

World Mosquito Program responses to Evaluation Report 2019 recommendations

The Pricewaterhouse Coopers *Evaluation of the World Mosquito Program (2019)* (PwC Report) provided four program-level recommendations, in descending order of priority:

1. Develop a detailed monitoring and evaluation framework and use this to nurture a trusted relationship with donors
2. Ensure ongoing communications with appropriate monitoring
3. Undertake rigorous up-front scoping
4. Begin planning for post-release earlier in the project.

The World Mosquito Program (WMP) is currently responding to these valuable recommendations as part of its continuous improvement process, within the constraints of funding and as a university-enabled enterprise. The recommendations are to be implemented in Pacific DFAT-funded projects (considered in the PwC evaluation) where possible, and in all future projects deployed in the Pacific and elsewhere.

[1. Develop a detailed monitoring and evaluation framework and use this to nurture a trusted relationship with donors](#)

The PwC Report proposes that prerequisites for the response to Recommendation 1 include the development of a complete **cost-effectiveness study** and **monitoring and evaluation expertise**, either through the creation of a new role embedded in the organisation supported by staff at the program and project levels and/or capacity building of current staff and sourcing of external knowledge, monitoring, evaluation and learning (MEL) expertise.

Cost-effectiveness study

In May 2019, the WMP commissioned Professor Donald Shepard to provide an economic evaluation of *Wolbachia* deployments in the Western Pacific. Professor Shepard is a health economist based at the Schneider Institutes for Health Policy at the Heller School, Brandeis University, USA.

The study seeks to show whether expenditure into the WMP method is cost effective, compared to other recent public health interventions, specifically to:

- estimate the cost of dengue in Fiji and Vanuatu (data from Kiribati is either unavailable or too imprecise to contribute to this step)
- describe the cost of *Wolbachia* deployment in Suva, Fiji and Port Vila, Vanuatu
- estimate the cost-benefit of *Wolbachia* deployments, with a 20-year time frame and under the assumptions of durable *Wolbachia* establishment and high efficacy as has been shown in Australia.

Professor Shepard will provide a first draft of the results of the study at the beginning of February and a final draft at the end of February 2019, to be shared with stakeholders in March 2019.

Monitoring, evaluation and learning expertise

In part, as a response to the recommendation of building ME&L expertise, WMP has appointed Dr Claudia Surjadjaja as the Regional Director of our Asia Office. Claudia is a public health professional with extensive experience in organisation/project development, program review and quality assurance in the field of infectious disease control and health systems strengthening. In a previous role, Claudia worked for PwC as Programmatic Expert and Monitoring & Evaluation Specialist. Being experienced in the operations of MEL frameworks, Claudia is **providing leadership around initiating** the proposed WMP MEL framework.

A **high-level MEL framework** was developed for the DFAT-funded project 'Operational pilot of *Wolbachia* technology to reduce the transmission of *Aedes aegypti*-borne diseases in the Asia-Pacific region' in early 2018, and reported against in subsequent milestone progress reports. We will build on this using Claudia's expertise and consider the need to engage an external consultant in Q4 of 2020 to develop an enterprise-wide MEL strategy for global programming in the Asia, Latin America and the Oceania regions in Q4 of 2020.

The WMP is open to the possibility of **co-designing the WMP MEL Framework** and indicators with key donors and funders, particularly if this enables the alignment of expertise around gender equality and sustainability. The WMP seeks a collaborative relationship in the delivery phase of *Wolbachia* deployments with a shared understanding of outcomes.

The **organisational change to accommodate** the WMP MEL Framework will occur in Q2 2020. A plan will be tabled to the WMP Executive, which meets monthly.

The WMP is **building staff capacity for MEL**, beginning with two senior managerial staff participating in week-long external MEL training (in Q4 2019) for the purposes of uplifting the core competencies of staff who will ultimately be involved in operationalising the WMP MEL Framework.

The process of **embedding project-level MEL indicators** has begun within the DFAT-supported Sri Lanka (Colombo) project planning and operations and will be led by Claudia. This has involved regular meetings between the data and implementation teams to ensure a shared understanding of the indicators, and their measurement and evaluation. By Q4 2020, the MEL framework will be partly road-tested in the Sri Lanka (Colombo) project.

Review of the WMP MEL Framework will be incorporated into the 12-monthly strategic and operational planning activities.

2. Ensure ongoing communications with appropriate monitoring

To implement Recommendation 2, the PwC Report proposes the **development of a post-release communication strategy**, in addition to **adjustments to current communications and community engagement** operations. The aim of these changes is to:

- update the community post-release
- contribute to the promotion of community health activities around mosquito-borne disease (e.g. insecticide use)
- monitor community acceptance, understanding and expectations
- manage community expectations around the *Wolbachia* method
- prepare for crisis communications in the event of an outbreak.

Post-release/ongoing communication strategy

Meetings will be held in mid 2020 with each Pacific project site, part of which will involve a media release to the respective communities. Following this, media communications will fall to the ministries of health of each country.

WMP crisis communications would be triggered in the unlikely event of multiple indicators of intervention failure across the global program. Ministries of health respond to mosquito-borne disease outbreaks according to their own processes.

Adjustments to current communications and community engagement

Adjustments have been made to communications and community engagement operations so that the Community Reference Groups are updated with operational progress and outcomes throughout the lifespan of the Project. Communications content and activities have been adjusted to be more precise and ensure that the *elimination* of dengue is not the perceived outcome of WMP activities.

Quarterly progress reports incorporating epidemiological and entomological data are provided to Pacific countries for a minimum of 12 months post-release. A regional meeting of all stakeholders is planned in June/July 2020 to reflect on the outcomes of the Oceania projects and agree on future reporting schedules.

3. Undertake rigorous up-front scoping

The PwC Report recommends that the WMP **undertake upfront scoping** in any future projects, beyond high-level government and entomological aspects of a country site, to include:

- government implementation requirements and capacity for involvement
- availability of resources and infrastructure.

The scoping process should include direct input from government and non-government organisations with local expertise. The WMP MEL Framework will contribute to upfront scoping and there will be an organisation-wide team with accountability.

Develop a detailed scoping plan

For each project, the WMP works with local governments to understand their implementation requirements and capacity for involvement, and identifies and works with a non-government organisation for local operational support. To the extent possible WMP engages with as many Gov. and non-Gov. stakeholders as possible to ensure the operational plan is inclusive of the range of competing priorities that typically exist in Project sites. This approach will continue into the future.

Apply the scoping plan to future sites

The WMP has already begun applying this recommendation in the Sri Lanka (Colombo) site, where more detailed scoping informed development of the project plan and budget. For example, the Colombo project has benefited from project experience in the Pacific that trialled the feasibility of egg versus adult releases – egg releases are more feasible and attractive and in Colombo – and more appropriate workforce arrangements. In the future, each project plan and budget will be informed by the WMP MEL Framework.

4. Begin planning for post-release earlier in the project

The PwC Report suggests several areas for improvement in terms of **sustainability planning**; that is, exit planning, ongoing monitoring and communications, the return of seconded staff and built capacity to government, and the consideration of resource and technical requirements of future options (e.g. long-term monitoring, future in-country deployments).

Develop a post-release strategy

Post-release strategies are articulated in each project's memorandum of understanding, including post-release/ongoing engagement with Community Reference Groups, and management of community expectations

Tailor a post-release plan to the project

The WMP will use the post-release strategy to develop a tailored local post-release plan. For example, each plan will be different depending on the type/size of a project – smaller projects will 'entail a combination of WMP and in-country local expertise', whereas larger projects with more release sites and deployment over longer periods will need more in-country capacity building for sustainability.

In Sri Lanka, staff seconded from the ministry have been employed on a fractional basis so that they remain in their substantive roles. Eggs for release in Colombo are being produced in Melbourne as there is no onsite capacity for egg production and the Sri Lankan Government wants to see the results of the intervention before committing to growing, rearing and providing quality assurance for their own mosquitoes.

The WMP aims to meet future demand in regional production hubs located where there is capacity (e.g. Brazil, Colombia, Indonesia, Vietnam) and rigorous cost-benefit criteria will be applied so that the organisation can protect 100 million people from mosquito-borne diseases by 2023.

Apply the post-release plan to future sites

This is being implemented. For example, an exit plan for Sri Lanka (Colombo) was tabled at the January 2020 WMP Executive meeting and endorsed, prior to the first mosquito release (releases will begin in February 2020). The local environmental health team in Kiribati intends to complete the full scope of releases via the translocation method in South Tarawa in Kiribati themselves, potentially working with donor support from DFAT and with the WMP in an advisory role.