



A Vector Control Research Alliance

## **Target Malaria welcomes the decision of the National Biosafety Agency of Burkina Faso to approve a small-scale release of genetically modified sterile male mosquitoes**

Target Malaria in collaboration with the Institut de Recherche en Sciences de la Santé/Centre Muraz (IRSS) has received the authorisation from the National Biosafety Agency (NBA) of Burkina Faso to conduct a small-scale release of genetically modified sterile male *An. coluzzii* mosquitoes in Burkina Faso (Arrêté N°2018 453 /MESRSI-/SG/ANB). This decision follows the submission of an application in November 2017 to seek the authorisation of the NBA to conduct this research activity.

Alongside the NBA's approval, our research protocol has been submitted to the IRSS' institutional ethics committee and was agreed.

The release will involve a small number (no more than 10,000) of sterile male mosquitoes and we will continue to monitor the release intensively for a period of maximum one year based on a monitoring strategy agreed upon with the NBA.

The timing and exact numbers for the release will be dependent on the status of the mosquito colony being maintained at the contained insectary at the IRSS and the local weather conditions.

The purpose of the small-scale release is to collect scientific data on longevity and dispersal of the released mosquitoes, and will serve to build capacity and operational experience amongst our teams. These mosquitoes are not intended to persist for more than a few weeks in the environment and are not intended to reduce the incidence of malaria or reduce the population of malaria transmitting mosquitoes. The knowledge and experience from this study will serve to inform the development of our next phases of the project towards a sustainable vector control intervention for Malaria.

Throughout our developmental phases, we are committed to engaging with a wide variety of stakeholders at the local, national and international level in order to ensure that we understand their queries or concerns so that they can be taken into account in the risk assessment process. We are also committed to seeking local communities' support as we progress in our research activities. The community at the release site has approved the small-scale release.

The IRSS and Target Malaria have ensured that the National Biosafety Framework of Burkina Faso has been consulted and permission has been sought for all regulated activities relating to the studies involving our genetically modified mosquitoes. This decision is a milestone as it is the first approval for field release of genetically modified mosquitoes in Africa and the first for malaria vectors anywhere.

### **Target Malaria**

Target Malaria is a not-for-profit research consortium, with 14 institutions across Africa, Europe and North America. Target Malaria's mission is to develop and share new, cost-effective and sustainable genetic technologies to modify malaria-transmitting mosquitoes and reduce malaria transmission. The project is committed to the values of excellence, evidence-based research, openness and accountability, co-development.

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