**Ethics Committee Meeting**

**Monday, February 27th**

**3pm – 4.30pm (London)**

**Summary Note**

**Present:**

* Claire Divver, BAE Systems
* Laurie Zoloth, Northwestern University
* Dominic White, WWF UK
* Fred Gould, North Carolina State University
* Delphine Thizy, Target Malaria
* Austin Burt, Target Malaria
* Isabelle Coche, Emerging Ag
* Hapsa Dia, Emerging Ag

**Apologies:**

* Rashmi Narayana, uMotif
* Allan Ronald, University of Manitoba
* Paul Ndebele, Medical Research Council of Zimbabwe
* Paulina Tindana, Navrongo Health Research Center
* Stephanie James, FNIH

1. **Introductions and Updates**

Delphine Thizy introduced Laurie Zoloth as the newest member of the Committee. She will bring a theological perspective from religious communities to the discussions of the Committee.

Delphine updated the Committee on recent events:

* Project Team Meeting (February 19th-23rd / Entebbe)
  + A lot of progress was achieved on the science which brings the technology under increased spotlight. As a result, it becomes even more important to set the best ethical example.
  + Mission, Vision, Value Statement statement:
    - Isabelle presented how the Mission, Visions, Value statement workshop was conducted. A final draft came out of the workshops and awaits Austin Burt’s validation

**Action point: The secretariat to share the final Mission, Vision, Value statement with the Ethics Committee once finalised.**

* Feedback on CBD COP 13
  + A surprise call for a Moratorium came from 160 NGOs advocating for the UN Convention on Biological Diversity to adopt a ban on the use of gene drive-based technologies (and a ban on gene drive research).
  + The meeting on the Convention on Biological Diversity concluded on Saturday 17 December, and the decision text on gene drive does not include a moratorium or ban. This is a very positive result for Target Malaria but the topic is likely to resurface in the future.
  + The topic of a moratorium on gene drive research and use was very divisive with some countries strongly in favour and some very opposed. As it was introduced very late into the CBD, after several rounds of informal consultations, Parties to the CBD agreed on a compromise language. The language is relatively neutral, mostly recalling a previous decision and noting that it may apply to gene drives.
  + Delphine noted that the team members support and activities during the crisis were crucial to its positive resolution.
  + A follow up with an online consultation is to be expected this year.
  + The next CBD will take place in Egypt in 2018
* Delphine presented a new initiative aiming to build a gene drive coalition in the coming months. This collation will aim to:
  + Identify supporters of the technology
  + Include vector control approach and the use of gene drive for conservation purpose
  + Promote a better understanding of the research
  + Foster discussions and exchanges to make sure we can safely go forward with this technology

1. **Working groups report**

**Ensuring African and the environmental community concerns and perceptions are addressed: Dominic, Fred, Paul**

The group suggested Target Malaria hold a series of workshops to engage environmental NGOs. They recommended the project start in Europe, but noted that before the workshop takes place, individual outreach to each NGO will need to take place. This will be help the project identify who should be invited.

* This working group is currently focusing on the engagement of the environmental community. It was advised to engage with stakeholders from Europe (UK) as a first step. The group suggests to engage with different groups before deciding who would be contacted to join the workshop.
* However, the outreach phase might take time and will require resources to facilitate finding the right people and organisations to engage with. The outreach in the UK might be a good way to “test the waters”.
* This initiative might need at least one representative from Africa, the Burkina PI could be a good option. It will be interesting for the Burkina team to highlight what they think the risks are, versus the method asking if they agree with the methods.
* The group emphasised the importance of correctly framing the questions and of engaging the right person to lead the discussions.

Discussion:

The discussion on the workshop raised a number of important questions:

* how to define the scope of participants (who is invited/who is not) and the framing of the event to ensure the results are collaborative and concrete;
* the need to ensure participants are engaging with an open mind rather than coming to defend a position;
* the importance of timing as the visibility of gene drive is quickly increasing so more and more groups will be forming an opinion on the topic;
* the importance for the project to be clear on what they want as an outcome so this is a useful exercise.

**Action point: Laurie to join the working group.**

**Action point: Environmental workshop likely to be cancelled until further notice.**

**Mapping of opportunities for training and mentorship and components of an ethics and engagement training: Paulina, Claire, Delphine**

The working group focused on the second part of their assignment which is identifying opportunities of mentorships and training

The aim was for the group to find existing opportunities and see if it was necessary or not for the project to develop its own trainings. The group was also to identify what sort of engagement might be needed: local or international.

The group suggests that it is not necessary to create full or new trainings. Instead, the project should focus on how people could get concrete experience.

The main gap identified was in the practice of stakeholder engagement, rather than the theory so providing greater training opportunities in that area should be the priority. The group advised leveraging existing trainings while giving opportunity to the team to do on the ground work side by side with experts in engagement. It would be short term training that can prove to be quite effective. The group said it was important to know how to keep ongoing dialogue at the right level and producing effective reporting. Claire suggested a partnership with the University of Pretoria that has very practical courses. She also suggested case studies could also be used to illustrate best practices.

Delphine highlighted that these approaches would be especially useful to adapt engagement to the product development phase.

**Managing stakeholder fatigue (report from previous discussion): Paulina, Allan, Paul**

The group was not present to provide their reporting. A final presentation of their work will be done at the June’s meeting of the committee in London.

1. **Internal SE Audit briefing**

Delphine requested guidance from the Committee on the internal SE Audit checklist. It will be used to assess the team's preparedness for the field release of sterile male

**Action point: Delphine to send the English version of the document to the team that will be working on this assignment.**

**Action point: Claire and Laurie volunteered to work on the Audit checklist with Delphine who will organise side meetings to work on this with the newly formed team.**

1. **Preparation for June meeting:**

To prepare for the 2 days meeting in London, Delphine asked the Committee if there were some requests and agenda items they would like to integrate to the program.

* The Committee was interested in having a presentation about regulations and more on the problem formulation process
* A visit of the insectary will be organised
* A presentation of the stakeholder map was also requested
* The committee wanted to have a presentation of the steps of the project to see how to anticipate some demands that might arise and if they were gaps that could be identified

1. **Outreach to new Ethics Committee members**

The Committee agreed that new members should be added to broaden the group and bring more diversity. A list of suggested new members and their publications had been shared prior to the call.

Allan Ronald suggested that Joseph Muftso-Bengo could be a great addition.

Fred recommended to add different profiles that were not from a bio ethics background such as NGO people.

Dominic encouraged the Committee to include more profiles to broaden the set of skills and expertise for variety sake and a discussion about which discipline the project might need will be helpful.

**Action point: The members are to provide names that could fit the profile via email. This topic will be discussed in June 2017 and the Committee will make a final decision.**

**Action point: Delphine and Hapsa to work on a shortlist**

1. **Conclusion**

The next meeting of the Committee will take place in London June 7th and 8th, 2017. The Committee is requested to provide the Secretariat with their desired travel dates and logistics assistance they might need. Hapsa will contact the Committee to coordinate the event. Details regarding the meeting will be circulated closer to the date.

The meeting was adjourned.