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## Towards the kick-off of our \$ 3.6 million RCT: A successful second technical meeting has been held!

CREC/LSHTM is preparing for the kick-off of its community randomized controlled trial. This project funded by UNITAID through IVCC aims at accessing the efficacy of 2 novel dual active Ingredient LLINs (Royal Guard net combining pyriproxyfen and alpha-cypermethrin) and Interceptor G2 (a mixture incorporating chlorfenapyr and alpha-cypermethrin) in 3 districts in central Benin.

In October 2018, an inaugural technical meeting (to harmonize the study protocol) lasting 2 days took place at the Golden Tulip Hotel in Cotonou (Benin) involving key principal investigators and researchers from LSHTM and CREC, NMCP as well as scientists from national universities in Benin. Ideas discussed have facilitated the finalization of the project protocol and the submission to the Ethics Review Committees of the Ministry of Health in Benin and the LSHTM in United Kingdom as well as the Vector Control Advisory Group (VCAG) of World Health Organization (WHO).

In order to get the project up and running and establish tasks for the current and next quarter, a second meeting took place on the 15<sup>th</sup> and 16<sup>th</sup> of March 2019 at the CREC/LSHTM conference room. At opening, the Trial Coordinator/Epidemiologist and the Lead Entomologist both newly recruited on the project were introduced. The meeting was an opportunity for participants to discuss technical details on both epidemiological and entomological components of the trial. Debates were articulated around important points including the identification of study sites and census, baseline and cross-sectional surveys counting for the epidemiological monitoring, insecticide resistance studies in malaria causing mosquitoes to perform as baseline and yearly for 3 years and the entomological surrogates' component. As over

120 000 LLINs will be distributed for evaluation in community, procurement of LLINs and distribution were also deliberated upon to ensure timely delivery. The project management and implementation structures were finalised and participants left the meeting satisfied after the intense brainstorming activities which ensued within the 2-day conference period. The stage is set for project activities to kick off within the next few weeks.

## CREC/LSHTM Field Station: The temple for high-quality experimental hut evaluation in West Africa.

Spread over 2 hectares, the CREC/LSHTM field site is located at the centre of a huge rice field in the city of Covè (7°14'N, 2°18'E), central Benin. The rice paddies provide extensive breeding sites for *An. gambiae s.l.* throughout the year. There are 2 stations where a total of 37 experimental huts of the WHOPES West African design have been constructed. The field station also has a laboratory where chemical and biological test systems (anti-vector products and mosquitoes respectively) used in the experimental hut studies are temporarily stored and mosquitoes from hut trials are observed.

The CREC/LSHTM field site has a staff strength of 11 including the Field Site Supervisor, Research Assistants and Technicians. In addition to semi-skilled workers, several dozen volunteers are occasionally engaged in mosquito collection activities during experimental hut evaluation. Over years, the CREC/LSHTM Facility has been providing the much-needed technical support to chemical companies in the development/evaluation of vector control tools. We are proud to have worked and developed strong partnership with several institutions and organizations across the globe and are still eager to offer our expertise to new partners.

**ABOUT US** | The CREC/LSHTM Collaborative Research Programme is a research partnership set up in 2003 between the London School of Hygiene & Tropical Medicine in the UK and the Centre de Recherche Entomologique de Cotonou, Ministry of Health in Benin. The partnership has extensive experience in the evaluation of vector control products to WHO standards and is largely funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation (BMGF) through the Innovative Vector Control Consortium (IVCC), the WHO and chemical companies.

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