

Global report on neglected tropical diseases 2024

Executive summary

Three full years have passed since the launch of the road map for neglected tropical diseases 2021–2030. Data on progress begin to provide insights into the prospects of attaining the 2030 targets.

In 2022, 1.62 billion people required interventions against neglected tropical diseases (NTDs). Although this reflects a 26% decrease from 2010, it does not provide the required trajectory to attain the road map's global target of a 90% reduction by 2030. Challenges persist, and the slow progress highlights the complexities of addressing NTDs on a global scale. Uncertain and evolving health, political and financial landscapes contribute to the difficulties in meeting the ambitious targets set in the road map.

Despite these challenges, significant milestones have been reached. In 2023, five countries were acknowledged by the World Health Organization (WHO) for eliminating one NTD, and one country for eliminating two NTDs. As of December 2023, a total of 50 countries have successfully eliminated at least one NTD, marking the halfway point towards the 2030 target of 100 countries. This achievement is commendable and highlights opportunities for further progress against the 13 NTDs targeted for eradication, elimination and elimination as a public health problem. At the same time, it underscores the need for additional innovative efforts to include new countries and address more diseases within this group.

The road map introduced cross-cutting indicators to monitor health system capacities and the political environment for combatting NTDs. To address the inherent data gaps, in 2023 WHO introduced the Global NTD Annual Reporting

Form (GNARF). This exercise exposed challenges in the implementation of action related to several basic indicators as well as information system barriers that affect the data quality of NTD programmes.

As of end 2022, data record an increase (+22%) in reported deaths from vector-borne NTDs (as compared with 2016), a gradual scale-up of the adoption and implementation of integrated skin-NTD strategies (11 countries), of the development of guidance for management of NTD-related disabilities (19 countries), of integration on NTDs in national health plans (28 countries), of inclusion of NTD interventions in packages of essential services (6 countries), of data reporting on all NTDs (32 countries), and of collecting and reporting gender-disaggregated data (17 countries). Health services have not yet fully recovered from the disruptions caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic, as evidenced by the decrease in the number of people treated through preventive chemotherapy in 2022 (49 million fewer than in 2021, also confirmed by the slight drop of the integrated treatment coverage index, 46%), while access to water supply, sanitation and hygiene is overall 85.8% in NTD-endemic countries and 63% among the population requiring interventions against NTDs. The share of the population at risk protected against catastrophic out-of-pocket health expenditure due to NTDs is 87.4%.

Buruli ulcer
Chagas disease
Dengue and chikungunya
Dracunculiasis
Echinococcosis
Foodborne trematodiasis
Human African trypanosomiasis
Leishmaniasis
Leprosy
Lymphatic filariasis
Mycetoma, chromoblastomycosis and other deep mycoses
Noma
Onchocerciasis
Rabies
Scabies and other ectoparasitoses
Schistosomiasis
Snakebite envenoming
Soil-transmitted helminthiasis
Taeniasis and cysticercosis
Trachoma
Yaws



In 2023, progress was also made under the three road map pillars.

Pillar 1 focuses on accelerating programmatic action. Medicine donation programmes achieved significant milestones in 2023, delivering 2.1 billion tablets and vials, 200 million more than in 2022. WHO and partners are actively working to strengthen the arsenal of medicines and diagnostics, and to make the supply of donated NTD medicines and provision of NTD services more effective and efficient in reaching those in need, through gender, equity and human rights sensitive approaches. A total of 48 technical products and operational tools of global relevance were published by WHO in 2023. The offer of capacity strengthening tools was also broadened, with 62 online courses and other products available on WHO online platforms. Advocacy events carried out in 2023 included the Global NTD Programme Partners' Meeting and the Reaching the Last Mile Forum, which raised the visibility of NTDs in the global health agenda and increased resource mobilization. The year 2023 also saw the inclusion of noma in the list of NTDs, and the mention of these diseases in two UN political declarations.

Pillar 2 addresses intensifying cross-cutting approaches, emphasizes integration across NTDs, cross-sectoral collaboration and mainstreaming of NTDs into health systems. Regarding integration, the global skin NTD community has notably gained momentum, as symbolized by the first global meeting at WHO headquarters in March 2023. Progress has also been made towards expanding the preventive chemotherapy approach to control of *Taenia solium* taeniasis.

In 2023, cross-sectoral coordination has been extended to address more NTDs. The National Bridging Workshop on Rabies (NBW-R) was piloted as a tool to increase One Health collaboration for rabies control, while the Global Arbovirus Initiative together with the Global Vector Control Response 2017–2030 provided a framework for expanding integrated vector management, especially in light of the growing public health threat represented by dengue. The collaboration between the WHO Global NTD Programme and the WHO Health Emergencies Programme is being strengthened, notably in the areas of outbreak-prone NTDs and dracunculiasis eradication, and, in general, for the

maintenance of NTD essential services in the context of health emergencies.

Two specific issues have been identified for facilitating the inclusion of NTDs within national health systems: positioning NTDs within universal health coverage and mainstreaming NTDs data into the national health information system. At the global level, this effort is reflected in having the NTD community actively participate in high-level discussions on primary health care and universal health coverage, as well as in ensuring that NTDs are part of WHO's corporate effort to strengthen routine health information systems, with the aim of facilitating the roll-out of data collection platforms and tools to enable a consistent flow and use of information on all indicators for each NTD.

Pillar 3 aims to change operating models and culture to facilitate country ownership. Efforts made in 2023 have included supporting countries in developing sustainability plans and facilitating the development of the third or more generation of national NTD master plans. Fostering sustained country ownership remains a challenge, particularly where resources are limited and competition with other health priorities is fierce. Work carried out in 2023 to estimate the cost of specific NTD interventions or approaches will inform the costing of the road map operational plan for the period 2025–2030 at global, regional and country levels, which in turn is expected to serve as an efficient tool to support resource mobilization.

Epidemiological and programmatic data for 2022, as well as facts and events that occurred in 2023, depict encouraging advancements and bottlenecks in the battle against NTDs. Challenges, ranging from a slow post-COVID-19 recovery to funding uncertainties, from geopolitical disruptions to climate change, from gaps in knowledge and tools to insufficient data, highlight the complexities inherent in addressing NTDs. While progress has been slower than anticipated, there is optimistic confidence in bridging the gap and returning to the planned trajectory towards 2030. Addressing these challenges head-on and fostering innovative solutions will be critical in ensuring positive progress and sustained success in the global fight against NTDs.

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Suggested citation. Global report on neglected tropical diseases 2024: executive summary. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2024. <https://doi.org/10.2471/B09040>

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