

Sustaining Momentum in NTD Programmes Amidst a Reduced Funding Landscape: A Regional Assessment

1. Introduction

This summary outlines the main findings from a rapid assessment survey conducted by WHO AFRO ESPEN between March and April 2025 to better understand the operational impact of the USAID funding pause on national NTD programmes. A total of 25 responses were received from 18 countries, all of which are currently facing disruptions in implementation due to the funding pause or broader financial constraints. The report provides an in-depth analysis, while the accompanying table highlights country-level details on activities impacted, medicine stock risks, and proposed mitigation strategies.

2. Programme Disruption and Scope of Activities

Most countries reported that core interventions—including Mass Drug Administration (MDA) and disease surveillance surveys—are expected to be postponed, modified, or cancelled if current funding gaps persist. including Schistosomiasis (16 countries), Soil-Transmitted Helminths (16), Lymphatic Filariasis (15), Onchocerciasis (15), and Trachoma (12). Other diseases mentioned include leprosy and mycetoma.

The most frequently reported delivery platforms remain community-based (16 countries) and school-based (12) channels, with increasing use of health facility-based (8) and mixed (9) approaches as countries adapt to the funding shortfall.

3. Risks of Medicine Expiry

While only a few countries flagged immediate expiry risks between February and April 2025 (3 countries), the risk becomes more significant in the May to October 2025 window:

- 10 countries reported expiry risks involving Albendazole, Praziquantel, Ivermectin, and Azithromycin
- Documented quantities at risk exceed 5 million tablets in some countries, with expiry dates between June 2025 and January 2026.

- Several countries raised concerns about delays in distribution, which could further increase the risk of medicine expiry.

4. Adaptation and Mitigation Strategies

Despite constraints, countries have shown strong commitment to programme continuity.

Key adaptation strategies include:

- **Integration of NTD interventions into broader health campaigns (12 countries)**, including immunization and maternal-child health services.
- **Resource mobilization from other partners (12 countries)**, especially non-USAID funders such as Sightsavers, The Carter Center, the END Fund, and Unlimit Health.
- **Pursuit of domestic financing** was mentioned in some responses, but no countries explicitly reported adopting this strategy across the board in the current analysis.
- Several countries have already planned to delay implementation by 3 to 6 months if external funding is not secured.

Examples from Tanzania and Uganda, where school-based MDA is supported through domestic financing, continue to demonstrate the potential for resilient and country-driven solutions.

5. Medicine Shipment Preferences

When asked about 2025 medicine shipments:

- 12 countries recommended proceeding as originally scheduled
- 3 countries advised adjustments based on in-country readiness and medicine levels
- 1 country proposed a case-by-case basis
- 1 country suggested pausing shipments in USAID-supported areas

The majority emphasized the importance of tailoring decisions to each country's inventory status and implementation capacity.

6. Coordination and Country Engagement

There is a strong willingness across countries to remain engaged:

- 23 of 25 respondents confirmed openness to continued technical dialogue
- Several countries nominated focal points for coordination and follow-up, signalling readiness to align on next steps.

7. Conclusion

The assessment findings reveal both the challenges and resilience of national NTD programmes amid the ongoing funding uncertainty. While risks related to medicine expiry and delayed implementation are present, countries are responding with proactive, context-specific solutions. Flexible support from partners—including technical coordination, shipment planning, and resource mobilization—will be essential to maintaining programme momentum. The coming months present a critical opportunity for collaboration to safeguard previous gains and sustain progress toward the 2030 NTD Road Map targets.

Strategic Approaches / Next Steps for ESPEN and Partners	
Advocate for integration of NTD interventions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate NTD interventions into broader health campaigns, such as immunization and maternal-child health services • Combining community-based, school-based, and health facility-based delivery platforms
Resource Mobilization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage non-USAID implementing partners with alternative sources of funding e.g., Sightsavers, The Carter Center, the END Fund, and Unlimit Health to fill some gaps • Encourage countries to use more domestic resources for NTD interventions and advocate for additional government budget financing e.g. Tanzania experience
Medicine Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Address the risk of medicine expiry by closely monitoring inventory levels and adjusting shipment schedules • Adopt a flexible, case-by-case approach to medicine shipments • Plan for potential delays in implementation by 3 to 6 months if external funding is not secured to allow countries to adapt their strategies for implementation
Coordination and Technical Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain strong technical coordination and dialogue with country focal points • Provide flexible support to countries, including technical coordination, shipment planning, and resource mobilization

8. List of Acronyms

AFRO	The WHO Regional Office for Africa
ALB	Albendazole
AZT	Azithromycin
CHW	Community Health Worker
ESPEN	Expanded Special Project for Elimination of Neglected Tropical Diseases
FTS	Filariasis Test Strips
IVM	Ivermectin
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
MEB	Mebendazole
MOH	Ministry of Health
NTD	Neglected Tropical Diseases
Oncho	Onchocerciasis
PC NTDs	Preventive Chemotherapy Neglected Tropical Diseases
PO	Purchase Order
PRSEAH	Prevention of and Response to Sexual Exploitation, Abuse and Harassment
PZQ	Praziquantel
RTI	Research Triangle Institute (International)
SCH	Schistosomiasis
SCM	Supply Chain Management
STH	Soil-Transmitted Helminthiasis
UCN	Communicable and Noncommunicable Diseases Cluster (WHO)
USAID	United States Agency for International Development
WHO	World Health Organization

9. NTD Supply Chain Summary – Expiry Risks and Mitigation

The following Tables present a structured summary of NTD medicine supply chain risks, highlighting countries with medicines at risk of expiry, their recommended actions, MDA postponements, and mitigation strategies. Where applicable, expiry quantities and planned integration programs are noted.

9.1. 🌐 Countries Reporting Expiry Risk

Country	Activities impacted	Feb–Apr 2025 Expiry	May–Oct 2025 Expiry	Expiry Quantity Info	Shipment Advice	MDA Delay (If no USAID funding)	Key Mitigation / Progress Steps
Madagascar	None	PZQ	PZQ, DEC	1,080,605 tablets exp. May 2025	📦 Continue	—	Integrate MDA with other health campaigns i.e., SCH/STH and LF MDA
Burkina Faso	MDA (SCH, LF Oncho) Surveys (SCH, STH, LF, Oncho) Other Activities Technical meeting	—	ALB (LF)	576,600 tablets exp. date: October 2025	📦 Continue	—	Seek government and partner funding
Burundi	MDA (SCH, STH, Oncho) Surveys (SCH, STH, Oncho)	—	ALB (LF)	1,953,200 tablets exp. June 2025	⚠️ Adjusted timelines	3 months	Integrate MDA with Vaccination campaigns/ Vitamin A supplementation, Seek government and partner funding
Guinea	MDA (SCH, STH, LF, Oncho) Surveys (STH, LF, Oncho) Other Activities: Workshop for the development of elimination dossiers for LF and trachoma.	IVM: 358,500 (Mar),	ALB (STH)	FTS: 16,800 (exp. July 2025), PZQ: 91,850 tablets (exp. August 2025), (ALB-STH): 600 tablets	📦 Continue	1 year	Postpone MDA, seek government funding and mobilization of partner funding (Ongoing efforts to mobilize partner funding with Sightsavers)
Kenya	Other Activities:	—	IVM	Not indicated	📦 Continue	—	Mobilize resources from other partners, Integrate MDA with

Country	Activities impacted	Feb-Apr 2025 Expiry	May-Oct 2025 Expiry	Expiry Quantity Info	Shipment Advice	MDA Delay (If no USAID funding)	Key Mitigation / Progress Steps
	Cross border collaboration						other health campaigns, seek local government funding for 2025 planned activities
Mozambique	MDA (LF Oncho, Trachoma) Survey (LF, Oncho, Trachoma)	—	ALB (LF)	158,600 tablets	Paused (USAID areas)	—	Integrate MDA Seek government and partner funding (Still in advocacy stage)
Tanzania	MDA (SCH, STH, LF Oncho, Trachoma) Survey (SCH, STH, LF, Oncho, Trachoma)	—	AZT	38,596 Azithromycin paediatric oral suspension expiring October 2025	Continue	—	Integrate with immunization, nutrition, malaria and share community health workers, Explore private sector support: Domestic financing
Niger	MDA (SCH) Survey (SCH, LF, Trachoma)		ALB (LF) PZQ	2 million PZQ tablets exp. October 2025			Integrate vaccination campaign, polio campaign, and domestic resources
Benin ¹	MDA (SCH, STH, Oncho) Survey (SCH, STH, Oncho)	—	PZQ	937 208 tablets exp. August 2025	Continue	—	Seek government and partner funding, through advocacy, MOH and partners to support the Oncho campaign In March/April
Togo	MDA (SCH, STH, Oncho) Survey (SCH, STH, Oncho, LF)	—	ALB (LF),	17,552 tablets exp. August 2025	Continue	3 months	Postpone MDA, no risk before April, seek government and partner support (Ongoing efforts to mobilize partner funding with Sightsavers)

¹ Obtained from bilateral discussion and not survey

9.2. Countries with No Reported Expiries

Country	Activities impacted	Shipment Advice	MDA Delay (If no USAID funding)	Key Mitigation / Progress Steps
Ghana	MDA (SCH, STH, LF) Survey (STH, LF)	Case-by-case	Don't know	Integrate MDA with other health campaigns, seek local government funding for 2025 planned activities,
Cameroon	MDA (Oncho) Survey (Oncho, LF)	⚠ Adjusted + 📦 Continue	1 year	Integrate with school deworming and vaccination, Seek government and partner support
Côte d'Ivoire	Survey (Oncho, LF, Trachoma)	📦 Continue	No postponement	Seek government and partner support
Ethiopia	MDA (Oncho) Survey (Oncho)	📦 Continue	1 year	Integrate MDA (Most of the PC NTDs in Ethiopia is funded by The End fund, it may be managed accordingly), Seek government support
Nigeria	Survey and Surveillance (LF)	📦 Continue	—	Integrate MDA (Net distribution during Malaria program activities, Nutrition program activities, Health promotion campaign). Seek local funding
Senegal	MDA (SCH, STH,) Survey (SCH, STH, LF)	📦 Continue	—	Postpone MDA, Seek government support.
Mali	MDA (SCH) Survey (SCH, STH)	No shipment	—	Praziquantel (PZQ): 5,560,000 tablets exp. January 2026
Sierra Leone	MDA (SCH, STH, Oncho) Survey (SCH, STH, LF, Oncho)	⚠ Adjusted timelines	3 months	Integrate with school health, SCM and reproductive health, Seek government and partner support, Engagement meeting with targeted programmes (school health, supply chain management and Reproductive Health)
Uganda	MDA: SCH, STH, Oncho Survey: SCH, STH	📦 Continue	6 months	Integrating MDA with other health campaigns (e.g. incorporating Mebendazole MDA into health facility services and immunization outreaches in 2025), Mobilizing partner support (e.g. Onchocerciasis MDA in five districts supported by The Carter Center).