

# **Consulting affected communities as part of the regulatory process, the experience of the release of non-gene drive sterile male mosquitoes in Burkina Faso**

Prof Chantal Kabore-Zougrana<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup>*Académie Nationale des Sciences, des Arts et des Lettres Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso*

\*email: cykabore@yahoo.fr

## **Abstract**

Public participation is an important part of biosafety decision making. As a regulatory requirement, affected communities were consulted by the National Biosafety Agency in the frame of the release of non-gene drive sterile male mosquitoes in Bana and Souroukoudingan villages (Burkina Faso). The Target Malaria project team in charge of the release activities were requested to not interfere with the communities during the whole consultation process. Preparatory visits identified two major subdivisions of the communities, one comprising local communities composed of villagers and the other made of civil servants. Therefore, “public audiences” and “regular surveys” were identified as the best consultation mechanisms for the two respective groups. The consultation process mainly involved the following: (i) explanation of the role of regulation in the process of the release; (ii) regulatory process prior to the release step; (iii) the importance of views from the communities on the decision making. In total, 66 people including seven civil servants were consulted in Bana whereas 122 people including six civil servants were consulted in Souroukoudingan. Most of the public was knowledgeable of the project activities and the objectives in relation with the release. Of the 188 people involved, up to 97.3% were favorable to the release. The minutes of the public consultation in each village were made and signed by all parties and used as integral parts of the decision-making documents.

**Key words:** mosquito, public consultation, community engagement