

## Press release

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# Target Malaria receives strong support from Burkina Faso's National Academy of Sciences

**OUAGADOUGOU, Burkina Faso, 14 August 2024** /African Media Agency (AMA)/- Target Malaria, an innovative research project aimed at reducing malaria transmission with gene drive, has just received significant support from the National Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters of Burkina Faso (ANSAL-BF). This [declaration](#) of support follows an in-depth three-day visit, from 18 to 20 July, in Target Malaria's facilities at the Institut de Recherche en Sciences de la Santé (IRSS) in Bobo-Dioulasso.

In its official statement, ANSAL-BF stressed the importance of the project for the country: *"The Target Malaria project is helping to place our country among the world's centers of excellence in malaria research. We call on the ministers responsible for health, scientific research and the environment to support, monitor and evaluate the project in every way possible. And the public to distance themselves from scientific untruths, in particular the conflation of malaria and dengue fever."*



### Recognition of the scientific interest of the project

The delegation, led by Dr Paco Sérémé, President of ANSAL-BF, visited the IRSS facilities, in particular the insectarium, which complies with international guidelines for the containment of arthropods (ACL). They also met with communities at one of the research sites, the village of Souroukoudingan.

At the end of the visit, Dr Sérémé said: *"Target Malaria is of undeniable scientific interest to our country. This project aims to provide technologies to reduce the impact of malaria by targeting its vectors."*

Professor Abdoulaye Diabaté, Principal Investigator of Target Malaria Burkina Faso, expressed his gratitude: *"The support of the Académie des Sciences and the government strengthens our determination to develop sustainable and ethical approaches to combat malaria. We are convinced that investing in innovative research methods and training the next generation of African scientists will bring us closer to our goal of eliminating malaria in Africa."*

### **Validation of the scientific approach**

This visit follows the encouragement expressed in March 2024 by Professor Adjima Thiombiano, Minister for Higher Education, Research and Innovation. *"The relevance of the project is obvious. We have seen that scientific rigour is essential,"* added Dr Sérémé.

The Academy also stressed the importance of communication with all stakeholders. Target Malaria is committed to maintaining an ongoing dialogue with all those interested in the project.

### **Excellence in scientific research on malaria**

Based at the IRSS, Direction Régionale de l'Ouest in Bobo-Dioulasso, Target Malaria Burkina Faso has been carrying out activities since 2012, mainly around the collection of entomological data. Burkina Faso offers an ideal study ground for research into malaria mosquito vectors. According to the Ministry of Health, malaria accounts for 43% of medical consultations, over 60% of hospital admissions and 30% of deaths.

In 2019, Target Malaria carried out a release of genetically modified mosquitoes, the first of its kind in Africa.

## **ENDS**

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## **Media Contact**

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## About Target Malaria

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Target Malaria is a not-for-profit research consortium that aims to develop and share new, cost-effective and sustainable genetic technologies to modify mosquitoes and reduce malaria transmission. Our vision is to contribute to a world free of malaria. We aim to achieve excellence in all areas of our work, creating a path for responsible research and development of genetic technologies, such as gene drive. [www.targetmalaria.org](http://www.targetmalaria.org)

Target Malaria receives core funding by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and Open Philanthropy. The lead grantee organization is Imperial College London with partners in Africa, Europe and North America.