



PROJECT BACKGROUND



OVERVIEW

Malaria is a major public health problem in sub-Saharan Africa (SSA). It causes an estimated one million deaths per year and is the leading cause of mortality in children under five. The use of long-lasting insecticidal nets (LLINs) is one of the most cost-effective interventions against malaria, and has been recommended by the World Health Organization (WHO).

According to the WHO, approximately 90% of Rwandans are at risk of malaria, which is the leading cause of morbidity and mortality – responsible for up to 50% of all outpatient visits – in the country. As part of an integrated strategy of combating the disease, Rwanda promotes universal coverage of free LLINs, with the National Malaria Control Programme (NMCP) defining universal coverage as one net for every two people or three LLINs per household. The strategy is to reach all population groups through two primary delivery channels: mass distribution aimed at all households, and targeted distribution to mothers and infants through Antenatal Care (ANC) and Expanded Program on Immunizations (EPI) visits.

Rwanda has achieved significant reductions in the burden of malaria over the last ten years, partly due to the incorporation of LLINs in the government's malaria control strategy. Presently, about 83% of households own at least one long lasting net (compared with 57% in 2007/2008), and net usage rates by children and pregnant women are 74% and 72%, respectively (compared with 58% and 62% in 2008).

Net coverage decreased to less than 25% in 2009 leading to upsurges in malaria cases. This has been attributed to prolonged negotiations regarding funding and specifications plus procurement delays. Furthermore, some LLINs were suspected to have become ineffective due to physical deterioration or insecticide decay. In 2010, an amount of US\$ 37.2 million was spent on the importation of mosquito bed nets for distribution (for free) throughout the country via the Ministry of Health clinics and development partners in line with the Government's "universal coverage" of households, which takes place every three years. Based on 2010 Demographic & Health Survey results, the scaling up of preventive measures in Rwanda – especially coverage and use of LLINs – resulted in significant reductions in:

Morbidity: by 87% from 1,669,614 malaria cases in 2005 to 212,200 cases in 2011; and
Mortality: by 76% from 1,582 deaths in 2005 to 380 in 2011.

In 2012 and 2013, a total of 417,500 and 2,665,650 nets respectively were detected to be ineffective. Replacement of 627,300 pieces of ineffective nets was carried out in the first quarter of 2014 [1].

[1] Ministry of Health, Fourth Health Sector Strategic Plan, July 2018-June 2024

LTC YAMEI RWANDA ESTABLISHED

Rwanda has committed itself to increase efforts in malaria prevention activities, especially in the distribution of mosquito bed nets and studying the feasibility of a bed nets factory in Rwanda [2]: Previous difficulties experienced with regards to mosquito nets - such as ineffectiveness of certain nets, timely delivery of sufficient quantities of LLINs of high quality, inability to replace defective items on time - would be addressed by a Rwandan production plant. These challenges could thereby be resolved not only in Rwanda but also for other Government agencies across Africa.

Over the five-year period 2009 to 2013, Rwanda imported a total of US\$ 85.9 million worth of mosquito nets, representing an annual average of US\$ 17.2 million, to implement the country's malaria control program [3]. Local production of quality LLINs would therefore lead to a tremendous decrease in costs related to this program. Relevant to the entire textile industry, the 16th ordinary summit of the East African Community Heads of State of 20th February 2015, in its communique, directed the council of Ministers to study the modalities for the promotion of the Textile, Apparel and Leather Industries in the region and stopping the importation of used clothes, shoes and other leather products from outside the region especially in resolution point 18 [4]. The Government of Rwanda, during an extraordinary cabinet meeting of 3rd November 2015 also deliberated on the urgency to progressively promote the "Made In Rwanda" initiative and directed Ministers responsible to design a clear plan of action to achieve the objective [5].

In light of the above, the Government of Rwanda through MINICOM had recommended a local firm to partner with a WHO-certified fabric producer on a commercial basis, in order to assure delivery of the LLIN fabric on a timely and sustainable basis [6]. Subsequently the MoD/RDF leadership advised on how the above would be addressed. A partner (FUJIAN YAMEI INDUSTRY & TRADE Co. Ltd), a WHO-qualified LLIN fabric supplier was found, with whom a business establishment in Rwanda was discussed and concluded. Several meetings with different Government Institutions including Ministry of Defense (MINADEF), Ministry of Health (MoH), Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning (MINECOFIN), Ministry of Trade and Industry (MINICOM), Rwanda Development Board (RDB), Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) were held in order to solidify the new venture. Ultimately, as a result of these discussions and directives, LTC Yamei Rwanda was established as a LLIN production plant.

[2] Ministry of Trade and Industry, Domestic Market Recapturing Strategy, 2015, p.3

[3] Ministry of Trade and Industry, Domestic Market Recapturing Strategy, 2015, p.1

[4] East African Community Secretariat, Kenyatta International Convention Centre, Nairobi, Kenya (2015) Communiqué of the 16th Ordinary Summit of the East African Community Heads of State

[5] Ministry of trade and industry, (2016), Strategy to transform the textile, apparel and leather sector, p.3

[6] Ministry of Trade and Industry, Domestic Market Recapturing Strategy, 2015, p.13

