

# **The role of external consultation in developing a community agreement model; the experience of Target Malaria**

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## **Abstract**

In 2019, Target Malaria, having received community agreement from the release site, conducted its first small-scale release of non gene drive genetically modified sterile male mosquitoes in Burkina Faso. Since then, the stakeholder engagement team undertook a long process of consultation, expert engagement, and reflection over past experiences to develop a new community agreement model for its next phase of research – non gene drive fertile strains. These past experiences had highlighted to us the importance of external consultation not only at the point of engaging with communities affected by our work, but also in the process of planning how, when and where engagement and agreement will be sought. This resulted in a new agreement model that reflects both the technical differences with the first mosquitoes that were released (sterile male strain) and the lessons learned from external engagement around that first release. The objective of the new model is to provide a framework that will be adaptable to different circumstances and contexts, scalable should more releases need to be done in the future, and which lives up to the project's commitments to accountability and excellence.

**Key words:** gene drive, stakeholder engagement, community agreement, mosquitoes