

Strategic Summary of the M&E Regional Coordination Mechanism Working Groups

1.0 Introduction: Operationalizing a Regional M&E Coordination Mechanism

This document summarizes the strategic outcomes from the session held on December 11, 2025, as part of the broader ESPEN workshop in Brazzaville from December 8-12, 2025. The primary goal of the session was to operationalize the Monitoring and Evaluation (M&E) Regional Coordination Mechanism by establishing a central Technical Committee and five thematic working groups. These groups are mandated to strengthen the data systems, tools, and processes that underpin Preventive Chemotherapy Neglected Tropical Disease (PC-NTD) programmes across the region.

The foundation for this initiative was a preliminary survey of 31 M&E professionals. The key insights gathered from this survey, which informed the structure and priorities of the new mechanism, are as follows:

- **Respondent Composition:** A significant majority of respondents (68%) were from partner institutions, highlighting a clear need to increase representation from national NTD programmes to ensure country-level perspectives are central to the mechanism's work.
- **Highest-Ranked Objectives:** The three most critical objectives identified for the Technical Committee were improving data quality and reliability, standardizing data collection and reporting, and strengthening training and capacity-building initiatives.
- **Core Responsibilities:** Survey participants identified the core responsibilities of the Technical Committee as coordinating regional data harmonization efforts, supporting capacity building for country teams, and providing robust data quality oversight.

This summary details the purpose, governance, and operational plans formulated by each of the five newly established working groups.

2.0 Working Group I: Harmonizing Strategies for Data Quality Assurance

This working group provides the structured, collaborative mechanism required to systematically dismantle barriers to data quality. Its mandate is to address persistent challenges—such as data source fragmentation, inconsistent standards, and process gaps—that directly contribute to inaccurate coverage reporting and the misallocation of resources, thereby hindering effective programme management and evidence-based decision-making.

Purpose and Objectives

The group's core rationale is to address persistent challenges in data quality across NTD programmes. To achieve this, it has defined seven specific objectives:

- To recommend best practices for ensuring data quality.
- To facilitate the sharing of experiences across countries.
- To disseminate country experiences through virtual meetings and webinars.
- To support the implementation of corrective measures and actions.
- To promote knowledge sharing on the integration of data collection tools.
- To collect ideas, best practices, and innovations on data quality from different countries.
- To provide recommendations to ESPEN/WHO on measures to ensure data quality in NTD programmes.

Expected Outcomes

The work of this group is expected to produce three primary outcomes:

1. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for data quality assurance.
2. **Knowledge sharing and dissemination** of global goods and resources.
3. **Training** on global goods and resources.

Governance and Membership

The group's membership will comprise a cross-section of key stakeholders to ensure its outputs are relevant and practical:

- Country and programme representatives (Governments, Programme Officers)
- Funding and implementation partners (Donors, Implementing Partners)
- Technical experts (MEL specialists, Researchers, Statisticians)

The selection of leadership roles, including a group lead, facilitators, and note-takers, has been deferred until the final composition of the working group is confirmed.

Timelines and Communication

The group will initially meet quarterly throughout 2026 to establish its operational rhythm and finalize its Terms of Reference. In 2027, the frequency will shift to biannual meetings. Communication and collaboration will be managed through Microsoft Teams, Zoom, email, and WhatsApp. Progress will be communicated through quarterly meeting notes and reports, supplemented by annual publications.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The group's success will be measured against four Key Performance Indicators (KPIs):

- Quarterly meetings are held.
- Data quality assurance SOPs are developed and endorsed.
- Knowledge products (e.g., guidance notes, tools) are shared with countries.
- Training or capacity-building sessions on global data quality tools are delivered.

With clear standards for data quality established, the next strategic imperative is to ensure this high-quality data is sustainably integrated into national health information systems.

3.0 Working Group II: Integration with National Health Information Systems (HMIS)

The strategic integration of PC-NTD data into national Health Management Information Systems (HMIS), such as DHIS2, is a critical step toward ensuring long-term data sustainability and country ownership. This working group is tasked with developing the blueprints and guidance required to embed PC-NTD indicators into national platforms, thereby enhancing data visibility for decision-making and optimizing resource use.

Purpose and Objectives

The group's mandate is rooted in the strategic necessity to address key opportunities in health information systems:

- Safeguard data protection and reduce fragmentation.
- Promote country ownership and sustainability.
- Improve data visibility for real-time decision-making.
- Enhance interoperability and collaboration across programmes.
- Optimize resource use and support systematic data archiving.

To meet this rationale, the group will pursue three core objectives:

1. Develop and disseminate an integration blueprint.
2. Facilitate peer learning and advocacy.
3. Generate evidence to inform global guidance.

Expected Outcomes

The group aims to deliver three key outcomes:

1. **Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)** for integrating digital NTD data into national HMIS.
2. **Learning products** showcasing successful country integration experiences.
3. **An evidence base** of lessons learned and pitfalls to avoid, strengthening future integration efforts.

Governance and Membership

The group has established a clear leadership structure and a collaborative model that defines distinct roles for Ministries of Health (MoH) and partner organizations.

Role	Assigned Individual/Entity
Chair	Dickson Kioko (Kenya)
Vice Chair	Adeye Anty Toni Ola Reine (Benin)

Secretary	Moses Aderogba (END Fund)
Vice Secretary	Mr Daouda Gueye (Senegal)

- **Member Countries:** Ghana, Benin, Kenya, Chad, Senegal, Côte d'Ivoire, Tanzania.
- **Partner Organizations:** Evidence Action, END Fund, WHO, POS, Sightsavers.

Stakeholder Responsibilities:

- **Ministries of Health (MoH)** will provide leadership in data flow mapping, offer strategic direction, and ensure programme ownership and accountability.
- **Partners** will provide technical facilitation, support inter-country coordination, and assist with progress tracking.

Timelines and Communication

To build momentum, the group will meet monthly for the first three months, after which it will transition to a quarterly meeting schedule. Meetings and document sharing will be conducted using Google Meet, Google Drive, Teams, and WhatsApp. Reports will be generated after each meeting and shared with WHO/ESPEN to ensure alignment and visibility.

Monitoring and Evaluation

Progress will be tracked using four defined KPIs:

- SOPs for NTD–HMIS integration are developed, validated, and shared.
- Number of learning products produced showcasing country integration experiences.
- Evidence briefs documenting lessons learned are produced and used by WHO/ESPEN.
- Number of countries developing or adopting NTD–HMIS integration blueprints.

The successful integration of NTD data into national systems is a crucial step, but its effectiveness depends fundamentally on the consistency and standardization of the data itself—the direct mandate of Working Group III.

4.0 Working Group III: Harmonizing Demographics and Programme Data

This working group will address foundational data challenges that directly impact the accuracy of programme planning and coverage estimation. Its focus is on resolving critical inconsistencies in core data elements—such as population denominators and the definition of implementation unit (IU) boundaries—that undermine the reliability of M&E and lead to flawed strategic decisions.

Purpose and Objectives

The group's overarching purpose is to improve the consistency of data used by NTD programmes across African countries, thereby strengthening overall data quality. This will be achieved through four key objectives:

- To coordinate and share learnings on the use of population denominators in NTD programme management.
- To establish an effective approach for aligning population denominators with MDA treatment coverage estimates.
- To improve data consistency across programmes and surveys, particularly regarding IU boundaries (e.g., demarcation, spelling).
- To document country sources of population denominators and the rationale for their use.

Expected Outcomes

The group will produce two primary outputs to guide country programmes:

- A report on lessons learned and good practices, including **recommendations**, regarding the use of population denominators.
- A report detailing good practices and **recommendations** for harmonizing IU-level data.

Governance and Membership

The group's composition will be refined progressively as its work evolves. Initial leadership roles have been designated, with an emphasis on shared responsibility among all members.

- **Co-chair:** Mr Milton
- **Co-chair:** Mr Dieudonné
- **Rapporteur:** Responsible for documenting discussions and key outputs.

All members are expected to contribute equally to the group's discussions and outputs.

Timelines and Communication

The group has adopted a multi-stage meeting plan to facilitate both initial planning and long-term collaboration. It will begin with monthly meetings for the first two sessions, followed by quarterly online meetings and one annual in-person meeting. Communication and documentation will be managed via Google Drive, Email, WhatsApp, and Microsoft Teams/Google Meet.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The group's performance will be measured against six KPIs:

- Population denominator guidance documents are developed and finalized.
- Number of harmonization products produced (e.g., guidance on denominators, IU boundaries, spelling standards).
- Quarterly meetings are held with documented agendas, minutes, and attendance.
- Number of countries participating in harmonization discussions.
- Pilot testing of agreed recommendations is conducted in selected countries.
- Evidence that outputs are used in programme reporting, planning, or decision-making.

With a framework for intra-country data consistency established, the subsequent challenge is to scale these principles for cross-border collaboration, the direct mandate of Working Group IV.

5.0 Working Group IV: Cross-Country Data Sharing & Standardization

This working group is tasked with addressing data fragmentation at a regional level. By establishing a structured mechanism for cross-border collaboration, joint planning, and comparative analysis, the group aims to overcome the limitations of siloed national data systems and foster a more unified, evidence-based approach to PC-NTD M&E.

Purpose and Objectives

The group was formed to address the limited harmonization of data management practices, the fragmentation of information systems, and the need for a formal cross-border coordination mechanism. Its work will be guided by four main objectives:

- Develop secure and ethical data-sharing protocols.
- Clearly define how data should be referenced, shared, and used.
- Prioritize and harmonize key PC-NTD indicators across countries.
- Develop a capacity-strengthening plan for Ministries of Health to support implementation.

Expected Outcomes

The group has a single, clearly defined expected outcome that will serve as its primary deliverable:

- **Draft guidelines for data harmonization and data sharing.**

Governance and Membership

The group currently includes representatives from Ministries of Health (MoH), AMREF, The END Fund, and WHO-ESPEN. However, several gaps in expertise have been identified, including the need for an HMIS expert, a legal expert, and a translator to ensure comprehensive and applicable guidelines.

The leadership structure is as follows:

Role	Assigned Individual/Entity
Group Chair	Samuel Okaro Onyango (AMREF)
Co-Chair	Nassa Christophe (MoH Burkina Faso)
Meeting Facilitator	Ernest Mensah (MoH Ghana)

- **Note-taker:** The role of note-taker will be rotational among group members.

Timelines and Milestones

The group will hold quarterly virtual meetings via Zoom. Email will serve as the primary communication channel, with WhatsApp as a backup, and Google Drive will be used for knowledge sharing. The group has set four key milestones for 2026:

- **Workplan developed:** End of January 2026
- **Country landscaping report completed:** End of Q1 2026
- **Data-sharing plan guidelines (Version 1) finalized:** July 2026
- **Final data-sharing guidelines completed:** December 2026

Monitoring and Evaluation

The group's KPIs are directly tied to the timely and successful completion of the milestones listed above. Progress will be communicated semi-annually and presented at the next M&E workshop.

Standardizing programme data provides a stronger foundation for tackling specific data challenges within critical operational areas, such as the logistics and supply chain systems managed by Working Group V.

6.0 Working Group V: Forecasting and Strengthening Logistics Management Information Systems (LMIS)

This working group addresses the critical function of supply chain management, ensuring that essential NTD medicines and commodities are available when and where they are needed. By improving forecasting accuracy, enabling multi-year planning, and strengthening national LMIS, the group aims to prevent the stock-outs and wastage that can derail treatment campaigns and undermine programme goals.

Purpose and Objectives

The group's creation is driven by the need to:

- Improve data quality to enhance forecasting accuracy and prevent shipment delays.
- Enable multi-year planning to align country needs with global production timelines.
- Strengthen accountability across the full LMIS cycle, including reverse logistics.
- Reduce wastage of essential PC-NTD commodities.
- Improve overall supply chain management of NTD medicines.

To achieve this, the group will focus on five primary objectives:

1. Integrate PC-NTD medicines into national LMIS.
2. Support timely submission of the Joint Application Package (JAP).
3. Facilitate the redistribution of medicines between countries to prevent expiration.
4. Harmonize good practices in logistics and supply chain management.
5. Support countries in developing SOPs for medicines management.

Expected Outcomes

The group's work will produce both internal- and external-facing outcomes.

Internal-facing outcomes

- Strengthened national systems and day-to-day supply chain operations.
- Uninterrupted availability of PC-NTD medicines (no stock-outs).
- Reduced wastage and expiration of medicines.
- Improved LMIS tools and enhanced data quality and visibility.
- Increased use of data for proactive, forward-looking decision-making.

External-facing outcomes

- Updated multi-year forecasts to inform global manufacturing and donation planning.
- Harmonized guidance documents on LMIS integration for PC-NTDs.
- Documented case studies showcasing successful supply chain integration.
- Shared evidence and lessons learned for partners, donors, and the global NTD community.

Governance and Membership

The group includes regional supply chain partners and M&E specialists and has established separate leadership structures for its Anglophone and Francophone members to ensure effective communication and coordination.

- **Anglophone Leadership:**
 - **Chair:** Dr. Richard Muthoka (Kenya)
 - **Co-chair:** Dr. Anna Josepha (Tanzania)
 - The Chair will facilitate meetings and designate a note-taker for each meeting.
- **Francophone Leadership:**
 - **Chair/President:** Dr. SOW (Senegal)
 - **Rapporteur:** Mr. Sedogo Adama (Burkina Faso)
 - **Members:** Alberto Luis Papique (Guinea-Bissau), Mme Miarinoro Randrianasolo (Madagascar), Dr. Diane Ehoumi Dah-Bolinon (WHO–ESPEN)

Timelines and Communication

Meetings will be held quarterly, primarily via Zoom or Microsoft Teams, with the potential for one in-person meeting annually. All documents will be shared via Google Drive, with email and WhatsApp serving as the main communication channels. Meeting reports will be prepared after each session and shared with members and WHO-ESPEN.

Monitoring and Evaluation

The group will track its success against five KPIs:

- Number of technical documents/reports produced to support forecasting and LMIS.

- Number of meetings held and participant attendance.
- Number of countries integrating PC-NTD medicines into their national LMIS.
- Number of countries submitting the JAP on time.
- Number of countries piloting or using agreed tools or guidance.

This group's focus is on translating better data into tangible, operational improvements in the PC-NTD medicine supply chain.

7.0 Conclusion and Consolidated Next Steps

The establishment of these five thematic working groups marks a significant step toward operationalizing a cohesive M&E Regional Coordination Mechanism. The strategic plans developed reflect a shared commitment to building a data-driven ecosystem across three core pillars: establishing robust **standards** (Working Groups I, III, IV), enhancing national **systems** (Working Group II), and improving programme **operations** (Working Group V). The success of these groups is interdependent; for example, the work of the HMIS Integration group (WG II) is fundamentally dependent on the foundational data standards being developed by the Harmonization group (WG III). Common approaches, such as quarterly virtual meetings and shared online platforms, will facilitate the continuous collaboration required to realize these synergies.

The overarching strategic goal of this mechanism is to empower national PC-NTD programmes to improve performance and accelerate progress toward elimination goals. To maintain momentum, the following concrete actions will be taken:

1. **Finalize the composition of the Technical Committee**, ensuring key roles such as M&E specialists, HIS experts, and programme managers are represented.
2. **Formally establish the working groups** with finalized membership and a defined scope of work for each.
3. **Set up quarterly meetings and collaboration tools** to facilitate continuous engagement and progress tracking.
4. **Develop key outputs**, including SOPs, training materials, and data harmonization blueprints, as prioritized by each working group.
5. **Implement a monitoring framework** to track improvements in data quality, reporting consistency, and country-level capacity.