

INTRODUCING RDTs TO PHARMACIES IN BENIN

RDTs (Rapid Diagnostic Test)

PROJECT OVERVIEW

The IRPB project, led by Population Services International (PSI) working with Association Béninoise pour le Marketing Social (ABMS), and its partners the Benin National Malaria Control Program (PNLP), and the Benin National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (ABMed), is measuring the level of overtreatment of malaria in the country. It is codesigning and piloting the rollout of malaria rapid diagnostic test m(RDT) in Benin's private pharmacies. Funded by the Gates Foundation, the project runs from April 2025 to December 2026.

The project assesses the extent of presumptive malaria treatment in pharmacies, identifies barriers to appropriate fever case management, and co-designs and evaluates models for the introduction of mRDTs in pharmacies and depots pharmaceutiques using participatory approaches and implementation science frameworks.

BACKGROUND

ACTwatch Lite results from 2023 showed that despite pharmacies being the primary source of antimalarial drugs in Benin's private sector, malaria testing was virtually absent in these outlets. WHO guidance recommends prompt diagnostic testing (with microscopy or RDTs) for suspected malaria prior to treatment.

The presumptive treatment of febrile illnesses with antimalarials risks:

- Potential misdiagnosis and delayed treatment of non-malarial illnesses



Facilitator demonstrates the usage of a malaria rapid diagnostic test during a training of pharmacists in Bohichon in March 2026. PSI Benin. Photo credit: ABMS.

- Increased risk of antimalarial drug resistance developing
- Inefficient use of healthcare resources, including unnecessary out of pocket expenditure among care-seekers

To address these risks, the IRPB project team is collaborating with key health stakeholders in Benin to co-design, pilot, and evaluate mRDT delivery models, in addition to collecting nationally representative data on malaria overtreatment in pharmacies. Policy recommendations and tools will be produced for national scale-up as a result of these findings.

KEY FINDINGS

12.8%

People leaving a pharmacy in Benin with malaria treatment who tested positive for malaria during the rainy season (pre-intervention)

~\$3,11 (1,750 CFA)

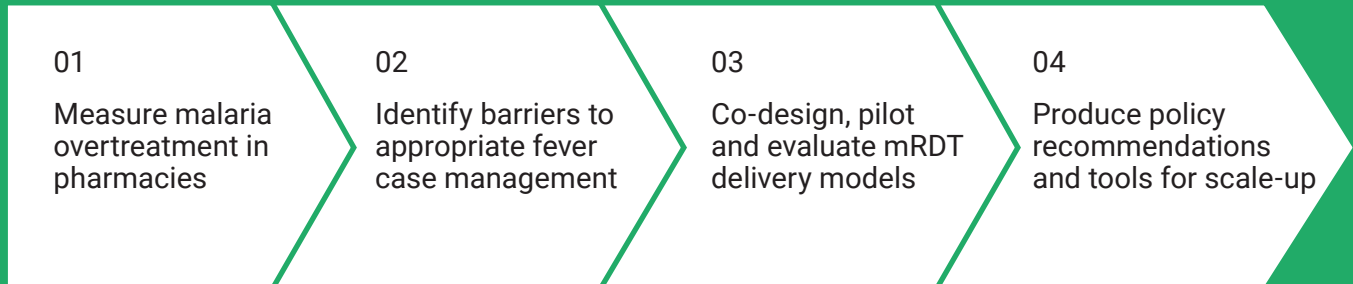
Median price paid for antimalarial medicine by clients in pharmacies in Benin

76.4%

Clients saying the proximity of the pharmacy is important in their choice to use it

APPROACH

Stakeholder engagement is key at every stage of project development and implementation. Stakeholders are engaged at each of the points shown below.



Co-design and evaluation draw on participatory approaches and implementation science frameworks, with stakeholders engaged at every stage. In January 2026 the project convened pharmacists, ministry officials, representatives of professional associations and consumers at a codesign workshop, and training of pharmacists followed in Bohicon in March 2026.

Delivery models are tested in both pharmacies and dépôts pharmaceutiques, so that findings reflect the full range of private outlets where people in Benin seek treatment for fever. The project serves patients seeking treatment for fever and malaria, alongside health workers in private health facilities.

Nationally representative data on overtreatment is collected in parallel with the pilot, so that the evidence base and the delivery model advance together and policy recommendations are grounded in what the pilot shows works in practice.

Partners include the Benin National Malaria Control Program (PNLP), which sets national malaria policy, and the Benin National Pharmaceutical Regulatory Agency (ABMed), which oversees the private pharmacy sector.

Engaging both from the start gives a model proven in the pilot a route into national guidance

IRPB measures and addresses overtreatment for malaria by introducing malaria testing to pharmacies in Benin.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

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Participants at the IRPB co-design workshop with pharmacists, ministry officials, representatives of professional associations and consumers, with PSI/ABMS staff, Benin, January 2026. ©Population Services International. Photo credit: ABMS