without compromising existing SMC activities.
- Some chemoprevention strategies have different operational models and require additional expertise.
- Expanding too quickly could reduce the Alliance's ability to maintain its current quality and focus on SMC.
- Ensuring all stakeholders, including new partners and interventions, are represented and aligned could be difficult.
- Some partners may prefer to keep interventions separate due to differences in funding streams and priorities.
- Some stakeholder groups are still nascent and many lack funding for implementation.

Strategic enhancements in governance, logistical processes, and leadership development will address key gaps, while continuing to spotlight country achievements and partner contributions ensures sustained engagement and advocacy success.

Strategy

Develop and document a comprehensive strategic plan to align goals, priorities, and activities across stakeholders. This will address the lack of a formalized strategy and enhance long-term impact.

Reward Systems

Continue to provide opportunities for global recognition and funding by showcasing country achievements and partner contributions through advocacy efforts and knowledge-sharing platforms, ensuring sustained engagement and support.

People

Build a succession plan and leadership development program to mitigate risks associated with over-reliance on key individuals and ensure continuity during leadership transitions.



Structure & Processes

Establish formal governance processes and accountability mechanisms to ensure consistent implementation of priorities and address the gaps in informal governance.

Offering

Reinvigorate logistical support for implementation of SMC campaigns (e.g., commodity distribution).

Annex 1

Stakeholder consultations

The SMC Alliance's ability to foster collaboration among competitors, drive innovation, and scale impact demonstrates its strength as a unifying platform, with an opportunity to formalize its structure and leadership to support sustainable growth and expanded chemoprevention strategies.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The SMC Alliance serves as a collaborative platform for stakeholders (countries, implementing partners, technical experts) to share experiences, identify challenges, and coordinate solutions, while facilitating technical assistance, resource mobilization, and knowledge sharing.
- **Strategy:** While the alliance does not operate under a formalized, long-term strategy, key objectives—like creating a research agenda, M&E framework, and organizing annual meetings—have been successfully implemented to address country needs and gaps.
- **Structure:** The alliance is organized into three autonomous subgroups—Monitoring & Evaluation (M&E), Research, and Advocacy and Communication—that set their own priorities and report back to the larger group, supported by a core leadership group of ~7–10 key stakeholders.
- **Processes:** The alliance relies heavily on its annual meetings as a primary process for identifying gaps, sharing best practices, and coordinating responses. Additionally, flexible funding processes allow implementing partners to cover travel and logistical costs based on their country budgets, ensuring equitable contributions.
- **People:** The alliance's success is driven by key individuals whose leadership and collaborative mindset—such as Andre's role as Executive Secretariat and Erin's balanced leadership as Chair—have enabled progress while maintaining trust among partners.
- **Rewards:** Stakeholders gain tangible benefits, such as access to technical assistance, knowledge exchange, and problem-solving solutions that directly address country-level implementation challenges (e.g., stock reallocation during COVID-19).

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Collaboration Among Competitors:** The alliance successfully brought together organizations that often compete for funding, fostering collaboration and shared learning toward improving SMC implementation.
- **Rapid Scale-Up:** The alliance played a critical role in scaling SMC coverage from 2 million children in 2014 to over 53 million by 2024, demonstrating its ability to coordinate stakeholders and resources to achieve significant public health impact.
- **Knowledge Sharing:** The annual meetings and alliance platform enable country-to-country and partner-to-country exchanges, promoting innovations like digitization in The Gambia and malnutrition screening in Niger.
- **Crisis Response:** During the COVID-19 pandemic, the alliance facilitated stock reallocations and problem-solving across countries, showcasing its agility and ability to address challenges in real time.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** The alliance's informal structure and heavy reliance on key individuals, such as Andre, present a risk to sustainability. Irregular virtual meetings in 2024 highlight the need for a dedicated coordinator to maintain momentum and ensure continuity.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Expanding to include other chemoprevention strategies (e.g., PMC, IPTsc, PDMC) could create synergies, improve resource efficiency, and streamline advocacy under a single, unified platform. It would also align with global health priorities around integration and optimize shared resources like SP drug usage.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Integrating additional strategies risks introducing greater complexity and diluting focus on SMC, which has been a clear success. Managing the unique operational needs of each intervention under one structure could prove challenging without careful planning.

The SMC Alliance's ability to coordinate effectively, expand inclusivity, and drive practical solutions reflects its value as a unifying platform. Opportunities exist to improve structure, sustainability, and ongoing guidance to support enhanced coordination and collaboration.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The Alliance serves as a coordination platform, primarily through annual meetings, to enable stakeholders to share experiences, tools, and challenges.
- **Strategy:** While efforts like the M&E subgroup have successfully developed frameworks, the Alliance lacks consistent processes for guidance development and dissemination.
- **Structure:** The alliance is organized into three subgroups—M&E, Research, and Advocacy/Communication—there is a growing need for clarity on roles, responsibilities, and participation expectations.
- **Processes:** Annual meetings are highly valued but limited in frequency. Coordination calls are less regular, and the sharing of tools and best practices remains inconsistent.
- **People:** Persistent efforts by individuals like André have been instrumental in sustaining the Alliance. However, reliance on one person poses sustainability risks.
- **Rewards:** The alliance provides value through collaboration, sharing of tools, and solutions to country-level challenges. Greater ongoing support outside the annual meeting is needed.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Consistent Annual Meetings:** Despite resource constraints, annual meetings continue to offer a valuable space for collaboration and learning.
- **Inclusivity:** Increased engagement of national counterparts alongside international partners has improved participation and representation.
- **Tool Development:** The M&E group has led progress on frameworks, providing practical solutions. However, dissemination and centralization need improvement.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** Heavy reliance on André for leadership risks sustainability. Lack of structured terms of reference for participants hinders clarity and engagement. Coordination outside annual meetings has declined, with fewer touchpoints for ongoing guidance.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Coordination could expand to include integration efforts (e.g., ITN campaigns, nutrition screening, malaria vaccines), maximizing efficiency at touchpoints with children.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Differences in implementation settings (e.g., routine systems for PMC) may complicate coordination, risking misalignment with country priorities.

The SMC Alliance's ability to coordinate effectively, expand inclusivity, and foster practical solutions highlights its value. Opportunities exist to strengthen monitoring, sustainability, and integration to enhance impact.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The Alliance serves as a coordination platform, bringing together countries, donors, and technical experts to share tools, experiences, and challenges. Data compilation tracks implementation progress and informs WHO reporting.
- **Structure:** The Alliance evolved from the SMC Working Group, with MMV assuming the secretariat role to formalize annual meetings. Initially aligned with RBM regional networks, it focused geographically on West African SMC-implementing countries.
- **Processes:** Annual meetings remain the central forum for reviewing progress, sharing challenges, and fostering collaboration. Countries exchange practical solutions, such as overcoming implementation barriers and improving delivery.
- **People:** Experts provide technical guidance and research support, ensuring results are shared and understood. National programs are central to implementation, ownership, and evaluation.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Accelerated Scale-Up:** The Alliance played a key role in accelerating SMC scale-up by providing implementation support, addressing funding gaps, and clarifying WHO policy recommendations.
- **Knowledge Sharing and Networking:** Annual meetings and collaboration enable countries to share practical solutions, tools, and challenges.
- **Progress Tracking:** The systematic collection of implementation data informs WHO's World Malaria Report, showcasing the success and geographical growth of SMC.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** Strengthen systematic monitoring of SMC coverage, safety (pharmacovigilance), and impact to ensure accountability and progress.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Explore integration opportunities with PMC and other chemoprevention interventions as malaria transmission patterns evolve.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Geographic and programmatic expansion risks reducing cohesion and focus; regional networks might better maintain alignment.

The SMC Alliance has proven its value by enabling flexible coordination, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting ambitious program scale-up. Moving forward, there are opportunities to foster innovation, secure sustainable leadership and funding, and retain a clear focus as the Alliance expands.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The Alliance serves as a neutral coordination platform, connecting countries, donors, and technical experts to share tools, knowledge, and lessons learned.
- **Strategy:** The Alliance fosters ambition and clarity around implementation goals, guiding countries to scale up SMC at an accelerated pace.
- **Structure:** The Alliance grew organically with flexibility, allowing it to adapt to changing contexts without the constraints of formal governance (e.g., RBM or WHO).
- **Processes:** Central forums for reviewing progress, fostering collaboration, and scaling up interventions. Effective learning exchange enables program managers to translate shared experiences into tangible operational improvements.
- **People:** Strong leadership commitment has been pivotal, particularly through dedicated stakeholders, co-chairs, and secretariat roles.
- **Rewards:** The Alliance's knowledge-sharing platforms contributes to significant progress, enabling countries to scale up SMC interventions efficiently and effectively.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Knowledge Management and Learning:** The Alliance facilitated knowledge exchange and operational guidance, improving program delivery and achieving tangible results.
- **Flexible and Inclusive Structure:** Open entry and exit policies allowed countries and partners to join based on value and need, fostering broad participation.
- **Resilience During COVID-19:** The Alliance adapted quickly during COVID-19, developing guidance that doubled SMC coverage in affected regions.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** The Alliance needs to embrace more innovative approaches to improve funding, such as exploring private sector engagement to diversify financial support. There is significant dependence on key individuals like André, which poses risks to continuity and sustainability. Succession planning is critical to mitigate this.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Broaden the Alliance's focus to other chemoprevention strategies like Perennial Malaria Chemoprevention (PMC) while maintaining SMC's centrality.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Expanding into other interventions risks overcomplicating processes, diluting focus, and stretching limited resources.

The SMC Alliance has proven its value by enabling flexible coordination, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting ambitious program scale-up. Moving forward, there are opportunities to foster innovation, secure sustainable leadership and funding, and retain a clear focus as the Alliance expands.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The Alliance acts as a focused coordination platform, enabling resource dissemination, problem-solving, and shared learning among stakeholders. It effectively collates resources and connects NMP teams with the right experts for specific challenges.
- **Strategy:** A small, cohesive group ensures targeted efforts, with subgroups delving deeply into critical implementation issues. Advocacy and standard processes for data collection and sharing are pivotal.
- **Structure:** Relies heavily on André for coordination and relationships, indicating centralized but potentially fragile leadership.
- **Processes:** Regular meetings facilitate sharing tools, best practices, and research insights. However, challenges exist in balancing meeting representation and inclusivity (e.g., bilingual participation).
- **People:** NMP representatives actively engage in meetings, and leadership roles like co-chairs (e.g., Dr. Perpetua) are taken seriously.
- **Rewards:** Successfully revised and publicized the field manual, and SMC contributions to the World Malaria Report reflect significant impact.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Knowledge Management and Learning: Advocacy and Results:** The Alliance's coordinEffective at sharing resources, updating field manuals, and hosting webinars for widespread knowledge dissemination. Summarized research needs and coordinated discussions have been instrumental.
- **Flexible and Inclusive Structure:** Collaboration with WHO to align manuals and processes has enhanced accessibility and relevance.
- **Advocacy and Data Impact:** The Alliance has contributed to increased SMC coverage through advocacy, with its efforts reflected in international reports like the World Malaria Report.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** Address reliance on André by fostering leadership diversity and institutionalizing processes. Improve funding streams to support the secretariat and scale up operations sustainably.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Collaborative discussions on integrating other interventions like PMC or vaccines could enhance the Alliance's relevance and impact, provided a structured and resource-backed approach.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Broadening focus risks overburdening limited resources, diluting attention from SMC, and creating logistical challenges for diverse stakeholder needs.

The SMC Alliance has proven its value by enabling flexible coordination, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting ambitious program scale-up. Moving forward, there are opportunities to foster innovation, secure sustainable leadership and funding, and retain a clear focus as the Alliance expands.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The Alliance plays a key role in supporting NMPs with both theoretical and practical aspects of planning, including data collation and microplanning to determine campaign timing and resource needs.
- **Strategy:** Promotes integration and equity by encouraging holistic approaches to chemoprevention. Helps countries tailor interventions based on local evidence and needs, such as targeting specific age groups and geographies.
- **Structure:** Operates under the guidance of co-chairs and partner organizations, mobilizing resources independently for meetings and coordination.
- **Processes:** Facilitates country-level implementation through technical assistance, procurement, and capacity building for campaigns. Lessons learned from country-to-country exchanges have refined SMC delivery practices.
- **People:** Provides microplanning support, helping countries estimate required human resources, drugs, and communication efforts for campaigns.
- **Rewards:** Significant achievements in market shaping, such as cost reductions for SPAC tablets, making SMC more cost-effective.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Knowledge Management and Learning:** Shares lessons learned and best practices that improve campaign timing, targeting, and microplanning. Encourages data-driven decision-making.
- **Market Shaping:** Progress in making SPAC tablets affordable and widely accessible has enhanced SMC's cost-effectiveness and scalability.
- **Research and Innovation:** Acts as a driving force behind operational research (e.g., OPT-SMC), generating critical evidence to improve delivery and outcomes.
- **Facilitated Procurement:** Mobilizes resources for countries, enabling smoother procurement processes and addressing supply challenges.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** Address gaps in governance by strengthening partnerships and advocacy efforts. Invest in alternative drugs to overcome resistance challenges.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Integrating other chemoprevention strategies, including PMC and vaccines, could enhance efficiency and equity while addressing a broader population. A united platform allows for shared learning and resource optimization.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Coordination among interventions with different delivery systems (e.g., campaigns vs. health systems) may present logistical and operational challenges.

The SMC Alliance has proven its value by enabling flexible coordination, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting ambitious program scale-up. Moving forward, there are opportunities to foster innovation, secure sustainable leadership and funding, and retain a clear focus as the Alliance expands.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** Originally started as an RBM working group in 2013 to help countries integrate SMC into policies, quantify needs, and streamline WHO recommendations. It has since expanded to a formal partnership supporting country implementation and coordination.
- **Strategy:** The Alliance has shifted from early implementation support to broader involvement, including new projects, research discussions, and deeper engagement with countries on SMC delivery.
- **Structure:** Developed from an RBM working group to a broader coordinating entity with technical sub-groups. These sub-groups have strengthened its ability to provide targeted support.
- **Processes:** Provides annual meetings for in-depth country exchanges, facilitates joint forecasting and planning, and supports coordination of cross-border campaigns.
- **People:** Countries that began SMC in 2013 still receive support, and more nations are joining the Alliance, expanding its geographical reach.
- **Rewards:** Increased the number of countries implementing SMC, improved planning quality, enhanced research-driven decision-making, and ensured SMC remains a standard malaria intervention.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Knowledge Management and Learning:** Serves as a clearinghouse for information on SMC, including targets, planning, drug needs, and research. It consolidates and facilitates country-level exchanges.
- **Technical and Policy Support:** Helps NMPs keep up with technical guidance, research, and implementation strategies. Provides tools to maintain high-quality SMC delivery.
- **Expansion of SMC:** More children are receiving SMC due to improved planning and country support. The Alliance has played a key role in scaling SMC beyond initial countries.
- **Piloting New Approaches:** Engages in pilot projects to test new SMC delivery methods and partner-driven innovations.
- **Resource Mobilization:** Facilitates partner engagement and supports technical assistance, funding, and cross-border collaboration.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** Needs to strengthen collaboration with WHO, GAVI, and other stakeholders to ensure clarity in roles and avoid redundancy in intervention coordination.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** The Alliance already supports new interventions and could coordinate vaccine rollouts in a way similar to how SMC was introduced. It has strong country and partner recognition, making it a natural umbrella for expanded collaboration.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Taking on more interventions requires additional tools, HR capacity, and funding. The Alliance must ensure it has the structure and flexibility to manage new initiatives effectively.

The SMC Alliance has proven its value by enabling flexible coordination, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting ambitious program scale-up. Moving forward, there are opportunities to foster innovation, secure sustainable leadership and funding, and retain a clear focus as the Alliance expands.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** WHO has been engaged with SMC since its inception, supporting the scientific process that led to WHO recommendations. The Alliance catalyzed multiple stakeholders and created a unique momentum in malaria prevention.
- **Strategy:** Initially research-driven, the Alliance became a coordination hub, providing technical guidance and ensuring continuity in implementation despite challenges like COVID-19. It has since evolved into an operational arm of RBM's CRSPC.
- **Structure:** MMV plays a key role in facilitating the Alliance's meetings and coordination efforts. WHO, Global Fund, and PMI have provided strong support, enabling smooth program implementation.
- **Processes:** The Alliance effectively manages supply and demand, ensuring that country needs are met. It supports M&E efforts by developing standardized monitoring guidance and adapting to evolving malaria control needs.
- **People:** Strong leadership and engaged partners have contributed to its success. However, leadership figures often have other commitments, creating potential challenges.
- **Rewards:** The Alliance has significantly scaled up SMC, expanding geographical coverage and preventing supply bottlenecks through its coordination mechanisms.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Knowledge Management and Learning:** The Alliance serves as a key data repository, pulling country-level information and providing essential research, technical updates, and forecasting.
- **Supply Chain Coordination:** It has played a critical role in preventing supply bottlenecks by linking demand with suppliers and ensuring reliable forecasting.
- **Resilience and Adaptation:** During COVID-19, the Alliance quickly adapted outreach strategies, enabling SMC campaigns to continue safely.
- **Influence on Policy and Program Design:** Its coordination efforts have facilitated program expansion and synchronization of interventions like vaccines in seasonal settings.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** The Alliance should focus on strengthening research and evidence-building, particularly for interventions like extending SMC age eligibility.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Synchronizing SMC with seasonal malaria vaccines presents a strong opportunity for impact, as seen in Mali and Ghana.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** PMC should be integrated into ANC clinics rather than housed within the malaria control space. Keeping PMC under the SMC umbrella may hinder its proper adoption.

Insights from the Alliance for Malaria Prevention highlight the importance of streamlined coordination, adaptability, and trusted partnerships in scaling and sustaining successful interventions like the SMC Alliance.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** The Alliance has been instrumental in scaling up SMC, playing a strong coordination and operational support role.
- **Strategy:** The Alliance should focus on being the primary repository of SMC knowledge and tools, ensuring standardization across partners.
- **Structure:** Compared the Alliance's structure to AMP, noting that AMP has remained lean and focused on coordination rather than a heavy secretariat. Flexibility and adaptability have been key to sustainability.
- **Processes:** Weekly and annual meetings play a crucial role in resolving bottlenecks and ensuring real-time operational problem-solving.
- **People:** Success relies on having a trusted individual who is recognized by NMs and partners, which has been key to AMP's influence.
- **Rewards:** AMP's trust and reputation with NMPs and donors like Gates have enabled it to move agendas that other organizations struggle with.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Scalability and Coordination:** The Alliance has driven significant expansion of SMC.
- **Country Engagement and Trust:** National programs trust the Alliance, making it a natural convener for coordination and technical support.
- **Operational Adaptability:** AMP's ability to remain flexible, rolling with shifts in the malaria landscape, has kept it relevant for 20 years. This is a key lesson for the SMC Alliance.
- **Efficiency and Digitalization:** Investing in digitalization and operational efficiencies has enhanced impact.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** The Alliance must ensure its expanded collaboration does not create inefficiencies or unnecessary complexity.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Strengthening its position as a centralized knowledge hub would provide greater consistency and efficiency in SMC implementation.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** The Alliance should avoid overextending itself and should remain focused on core coordination, operational guidance, and technical assistance.

The SMC Alliance has proven its value by enabling flexible coordination, facilitating knowledge exchange, and supporting ambitious program scale-up. Moving forward, there are opportunities to foster innovation, secure sustainable leadership and funding, and retain a clear focus as the Alliance expands.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** Initially started as an SMC working group, evolving into the SMC Alliance to formalize country support, advocacy, and coordination efforts.
- **Strategy:** The Alliance was built on a multi-stakeholder model including researchers, implementers, donors, and national malaria programs (NMPs). This approach ensured practical implementation support and policy alignment.
- **Structure:** MMV stepped in to support coordination when leadership gaps emerged. The Alliance now operates under CRSPC rather than as an RBM working group, allowing for greater direct country support.
- **Processes:** Provides annual meetings for country-driven planning and review. Funders have been flexible in reallocating resources based on country needs.
- **People:** Initially chaired by NMP representatives, though participation has been uneven due to competing priorities. Researchers have played a dominant role, sometimes leading to tensions.
- **Rewards:** The Alliance has successfully scaled SMC, facilitating harmonization of measurement tools, cross-border collaboration, and improved fundraising and advocacy.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Knowledge Management and Learning:** Facilitates structured planning and review, ensuring countries learn from each other and align on measurement and implementation approaches.
- **Scalability and Coordination:** The Alliance has driven SMC expansion across multiple countries, supporting the planning and implementation of campaigns at scale.
- **Resource Mobilization and Advocacy:** Funders have been responsive and flexible, moving resources between countries as needed, reducing competition for funding.
- **Country Engagement:** The Alliance has improved country participation, ensuring NMPs have a space to contribute, particularly during annual meetings.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** The Alliance should ensure that broadening its mandate does not dilute the progress made in SMC. Other chemoprevention interventions (e.g., PMC, IPTsc) are not as clear-cut and require careful integration.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** Many interventions target the same age groups and use similar medications, making an integrated approach logical from a programmatic efficiency perspective.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** There is a risk of competition between constituencies (e.g., PMC advocates vs. SMC implementers). Expanded collaboration should be done sensitively, ensuring that efficiency gains remain the primary driver.

Learnings from the Vector Control Working Group (VCWG) emphasize the value of structured leadership, strategic meeting design, and adaptability in maintaining relevance and scaling initiatives, offering a model for the SMC Alliance's evolution.

How is the SMC Alliance currently designed?

- **Offering:** Compared the SMC Alliance's evolution to the Vector Control Working Group (VCWG), which started as a focused entity (WIN for ITNs) and later broadened its mandate.
- **Strategy:** Leadership expertise is key to effective functioning. The Alliance should ensure that leaders have the time and institutional backing to fulfill their roles.
- **Structure:** VCWG has a structured leadership model with co-chairs, workstreams, and task teams, which the SMC Alliance could learn from.
- **Processes:** Meetings are strategically linked to major malaria events, allowing for in-person engagements without additional costs. Webinars are used to maintain engagement and knowledge-sharing.
- **People:** Having strong, experienced leaders in key positions enables efficient facilitation and decision-making.
- **Rewards:** Evolving from a narrow focus (ITNs) to a broader vector control approach helped VCWG maintain relevance, a lesson for the SMC Alliance's expansion considerations.

What are the SMC Alliance's key successes?

- **Flexible and Inclusive Leadership:** VCWG's success is tied to a co-leadership model that ensures continuity and expertise.
- **Strategic Meeting Design:** Combining meetings with existing global convenings maximizes participation and efficiency.
- **Knowledge-Sharing and Adaptability:** VCWG has leveraged webinars and online tools to ensure consistent engagement across stakeholders.

How might the SMC Alliance evolve?

- **Challenges/Weaknesses:** Leadership time and institutional backing must be secured to ensure smooth operations.
- **Expanding Scope—Pros:** VCWG successfully expanded beyond ITNs to include broader vector control strategies, providing a model for how the SMC Alliance might scale its focus.
- **Expanding Scope—Cons:** Expanded collaboration should be done in a structured way to avoid overcomplication and dilution of focus.

Annex 2

Resource catalogue



Resource hub

The website offers a centralized repository of technical guidelines, implementation frameworks, and best practices designed to support SMC delivery. These resources empower countries and stakeholders with the tools needed to strengthen planning, execution, and monitoring of SMC interventions.

Examples: Technical guidelines such as the "SMC Monitoring & Evaluation Toolkit" and reports on delivery strategies like "Experiences from Cameroon."

Knowledge sharing

A comprehensive collection of research publications, case studies, and event materials promotes cross-country learning and dissemination of evidence. The platform fosters collaboration by providing access to the latest findings and lessons learned from SMC programs globally.

Examples: Publications like the "Coverage and quality of seasonal malaria chemoprevention supported by Malaria Consortium in 2022" and presentations from events such as the "OPT-SMC MIM Conference."

Advocacy and visibility

The website amplifies advocacy efforts by showcasing impact stories, analytical reports, and key achievements of SMC initiatives. It serves as a key communication channel for raising awareness and aligning global efforts in malaria prevention.

Examples: Stories highlighting regional successes and analytical documents such as the "SMC Alliance Annual Meeting Report Abuja 2024."

Interactive features

Interactive tools, including discussion forums and real-time updates, enable stakeholders to engage, share experiences, and access timely information. The platform's dynamic features ensure continuous support and collaboration among Alliance members.

Examples: Discussion platforms for stakeholder dialogues and updates on events like the "8th SMC Alliance Meeting" in Togo.



Expert articles and strategic learnings

The SMC Alliance offers a selection of articles on its website that provide valuable insights into the evolution, impact, and challenges of seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC). These articles serve as critical knowledge resources for policymakers, implementing partners, researchers, and funders, offering evidence-based discussions on best practices, programmatic learnings, and strategic directions for SMC expansion.

Advancing malaria prevention research

The website features several peer-reviewed contributing significantly to the body of research on SMC. These publications offer in-depth analyses and findings that inform best practices and strategic planning for SMC implementation. Notable articles include:

- "From efficacy to effectiveness: a comprehensive framework for monitoring, evaluating and optimizing seasonal malaria chemoprevention programmes": This study presents a tailored framework for monitoring and evaluating SMC programs, addressing the complexities of large-scale, time-sensitive interventions and external factors influencing outcomes.
- "Systematic review on the cost of seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC)": This review assesses the financial and economic costs associated with SMC delivery, providing insights into resource allocation and cost-effectiveness critical for policymakers and implementers.

Visual Insights into Malaria Prevention

The SMC Alliance provides a curated selection of videos on its website, offering visual insights into the implementation and impact of seasonal malaria chemoprevention (SMC). These videos serve as valuable resources for policymakers, implementing partners, researchers, and funders, illustrating best practices, programmatic learnings, and strategic directions for SMC initiatives. By presenting real-world applications and success stories, the Alliance enhances understanding and engagement among stakeholders committed to malaria prevention.

30 Nov 2024

WHO guidelines for malaria, 30 November 2024

World Health Organization

Peer-reviewed article

24 Sep 2024

SMC Alliance Annual Meeting Report Abuja 2024

SMC Alliance

Article

December 2023

SMC Alliance Annual Meeting Report 2023_Guinea