

A person wearing a backpack and a hat is walking away from the camera through a field of tall grass. The background shows a line of trees under a clear sky. The entire image has a blue color cast.

RBM Partnership To End Malaria

Case study

Malaysia

The Ministry of Health Malaysia

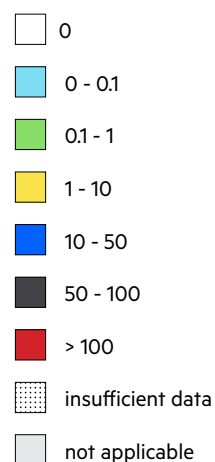
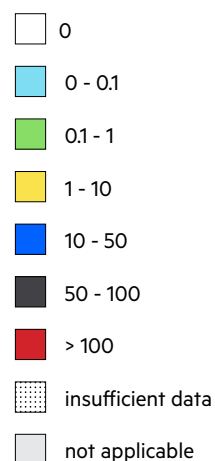
Despite the negative impact to malaria service delivery, Malaysia has taken strategic steps to ensure malaria control and prevention activities are not interrupted during COVID-19. Now more than ever, Malaysia is committed in its efforts to maintain “zero human indigenous malaria” status for 3 consecutive years to be declared malaria free

Malaysia reported its first COVID-19 case on January 23, 2020 which was imported from Wuhan, China. The first Malaysian tested positive for COVID-19 was reported on February 3, 2020. As of March 31, 2020, a total of 2766 positive cases had been reported to the Ministry of Health (MoH).

The Government of Malaysia, through the National Security Council implemented a Movement Control Order to contain the spread of the virus on March 18, 2020. The order has 4 phases including enhanced and conditional movement control orders that affected the implementation of many public health initiatives including malaria elimination.

Given the country’s impressive “zero malaria” status since 2018, the Malaysia National Malaria Control Program worked with program managers at national and state level with guidance from the World Health Organization to ensure that critical actions to prevent and control malaria are not been neglected.

For the longest time, prompt malaria diagnosis, treatment and surveillance in remote, hard-to-reach regions played a key role in Malaysia’s elimination success. During the lockdown, the Ministry deployed innovative malaria prevention strategies, modifying critical actions on the field to prevent malaria reintroduction.

CONFIRMED PF CASES PER 1000 POPULATION**CONFIRMED PV CASES PER 1000 POPULATION**

Source:

[WHO World Malaria Report 2019](#)

One critical aspect of its modified malaria prevention strategy is around vector control management. Malaysia started house-to-house distribution of Long-Lasting Insecticide Nets (LLIN) to avoid community gathering and maintain social distancing while ensuring continuity in malaria prevention campaigns to prevent outbreaks.

The Health Ministry ensured no interruptions to key malaria elimination activities as per standard operating procedure but with COVID-19 precautions (SOP + COVID19 precautions). These key interventions include Routine Case Detection with malaria screening among high-risk groups and Case Management. Equally critical is supply of key malaria commodities such as diagnostic equipment and antimalarial medicines.



To keep the limelight on malaria elimination efforts during the pandemic, Malaysia launched an advocacy and communications campaign during World Malaria Day 2020. Key messages revolved around commitment and actions to ensure progress against malaria are not lost amidst the pandemic. At the National Level, senior ministry officials were mobilized for media outreach including radio and TV interviews and press statement. Social media campaigns were carried out at the State Level.

Looking forward, Malaysia continues to remain vigilant in their fight against malaria and COVID-19. Strong program leadership at the national level will continue to be key. Disease burden stratifications for malaria and COVID-19 is also important to harmonize field activities, such as case investigation

and contact tracing for both diseases where possible. For effective planning, the Health Ministry warrants continuous updates of COVID-19 situation i.e. Epidemiology, Mode of transmission, control and prevention, Guidelines & SOPs.

The Malaysian National Malaria Program together with its partner agencies such as the armed forces, forestry department, department of Orang Asli (Aborigines) development and commercial plantation sector are working towards adapting to the 'new normal' and are dedicated to exploring and using innovative methods in the delivery of services for malaria. Critical actions such as these solidify their elimination goal and pave the way for a malaria-free certified status by 2021.

Produced in collaboration with

