

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Press release

Target Malaria launches free video game on how to develop genetically modified mosquitoes to fight malaria

LONDON, United Kingdom, 3 December 2024 – Target Malaria, a not-for-profit research consortium, has launched an educational video game titled [“Target Malaria: The Game”](#). Available for free in both French and English on Itch.io, the game invites players to step into the role of a lab technician specialising in the genetic modification of mosquitoes. This interactive tool offers a hands-on introduction to molecular biology, allowing players of all ages and backgrounds to explore the potential of genetically modified mosquitoes as a promising tool to fight malaria.

Developed in collaboration with independent game developer Michael Marston, “Target Malaria: The Game” runs seamlessly on both gaming PCs and low-spec systems for easy use in low connectivity environments.

It features two modules at this point, and each task requires speed and precision, with players earning points for accuracy:

- In “*Microinjection*”, players simulate injecting a DNA solution into mosquito embryos.
- In “*Transgenic Screening*”, players sort fluorescent, genetically modified mosquito larvae.

“The game’s setting simulates Target Malaria’s lab at Imperial College London, providing a realistic glimpse into the scientific principles and techniques of molecular biology.”, says Louise Marston, Senior Lab Technician at Imperial College London, who came up with the game’s idea and was the scientific advisor for its development.

“We tested *Target Malaria: The Game* at science events in the United Kingdom earlier this year. It sparked meaningful conversations about the scientific discovery process at Target Malaria. We

are thrilled to now make it publicly available”, adds Morgane Danielou, Head of Global Communications at Target Malaria.

“We hope video game enthusiasts, tech lovers, and science students will use this unique tool to learn more about malaria and the devastating impact it has on African communities and economies”, said Michael Marston.



“Target Malaria: The Game” can also be used for training purposes in labs working on the genetic modification of mosquitoes. With this interactive tool, Target Malaria hopes to further share its technology, as well as make its research accessible to the public at large.

As part of its mission, [Target Malaria](#) is pioneering cost-effective and sustainable genetic technologies, such as [gene drive](#), to complement existing malaria interventions. Stakeholder engagement is central to its work, and the research consortium has developed an array of creative science communication tools over the years. These include: [Mozzie Drive](#), a card game illustrating gene drive technology; [“Swarm”](#), a sonification developed with British composer Jamie Perera; and [interactive theatre performances](#) in Burkina Faso that explain the project's purpose and phases.

ENDS

Notes to editors: [How to download “Target Malaria: The Game”](#)

1. Download the game from Target Malaria’s page on Itch.io:
<https://targetmalaria.itch.io/target-malaria-the-game>
2. Open the downloaded file “TargetMalariaTheGameInstaller” and execute it.
3. A pop-up window, The Game Setup Wizard, will appear on your screen. Accept the license agreement and click on Next (several times). If you want to create a shortcut on your desktop, check the relevant box before clicking on “Finish”.
4. The Game will automatically launch once the setup is done. Select your preferred language and play!

Media Contact

For further information about Target Malaria:

Email: info@targetmalaria.org

Website: www.targetmalaria.org

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#)

About Target Malaria

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

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.