

CS4ME

CIVIL SOCIETY FOR MALARIA ELIMINATION

The Institutionalization of the NMCP-CS4ME Niger Task Force: From an Informal Framework to a Structured National Coordination Mechanism



Niger

Organisation Nigérienne des Educateurs Novateurs

Background and Needs:

In Niger, malaria remains a major public health priority, but until recently, collaboration between the National Malaria Control Program (NMCP) and civil society organizations (CSOs) remained fragmented, poorly structured, and insufficiently integrated into decision-making processes. This situation resulted in limited access to NMCP, the absence of a formal framework for dialogue, limited CSO involvement in strategic planning, and fragmented efforts characterized by duplication and reduced institutional visibility. Despite significant community engagement, advocacy for domestic resource mobilization remained insufficient due to the lack of a structured space allowing CSOs to effectively influence public policy. In light of these constraints, the institutionalization of a sustainable consultation framework emerged as a strategic necessity to strengthen coordination, the complementarity of interventions, and the overall impact of the national malaria response.

Desired Change:

The goal was to establish a formal framework for consultation in order to strengthen the credibility, visibility, and effectiveness of civil society in the fight against malaria in Niger. The goal was to transition from informal, ad hoc collaboration to a structured, inclusive, and sustainable coordination mechanism between the PNLP, the Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM), CSOs, the DES-ICI platform, and the Réseau Santé Plus. This change is essential to ensure effective civil society participation, improve the coherence of interventions, strengthen advocacy for domestic resource mobilization, and guarantee that national responses fully integrate the realities and needs of communities.

Your approach:

The institutionalization of the PNLP–CS4ME Niger Task Force has developed gradually through a pragmatic, inclusive, and results-oriented approach.

In the initial phase, CSOs, with support from the CRG project implemented by the NGO ONEN in partnership with Impact Santé Afrique, initiated discussions with the PNLP, particularly with the former Coordinator. These initial contacts provided an opportunity to present the project's objectives and lay the groundwork for collaboration.

At the same time, high-visibility field activities, such as advocacy efforts, were carried out. These initiatives played a decisive role in concretely demonstrating the added value of civil society in raising awareness and mobilizing the community. They helped strengthen the credibility of CSOs and generate growing interest from the PNLP.

Gradually, this momentum led to a more formal commitment by the PNLP to the CS4ME CE SI project, evidenced by the involvement of the Deputy Coordinator and the designation of a CS4ME CE SI focal point within the PNLP. This step marked a decisive turning point in the structuring of the partnership.

The institutionalization process was then consolidated through a participatory approach involving all stakeholders, including the PNLP, CS4ME member CSOs working to combat malaria, the CCM, the DES-ICI platform, and the Santé Plus Network. This collaborative effort led to the development and adoption of an operational charter and internal regulations, clearly defining roles, responsibilities, and collaboration procedures.

The CCM played a decisive role throughout this process. Actively involved in strategic discussions and the formulation of policy directions, it helped strengthen the Task Force's legitimacy, credibility, and institutional ownership.

At the conclusion of this process, the PNLP–CS4ME Niger Taskforce was structured around a shared governance model, with coordination provided jointly by the PNLP and CSOs, and an administrative secretariat housed within the NGO ONEN. Four thematic committees were established—(i) community mobilization, (ii) communication, (iii) advocacy, and (iv) community monitoring—enabling the functional and effective organization of activities.

Changes to date:

The institutionalization of the Task Force has profoundly transformed the place and role of civil society in the fight against malaria in Niger. Collaboration with the PNLP now takes place within a formal, regular, and structured framework, facilitating CSOs' access to decision-makers and forums for strategic dialogue. In 2025, five Taskforce meetings were held, including one extraordinary session, with consistent participation by the PNLP, and two (2) sessions were conducted within the Taskforce itself.

This organizational structure has significantly improved the coordination of interventions. Actions are now planned within a shared framework, supported by an annual work plan and active thematic committees, ensuring greater coherence and effectiveness.

Furthermore, civil society now contributes to the PNLP's strategic frameworks, notably to the performance review of the 2023–2026 National Malaria Control Program (PSN) and to discussions on establishing a multisectoral committee to combat malaria. Advocacy has also been strengthened, with joint actions focused on mobilizing domestic resources and strengthening community participation and engagement in the fight against malaria.

These advances have led to greater recognition of the role of CSOs, as evidenced by the emphasis placed on them in the recommendations from the performance review of the 2023–2026 National Malaria Control Program (PSN), which called for the contribution of CSOs to malaria control efforts to be taken into account in the new 2027–2031 PSN.

Key Lessons and Messages:

The experience of the PNLP–CS4ME Niger Task Force highlights that institutionalization is a key lever for improving the coordination, credibility, and impact of civil society initiatives.

One of the main lessons learned is that demonstrating added value in advance, through concrete and visible actions, facilitates the buy-in of public institutions. Similarly, the early and ongoing involvement of the CCM strengthens the legitimacy of the process and fosters ownership by all stakeholders.

Co-construction with the PNLP, based on trust and transparency, proved crucial for establishing a balanced and sustainable partnership. The existence of a formal framework, through the charter and internal regulations, has helped clarify roles and structure interactions.

Finally, the inclusivity of the process, incorporating CSOs, the platform, and networks, has contributed to greater representativeness and collective ownership of the actions.

Next steps:

Today, the PNLP–CS4ME Niger Task Force functions as a structured and operational coordination mechanism. It is guided by an annual work plan, regular meetings organized alternately by the PNLP and CSOs, and active thematic committees with dedicated focal points.

It now participates in national strategic frameworks and plays a growing role in advocacy, communication, and community monitoring. This evolution reflects its gradual integration into the institutional mechanisms of the malaria response.

Future plans focus on incorporating the Task Force into the interventions of the new National Malaria Control Program (PSN) 2027–2031 by building on the achievements of institutionalization to strengthen advocacy for domestic resource mobilization, community participation, and engagement.

Ultimately, the Task Force aims to establish itself as a key driver capable of having a lasting impact on national policies and strategies to combat malaria.