



Toward Sustainable Social and Behavior Change for Malaria in Guyana

► Introduction

Breakthrough ACTION Guyana focuses on two interrelated agendas: (1) designing and implementing targeted, innovative, and effective solutions to high-priority social and behavior change (SBC) challenges, and (2) increasing the capacity of Guyanese institutions to coordinate, design, implement, and evaluate high-quality SBC interventions. Inherent in both agendas is an investment in the sustainability of the SBC system beyond the life of the project. With sustainability at the heart of the program, Breakthrough ACTION Guyana, the Ministry of Health (MOH), private sector partners, and other key stakeholders have undertaken several initiatives to ensure that SBC systems and structures endure over time.



Breakthrough ACTION Guyana and the MOH's Definition of Sustainability

Sustainability refers to continued achievement of desired health outcomes beyond the end of technical assistance and funding from donors through the allocation of necessary human, financial, and material resources. It also encompasses the institutionalization, maintenance, and adaptation of program processes and activities within a host organization and ongoing efforts to develop and increase institutional and community capacity to implement effective programs.

► Interventions

Sustainability Action Plan

In partnership with Vector Control Services/National Malaria Program (VCS/NMP) and the Public Relations/Health Promotion Unit (PR/HPU) of the MOH, Breakthrough ACTION Guyana developed a sustainability action plan (SAP) to detail the steps the institutions would take to ensure a successful transition of SBC interventions, capacities, systems, and structures from the project to the government. With an intentionally gradual approach and a timeframe

spanning more than three years, the SAP focused on the development of systems for the transfer of knowledge and skills to MOH and partners, the mobilization of increased domestic funding for malaria and SBC activities through annual government operations plans and public-private partnerships, improved coordination between VCS/NMP and the PR/HPU for malaria SBC activities, and the collaborative design, implementation, and monitoring of malaria SBC interventions.

Guyana Malaria Public–Private Partnership Platform Strategy and Memorandum of Cooperation

Guyana’s private sector is dominated by the extractives industry, which is strategic to malaria prevention due to the transient nature of their labor force and the environmental exposure at mining locations. Both the MOH and mining organizations acknowledged the need for a robust public–private partnership for malaria elimination; however, an erosion in the relationship between the two sectors derailed effective collaboration for almost three decades. To tackle this impasse, Breakthrough ACTION Guyana engaged malaria stakeholders starting in 2022 to revive collaboration. Under VCS/NMP guidance, Breakthrough ACTION developed a concept note that envisaged the Guyana Malaria Public–Private Partnership Platform (GMP4). Breakthrough ACTION shared the document with key public and private stakeholders as an invitation to dialogue, then interviewed each stakeholder over several months to listen to their vision for partnership and overcome hidden barriers to collaboration.



Based on the insights from the stakeholder pre-engagement, Breakthrough ACTION Guyana organized a public–private partnership workshop between the MOH, VCS/NMP, and public and private stakeholders with

the goals of forging relationships, prioritizing systemic challenges, and generating catalytic solutions. The workshop used a human-centered design approach to build empathy and consensus on core challenges and co-create ideas for potential solutions. These ideas included a mapping exercise of the malaria commodities supply chain as a first step toward collaboration, a malaria advocacy strategy, and a GMP4 WhatsApp bulletin board.

After more than two years of collaboration and advocacy by Breakthrough ACTION, five agencies (the MOH, Ministry of Labor, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Guyana Gold and Diamond Mining Association, and Guyana Women’s Mining Organization) signed a Memorandum of Cooperation (MOC) on April 24, 2024, in advance of World Malaria Day. The MOC is the first formal agreement in Guyana with cross-sectoral commitments for collaborative action towards malaria control. The MOC is short and clear, and it includes concrete doable actions for each party that are within their sphere of influence, such as sharing information about malaria with constituencies and employees, recruiting and training volunteer malaria testers in mining camps, and supporting the distribution of malaria commodities and supplies, SBC materials, and reporting forms to hard-to-reach hinterland communities. The MOC facilitates the scale-up of existing MOH-led malaria interventions, such as the Lil Mosquito, Big Problem (LMBP) SBC campaign, by leveraging partner’s assets and capabilities.

SBC Materials Toolkit and Branding Guide

As the project rounds out its final year, there are now tested interventions and models that can be further institutionalized, replicated, and scaled through the MOH, the private sector, and other organizations. Breakthrough ACTION developed the SBC Materials Toolkit and Branding Guide to ensure that the project’s resources and tools are well-documented and packaged to facilitate sharing and broader replication. The toolkit is a collection of editable files, specifications, and tips for use so that project materials can be adapted by partners, stakeholders, and organizations working to improve malaria testing, treatment, and prevention behaviors in similar mining settings. Customizable materials can be tailored to local contexts and specific community needs, implementation tips provide practical guidance and best practices for effective implementation, and detailed scripts and technical specifications help ensure consistent messaging and quality in the delivery of malaria interventions. The accompanying branding guide contains guidance on logo usage, typography, colors, illustrations and design to ensure that the LMBP brand retains visual consistency.

▶ Results

- Key insights from the GMP4 engagements were that stakeholders felt unrecognized for their efforts in addressing malaria and were similarly unaware of initiatives from other actors in the ecosystem. Creating a process for regular exchange of information could help stakeholders better appreciate and coordinate their roles in prevention, diagnosis, or treatment and celebrate their successes.
- MOC signatories shared information on the number of miners and mining locations to facilitate planning for the 2024 mass long-lasting insecticidal net distribution. This exchange was a significant development since it had not been previously done.
- An immediate outcome of the signing of the MOC was the distribution by VCS of 46,197 free insecticide-treated nets to miners and other endemic communities. The distribution commenced on the day of the MOC signing.
- Breakthrough ACTION shared LMBP SBC materials electronically with MOC partners for distribution to their employees, effectively expanding the reach of the campaign. These included the Miners' Buzz videos and posters on testing, prevention, and treatment.



Honorable Dr. Frank Anthony, Minister of Health (with tie), flanked by Ms. Adrienne Galanek, Deputy Chief of Mission, US Embassy to his immediate right; Ms. Urica Primus, President, Guyana Women's Miners Organization, at his immediate left; Honorable Vickram Bharrat, Minister of Natural Resources, next to Ms. Galanek; and other representatives from the MOH, Guyana Geology and Mines Commission, Guyana Gold and Diamond Mining Association, USAID, and Breakthrough ACTION displaying long-lasting insecticidal nets following the signing of the historic MOC to galvanize public-private sector action against malaria on April 24, 2024.

▶ Lessons Learned

- **Pre-engagement and empathy were critical to help stimulate engagement of public and private sector partners on tackling the malaria challenge.** Breakthrough ACTION spent two years deeply listening to and learning about partners' efforts, frustrations, and motivations on collaboration. These listening sessions were very important in gaining trust in the collaboration process and grounding the generated ideas to ensure success in building credibility and momentum. Building empathy for partners' perspectives was important to dissolve entrenched positions and create space for new ideas. Significant time was spent on partner presentations on their malaria prevention interventions, for instance, to enhance awareness of their interconnected roles. Sharing MOH strategic plans with stakeholders helped them understand how they could better leverage their resources to complement the national strategy.
- **A neutral convening party can help diffuse tension and bring everyone to the same table.** Despite serving common constituents, public and private sectors may have mutual distrust. A trusted broker who understands the different cultures, time horizons, and capabilities has an important role in harmonizing these differences and bringing

complementary strengths to the forefront. Breakthrough ACTION Guyana was seen as a trusted broker by both parties, which helped foster dialogue. This demonstrated how a mediating group can facilitate the rebuilding of critical relationships among public and private stakeholders.

- **Having an actionable document that articulates in-kind collaboration and serves as a commitment device helps hold stakeholders accountable for their responsibilities.** The initial GMP4 strategy was based on the premise that partners had to make financial contributions to the GMP4. Further reflection revealed that this approach seemed to present a hurdle to the formation of partnerships. Breakthrough ACTION then introduced the MOC, which was short and simple, and did not ask for money but rather commitment in kind, making it easy for many partners to join. The MOC is a breakthrough for creating momentum around public–private partnerships by removing entry hurdles and allowing partners the flexibility to contribute resources in kind.
- **Increased collaboration with government and local organizations can expand and sustain malaria programs.** The financial and other resources that government may want to commit to a particular sector can be limited since other sectors are also vying for support. The signing of the MOC and the benefits that have been derived thus far provide a timely reminder that collaboration is pivotal for expansion and sustainability. What previously seemed out of reach, now has a greater possibility of being achieved.

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