

EQUATORIAL GUINEA

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Marathon Oil partners with governmental and community organizations to address health care, education and other social issues in Equatorial Guinea.

Malaria accounted for more than one-third of deaths on Bioko Island when Marathon Oil acquired our assets in 2002. Realizing that the disease was the largest social risk to our business and the community, Marathon Oil established a public-private partnership to substantially reduce malaria transmission. The [Bioko Island Malaria Control Project \(BIMCP\)](#) is a collaborative effort of Marathon Oil, our business partners, the private NGO Medical Care Development International (MCDI) and the Government of Equatorial Guinea. The BIMCP is now in Phase III, which continues the use of standard anti-malaria control measures through 2018 and supports participation in trials of a promising vaccine to prevent malaria infection, disease and transmission.

As a result of our project, malaria infection rates on Bioko Island have declined over 50 percent and infant and maternal mortality rates related to malaria infection are down 85 percent. In addition, improved health and well-being is helping to reduce the economic burden of malaria and alleviate poverty on Bioko Island.

In 2014, the malaria infection rate averaged 19 percent of the island's population, down from a 28 percent infection rate the previous year. The project team tested a new long-lasting insecticide with the potential to reduce the cost and intrusion of indoor residual spraying in homes, a primary intervention method. Based on the test results, 190,000 bed nets impregnated with the new long-lasting insecticide will be distributed to all residents on Bioko Island in 2015. This distribution will follow World Health Organization (WHO) standards by hanging the nets in recipients' homes. The bed net distribution will maintain progress made through the indoor insecticide-spraying program.

In preparation for vaccine trials, MEGPL, MCDI, Ifakara Health Institute, vaccine manufacturer Sanaria, Inc., La Paz Hospital and the Equatoguinean Ministry of Health and Social Welfare partnered to run the first human subjects trial of a medical product in Equatoguinean history. The project involved training an Equatoguinean team of two doctors, one nurse and a lab manager, as well as assisting in setting up and training the country's first independent ethics review committee. In addition, 33 adult volunteers were identified to participate in the trials. The team established the first partnership between Equatorial Guinea and Tanzania through scientific research and cooperation. The Equatoguinean Ethics Review Committee, which complies with international scientific standards, approved the research group's study protocol, with the first vaccine trial starting in March 2015. Two increasingly larger vaccine studies are planned over the next four years to provide proof of concept that malaria can be eradicated in a highly endemic African setting.

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