



WHO / Fanfan Combrink

The rollout of effective malaria vaccines marks a major milestone in global health, offering vital protection in endemic areas each year. Building on the success of the Malaria Vaccine Implementation Programme in Ghana, Malawi and Kenya — which demonstrated that over 4 years, about 1 in 8 deaths from all causes were averted in young children eligible to receive the RTS,S vaccine — the World Health Organization (WHO) endorsed the RTS,S vaccine in 2021. In 2023, WHO also recommended the R21/Matrix-M vaccine. Both malaria vaccines have been proven safe and effective, reducing malaria cases by over 50% in the first year after vaccination — a critical period when children face the highest risk of severe illness and death.

THE NEED FOR IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH

With malaria vaccines now available and supply increasing, countries in West and Central Africa — where seasonal transmission is intense — have a critical opportunity to lead the way in vaccine rollout. Success will depend on strong national leadership, informed by local evidence and supported by coordinated partnerships to ensure vaccines reach the children who need them most.

THE CHALLENGE

- Despite their proven potential, malaria vaccines face major implementation hurdles. Low routine immunisation rates and the new need for two extra visits add logistical challenges, but also open doors to deliver other vital vaccines.
- Unlocking this potential requires trained community health workers and tailored delivery, especially in areas with seasonal transmission. Stronger safety monitoring is also key to addressing concerns and building public trust in vaccines.

OPT-MVAC GOALS

OPT-MVAC supports implementation research led by national immunisation, malaria and pharmacovigilance programmes to tailor delivery strategies to local needs and promote cross-country learning. Driven by national programmes, the project is providing grants and technical assistance to support the monitoring of vaccine coverage and the development, implementation and evaluation of strategies to address challenges such as vaccine hesitancy, access barriers and other gaps in uptake.

PARTICIPATING ORGANISATIONS

EXPECTED IMPACT

- Protecting young children from malaria through increased vaccine coverage, supporting longer, healthier lives.
- Strengthening a regional network of endemic countries to co-develop and evaluate strategies, improve safety monitoring and share data and lessons to boost vaccine uptake.
- Fostering EU/AU collaboration, translating innovation into impact and building research capacity within national programmes and their research partners.
- Advancing Global Health EDCTP3 JU goals by reducing infectious disease burden and enhancing health security in sub-Saharan Africa through malaria vaccine research and uptake.
- Contributing to SDG 3 by improving access to essential health services and promoting disease prevention.
- Promoting equitable scientific partnerships grounded in co-ownership, mutual interest and shared priorities.



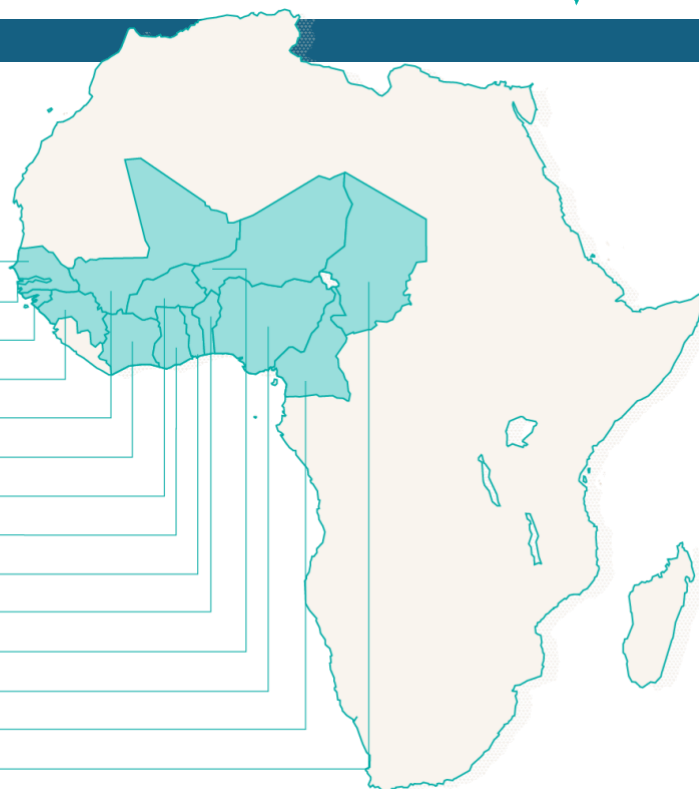
PARTICIPATING COUNTRIES



14 partner countries

OPT-MVAC is driven by the leadership of national immunisation, malaria and pharmacovigilance programmes across **14 participating countries**, ensuring that implementation efforts are grounded in local priorities and systems.

Senegal
The Gambia
Guinea-Bissau
Guinea
Mali
Côte d'Ivoire
Burkina Faso
Ghana
Togo
Benin
Niger
Nigeria
Cameroon
Chad



TIMELINE

OPT-MVAC will run from January 2025 to April 2029. The 4-year project will generate high-quality data to inform countries and improve immunisation by aligning monitoring methods, supporting ethical data collection and strengthening pharmacovigilance systems. It will provide technical support and training to adapt research protocols, ensure benefit-risk-based vaccine selection and promote trust, access and coverage, while adhering to international standards and sharing progress with key stakeholders.

CURIOUS TO LEARN MORE?

Discover what we do and explore opportunities to collaborate.



Visit our website:
www.opt-mvac.org/



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