

Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control

*Report of the Third Research Coordination Meeting
of an FAO/IAEA Coordinated Research Project,
Held virtually in Vienna, Austria,
from November 6 to 10, 2023*

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Summary:

The application of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) in area-wide integrated pest management (AW-IPM) programmes continues to increase in response to requests from Member States. These requests include the development and refinement of SIT packages for programmes to control populations of different insect pests of agricultural, veterinary and human health importance. The development and operational application of such programmes with an SIT component against human disease vectors depends on the efficiency of irradiated sterile males to induce sterility in the target populations. Irradiation, in combination with other steps in the workflow from production to release of the sterile males is a critical point ultimately affecting performance in the field. Quality control is critical at every step of the SIT workflow, both pre- and post-irradiation.

This CRP will be the opportunity to investigate the impact of endogenous factors such as stage, age and genetic background on irradiation efficacy, as well as physiological mechanisms associated with genetic variation in radiation responses. We will also explore the impact of exogenous factors on radio-sensitivity, such as temperature, density, oxygen availability, irradiation source, dose-rate and energy of the rays. Another important aspect to characterize is the impact of irradiation on vectorial capacity of females, as well as on the cytoplasmic incompatibility and pathogen interference conferred by *Wolbachia* infection.

Finally, it will be important to develop and validate new quality control tools to monitor the product quality along the production chain and compare it between production and release centres.

Background

Scientific situation and problems to be researched: Insects are the most abundant, speciose and diverse animal group on this planet. Although most insect species are beneficial or harmless, there are a select few which are vectors of human diseases and their populations need to be managed. Conventional control methods are primarily based on insecticides. However, there are increasing concerns about their negative impact on human health and environment, as well as the inevitable selection of insecticide resistance due to their extensive use. The Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) represents a species-specific, non-polluting and environment-friendly approach that has been extensively used over the last 60 years to control populations of plant and animal pests, and animal disease vectors as a component of AW-IPM programmes. Due to its successful use against different target species, the requests for the application of the SIT against human disease vectors continues to increase from FAO and IAEA Member States (MS). Programme efficiency and cost-effectiveness depend on the efficiency of irradiated sterile males to induce sterility in the target populations. Irradiation, in combination with other steps in the workflow from production to release of the sterile males, is a critical point ultimately affecting performance in the field. Quality control is also critical at every step of the SIT workflow.

Targeted species: Currently, the following species of human health importance are considered potential targets for the SIT: *Aedes aegypti*, *Ae. albopictus*, *Ae. polynesiensis*, *Anopheles albimanus*, *An. arabiensis*, *An. darlingi*, *An. gambiae* complex, *An. stephensi*, *Culex pipiens* complex.

Importance of irradiation and quality control in SIT programmes

Historically, a variety of chemosterilants were used to sexually sterilize male mosquitoes with varying success and suitability for larger scale SIT programmes, and the evaluation of sterilizing male mosquitoes by irradiation has suggested that this is, to date, the most practical, safe and environment-friendly way to induce sterility, especially at large scale [Helinski et al., 2006]. The use of isotopic sources for gamma radiation (usually cobalt-60 or caesium-137), has been most commonly used for AW-IPM programmes with an SIT component. However, X-ray and high energy electrons (in this case “high” refers to a minimum of 1-5MeV) are now becoming viable and practical alternatives (Gómez-Simuta et al., 2021). In irradiation processes, the key factor is the absorbed dose, which needs to be accurately controlled to ensure that treated insects are rendered sufficiently sterile but are still able to compete for wild females upon release. Therefore, accurate dosimetry (measurement of absorbed dose) is critical. Factors such as insect age and stage, handling methods, oxygen level, ambient temperature, dose-rate and many others prior to- and during irradiation, influence both the radio-sensitivity and biological viability of the irradiated mosquito. Because of these sources of variation, there is presently a lack of consensus on the irradiation protocols to produce high quality sterile male mosquitoes for field release, especially at a large scale. Thus, exploring the impact of these different factors, and their impact on the quality of the resulting sterile males, in interaction with other handling steps before release, is essential. A careful evaluation of these factors in the design of irradiation protocols can help to find a balance between the sterility and competitiveness of the irradiated males destined for field releases.

Many SIT programmes apply higher doses than required as a “precautionary” measure to ensure full sterility. However, this is likely to decrease the overall competitiveness of the sterile males which could compromise their effectiveness in the field. Therefore, the studies in this CRP proposal aim to understand the various factors affecting dose-response in mosquitoes to standardize the irradiation processes to optimize male sterility and quality.

Moreover, the quality of the mosquitoes should be monitored with standard quality control (QC) procedures throughout the production process of the sterile males. The QC is necessary to both assess the efficacy and efficiency of mass-rearing and to predict the performance of those insects. There is a need to validate existing QC tests for both mass-rearing and field performance. Therefore, the studies in this CRP proposal aim to develop two types of QC indicators:

- Quick and efficient parameters that will be monitored routinely;
- More labour-intensive parameters that will be measured periodically over longer time intervals.

CO-ORDINATED RESEARCH PROJECT (CRP)

This Coordinated Research Project (CRP) is based on an expert group meeting on “Harmonization of Irradiation and Dosimetry Protocols for *Aedes* Invasive Mosquitoes” conducted in February 2018 and May 2019, Vienna, Austria.

The overall objective of this new **CRP D44004-CR-1**, approved for the **period 2020-2025**, is to understand irradiation induced effects, endogenous and exogenous factors that affect or improve dose-response, irradiation dosimetry procedures, impact of irradiation on vectorial capacity, impact of irradiation on cytoplasmic incompatibility and pathogen interference by *Wolbachia*, and to develop tools to assess quality of sterile male mosquitoes.

FIRST RESEARCH CO-ORDINATION MEETING (RCM)

21 scientists from 19 countries (including hosts) presented virtually during this first RCM, organized from Vienna, Austria from May 31 to June 4, 2021. The list of participants, which included CRP contract and agreement holders is given in Annex 1. The agenda for the meeting is attached in Annex 2.

During the first three days of the meeting RCM participants presented research relevant to the CRP, as well as their research plans for the following 18 months of the CRP.

During the last two days of the meeting, general discussions were held to define and review the thematic areas of the CRP, the review of the general and specific R&D objectives to be addressed during the 5 years of the CRP, and the CRP Logical Framework, in order to agree on minimum outputs to be achieved at the end of the CRP.

Abstracts of the presentations are compiled in Annex 3 and a copy of all presentations was made available to all participants at the end of the RCM.

SECOND RESEARCH CO-ORDINATION MEETING (RCM)

16 scientists from 15 countries travelled to IAEA Headquarters to present their results from the past year, and 2 additional participants presented virtually, for the 2nd RCM in Vienna, Austria from July 18-22, 2022. The list of participants, which included CRP contract and agreement holders is given in **Annex 5**. The agenda for the meeting is attached in **Annex 6**.

During the first two days of the RCM meeting, participants presented research relevant to the CRP, as well as their research plans for the following 18 months of the CRP.

During the last three days of the meeting, general discussions were held to define and review the thematic areas of the CRP, the review of the general and specific R&D objectives to be addressed in the next 18 months of the CRP. The Logical Framework was also reviewed to discuss the previously planned outputs of the CRP.

Abstracts of the presentations are compiled in **Annex 7** and a copy of all presentations were made available to all participants at the end of the RCM.

Workshop on irradiation methods and dosimetry

A workshop for both theory and hands-on training on irradiation methods and dosimetry took place for contract holders at the FAO/IAEA Laboratories in Seibersdorf on July 14 and 15. Presentations on irradiation and dosimetry basics, how to design an irradiation set-up according to the experiments, how to obtain a dose response curve, how to irradiate adults vs pupae, and the importance of dosimetry and how to calibrate and use Gafchromic films were accompanied by practical group sessions. The participants were familiarized with the gamma irradiators Foss Model 812, Gammacell220, and X-ray irradiators Raycell MK2, and Radsources RS2400, what the main differences are between the devices regarding dose rates and chamber geometry, and were shown how to use dosimetric films to verify absorbed dose, and to create a dose map. Participants learned how to use the Gafchromic system to

read the films exposed on the previous day, and to obtain the absorbed dose values. The agenda is provided in **Annex 4**.



Participants of the Workshop on Irradiation methods and dosimetry, and the IPCL in Seibersdorf, Austria.

THIRD RESEARCH CO-ORDINATION MEETING (RCM)

38 scientists from 20 countries reconvened in the frame of a Research Coordination Meeting (RCM), organized virtually from 6 to 10 November, 2023 to present their results from the past year. The list of participants, which included CRP contract and agreement holders is given in **Annex 9**. The agenda for the meeting is attached in **Annex 10**.

During the first three days of the RCM meeting, participants presented research relevant to the CRP, as well as their research plans for the following 18 months of the CRP.

During the last two days of the meeting, general discussions were held to define and review the thematic areas of the CRP, the review of the general and specific R&D objectives to be addressed in the next 18 months of the CRP. The Logical Framework was also reviewed to discuss the previously planned outputs of the CRP. Additional side-meetings were also scheduled to address specific topics and results of high impact, as well as research gaps that need addressing. Main achievements on the past 18 months included: (1) Irradiation of *Aedes* mosquitoes at egg stage resulting in 96% adult emergence from pupae, with >92% sterility in males, (2) Sterilization of male mosquitoes using mid- and high energy e-beam (3) The use of cold acclimation and cold-active miRNAs to improve *Ae. aegypti* sterile male performance in low temperatures.

Abstracts of the presentations are compiled in **Annex 11** and a copy of all presentations were made available to all participants at the end of the RCM.

Major achievements by the 2nd & 3rd RCM

Irradiation & sterilization

Topic 1. Irradiator qualification

- Availability of “off-the-shelf” blood x-ray irradiators, and Assessment of (MK2 – Radgil2) show the suitability for small to medium scale SIT projects.
- Energy/penetration and dose-rates as specifications for applicability of e-beam technology described.
- High energy (10MeV) e-beam has application potential for insect sterilization.

Topic 2. Factors that affect dose-response and/or insect quality (endogenous & exogenous)

- Pupae density dependent hypoxia characterized
- Water temp has no impact on irradiation outcome
- Irradiation medium is important for standardized sterilization
- Age of adults was assessed in terms of radiosensitivity. Although results are as of yet inconclusive, a mild impact was reported and warrants further investigation.
- Energy/dose-rate (e.g. x-ray vs gamma-ray) impacts dose response. Dose rate seems more important than radiation source.
- Geographic origin thought to have little/no effect, but new publication on drosophila shows that background radiation (cosmic or environmental) may change the radiosensitivity of some strains.
-

Topic 3. Effects of irradiation on vector competence

- No impact of transmission of CHIKV and DENG V in *Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus* was reported, but an increased dissemination of CHIKV in the mosquito body in both species was observed in two separate studies.
- No increase in vector competence was found in Thailand and China, corroborating similar studies.
- Irradiation in females was found to change blood feeding rates, longevity and flightability in some cases, (results depend on experimental design).
-

Topic 4. Effects of irradiation on symbionts

- Irradiation was found to have no impact on *Wolbachia* densities in *Ae. albopictus*, and decreased densities in some age groups in *Ae. aegypti*.

Quality Control

Topic 1. Standardization & development of novel methods for product Quality Control

- Standardization of the IAEA/FAO FTD was achieved at the IPCL and warrants further validation by other research bodies.
- Greek Ice cream cup as a pupal release method which enables monitoring of escape rates as potential novel tool for releases (to be standardized)
- Survival and escape rates (under stress) can be monitored in SIT releases using the novel Spanish escape cup
- Pupal size and color using image J as a method to determine pupal age.

Topic 3. Factors affecting downstream (sterile) male quality

- Chilling differentially affects QC parameters depending on treatment duration and temperature. Chilling (immobilization) may decrease damage during long-distance transportation and a 1 day recovery period restores flight ability in sterile males.
- Hypoxia/anoxia negatively affects flight ability, but is highly radioprotective, and improves longevity, and significantly increases mating competitiveness
- Dose-fractionation improves QC parameters (flight ability, longevity and mating competitiveness), though added benefits may not outweigh increased work load.
- Marking with fluorescent dust negatively affects flight ability and survival if too heavily marked. Improved marking protocols have been developed.
- High adult densities in release containers negatively affects male quality (survival under stress)
- *Ae. aegypti* are capable of cold acclimation that mitigates cold-induced injury. Pre-treatments according to climate of sterile mosquitoes could improve quality once released.

1. Irradiation & Sterilization

1.1 Background

Irradiation and dosimetry procedures

Standard dosimetry procedures using Gafchromic® film dosimeters for SIT are presented in **(IAEA, 2004)** and ISO standards are available for the use of radiochromic films (ISO/ASTM 2011) and dosimetry for SIT programmes (ISO/ASTM 2013). However, there is a need to develop standardized protocols for both irradiation and dosimetry procedures for human disease vectors.

Endogenous factors on irradiation efficacy

Life stage and age within each life stage are known to impact radiation sensitivity in many insect taxa, with radiation sensitivity decreasing with increasing developmental stages i.e. adults are less susceptible to radiation than larvae **(Cogburn, Tilton and Brower, 1973; Dey and Manna, 1983; Dongre et al., 1997; Hallman and Thomas, 2010; Williamson, Mitchell and Seo, 1985)**. Similarly, it is well known that some insect taxa are more susceptible to sterilization by radiation than others **(Bakri et al., 2005; Bakri, Mehta and Lance, 2005)**. For example, it takes much higher doses of radiation to sterilize moths than mosquitoes. It is not surprising that highly divergent insect taxa vary in their radiation sensitivities, but there is some limited evidence for radiation susceptibility differing between populations **(Azizyan and Ter-Hovhannesian, 2010)**. Terzian and Stahler **(Terzian and Stahler, 1966)** showed that radiation tolerance increases in eggs of the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*. Specifically, they showed substantially greater survival of mosquitoes after egg irradiation in a line selected over 35 generations compared to the unselected parental colony that had been in the laboratory for more than 20 years. Thus, we know there can be heritable variation for radiation susceptibility segregating even within long-standing laboratory colonies. Similarly, there is a substantial body of literature that shows naturally segregating genetic variation in radiation susceptibility within populations of the fly *Drosophila melanogaster* **(Enfield, North and Erickson, 1981; Westerman and Parsons, 1973)**.

In addition to genetic variation, there may be other types of heritable effects on radiation sensitivity in insects due to epigenetic changes or vertically transmitted microbes. Beyond intracellular bacteria that are clearly vertically inherited (see specific paragraph on *Wolbachia* below), other microbiota may impact radiosensitivity by modulating the immune system which warrants more research.

Exogenous factors on irradiation efficacy

Mass-rearing and diet (nutritional state) affects mosquito overall biological quality, and may also affect dose-response, or more likely the propensity to repair cellular/DNA damage during and following irradiation procedures. Handling procedures prior to- and during irradiation may also have an effect on the resulting sterile adult male biology. Handling procedures include variable factors such as irradiation medium (in water or air), or pupal densities inside the sample irradiated (**Yamada et al., 2019**).

It has been suggested that lowering the ambient temperature during irradiation treatments reduces radiosensitivity, by reducing the insects' metabolic rate (**Rananavare, Harwalkar and Rahalkar, 1991**). This has yet to be assessed and confirmed for mosquito pupae, however maintaining consistency in all irradiation experiments in terms of temperature is good practice- not only for sterilizing pupae, but also for consistency and reliability in the dosimetry applied.

The oxygen levels, i.e. the atmospheric condition in which mosquitoes are subjected to before, and during radiation exposure can greatly influence the resulting induced sterility following irradiation, as is seen in other insects. Radiation effects are generally reduced in oxygen-poor environments (hypoxia) as compared to relatively oxygen-rich environments, or normoxia. Normoxia is defined as having roughly the same atmospheric oxygen content as would be expected in the local atmosphere at normal pressure and temperature, where normal temperature is 20°C and pressure is 1 atmosphere. Gaseous oxygen levels are often estimated as the partial pressure of oxygen relative to the other gases in the atmosphere, but for insects in regular air the field often approximates this as a percentage of oxygen relative to other gases in that air sample if at near normal pressure and temperature conditions. For example, the oxygen content of atmospheric air at normal pressure is often approximated as 21%. While a hypoxic condition is technically any atmosphere that is less than 21% oxygen, insects do not typically react to hypoxic conditions until oxygen levels reach less than 16% and hypoxia does not generally acutely affect insect growth, performance, and reproduction until oxygen content falls below 6% - termed severe hypoxia (**Harrison, Greenlee and Verberk, 2018**). There is a substantial literature showing that exposure of insects to severe hypoxia prior to and during irradiation affects the insects response to radiation, including lower levels of induced sterility or mortality for a given dose in severe hypoxia as well as occasionally improved post-irradiation performance of sterile males. Thus, the availability of oxygen to mosquito pupae and adults prior to and during the irradiation process should be carefully considered as a parameter that could affect the outcomes of the radiation treatment.

The effects of irradiation source, dose-rate and energy on dose-response in insects are not well understood. Their effects are often difficult to assess as researchers seldom have multiple irradiation devices to directly compare their sterilizing efficiency while controlling all (or most) other internal and external factors. Therefore, little data exists regarding this variable.

Impact of male residual fertility on target populations

The impact of the potential introduction of colony genotypes and irradiation induced mutations into targeted populations through male residual fertility (e.g. possible effect on vectorial capacity) has not been studied. While it is known that optimal irradiation doses, designed to achieve the best combination of competitiveness and sterility, usually confer sub-sterility, no information is available on the traits of the produced progeny, which is relevant in the case of mosquitoes.

Impact of irradiation on vector capacity

When considering a mosquito release programme, one of the primary issues to be addressed is to the elimination of the females since females are blood feeders and therefore are potential disease vectors. However, current sex sorting techniques are not 100% efficient, and a small number of females are dispersed with males during releases. For this reason, the impact of irradiation on vectorial capacity needs to be assessed to determine at which level irradiated female mosquitoes can still transmit disease pathogens.

It has been shown that irradiated females of several species of mosquitoes did not produce eggs at doses lower than those required for male sterilization (for *Anopheles arabiensis*, (Poda *et al.*, 2017); (Dandolo *et al.*, 2017), *Aedes albopictus*, (Balestrino *et al.*, 2010; Bond *et al.*, 2019; Yamada *et al.*, 2014; Damiens personal communication), and *Ae. aegypti*, (Bond *et al.*, 2019) but no effect on blood feeding behaviour or survival in the laboratory has been observed for *Anopheles arabiensis* (Dandolo, 2017) and for *Aedes albopictus* (Moretti *et al.*, 2021; Damiens personal communication). However, for *Aedes aegypti*, a reduction of blood feeding and longevity has been observed (Aldridge *et al.*, 2020). Further experiments are needed to study this potential impact of irradiation. A modification of blood feeding or survival will have a strong effect on vectorial capacity.

Moreover, direct effects of irradiation on vector competence should also be assessed to determine if irradiated female mosquitoes can transmit disease pathogens. In a trial conducted in Burkina Faso on *Anopheles arabiensis*, oocyst prevalence of *Plasmodium falciparum* was significantly reduced in irradiated females but oocyst intensity (mean number of oocyst in the midgut of infected females) was not affected by irradiation (Guissou *et al.*, 2020).

Impact of irradiation and mass-rearing on cytoplasmic incompatibility and pathogen interference conferred by *Wolbachia*

The combined IIT/SIT approach has been proposed to minimize the possibility of unintended population replacement, in which low-dose irradiation is used to sterilize any residual females not removed from released male mosquitoes without affecting the latter's fitness or mating performance (Zheng *et al.*, 2019). In these combined IIT/SIT strategies, cytoplasmic incompatibility between *Wolbachia*-infected males from the colony with wild females not infected with the same *Wolbachia* strain plays the primary role in population suppression in the release program (Zhang *et al.*, 2015). While some have suggested that IIT induced by *Wolbachia* or other vertically transferred microbes is sufficient as a mechanism for suppressing mosquito populations, the potential for accidental release of *Wolbachia*-infected females that could in turn cause the novel *Wolbachia* to be established in the environment is substantial when considering the release of millions of sterile male insects (Zhang *et al.*, 2015). Thus, radiation treatments are often combined with *Wolbachia*-based

IIT to sterilize the few females that are released during a large-scale operational program. In this case of IIT/SIT combined technique, the goal is to select doses that will completely sterilize females, but not necessarily sterilize males – although the additional partial sterilizing effects of radiation on males may also be useful for population suppression. Intracellular endosymbiotic bacteria in the genus *Wolbachia* are well known for their many physiological effects on insects, from inducing reproductive incompatibilities to altering vector competence for a number of viruses that can cause human diseases, among others (**Dutra et al., 2016; van den Hurk et al., 2012; Pan et al., 2017**, etc.). To our knowledge, there are no published studies evaluating the extent to which infection with *Wolbachia* or the particular strain of *Wolbachia* used for infection may affect the dose of radiation needed to sterilize females. It is possible that some *Wolbachia* strains may have greater effects on radiation sensitivity than other strains due to the physiological mechanisms that they may induce. Furthermore, it is also possible that the effects of any particular *Wolbachia* strain on mosquito physiology may be dependent on the genetic background of the mosquito strain involved. *Wolbachia* infection has been clearly shown to affect mosquito physiology with respect to the immune system and vector competence for a wide range of viruses, thus there may be additional interactions between radiation dose responses, *Wolbachia* genetic background, and the genetic background of the mosquito colony that require further investigation.

The *Aedes albopictus* line "HC" is superinfected with three different strains of *Wolbachia*: the original native double-infection involving wAlbA and wAlbB, and the transinfected wPip (**Zheng et al., 2019**). The wPip strain originated from the mosquito *Culex pipiens* and induces complete unidirectional cytoplasmic incompatibility (CI) when the triple-*Wolbachia*-infected HC males mate with wild-type *Ae. albopictus* females carrying only the native wAlbA and wAlbB double-infection. Given that IIT is based on CI conferred by *Wolbachia*, it is necessary to assess the impact of irradiation or mass-rearing on cytoplasmic incompatibility. Longitudinal monitoring every three months indicated no impact of mass-rearing on cytoplasmic incompatibility in *Aedes albopictus* HC line on CI (Y. Wu, pers. com.). wPip in HC mosquitoes inhibited replication of both Zika and dengue virus and blocked both horizontal and vertical transmission of Zika virus, indicating its ability to generate *Wolbachia*-mediated viral blocking. Data of annual monitoring indicate no impact of mass-rearing on pathogen interference in the *Aedes albopictus* HC line after 4 years of monitoring (Y. Wu, pers. com.). However, there is evidence of an impact of radiation on the density of *Wolbachia* in tsetse (**Demirbas-Uzel et al., 2018**). On the contrary, it did not modify *Wolbachia* density or pathogen interference in the *Aedes albopictus* line "HC" (**Li et al., 2021**). Moreover, there is evidence that wMel density in the adults of the *Ae. aegypti* line declined when eggs were held at 26-36°C or above with complete loss at 30-40°C (**Ross et al., 2019**) and no pathogen interference against Zika & Dengue 2 was observed in the *Ae. aegypti* line used in Singapore (C.H. Tan, pers. Com.). There is therefore a need to better characterize the impact of irradiation and mass-rearing on pathogen interference and CI conferred by *Wolbachia*.

1.1 Preliminary results

In the last years, and due to the improvement of X-ray tubes, more and more X-ray irradiators, in particular those designed for blood irradiation are becoming attractive options as alternatives to self-contained gamma irradiators, as dose rates, dose uniformity, and processing capacity are meeting the technical requirements for mosquito sterilization.

Following the characterization of the Raycell MK2 blood X-ray irradiator, and the use of the Cegelec blood X-ray machine in an active SIT project, other blood X-ray devices are being considered such as the Gilardoni Radgil2. This device will be assessed for its suitability for mosquito sterilization in the frame of this CRP.

Finding alternative solutions for panoramic irradiators is also of interest for large operational SIT programmes with high insect throughput, especially those programmes with automated, conveyor belt systems for efficient irradiation processing. Here, e-beam technology may offer a good solution. However, the use of e-beams for insect sterilization is still in its R&D stage and many parameters still need thorough assessment for the development of standardized protocols. E-beam energy and related penetration depth as well as dose-rates and handling of the various e-beam devices need consideration when processing mosquitoes. An addition, the biological effects of energy (independent of dose rates) still need to be elucidated. First studies using a 10MeV industrial e-beam device has shown to successfully irradiate up to 500 million fruit flies per week (**Plá *et al.*, 2021**). and has shown promising results and application potential for mosquito sterilization. Electrons are highly efficient in terms of power efficiency, whereas X-ray conversion will cause a loss of more than 90% of heating power in cooling water, which is an important aspect in terms of sustainability. Once sample thickness and density is configured, lower energy e-beam may become a more suitable and economical option.

Following the series of experiments to identify factors in mosquito irradiation that may affect dose-response in terms of sterility (**Yamada *et al.*, 2022, 2019**), additional variables have been investigated to further standardize irradiation procedures such as pupae density dependent hypoxia, where it was found that increasing pupal load size decreased the overall average sterility levels, indicating the increased hypoxia levels occur within the load during radiation exposure. Contrarily, water temperature during irradiation did not affect the dose response in pupae. Preparation methods of pupa samples and irradiation media are important for achieving target sterility, as irradiation in water does not produce the same results as irradiation in air. The age of adult mosquitoes and the geographic origin of mosquito strains seem to have little or no effect in the studies performed thus far. Although a recent publication reported that *Drosophila* strains that are reared in underground laboratories, may develop different inherent radiosensitivity, possibly due to the lack/presence of background environmental and cosmic radiation levels (**Porrizzo *et al.*, 2022**). It is now known that dose and dose-rate have a complex interaction and can affect dose response in insects. It has also been shown that irradiating mosquitoes with Gamma-rays and X-rays can result in different sterility levels although the same dose is applied. Further tests are needed to assess whether this results from different dose rates or energies.

The effect of irradiation on female mosquitoes is important as changes in physiology could affect their host seeking, blood feeding, and flight behaviour, and additionally, it may affect vector competence. As no perfect sexing system exists for mosquitoes to date, the release of some females together with the sterile males is inevitable. These females will have been irradiated at the male-sterilizing dose, which significantly exceeds female sterilizing doses. Two recent studies from Italy and France (La reunion) have shown that irradiation did not increase the transmission of CHIKV and DENV in both *Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus* females but did increase dissemination of CHIKV in the mosquito body in both species. Additional experiments from Thailand, Singapore and China have confirmed that irradiation did not increase vector competence in irradiated females. Other studies investigating the effects of

irradiation on female vector capacity have presented varying results, depending on the protocols used. However, irradiation was generally found to alter blood feeding rates, longevity and flight ability in contradictory ways. Further experiments with harmonized protocols are still needed to fully understand these effects in sterile females, and to evaluate the implications in the field.

In SIT/IIT combined strategy, the impact of irradiation on Wolbachia densities is an important topic. Recent studies have found that doses up to 45Gy did not reduce Wolbachia densities in *Ae. albopictus*.

1.1 Individual Plans according to topics

<u>Sub-topics:</u>	<u>Researchers</u>	<u>main interests</u>
Irradiator qualification	Florent Kuntz	dosimetry; irradiators
	Patricio Ponce	mosquito organ depth, sperm production/age
	Hadian Sasmita	dosimetry; SOP e-beam
	Carlos Tur Lahiguera	dosimetry; e-beam
	Romeo Bellini	<i>evaluation of Radgil2 (X-ray)</i>
Factors affecting dose-response of X-ray, gamma-ray & ebeam	Dan Hahn	hypoxia; stress factors
	Carlos Tur Lahiguera	<i>various factors</i>
	Hadian Sasmita	<i>dose-rate; geographical origin</i>
	Glenda Obra	various factors, comparison
	Romeo Bellini	pupae densities
	Diana Iyaloo	<i>strain origin; Cs¹³⁷ vs Co⁶⁰, pupae density & water temp</i>
	Louis Clement Gouagna	<i>endo. exo. factors</i>
	Jair Virginio	pupae densities (atm); adult/pupae
	Kajla Seheli	dose rate, water temp, anoxia

Effects of irradiation on vector competence

Ariane Dor	<i>transm. risk released females</i>
Simon Sawadogo	<i>irrad. An. arab. & coluzzi</i>
Pattamaporn Kittayapong	<i>Ae. aegypti</i>

Effect of irradiation on symbionts	Pattamaporn Kittayapong	<i>Ae. aegypti</i>
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2. Quality Control

2.1 Background

Quality control methods for mosquito SIT

The term “Quality Control” (QC) in insect mass-rearing refers to the methods to assess and ensure the ability of produced sterile males to compete successfully with wild conspecifics to mate fertile females (**Boller *et al.*, 1981**). The main objective of quality measurement is to detect any significant change in the produced insects, providing a rapid diagnosis so that the production process can be amended and ensure that sterile males will perform successfully after release.

Quality control in a mass-rearing facility needs to be divided into three basic processes: 1) quality control of the production, 2) quality control of the process and 3) quality control of the product. It is thus necessary to determine the correct size of the samples of eggs, larvae, pupae and adults, as well the number of repetitions (FAO/IAEA/USDA, 2014). The mass-rearing process must be monitored continuously to verify that each development stage meets the established requirements (**Calkins and Parker, 2005; Hernandez *et al.*, 2010**, see Figure 1).

As mosquitoes are maintained in artificial rearing conditions and are submitted to strong selection during colonization to increase yields, behavioral modifications may produce some mating incompatibility between mass-reared males and wild females (**Rull, Brunel and Mendez. M.E, 2005**).

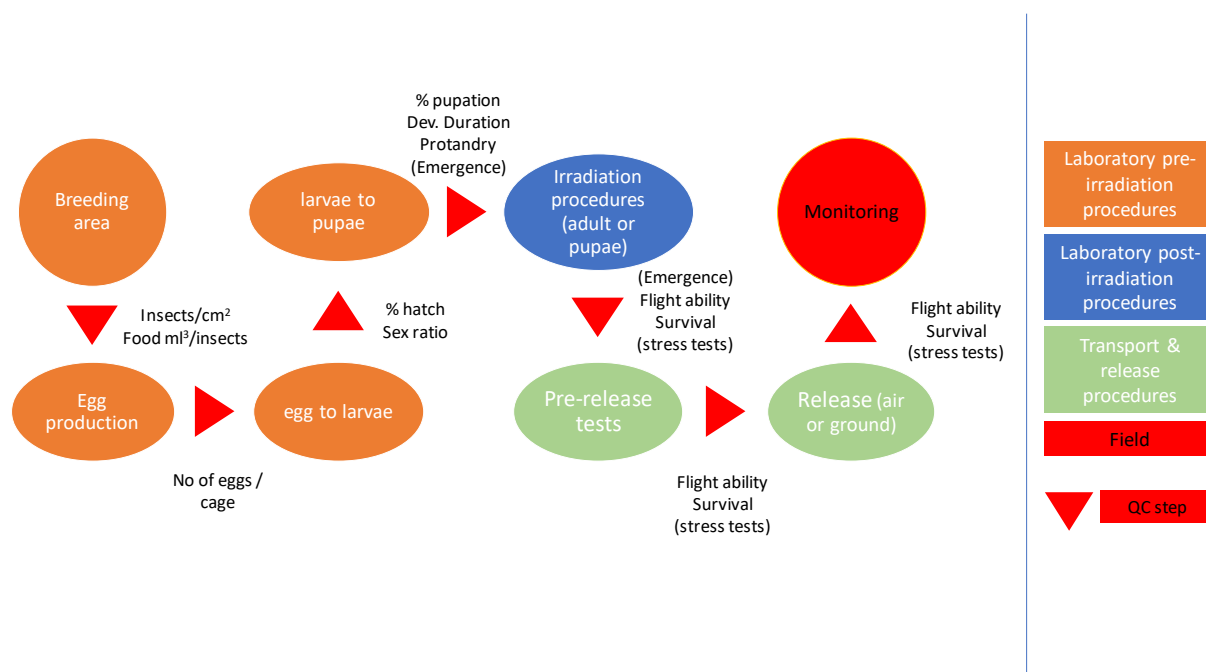


Fig. 1 Examples of quality control monitoring along the production chain of sterile male mosquitoes (Adapted from (FAO/IAEA/USDA, 2014))

Several quality-control tests have been developed and are regularly used along the production-release process (**Balestrino *et al.*, 2017; Culbert *et al.*, 2018; FAO/IAEA/USDA, 2014**). Most of these methods identified problems during rearing, irradiation, transport, holding, chilling, and release of the sterile males. Also, some field cage quality-control tests have been developed to evaluate male mating performance (**Rull *et al.*, 2012**).

The procedures for releasing sterile males will generally be performed using the chilled adult technique, which immobilize the insects using low temperatures (6 to 10 ° C), which can also have a significant effect on the quality of sterile insects. For this reason, every batch of sterile males need to be monitored at each step of the production process, in order to detect any problem related with the final quality of the released insects (**Arredondo et al., 2016**).

Moreover, some more complex tests which are costly and time consuming need to be conducted at regular intervals, e.g. competitiveness tests in semi-field settings (Bellini et al. 2013).

2.2 Preliminary results

Unlike SIT programmes against other insect pests with a long history of implementation and success, the SIT package for mosquitoes has yet to develop a variety of QC tests to assess the produced sterile males before their release, and their performance once in the field. The few available methods to assess competitiveness and field performance are tedious and time consuming such as field cage competitiveness tests to determine Fried's competitiveness index, or MRR studies in the open field. Prototypes of the FAO/IAEA flight test device (FTD) were developed several years ago, however it was not until recently that the FTD design, as well as the protocols for its use were improved and standardized. A link between escape rates and competitiveness is being investigated.

Other QC tests based on escape rates from various containers have been developed independently and have shown to be good indicators for general quality, such as the adult release cup (in Greece, Brazil and La Reunion) and the stress-escape cup (Spain), where sterile males are subjected to additional stress (deprivation of sugar) before allowed to attempt escape.

Pupal size (or weight) has been an indicator of product quality in mosquitoes, as well as other insects. Large pupae indicate good rearing practices and homogeneity of larval development and the storage of teneral reserves, which in turn suggests good wing length, good survivorship and energy for flight ability, and high fecundity in females. Pupal color is also an indicator for age, and these two indicators may be evaluated as process QC parameters in SIT programmes.

Temperature in general is an important factor that can influence a variety of mosquito QC parameters. Temperature is relevant during egg hatching, larval rearing, pupation time, pupation rates and emergence to adulthood, swarming/mating activities etc. Exposures to cold temperatures can stress or protect from stress depending on the temperature and exposure duration, and is an important part of handling, irradiation, packing, transportation, release strategies. It has been shown that chilling (7C) can be slightly radioprotective, probably due to the reduced metabolic rates in the mosquito while being subjected to greater stress factors. A greater radioprotectant that has significant effects in dose response is hypoxia (in pupae irradiated in water, and anoxia in adults irradiated in nitrogen). Three species of mosquitoes (*An. arabiensis*, *Ae. albopictus* and *Ae. aegypti*) showed up to 30% reduction in induced sterility when irradiated in low oxygen environments as compared to irradiation in air with the same dose.

Another stress factor during packing, transportation and release is the density at which the adults are packed. Marking methods, for example when excessive quantities of commonly

used fluorescent dusts are applied, and some colors (e.g. blue) has also been shown to reduce flight ability and survival, and thus likely the overall performance in the field. Outdoor, or simulated outdoor conditions can allow lab reared males to acclimate to field climate conditions and achieve similar cold hardiness to wild mosquito populations and thus improve their performance once released, in particular in colder seasons. This data has important implications for application in the SIT against mosquitoes, especially in regions with cooler seasons.

Another instance in which preconditioning mosquitoes to a stress factor can induce hormesis, and maintain quality when re-exposed to the same stressor is dose fractionation. Adults exposed to an acute, fully sterilizing dose showed reductions in longevity, and mating competitiveness compared to those irradiated with 2 fractionated doses, despite the double handling needed for 2 exposures. However, the savings in quality reductions may not justify the costs in process efficiency.

2.3 Individual Plans according to topics

Sub-topics:	Researchers	main interests
Product Quality control	Carlos Tur Lahiguera	<i>product QC</i>
	Ariane Dor	<i>estab. baseline QC param.; novel tools</i>
	Thierno Bakhom	<i>QC test validation, product QC</i>
	Diana Iyaloo	<i>QC test validation</i>
	Antonios Michailakis	<i>novel QC tests, product QC</i>
	Glenda Obra	<i>QC test validation</i>
	Simon Sawadogo	<i>An. arab. Swarming dynamics; optimize use of rhod.B for mating tests</i>
	Zhiyong Xi	<i>product QC</i>
	Louis Clement Gouagna	<i>product QC (MRR)</i>
	Romeo Bellini	<i>product QC (MRR)</i>
	Patricio Ponce	<i>product QC</i>
Jair Virginio	<i>product QC</i>	

Process quality control

Carlos Tur Lahiguera	<i>automated systems; process e-beam</i>
Ariane Dor	<i>novel tools</i>
Hadian Sasmita	<i>process e-beam irradi</i>
Michael Samuel	<i>irrad en masse Anoph.</i>
Kajla Seheli	<i>irrad. en masse; UPSCALING PROCESS</i>
Louis Clement Gouagna	<i>irrad protocols</i>

Factors affecting downstream sterile male quality

Ariane Dor	<i>effects of chilling</i>
Michael Samuel	<i>handling/irrad. methods</i>
Dan Hahn	<i>cold tolerance</i>
Heath MacMillan	<i>cold tolerance</i>
Simon Sawadogo	<i>temp, dose on dispersal & comp; swarming</i>
Glenda Obra	<i>irrad effects on dispersal</i>
Zhiyong Xi	<i>factors improve irrad. outcome for females</i>

3. Logical Framework

Logical Framework (table):

Narrative Summary	<i>Objective Verifiable Indicators</i>	<i>Means of Verification</i>	<i>Important Assumptions</i>
<p><i>Overall Objective</i> develop and evaluate irradiation and quality control procedures to be used for sterile insect technique (SIT) applications, as part of AW-IPM programmes, to control populations of mosquitoes, vectors of human diseases</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Requests by Member States in the area of mosquito control using the SIT are increasing. To transfer this nuclear technology to Member States, the availability of irradiation and quality control procedures at large scale is an essential precondition. Biological material is available.</p>

Specific Objectives			
<p>1. Understand the factors that affect sterilization by irradiation and downstream performance of the sterile male mosquitoes</p>	<p>At least three specific factors affecting irradiation described</p>	<p>Reports and published papers.</p>	<p>Specific factors affecting irradiation can be identified.</p>
<p>2. Design and validate irradiation and dosimetry protocols for large numbers of mosquitoes, appropriate for operational programmes</p>	<p>Protocol for irradiation and dosimetry developed.</p>	<p>Reports and protocols.</p>	<p>Irradiating large numbers of mosquitoes without impacting their quality is possible.</p>
<p>3. Develop and validate standard product QC procedures for sterile male mosquitoes</p>	<p>At least three QC tests developed and validated.</p>	<p>Reports and or published papers.</p>	<p>QC tests allowing fast, reproducible and cheap evaluation can be developed and adopted by MSs.</p>

Outcomes			
<p>1. Major drivers of variation in the efficacy of sterilization by irradiation identified and integrated into MSs protocols</p>	<p>Protocols adopted</p>	<p>Data collected</p>	<p>Protocols can be integrated into MS production systems.</p>
<p>2. Guidelines for large-scale irradiation adopted and implemented</p>	<p>Guidelines developed</p>	<p>Data collected</p>	<p>Guidelines can be adopted by MSs.</p>
<p>3. Guidelines for QC adopted and implemented within operational SIT mosquito programmes</p>	<p>Guidelines developed</p>	<p>Data collected</p>	<p>Guidelines can be adopted by MSs.</p>

<p>Outputs</p> <p>1. Data on the impact of endogenous factors on irradiation efficacy including physiological and cellular processes available</p> <p>2. Data on the impact of exogenous factors on irradiation efficacy available characterized</p> <p>3. Impact of the potential introduction of colony genotypes and irradiation induced mutations into targeted populations through residual fertility quantified</p> <p>4. Impact of irradiation on vectorial capacity including female behaviour, vector competence and longevity evaluated</p> <p>5. Impact of irradiation on cytoplasmic incompatibility and pathogen interference conferred by Wolbachia quantified</p> <p>6. Irradiation and dosimetry procedures for SIT applications harmonized</p> <p>7. Impact of irradiation relative to other production steps on the quality of male mosquitoes evaluated</p> <p>8. Quality control methods</p>	<p>At least two endogenous factors impacting irradiation efficacy identified</p> <p>At least two exogenous factors impacting irradiation efficacy identified</p> <p>Frequency of transfer of mutations quantified</p> <p>At least two traits related to vectorial capacity characterized</p> <p>At least two Wolbachia strains assessed</p> <p>One procedure developed</p> <p>Impact of irradiation compared to at least two production steps (measure impact of production steps & irradiation on mosquito quality)</p> <p>At least two quality control tests for the</p>	<p>Reports and or published papers</p> <p>Reports and or published papers</p> <p>Reports and or published papers</p> <p>Reports and or published papers</p> <p>Reports and or published papers</p> <p>Protocols published</p> <p>Reports and published papers</p> <p>Reports and published papers</p>	<p>Biological material is available. Methods are available or can be applied to mosquitoes.</p> <p>Biological material is available. Methods are available or can be developed</p> <p>Methods are available or can be developed</p> <p>Laboratory with appropriate level of biosafety for vector competence studies available.</p> <p>Biological material available. Laboratory with appropriate level of biosafety for vector competence studies available.</p> <p>MSs will adopt irradiation and dosimetry protocols</p> <p>QC protocols are available or can be developed</p> <p>QC protocols can be developed</p>
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<p>to be applied to monitor the mosquito production process developed and validated</p> <p>9. Quality control methods to be applied to monitor sterile male performance developed and validated</p> <p>10. Results published in a peer reviewed journal</p>	<p>production process validated</p> <p>At least two quality control tests for sterile males performance validated</p> <p>Papers drafted and submitted.</p>	<p>Reports and published papers</p> <p>Journal issue with published scientific papers.</p>	<p>QC protocols can be developed</p> <p>Data for publication available</p>
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Activities			
1. Announce project amongst established entomologists working on vectors and establish CRP	Proposals evaluated and 10 Research Contracts, 10 Research Agreements and 1 Technical Contract awarded.	Signed contract and agreements.	Suitable proposals submitted, funding available and approval of Contract and Agreements by CCRA-NA committee.
2. Organize first RCM to refine the logical framework and plan the overall activities of the CRP (3Q 2020)	1 st RCM held 2021.	Participants' activities and logical framework revised.	Contracts and Agreements signed by counterpart organizations.
3. Conduct Research and Development	New knowledge created on irradiation and QC of mosquitoes	Scientific papers and reports from the participants	Methods and resources available.
4. Organize second RCM to analyse progress in delivering research outputs and plan the next phase of the project (1Q, 2022).	2 nd RCM held 2022. (Q3, in Vienna)	Participants and RCM Progress Reports.	Progress satisfactory.
5. Organize a training on irradiation and quality control in conjunction with the second RCM	Training held in 2022 (2-3 day workshop, before the 2.RCM)	Training report	Suitable location to held the training and training material available
6. Conduct Research and Development	New knowledge created on irradiation and QC of mosquitoes	Scientific papers and reports from the participants	Methods and resources available.
7. Review the CRP after its third year	Satisfactory progress of research agreements and technical contract	Report	Contracts and Agreements properly managed by counterpart organizations. Methods and resources available.
8. Organize third RCM to analyse progress in delivering the research outputs and plan the final phase of the project. (3Q, 2023)	3 rd RCM to be held 2023.	Participants and RCM Progress Reports.	Progress satisfactory and mid-CRP evaluation approved by CCRA-NA committee.

<p>9. Conduct Research and Development</p>	<p>New knowledge created on irradiation and QC of mosquitoes</p>	<p>Scientific papers and reports from the participants</p>	<p>Methods and resources available.</p>
<p>10. Organize final RCM to assess the success of the CRP in reaching its objectives and review the final publication. (1Q, 2025)</p>	<p>4th RCM to be held 2025.</p>	<p>Participants and RCM Final Reports</p>	<p>Final reports are submitted to the Agency.</p>
<p>11. Evaluate the CRP and submit evaluation report.</p>	<p>Satisfactory completion of research agreements and technical contract</p>	<p>Report</p>	<p>Contracts and Agreements properly managed by counterpart organizations. Methods and resources available.</p>
<p>12. Publish the results of the CRP in a special issue of a peer reviewed journal.</p>	<p>At least 20 publications accepted.</p>	<p>Scientific publications.</p>	<p>Consensus can be found on appropriate peer review journal and acceptance by journal obtained.</p>

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ANNEX 1: List of participants of the 1st RCM

D44004-CR-1
First Research Coordination Meeting on Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control
Seibersdorf, Austria
31 May to 4 June 2021

List of Participants
(as of 2021-05-06)

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ANNEX 2: Agenda of the 1st RCM

First FAO/IAEA Research Co-ordination Meeting “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

May 31 – June 4, 2021

Vienna, Austria – Virtual

Monday May 31, 2021

Day 1: The Americas (time zone)

Webex session open at 14:00 CET (Vienna time)

CET (local time for presenter)

14.30 – 15.00 OPENING REMARKS

15.00 – 15:30 **Hanano Yamada & Hamidou Maiga**

Irradiation studies & Quality Control methods and tools at the IPCL

15.30 – 16.00 (10.30 – 11.00) **Jair Virginio** (Brazil, -5)

Adult mosquito irradiation at Moscamed Brasil

16.00 – 16.30 (10.00 – 11.30) **Dan Hahn** (USA, FL, -6)

Thinking about hypoxia and temperature treatments for improving sterile male performance in the field.

16.30 – 17.00 (10.30– 11.00) **Heath MacMillan** (Canada, (Ottawa) -6)

Can we improve the field performance of SIT Aedes aegypti through assisted thermal acclimation?

17.00 – 17.30 (10.00 – 10.30) **Patricio Ponce** (Ecuador, -7)

Irradiation assays for Aedes aegypti from Ecuador

17.30 – 18.00 (10.30 – 11.00) **Ariane Dor** (Mexico, -7)

Development and evaluation of quality control methods for the application of the SIT in Aedes aegypti

BREAK 10 min

1 hour Discussion

Tuesday June 1, 2021

Day 2: **Europe & Africa (time zones)**

Webex session open at 12:00 CET (Vienna time)

CET (local time for presenter)

12.45 – 13.00

OPENING REMARKS

13.00 – 13.30 (15.00 – 15.30) **Ambicadutt Bheecarry** (Mauritius, +2)

Optimizing the quality of sterile Ae. albopictus males released as part of a Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) feasibility study in Mauritius

13.30 – 14.00 (13.30 – 14.00) **Louis Clement Gouagna** (France)

Standardization of irradiation process of Aedes albopictus males under mass-rearing conditions in support of SIT program in La Reunion Island

14.00 – 14.30 (15.00 – 15.30) **Antonios Michailakis** (Greece, +1)

Testing quality control methods for irradiated Aedes albopictus males

14.30 – 15.00 **Florent Kuntz** (France)

Dosimetry challenges and irradiation modality effect on mosquito

15.00 – 15.30 **David Almenar** (Spain)

Development of protocols and materials for medium-large scale sterilisation by ionizing irradiation and electron-beam technology, and Quality Control of Aedes mosquitoes

15.30 – 16.00 **Romeo Bellini** (Italy)

Scenarios for the application of SIT on Aedes invasive species in Europe

BREAK

16.30 – 17.00 **Michael Samuel** (South Africa)

Optimizing bulk irradiation of mass-reared Anopheles arabiensis males in prospective of a pilot sterile male release programme in South Africa

17.00 – 17.30 (14.30 – 15.00) **Mame Thierno Bakhom** (Senegal, -2)

Quality control procedures of Aedes aegypti sterile males to ensure effective area-wide integrated management programmes

17.30 – 18.00 (15.30 – 16.00) **Simon Sawadogo** (Burkina Faso, -2)

Evaluating the influence of environmental factors on the swarming and mating competitiveness of sterile males of Anopheles arabiensis and the irradiation dosage on the vector competence of sterile females under semi-field and field conditions

1 hour Discussion

Wednesday June 2, 2021

Day 3: Asia (time zones)

Webex session open at 08:00 CET

CET (local time for presenter)

08.45 – 09.00 OPENING REMARKS

09.00 – 09.30 (15.00 – 15.30) **Glenda Obra** (Philippines, +6)

Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control of Dengue Mosquito, Aedes aegypti in the Philippines

09.30 – 10.00 (15.30 – 16.00) **Yongjun Li** (China, +6).

Quality control of long-term mass-reared Aedes albopictus for suppression

10.00 – 10.30 (15.00 – 15.30) **Hadian Sasmita** (Indonesia, +5)

Exploring the critical factors influencing the radiation sensitivity in irradiated males Aedes aegypti

10.30 – 11.00 (15.30 – 16.00) **Pattamaporn Kittayapong** (Thailand, +5)

Title to be provided

11.00 – 11.30 (15.00 – 15.30) **Kajla Seheli** (Bangladesh, +4)

Optimization of irradiation dose and quality assurance of sterile male Aedes aegypti: A laboratory study

BREAK

1 hour Discussion

Thursday, 3 June 2021

Day 4:

Group discussions: (re)defining R&D workplan and goals: **open sessions** (*use the same link*)

09.00-10.00 Vienna time: [Matching & optimizing irradiator and dosimetry systems](#).
Discussion and Q&A time with Florent on getting our dosimetry right!

10.00-12.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) [Europe, Africa & Asia](#)

15:00-17.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) [The Americas \(& Europe\)](#)

Revision of the Logical matrix framework (to be edited on the document)

ANY TIME Other sub-group discussion, coordination & collaborations on specific activities, or One-on-one discussions on data/protocols/planned activities/etc (let me know by email if you wish to meet and when)

Final report- completion of all sections

Friday, 4 June 2021

Day 5:

Open sessions

10.00-12.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) [Europe, Africa & Asia](#)

15:00-17.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) [The Americas \(& Europe\)](#)

Final report compiled and completed

ANNEX 3: Abstracts of the 1st RCM

Optimizing the quality of sterile *Ae. albopictus* males released as part of a Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) feasibility study in Mauritius

Ambicadutt Bheecarry, Diana P. Iyaloo, Khouaildi B. Elahee, Varina Ramdonee-Mosawa, Nabiihah R. Munglee, Nilesh Latchooman, Srutee Ramprosand, Surendra Puryag

Vector Biology and Control Division, Ministry of Health and Wellness, Mauritius

When the national project MAR 5019 (aiming to investigate the use of the Sterile Insect Technique to control *Aedes albopictus* in Mauritius) was implemented; several areas for improvements were identified. Some of those areas are enumerated below and will be addressed during this CRP in Mauritius.

(1) Although the sterility of released males were assessed throughout MAR 5019, a quality control system to accurately monitor male fitness was lacking. Hence, building from the work started at the IPCL, male performance will be assessed in the laboratory, semi-field and field conditions and the results compared and evaluated with the aim of developing a quick and effective quality control system for sterile males.

(2) During irradiation studies conducted in a cesium-137 irradiator, the density of pupae at irradiation significantly impacted their level of sterility and pupae had to be irradiated at a density not exceeding 1500 per petri dish for an effective sterilization. Since gamma rays can only be effectively attenuated by very dense materials such as lead, it is unclear how pupal density could have impacted the level of radiation dose received. The main hypothesis is an increasing level of hypoxia with density, thus conferring increasing resistance to irradiation. This will be investigated during this CRP.

(3) In an operational sterile release programme, it is essential that a compaction system for sterile *Ae. albopictus* males be developed to ensure that males are transported in a practical, cost-effective way with reduced effects on their competitiveness. Preliminary works have started at the VBCD to develop optimized protocols for the irradiation of *Ae. albopictus* males in the pupal and adult stages and to compare male fitness using both protocols. Furthermore, the effect of dose-rate and energy of the rays on the sterility and performance of the males using two different type of gamma irradiators (Cobalt-60 and Cesium-137) will also be investigated.

(4) Finally, if travel restriction becomes more relaxed, the impact of irradiation on different strains of *Ae. albopictus* (originating from two dependencies of Mauritius), will be investigated.

Quality control procedures of *Aedes aegypti* sterile males to ensure effective area-wide integrated management programmes

M. T. Bakhoun¹, G. Diouf¹, A. G. Fall¹ and M.T. Seck¹

¹ Laboratoire National de l'Élevage et de Recherches Vétérinaires de l'Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (LNERV-ISRA), BP 2057, Dakar, Sénégal

Although the sterile insect technique (SIT) remains the most effective strategy used to control insect pests, its application in area-wide integrated pest management (AW-IPM) programmes continues to increase in response to requests from the Member States. These requests include the development and refinement of the SIT packages for programmes to control mosquito populations. The successful implementation of area-wide integrated pest management, with an SIT component against these vectors, depends on the efficiency of irradiated sterile males to induce sterility in the target populations. Many factors from the sterile male production of mosquitoes to their release in the field determine the quality of released males and ultimately affect their performance in the field. The challenge is thus to perform adequate quality control procedures to monitor the quality of the sterile males of mosquito along the production chain and release, to ensure the effectiveness of implementing area-wide integrated pest management (AW-IPM) programmes. The main objective is to develop and evaluate adequate quality control procedures to be used for sterile insect technique (SIT) applications to control populations of *Aedes aegypti*. In this project, based in Senegal, we propose to assess the impact of the irradiation on the evolutionary response of *Aedes aegypti* populations in testing the flight ability and the competitiveness of *Aedes aegypti* males irradiated in the different stages (adult and pupae) under semi-field cages and field trial, including their survival and dispersal.

For the next 18 months, we will (1) assess the impact of dose responses in *Aedes aegypti* males irradiated as pupae and adult on the flight ability of irradiated males, and (2) evaluate the competitiveness of *Aedes aegypti* males irradiated in adult and pupae stages using doses giving induced sterility (IS) >99% under semi-field conditions.

Testing quality control methods for irradiated *Aedes albopictus* males

G. Mastronikolos¹, G. Balatsos², V. Karras², D. Papachristos², A. Kapranas², C.S. Ioannou¹, P. Milonas², Romeo Bellini³, Arianna Puggioli³, N. Papadopoulos¹ and A. Michaelakis²

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The evaluation of this sterile insect technique (SIT) for Greece has already begun since the autumn 2018 in the area of Vravrona (Municipality of Markopoulo) against the *Aedes albopictus*. For the SIT trials irradiated males are transported from the CAA facility (Italy) to the Benaki Phytopathological Institute in Athens by air express carrier. In order to conduct the SIT pilot program, adults were sent every week in chilled foam boxes. Under the frame of the current CRP program (CRP code: D44004), we assessed several experimental procedures trying to investigate different parameters that might indicate the quality of the transported sterile males. Initially, the residual fertility of Greek *Aedes albopictus* strain (Vravrona colony) was evaluated and compared with other European strains. The quality characteristics of the sterile males of *Ae. albopictus* Vravrona colony in comparison with those of the wildish males of a recently established laboratory colony. Specifically, we evaluated the effect of mating, food and water stress on male survival, Effect of mating on male longevity and the male mating performance (mating propensity and male mating competitiveness). The results showed that the quality importance of the transported sterile males was very good. As a next step we are planning to implement a Mark-Release-Recapture studies on the dispersal capacity and post-capture longevity of irradiated of the *Ae. albopictus*. We will also try to include in MRR studies non-irradiated males of the Asian tiger mosquito aiming to record the (remaining) lifespan of the recaptured individuals maintained under laboratory conditions to clarify how their exposure to natural settings shape their longevity.

Standardization of irradiation process of *Aedes albopictus* males under mass-rearing conditions in support of SIT program in La Reunion Island

Lucie MARQUEREAU, Brice DEREPAAS, Antonin LECLERCQ, Louis Clement GOUAGNA

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Abstract. Under the phase 2 of the R&D program to study the feasibility of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) for the control of *Aedes albopictus* on Reunion Island, one of the main challenge is to upscale the mass rearing as well as to optimize the irradiation system for large number of mosquitoes. The factors influencing the sterility level of male *Aedes albopictus* exposed to ionising irradiation are complex and include both endogenous parameters, i.e. developmental stages, duration of rearing in the lab, geographic origin of mosquito strains, and exogenous factors such as the bulk number of mosquitoes to be irradiated, holding and exposure conditions. Early experiments suggested that 35-40Gy from gamma and X-ray sources is the most appropriate dose for implementing SIT for the control of *Aedes albopictus* on the Island. This presentation will provide an update of further radio-sterilization studies carried out in an ongoing SIT feasibility program, where we used varying number of *Aedes albopictus* male pupae (c.a. 2000 – 14000 pupae per irradiation cycle) derived from a mass-rearing system, and test different conditioning atmospheres in order to establish optimal conditions for the mass-production of sterile males, beside reducing the level of residual fertility and maintaining sterile male quality. Though our objectives have been to identify the dose of X-ray radiation and irradiation conditions that would fully sterilize male pupae under mass-rearing conditions, the accidental release of sub-sterile male mosquitoes and residual females in an SIT program is possible, and likely has some associated potential ecological and health risks. Further studies are planned (1) to examine the fitness of male and female offspring originating from sub-sterile male parents x fertile female crosses, (2) to document the effects of releasing semi-sterile irradiated male *Aedes albopictus* on the target population gene pool, and (3) to investigate the response of sterile female *Aedes albopictus* to arbovirus infection. The implication of such studies for mass release of sterile mosquitoes in SIT program will be discussed.

Exploring the critical factors influencing the radiation sensitivity in irradiated males *Aedes aegypti*

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Several factors within the radiation sterilization process are linked to the radiation sensitivity of males *Aedes aegypti*. Those factors could come from the environmental conditions and physics during the irradiation process, such as atmosphere, dose rate, and temperature; and/or biological conditions including stage, age, size & weight, diapause, and nutritional state. Exploring those factors is critically important to improve or, at least, to maintain the quality of irradiated males, leveling their competitors in the field. The studies exploring the listed factors should receive more attention to develop consistent, reproducible, and reliable irradiation procedures as one of determining factors in successful SIT application against *Ae. aegypti*. Among the above-mentioned factors, we have been investigating life stage, age and temperature factors on irradiation process conducted in Gamma-cell 220 applying varied doses. Biological parameters related to males' quality have been characterized for each dose and factor. Briefly, males' longevity, induced sterility level and mating competitiveness index were affected by dose received, life stage and age. Higher temperature applied prior to the irradiation resulted in higher induced sterility level and lower longevity. Further works within the scopes of CRP will be investigating acute and chronic irradiation using different type of gamma irradiators; different levels of oxygen atmosphere before and during irradiation; and different origins of the species. In order to do those works, we have been preparing the two irradiators with appropriate dosimetry system; mastering the technique to create hypoxia and normoxia conditions; as well as collecting *Ae. aegypti* field strains from the different origins of Indonesia.

Simultaneous application of MAT and SIT for management of *Bactrocera dorsalis* in South Africa: environmental and physiological considerations

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Males of many *Bactrocera* Macquart (Diptera: Tephritidae) species are attracted to one of a number of semiochemical compounds referred to as phenylpropanoids. Due to their attractiveness, some of these chemicals, including methyl eugenol, are highly effective lures in traps that are also used for “male annihilation technique” (MAT). MAT can be used prior to sterile insect technique (SIT) programmes targeting *Bactrocera* species to reduce the abundance of wild males, thereby improving the sterile:wild male ratio. This sequential application of MAT followed by SIT was believed necessary to prevent attraction of released sterile males to MAT baits. However, it has been proposed that MAT and SIT may be applied simultaneously because prior exposure to a phenylpropanoid reduces subsequent male attraction to the same or a different chemical. An issue that needs to be addressed is whether pre-release nutritional treatments supported by joint FAO/IAEA-funded research are also compatible with simultaneous application of MAT and SIT. This is because sterile male *Bactrocera* fed yeast hydrolysate to improve their survival and mating performance respond more strongly to phenylpropanoid lures. This project, based in South Africa, will investigate some of the environmental and physiological variables that may interact with semiochemical pre-treatment to influence response of *Bactrocera dorsalis* (Hendel) to methyl eugenol. Specifically, we will: (1) Identify alternative, affordable and readily available semiochemicals for pre-release treatment of *B. dorsalis* that reduce responsiveness to traps baited with methyl eugenol; (2) Establish the responsiveness of *B. dorsalis* to traps baited with methyl eugenol when pre-treated with selected semiochemicals and nutritional supplements under varying semi-field conditions; (3) Determine whether pre-release treatment of *B. dorsalis* with selected semiochemicals and nutritional supplements affects flight, dispersal and metabolic rate; and (4) Document the field response to methyl eugenol by sterile *B. dorsalis* receiving pre-release treatments relative to untreated and wild males.

Development and evaluation of quality control methods for the application of the SIT in *Aedes aegypti*

Ariane Dor¹, Génesis Sánchez², Carlos F. Marina³, J. Guillermo Bond³ and Pablo Liedo³

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In southern Mexico, a pilot project on *Aedes aegypti* Sterile Insect Technique is currently performed with a Genetically Diverse Strain (GDS). Initially, mosquitoes were chilled and manually released by ground; after that, they were released by air using a drone, involving an additional chilling step in the process. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, releases have been stopped since March 2020, as well as the production of the mosquito's strain, making impossible to achieve any planned research. Nevertheless, in 2021, part of the specific objective 1 (to establish the baseline of the quality parameters of the mass-reared GDS) and the whole objective 3 (to assess the sexual performance of the mass-reared males) are attended. We are testing whether the chilling processes affects sterile males' survival, flight ability and sexual competitiveness. First, we will determine the effect of different chilling times on the survival and flying abilities of male mosquitoes under laboratory conditions. For that, four treatments plus a control (mosquitoes without chilling) will be performed. The first treatment consists of the manual release protocol, that is a chilling at 4 ° C for 25 minutes. The second, third and fourth treatment correspond to the air release protocol, consisting of a second chilling for 25, 50 or 100 minutes. For the survival test, the daily mortality of 100 males from each treatment will be evaluated until the last adult dies (three repetitions/treatment and control). For the flight ability test, 50 mosquitoes will be tested in a flight device for 2 hours (ten repetitions/treatment and control). To test the sexual competitiveness of irradiated males, the irradiated males will be chilled under two treatments: ground (on chilling at 4°C for 25 min) and air release (two chillings at 4°C for 25 minutes each). The control will consist of unchilled irradiated mosquitoes. The experiment will be carried out according to the protocol established by the IAEA and the Fried (1971) competitiveness index will be calculated.

Optimization of irradiation dose and quality assurance of sterile male *Aedes aegypti*: A laboratory study

Kajla Seheli, Md. Forhad Hossain, Ananna Ghosh, Mahfuza Momen, Nahida Sultana and Md. Aftab Hossain

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A country of some 160 million people, Bangladesh had struggled against its worst outbreak of dengue fever causing 164 deaths in the year 2019. Just two years back in 2017 chikungunya, another *Aedes* borne disease created significant concern in the country as more than 13000 people were infected. When it comes to transmitting diseases among people, mosquitoes are unsurpassed in the economic and health burdens they impose. In the absence of efficient drugs or vaccines and given the need to reduce the use of insecticides, international efforts are required to develop and implement new, complementary control techniques for mosquito species. The nuclear Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) is one such technique. Therefore, logical and phase conditional approach for mosquito population management through SIT could be considered very promising for future dengue mosquito management programme in Bangladesh. Insect Biotechnology Division of Institute of Food and Radiation Biology under the IAEA CRP grants, previously had established a mosquito insectary and has accomplished some basic researches on mass rearing, male sterility dose, adult male longevity and egg hatching rate etc. As radiation is deleterious to mosquito, careful studies are needed to select an optimal irradiation dose that will ensure the quality of sterile males for field release. Hence, currently we are focusing to determine the appropriate radiation dose that may satisfy the fitness qualities of irradiated male mosquito of *Aedes aegypti* for SIT applications. This study was conducted in laboratory conditions. We determined the effects of different doses of gamma radiation on flight ability, adult longevity and wing size of sterile males. The work plan for next two years are as follows: 1) Mating competitiveness analysis of the irradiated males of *A. aegypti*. 2) Sex separation process will be further improved. 3) Up-scaling the production of sterile *A. aegypti* males up to 50 thousand per week. 4) The irradiation process for large volume of male pupae will be established.

Quality control of long-term mass-reared *Aedes albopictus* for suppression field trial in China

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The endosymbiotic bacterium *Wolbachia* is being developed as a tool to suppress mosquito populations and their transmitted pathogens, with successful field trials in multiple countries having resulted in efforts to scale-up the capacity to mass-produce mosquitoes for release. However, major challenges exist to achieving this goal, including concerns that mass-reared mosquitoes will adapt to laboratory conditions during long-term maintenance and experience inbreeding depression, resulting in poor performance of the released mosquitoes in the field. Here, we assessed the performance of the *Aedes albopictus* HC line infected with a triple-strain *Wolbachia* after mass-rearing at scaled-up densities of up to 15 million mosquitoes per week for over 50 generations. In comparison to the wild-type GUA line, the HC mosquitoes had desirable characteristics for mass-rearing and release, including robust male mating competitiveness, high female reproductive capacity, reduced vector competence for dengue virus, and increased *Wolbachia* density. Although the larval survival rate of the HC and GUA lines was similar, the HC larvae developed significantly faster, possibly because of up-regulation of the molting hormone 20-hydroxyecdysone-related gene *E75* in the HC larvae. Our results indicate that over many generations mass-reared mosquito lines can retain their quality if large effective population sizes with sufficient genetic heterogeneity are maintained under optimized rearing conditions, and demonstrate the long-term feasibility of deploying *Wolbachia*-based approaches for area-wide management of mosquito vectors for disease control.

Irradiation assays for *Aedes aegypti* from Ecuador

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Dengue, zika and chikungunya diseases are present in Ecuador and affect mainly the population on the Pacific coastal zones, where dengue is considered endemic. Every year there are thousands of confirmed dengue cases. Chikungunya and Zika cases, since the first locally acquired cases reached high incidences in the coastal provinces and in the Amazon basin region.

The National Institute of Research in Public Health (INSPI) with IAEA support engaged in the SIT (Sterile Insect Technique) program to control *Aedes aegypti* populations in continental Ecuador and the Galapagos Islands.

We are monitoring the population of *Aedes aegypti* in the continent (Lita and Cachaco) and the Galapagos Islands. A colony of the insect from Lita has been reared in the laboratory to implement the SIT essays.

A critical part of the technique is to determine the radiation doses to sterilize the insects maintaining the competitiveness of males to mate with wild females when released in the field.

We have started a study to determine the doses to sterilize male mosquito pupae and measure the effects on mosquito male performance.

The irradiation is done in a semiautomatic irradiator JLShepard, Model 109 Cobalt-60, with 157.75 Gy /y dose rate. A dose map of the canister was done using Alanine dosimeters (Bruker, pellet type) to obtain dose rate and the calibration curve.

A canister was designed to hold seven plastic containers (30 ml) in five levels. Three pupae were placed in each container, 21 for each dose. The doses used were 40, 55, 60, 70 and 80 Gy. Radiation time varies from 14 (40 Gy) to 28 minutes (80 Gy). Preliminary results show high mortality rates (pupae and adults) as radiation doses increase. Mortality in the control group was 19%, with 40 Gy 38.1%, 55 Gy 61.9%, 60 Gy 57.1, 70 Gy 85.7%, 80 Gy 81%).

Fertility rates (mean number of eggs per non-irradiated female) varied from 4 (control), 11 (40 Gy), 0 (55 Gy), 5 (55 Gy) 4 (60 Gy), and 0 (80 Gy). Viable eggs from irradiated males x non-irradiated females were produced only at 40 Gy (20%).

The next 18 months we plan to increase the number of irradiated pupae and measure the effects of radiation in the laboratory and field cages.

Optimizing bulk irradiation of mass-reared *Anopheles arabiensis* males in prospective of a pilot sterile male release programme in South Africa

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Anopheles arabiensis is a dominant mosquito vector of malaria in sub-Saharan Africa and the primary vector of the disease in South Africa. While the country has made great strides in malaria control through the use of indoor residual spraying of insecticide – namely DDT, supplemental measures are necessary to achieve the target of eliminating local transmission of the disease by 2023. The sterile insect technique (SIT) has shown potential to suppress and possibly eliminate target populations of non-vector pest species as well as *Aedes* arbovirus vector species. As such, it may be a feasible option for the country's vector control arsenal, as well as have implications for other sub-Saharan African countries aiming to control this malaria vector.

To date, we have collected several years of surveillance data at a target site in Mamfene, KwaZulu Natal and have established a wild type strain of the predominant *An. arabiensis* vector at the NICD, Johannesburg. A genetic sexing strain was crossed with the wild strain to provide us with a suitable strain for mass rearing, designated as GMK. We have also investigated alternative sexing methods, and produced irradiation data as a platform for the prospective bulk irradiation – including dosimetry. A customized irradiation canister was also designed to contain mosquito pupae for baseline irradiation investigation. Finally, we have a newly established mass rearing facility where we are currently upsizing the colony for large scale experiments, including a pilot release of sterile males planned for 2021. This follows multiple mark-release-recapture exercises conducted between 2016-2018.

Our aim in the immediate future is to optimize a process for the bulk irradiation of *An. arabiensis* mosquitoes and to develop appropriate quality measures. This will primarily require further investigation into a suitable irradiation surface/canister for large quantities of mosquitoes and assessment of the impacts of pupal density, the absence and presence of water, and, the absence and presence of oxygen on sterilization and fitness. We will also investigate the potential for irradiating adults of the species and develop a standardized method for conducting this, if feasible. The current target is to consistently be able to produce 50,000 sterile male mosquitoes per week by the end of 2021 and henceforth expand capacity and production.

Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control of Dengue Mosquito, *Aedes aegypti* in the Philippines

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The implementation of this CRP Project started only in the last quarter of 2020. For the first year, the objective was to determine the sterilizing dose for *Aedes aegypti* and determine the effect of irradiation on survival and mating of *Ae. aegypti*. Dose mapping was initially done using alanine dosimeters to determine the position of the minimum and maximum dose absorbed by the sample using the container designed for the test. Irradiation of male *Ae. aegypti* pupae was done using the new PNRI Gamma Irradiator (Ob-Servo Sanguis) procured through the IAEA TC project PHI5033, which became operational June 2020. Preliminary trials included only two doses (15 and 90 Gy) and a control lot. Survival did not differ significantly between 15 and 90 Gy, including the control. For the subsequent trials, pupae were irradiated using six doses ranging from 15 – 90 Gy at 100% shielding. Unirradiated pupae served as the control. The longevity of adult males, in general, decreased with an increase in dose. Based on the results of the sterility tests, fertile eggs were observed even at the highest dose (90 Gy) in Trial 1, but not in Trials 2 and 3, where complete sterility was observed at 75 Gy. For the next 18 months, we will be continuing with the maintenance of our stock colony, radiosensitivity studies using 50 and 25% shielding, and quality control of irradiated and control *Ae. aegypti*. We will also try to test on supplements for irradiated mosquitoes. If the situation will permit, we will visit another potential site for SIT.

Development of protocols and materials for medium-large scale sterilisation by ionizing irradiation and electron-beam technology, and Quality Control of *Aedes* mosquitoes

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The Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) has proven to be effective to suppress the wild mosquito populations at a small scale. However, the actual feasibility of SIT as a valid area-wide vector control method has to be tested at large scales. Most of the methods currently used in pilot projects will not be directly applicable to large scales considering a cost-effectiveness point of view. The Spanish public company TRAGSA is currently involved in the research of large-scale methods in *Aedes* SIT. This research includes the mass sterilization of males and the application of quality control (QC) systems for the mass production of mosquitoes.

Our recent experience in the pilot project against *A. albopictus* combined with new research in the area of sterilization by ionizing radiation in the genus *Aedes* shows that there is an unexpected inconsistency concerning the outcome of sterilization, even when similar methodologies are in use. The identification of the key factors involved in this lack of uniformity is currently a subject of major importance for the *Aedes*-SIT pilot projects. Although traditionally the sterilization at pupal stage has been preferred in SIT projects, there is an increasing interest in the sterilization in adult stage, since there may be advantages that can exceed the inconveniences of their difficult handling. On the other hand, the electron beam technology is currently used for the sterilization of millions of *Medflies* in Valencia. Our goal is the development of protocols for the sterilization of male mosquitoes with beam electron systems. We will explore the possibility of the irradiation in pupae and adult stages. Concerning QC, our goal is the incorporation of quality control tests in a global quality system that includes the routine performance of quality tests and an integrated system of quality information management. This protocol of QC will also include the routine irradiation dosimetry.

For the next 18 months we plan to (1) Analyse the collected data on sterilization during the pilot project; (2) Analyse the data on QC during the pilot project and establishment of QC parameters and thresholds; (3) Research on the factors associated to heterogeneity in the induced sterility to pupae with Gammacell 220, including geometry of dose, environment, and pupae condition; (4) Validation of containers specifically designed for the irradiation and transport of pupae and adults in Gammacell 220 and electron-beam (5) Research on the sterilization by electron-beam; (6) Development of protocols for the routine dosimetry for Gammacell 220; (7) Evaluation and research on the application of image analysis to QC methods.

Evaluating the influence of environmental factors on the swarming and mating competitiveness of sterile males of *Anopheles arabiensis* and the irradiation dosage on the vector competence of sterile females under semi-field and field conditions

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Due to the insecticide resistance developed by several malaria vector species and also to the lack of compliance of malaria control tools in the community level, the only use of insecticide-based control tools become challenging to reach the elimination level of malaria in the endemic African countries. The development of complementary methods became a crucial need. Among them the use of biological or genetic control of vectors being developed in lab level began promising. However, prior to implementing such tools or strategy in public health level, many steps remain to be rabbit. In this perspective IAEA supports all countries aiming to develop biological control of both arboviruses or malaria vectors using the release of sterile males by irradiation alone or in combination with Wolbachia. But to better implement these techniques basic studies are needed to refine, standardise and sharing protocols. The main objective of this study through this CRP is to test the competitiveness and the vector capacity and competence of respectively irradiated males and females of *An. arabiensis* under the influence of external factors such as temperature, seasonality, irradiation dosage. Specifically, we'll work on: (1) the kinetic of swarming and mating patterns of irradiated males in the lab using 3D system according to two irradiation dosages and temperature points, (2) the competitiveness of irradiated males in malaria sphere in dry and wet seasons (3) the density/dispersion and survival of marked/released and recaptured of irradiated males in the field around the river sides (4) the vector competence and capacity of irradiated females according two irradiation dosages.

Thinking about hypoxia and temperature treatments for improving sterile male performance in the field.

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An important facet of sterile insect technique (SIT) is to consistently deliver high-quality, sexually competitive sterile males to the field that will be able to perform well. Yet, many steps in the sterile insect production and distribution pipeline can have negative effects on male performance: from mass rearing and handling to sterilization, shipping, and release protocols. Here I will give two case studies about how our lab and collaborators have used a variety of techniques in evolutionary physiology research to ameliorate the stresses incurred by insects at various stages in the sterile male pipeline. One important consideration for irradiation of large groups of insects is whether insects have access to adequate oxygen. Due to either accidental crowding or intentional packaging of insects in modified or controlled atmospheres, experiencing hypoxia prior to and during irradiation can affect both the dose needed to provide adequate sterility and post-irradiation male performance. I will discuss work in our lab that has shown irradiating *Aedes aegypti* pupae in low oxygen atmospheres increases the radiation dose needed to achieve 99% sterility and potentially improve post-irradiation male performance. Then, I will outline work currently underway that explores the effects of irradiation of compacted adult males under low-oxygen atmospheres on sterilizing doses and post-irradiation male performance. A second important consideration for sterile insect programs is to begin releases early in the season before wild populations grow large enough to be difficult to affect. Yet, males raised at warm temperatures in the lab may not perform well at seasonally low temperatures in the field. I will discuss work from our lab and collaborators showing substantial changes in thermotolerances of wild field populations across an entire mosquito community in North Florida, data that suggest wild males may be better prepared to perform in cool springtime conditions than lab-reared males. Then, I will outline work in progress to characterize the timescales over which lab-reared *Ae. aegypti* adults may be acclimating under field conditions to try to improve sterile male performance.

Can we improve the field performance of SIT *Aedes aegypti* through assisted thermal acclimation?

Heath A. MacMillan

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The majority of insects, including *Aedes aegypti*, are chill susceptible, meaning they suffer from performance deficits, sustain injury, and die at temperatures well above those that cause them to freeze. *Ae. aegypti* have historically been restricted to tropical and subtropical regions, but adults have been recently and repeatedly found in more poleward climates. This suggests that adult *Ae. aegypti* are capable of overwintering, but very little is known about their capacity for, and plasticity of, thermal performance and whether/how this plasticity could be used to improve performance of sterile males released in the field when the climate is suboptimal for release. We are working to characterize how thermal environments influence male *Aedes* performance in the laboratory and identify the physiological mechanisms that underlie plasticity in thermal performance observed. Our early work on this topic confirmed that *Ae. aegypti* are indeed capable of cold acclimation that mitigates cold-induced injury. In the coming months, we will extend this understanding with a focus on how chilling specifically impairs reproduction in this species and whether and how specific thermal treatments can mitigate these effects. We plan to do this using a custom-built laboratory system capable of producing 10-20 dynamic thermal environments for different animals simultaneously. Ultimately, we hope to test promising pre-treatments in a field setting using SIT males in order to develop best practice recommendations in matching thermal pre-treatments of sterilized insects to the prevailing climate.

Dosimetry challenges and irradiation modality effect on mosquito

Florent Kuntz and Abbas Nasreddine

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X-ray irradiation of pupae and larvae becomes more and more attractive compared to gamma irradiation due to environmental and economic reasons. However, the usage of low to medium energy X radiation (lower than 300 keV) for low dose applications such as SIT treatments implies to control this process with sensitive, well characterized, and calibrated dosimetry systems.

Dosimetry for this kind of radiation energy is not trivial and if Cobalt60 calibrated dosimeters are used, one may have up to 30 % deviation due to the radiation spectrum differences.

In the past years, Alanine/EPR dosimetry system's response have been evaluated at Aerial. The first objective of this project is to set up a protocol which helps estimating the X radiation energy spectrum characteristics of partner's X- ray generators.

Traceable primary dosimetry with ionization chambers needs to be setup for this purpose and will make it possible to calibrate the Alanine /EPR dosimetry system in this particular radiation field. This would ensure consistency of irradiation doses between this CRP partners whatever the radiation type and energy in use.

The second work package of the proposed project is dedicated to radiation modality and dose rate impact on irradiated larvae and pupae. Samples from partners will be irradiated at same dose with low (up to 100 kV), medium and high (starting from 0.8 MV up to 7 MV) energy X-rays as well as medium (2.2 MeV) and high (10 MeV) energy electron beams.

Dose rates (Gy/min) will be selected to obtain at least 1 decade difference between experiments. Thus, after post irradiation characterizations performed by the partners, irradiation modality and dose rate effect will be assessed. (Selection of larvae and pupae type is left to the competent partners.)

ANNEX 4: Agenda of the Workshop on irradiation methods and dosimetry



“Workshop on irradiation methods and dosimetry”

Seibersdorf, Austria

14-15 July 2022

DRAFT AGENDA

Thursday, 14 July, 2022 (Room TC18)		
11:00	Opening Address <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Objective of the workshop and targeted outputs ● Introduction of participants ● Review and adoption of Agenda 	Jeremy Bouyer & Hanano Yamada
11:30-12:30	Presentation “Irradiation & Dosimetry Basics”	Hanano Yamada
12:30-13:30	LUNCH at IPCL cafeteria	(Vegetarian or meat option)
13:30-14:15	Presentation “Irradiation: How to” Explanation of group exercise	Hanano Yamada
14:15-16:45	Group practical exercise (Room GF70, IPCL) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Introduction to the Foss812, GC220, MK2, RS2400 ● Irradiation set-up (container + sample + dosimeters + cold packs (opt)) ● X-ray & Gamma ray exposures 	Group exercise

	(MK2 and GC220) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dose distribution map (simplified) 	
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Friday 15 July 2022 (Room TC18)		
9:30-12:30	Presentation & discussion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irradiating adults vs. pupae (dose-response curves) • Variables to consider in irradiation & dosimetry • Troubleshooting & common issues ----- • Mass-irradiation (chilling, packing & transport) ----- • Group discussion on various protocols used by participants 	Hanano Yamada ----- Hamidou Maiga ----- Group discussion
12:30-13:30	LUNCH at IPCL cafeteria	Vegetarian or meat option
13:30-14:30	Presentation: Calibration of Gafchromic films (how to use the excel spreadsheet) Q&A	Hanano Yamada
14:30-16:45	Group practical exercise (TC18) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reading and analysis of the Gafchromic films • Dose distribution map • Discussion of results 	Group exercise

ANNEX 5: List of Participants of the 2nd RCM

S. No.	Authority	Personal Details
1	Bangladesh (WS/RCM)	<p>Ms Kajla SEHELI</p> <p>Insect Biotechnology Division Institute of Food and Radiation Biology AERE Bangladesh Atomic Energy Commission Ganakbari 1349 SAVAR BANGLADESH</p> <p>Tel:+880 27790527</p> <p>Email:kseheli@gmail.com</p>
2	Brazil (RCM)	<p>Mr Jair FERNANDES VIRGINIO</p> <p>BioFabrica MOSCAMED Av. C1, 992 - Quadra D 13, Lote 15 Distrito Industrial do São Francisco 48.908-000 JUAZEIRO BRAZIL</p> <p>Tel:+55 (74)36125399</p> <p>Email:jair@moscamed.org.br</p>
3	Burkina Faso (WS/RCM)	<p>Mr Simon SAWADOGO</p> <p>Institut de recherche en sciences de la santé - IRSS 399, Avenue de la Liberté P.O. Box 545 BOBO-DIOULASSO BURKINA FASO</p> <p>Tel:</p> <p>Email:sawsimp2005@yahoo.fr</p>

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7	Greece (WS/RCM)	<p>Mr Antonios MICHAILAKIS</p> <p>Laboratory of Insects & Parasites of Medical Importance Benaki Phytopathological Institute 8, Stefanou Delta street ATHENS GREECE</p> <p>Tel:00306977484842</p> <p>Email:a.michaelakis@bpi.gr</p>

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10	Mauritius (WS/RCM)	<p>Ms Diana Pillay IYALOO</p> <p>Cardinal Lane Morcellement Tara 230 TERRE ROUGE MAURITIUS</p> <p>Tel:+230 6740019</p> <p>Email:dianaiyaloo@yahoo.com</p>
11	Mexico (RCM)	<p>Ms Ariane Liliane Jeanne DOR</p> <p>Quinta privada norte #23 TAPACHULA MEXICO</p> <p>Tel:</p> <p>Email:ador@ecosur.mx</p>
12	Philippines (WS/RCM)	<p>Ms Glenda OBRA</p> <p>Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI) P.O. Box 213, Commonwealth Avenue, Diliman QUEZON CITY PHILIPPINES</p> <p>Tel:+63 2 92 96 011</p> <p>Email:gbobra@pnri.dost.gov.ph</p>

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13	Reunion (RCM)	<p>Mr Louis GOUAGNA</p> <p>Institut de Recherche pour le Développement IRD Réunion, CS 41095 - 2 rue Joseph Wetzell 97495 SAINTE CLOTILDE CEDEX REUNION</p> <p>Tel:</p> <p>Email:louis-clement.gouagna@ird.fr</p>
14	Senegal (WS/RCM)	<p>Mr Assane Gueye FALL</p> <p>Institut sénégalais de recherche agricole (ISRA); Laboratoire national d'élevage et recherches vétérinaires (LNERV) Route du Front de Terre B.P. 2057 DAKAR SENEGAL</p> <p>Tel:221 775502870</p> <p>Email: agueyefall@yahoo.fr</p>
15	South Africa (WS/RCM)	<p>Mr Michael SAMUEL</p> <p>Wits Health Consortium Medical Entomology Research Group 31 Princess of Wales Terrace, P.O. Box X2600 2193 PARKTOWN, JOHANNESBURG GAUTENG SOUTH AFRICA</p> <p>Tel:+27 115550303</p> <p>Email:michaels@nicd.ac.za</p>
16	Spain (RCM)	<p>Mr David ALMENAR</p> <p>TSUP Obras Valencia Servicios Ut Grupo Tragsa - SEPI MONCADA SPAIN</p> <p>Tel:</p> <p>Email:dalmenar@tragsa.es</p>

S. No.	Authority	Personal Details
17	Thailand (WS/RCM)	<p data-bbox="667 248 1536 293">Ms Uryakorn Chansang</p> <p data-bbox="667 360 1536 405">Ministry of Public Health (MOPH)</p> <p data-bbox="667 427 1536 472">Tiwanon Street, Ampur Muang</p> <p data-bbox="667 495 1536 539">BANGKOK,</p> <p data-bbox="667 562 1536 607">THAILAND</p> <p data-bbox="667 629 1536 674">Email:uruyakorn.c@dmsc.mail.go.th</p>

ANNEX 6: Agenda of the 2nd RCM

Second FAO/IAEA Research Co-ordination Meeting “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

July 18 – 22, 2022

Vienna, Austria

Vienna International Centre (IAEA Headquarters), MOE100 (main room), MOE58 (side room if needed), MOE59 (side room if needed)

AGENDA

Monday June 18, 2022

08.00 - 09.00 Registration at Gate 1 (by underground U1 station)

09.00 – 09.30 **Jeremy Bouyer & Rui Cardoso Pereira:** Welcome & opening remarks;
Administrative details

Session I: Irradiation / Sterilization (Chairperson: Florent Kuntz)

09.30 – 10.00 **Hanano Yamada** *Characterization and dose-mapping of an X-ray blood irradiator for mosquitoes*

BREAK 30 min

10.30 – 11.00 **Hadian Sasmita** *Investigation of Endo- and Exogenous Factors Influencing Dose-Response and Male Quality: High vs. Low Dose Rate Irradiators and Strain Geographical Origin*

11.00 – 11.30 **Patricio Ponce** *Sterilization of Aedes aegypti pupae and adults from Ecuador using a gamma irradiator.*

11.30-12.00 **Diana Iyaloo** *Challenges with the use of the Cesium-137 irradiator (Gammacell 1000) and next steps*

LUNCH 1 hr

Session I: Irradiation / Sterilization (continued, Chairperson: Hadian Sasmita)

13.00 – 13.30 **David Almenar** *Recent achievements in the sterilisation methods, process and quality control at a medium-scale in the SIT-based project against Aedes albopictus in the Valencian Community (Spain)*

13.30-14.00 **Ariane Dor** *Effect of chilling in flight ability and sexual competitiveness of the Tapachula Aedes aegypti Genetically Diverse Strain*

14.00 – 14.30 **Aline Taiane** *Impact of the age on induced sterility and flight ability during adult irradiation of Aedes aegypti*

BREAK 30 min

15.00 – 15.30 **Glenda Obra** *Establishment of Sterilization Dose for Dengue Mosquito, Aedes aegypti, using Gamma and X-ray Irradiation.*

15.30 – 16.00 **Fabrizio Balestrino** *Scaling up mass irradiation of Aedes albopictus at pupal stage*

Tuesday July 19, 2022

Session I: Irradiation / Sterilization (continued, Chairperson: Clement Gouagna)

09.00 – 09.30 **Yongjun Li (visio-conference)** *The value of combining incompatible and sterile insect technique to control mosquitoes*

09.30 – 10.00 **Simon Sawadogo** *Effect of different irradiation doses on Anopheles coluzzii males' survival and fertility*

BREAK 30 min

10.30 – 11.00 **Uruyakorn Chansang** *Effect of different irradiation dosages on sterility and quality of Aedes aegypti mosquitoes with and without Wolbachia symbionts*

Session II: Quality Control (Chairperson: Clement Gouagna)

11.00 – 11.30 **Hamidou Maiga** *Towards the standardisation of the IAEA flight test device in Aedes mosquitoes*

11:30 – 12.00 **Louis Clément Gouagna** *Recent developments in mass irradiation of Aedes albopictus pupae in Reunion Island and field performance of sterile males*

LUNCH 1 hr

Session II: Quality Control (continued, Chairperson: Antonios Michailakis)

13.00 – 13.30 **Kajla Seheli** *Effect of some exogenous factors (nutritional state, water quality and oviposition medium) on quality parameters of laboratory reared Aedes aegypti*

13.30 – 14.00 **Antonios Michaelakis** *Quality Control tests for transported irradiated Aedes albopictus males*

14.00 – 14.30 **Michael Samuel** *Quality management in the mass production of the malaria vector Anopheles arabiensis for the development of a functional and sustainable Sterile Insect Technique (SIT)*

BREAK 30 min

15.00 – 15.30 **Assane Gueye Fall** *Impact of long-distance transport on the quality of Aedes aegypti sterile males*

Wednesday July 20, 2022

Session IV: Review of individual proposals (Chairperson: Jeremy Bouyer and Group Leaders)

09:00 – 12.00 Working Groups: revising individual plans for the 5 year of the CRP and for the next 18 months

Lunch

13.00 – 15.00 Working Groups: Preparing individual plans

Coffee break

15.30 – 17.00 Working Groups: Preparing individual plans

Thursday July 21, 2022

09:00 – 09:30 **Dan Hahn (virtual)**

Lab-reared Aedes aegypti adults can quickly achieve similar cold hardiness to wild populations with 3 days of outdoor acclimation

Session III: Inter-lab studies. (Chairperson: Hanano Yamada / Hamidou Maiga)

09.30 – 10.00 **Florent Kuntz** *Intercomparison of dosimetry systems*

Coffee break

10.30 – 11.00 **Maiga Hamidou** *Inter-lab comparison of flight ability and semi-field competitiveness*

11.00 – 12.00 Review of the protocols by groups of participants

Lunch

SESSION IV: RCM report (Chairperson: Jeremy Bouyer and Group Leaders)

13.00 – 14:30 Review of the logical framework

Coffee break

15:00 – 16.00 Review and agreement on content of RCM report (main achievements and recommendations)

Friday July 22, 2022

SESSION IV: RCM report cont. (Chairperson: Jeremy Bouyer and Group Leaders)

09:00- 10:00 Review and agreement on content of RCM report (main achievements and recommendations)

Coffee break

10.30 – 12.00 Review and agreement on content of RCM report (main achievements and recommendations).

Lunch

13.00 – 15.00 Presentation of the final RCM report (main achievements and future work)

ANNEX 7: Abstracts of the 2nd RCM

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Scaling up mass irradiation of *Aedes albopictus* at pupal stage

AUTHOR (S): Balestrino F., Puggioli, A., Malfacini M., Carrieri M., Bellini R.

ORGANIZATION: Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli” srl, Crevalcore, ITALY

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Sterilization by irradiation remains the most practical way to induce sterility in insects for area-wide integrated pest management (AW-IPM) programmes that integrate the sterile insect technique (SIT). At CAA we used a self-shielded gamma irradiator (Cs137; IBL 437 CIS Bio international), with a current central dose rate of about 2 Gy/min to sustain SIT campaigns against *Aedes albopictus*. The current adopted SOP indicates to irradiate male pupae in a thin layer of water when they are 24-36 hours old at lab temperature (20-22 °C), using the dose of 35 Gy. Past studies have confirmed that this procedure induces a sterility level of about 99% in adult males, without evidence of significant impact on male longevity, mating capacity and competitiveness in semi-field and field setting. Moreover, comparative studies on the sensitivity to radiation of several *Aedes albopictus* European populations shown no significant differences between populations of different origins. To maximise irradiation procedures, we investigated the effect of different maturation, transportation and irradiation methods on the sterility levels of males irradiated at pupal stage in water with 35 and 50 Gy at 30 h from collection (age 30-40 h). The pupae were matured, transported and irradiated while maintained at low (6 pupae per ml) or high density (100 pupae per ml) in order to identify the radiation dose and method capable to induce effective sterility. Results indicated that transportation and irradiation methods significantly reduce the radiosensitivity of *Ae. albopictus* at pupal stage. As previously observed, we assumed that pupae can completely deplete the dissolved oxygen in the water and an additional concurrent strong reduction of the air available to the pupae can have a potential synergistic radioprotective effects during irradiation. Moreover, in this study, we observed a decreased radiosensitivity at pupal stage at 35 Gy with the standard irradiation procedures in comparison with our data records from different European strains. The possible radioprotective effect of some components of the larval and adult diets are currently being studied to understand and calibrate the mass irradiation procedures to obtain males with adequate sterility and sexual competitiveness using available gamma and X-ray radiators recently purchased.

In this presentation we will also report on the effect of radiation on the dissemination and transmission rate of dengue and chikungunya viruses in *Ae. aegypti* and *Ae. albopictus* females exposed at pupal stage at the radiation dose of 40 Gy.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Lab-reared *Aedes aegypti* adults can quickly achieve similar cold hardiness to wild populations with 3 days of outdoor acclimation

AUTHOR (S): Dylan Tussey & Dan Hahn

ORGANIZATION: University of Florida

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

SIT programs are often most effective when they begin releases well before pest populations rise, typically in the spring when night-time and early morning temperatures are low. The problem is that males reared under high and stable laboratory temperatures may not perform well in the field under temperatures that fluctuate daily between warm in the afternoon and cold in the early morning. One potential solution to this problem is to acclimate sterile males under fluctuating thermal regimes prior to their release into the field. The extent to which mass-reared males of a tropical mosquito species can benefit from cold acclimation for use in SIT programs has not yet been determined. A faster recovery time from chill coma in mass-reared and acclimated sterile males could potentially allow for increased survival, greater dispersal capacity, and better mating competitiveness in released sterile males during early season releases when nightly temperatures may induce chill coma. The objectives of this study were to determine the extent to which lab reared *Aedes aegypti* can acclimate to field environmental temperatures over 3 or 7 days across seasons, compare the CT_{min} values of outdoor acclimated lab-reared mosquito to wild mosquitoes in an equivalent time period, and identify which environmental temperature metrics are most closely associated with changes in CT_{min} .

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Effect of different irradiation dosages on sterility and quality of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes with and without *Wolbachia* symbionts

AUTHOR (S): Pattamaporn Kittayapong^{1,2,3}, Jiraporn Yongyai², Parinda Thayanukul^{1,2}, Suwannapa Ninphanomchai^{1,3}, Wanich Limohpasmanee⁴ and Uruyakorn Chansang⁵

ORGANIZATION: ¹Center of Excellence for Vectors and Vector-Borne Diseases, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University, Thailand, ²Department of Biology, Faculty of Science, Mahidol University, Thailand, ³Go Green Co., Ltd., ⁴Thailand Institute of Nuclear Technology, Ministry of Higher Education, Science, Research and Innovation, Thailand, ⁵Department of Medical Sciences, Ministry of Public Health, Thailand,

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

In this paper, we evaluated the effect of X-ray irradiation on sterility and quality of *Aedes aegypti* with and without *Wolbachia* endosymbionts when they were irradiated with different dosages, i.e., 30 Gy, 50 Gy and 70 Gy, at the pupal stage. In addition, we also investigated the effect of the same different X-ray irradiation dosages on density of *Wolbachia* endosymbionts infecting *Ae. aegypti*. In the experiment, male and female pupae of the wild type and *wAlbB* *Wolbachia* trans-infected *Ae. aegypti* were reared, sex separated and irradiated with the above dosages. They were then subjected to assess adult emergence, survival rate, longevity and induced sterility. Result showed that irradiation had no impact on adult emergence of wild-type *Ae. aegypti*. However, increase of irradiation dosage dramatically decreased survival rate and longevity of both wild-type males and females. Irradiation dosage of 30 Gy was sufficient to induce complete sterility in wild-type females whereas higher irradiation dosage of 50 Gy was required to induce near to complete sterility in wild-type males and complete male sterility was achieved when irradiation dose was at 70 Gy. In *Wolbachia* trans-infected *Ae. aegypti*, a significant reduction of 71-87% of male emergence was observed at 30 and 50 Gy and decreased to 34% at 70Gy, while a significant reduction of 85-88% of female emergence was observed at 50 and 70 Gy. In terms of survival rate and longevity, irradiated *Wolbachia* trans-infected males had lower survival rate and longevity. Surprisingly, this was not the case for irradiated *Wolbachia* trans-infected females. Some females irradiated at 30 and 50 Gy showed higher survival rate, but their longevity was not different when compared to non-irradiated females. In term of induced sterility, irradiation dosage of 70 Gy induced complete sterility in males, while lower irradiation dosage of 30 Gy could induce complete sterility in females. To assess the effect of different X-ray irradiation dosages on density of *Wolbachia* endosymbiont in *Wolbachia* trans-infected *Ae. aegypti*, irradiated male and female adults aged 7, 14 and 21 days were sampled for detection of *Wolbachia* density focusing on the *wAlbB* strain by using qPCR analysis. Results showed that X-ray irradiation significantly reduced density of *Wolbachia* in irradiated *Wolbachia* trans-infected males when compared to those of non-irradiated ones. Irradiation dosage of 30 Gy showed no impact on the density of *Wolbachia* in older irradiated males when compared to those of younger irradiated ones. In contrast, when irradiation dosage was equal to 50 Gy, significant reduction of the density of *Wolbachia* in older irradiated males was observed. However, when

irradiation dosage was at 70 Gy, irradiated males were very weak and assessment on the effect of irradiation on the density of *Wolbachia* was difficult and unclear. When focused on *Wolbachia* trans-infected females, it was found that X-ray irradiation reduced the density of *Wolbachia* in irradiated females when compared to those of non-irradiated ones when females aged 7 days only. The density of *Wolbachia* was proportionally reduced in relation to age in non-irradiated females when the older females showed lower density of *Wolbachia*. However, they were very weak after irradiation and did not live long when compared to those of non-irradiated ones. In addition, irradiated females could not lay any eggs and they were completely sterile when irradiation was at 30 Gy. Therefore, it was possible that irradiation had some impacts on *Wolbachia* trans-infected females resulting in reducing *Wolbachia* density. Therefore, further studies are needed to investigate the effect of irradiation on *Wolbachia* density in *Wolbachia* trans-infected males and females.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Effect of different irradiation doses on *Anopheles coluzzii* males' survival and fertility

AUTHOR (S): Simon P. Sawadogo¹, Jean Jacques B Tioye¹, Serge Poda¹ and Roch K. Dabiré¹

ORGANIZATION: ¹ *Institut de Recherche en Sciences de la Santé, Bobo-Dioulasso BP 545, Burkina Faso.*

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The definition of the appropriate radiation dose-response for an insect species such as disease-transmitting mosquitoes is very important for male sterility and the application of the sterile insect technique. This technique can only work if sterile males can successfully mate in the field despite significant stressors such as artificial rearing conditions, handling, and radiation exposure. Previous work has indicated that radiation sensitivity varies considerably between species, which justifies the need to define an appropriate dose-sterility and dose rate for *Anopheles coluzzii* males. Here, we performed experiments to observe the interaction between rhodamine B and irradiation to assess their effects on males and induced sterility in females. Males' mosquitoes were exposed in pupal stage with 70, 80 and 90 Gy radiation dose. After irradiation males' have been separate in two groups. A group was fed glucose and

the other glucose coupled with rhodamine B to measure parameters such as survival and mating success of mating over six (6) treatments. Irradiation had no significant adverse effects on the male's survival. The measurement of longevity was respectively: control with glucose: 23 D; control with glucose + Rho B: 23 D; 70 Gy: 23 D; 70 Gy + Rho B: 23 D; 80 Gy: 23 D; 80 Gy + Rho B: 20 D; 90 Gy: 22 D; 90 Gy + Rho: 21 D. At the mating, 1:1 sex ratio (30♂: 30♀), the number of females inseminated according to dose was: control with glucose: 21; control with glucose + Rho B: 19♀; 70 Gy: 19♀; 70 Gy + Rho B: 20♀; 80 Gy: 14♀; 80 Gy + Rho B: 16♀; 90 Gy: 15♀; 90 Gy + Rho B: 15♀. Eggs of control had hatched, no eggs of different doses hatched in each treatment. Residual fertility was the same for all six (6) treatments, equal to zero (0). The induced sterility for all the treatments gives the same value, it is 100%. Thus, we observed induced sterility in females following mating with irradiated males for all treatments.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On "Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control"

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Establishment of Sterilization Dose for Dengue Mosquito, *Aedes aegypti* using Gamma and X-ray Irradiation

AUTHOR (S): G. Obra, A.M. Hila, Z. Loberiza, H. Solomon, F. Pares, C. Feliciano, S. Tatu, J.P. Cabahug

ORGANIZATION: Philippine Nuclear Research Institute (PNRI), Diliman, Quezon City, PHILIPPINES

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The sterilizing dose for *Aedes aegypti* was established using the OB Servo Sanguis Gamma Irradiator at the PNRI. Male pupae of *Ae. aegypti* (26-41 hour-old) were irradiated with doses ranging from 15 to 90 Gy. Unirradiated lot served as the control. A dosimetry system was used to determine the absorbed dose using the alanine dosimeter. Based on the results of the seven trials, induced sterility of $99.29 \pm 0.29\%$ was achieved at 60 Gy. Mean pupal mortality ranged from 0 to 2 % (0 to 90 Gy), indicating that irradiation did not significantly affect the pupae. In addition, the mean longevity was not significantly different at 60 Gy (18.1 ± 1.08 days) and 75 Gy (16.8 ± 1.16 days).

Two trials were conducted using X-ray irradiation. Results of the first trial showed that a 99% induced sterility could be achieved at a lower dose of 45 Gy. The induced sterility for the first trial was 99.51% at 45Gy and 99.88% at 60Gy. There were no significant differences among treatments in % pupal mortality (0.33 to 1.67%) and % adult emergence (97.0 to 99.3%). Male longevity at 45 and 60 Gy was not significantly different from each other, with 18.9 ± 1.18 days at 40 Gy and 18.5 ± 0.39 days at 60 Gy. The difference in results may be due to differences in dose rate and temperature inside the irradiation chamber of gamma and X-ray irradiators. Data collection for Trial 2 is ongoing.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Effect of some exogenous factors (nutritional state, water quality and oviposition medium) on quality parameters of laboratory reared *A. aegypti*

AUTHOR (S): **Kajla Seheli, Md. Forhad Hossain, Ananna Ghosh, Mahfuza Momen and Md. Aftab Hossain**

ORGANIZATION: *Insect Biotechnology Division, Institute of Food and Radiation Biology, Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Dhaka 1349, Bangladesh.*

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Dengue – a leading cause of serious illness and death in some Asian and Latin American countries – was first reported in Bangladesh in 2000 and claimed 93 lives. When it comes to transmitting diseases among people, mosquitoes are unsurpassed in the economic and health burdens they impose. In 2022, the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) has so far recorded 969 dengue cases and 854 recoveries in Bangladesh. The first death from dengue this year was reported on June 21, 2022. A total of 105 dengue patients including 95 in Dhaka division alone died in 2021. Our team under IAEA RAS 5082 has performed a dose response test to obtain the appropriate radiation dose that may satisfy the fitness qualities of irradiated male mosquito, *Aedes aegypti* for SIT applications with ~99% sterility. The results of this study showed that the radiation dose of 60 Gy can be considered as the effective dose for achieving male sterility while keeping the male performances to a satisfactory level. The irradiator used in these experiments is a dry storage irradiator (BRIT, India) with a 90 kCi *Cobalt-60* (^{60}Co) gamma source located in the Institute of Food and Radiation Biology (IFRB). Doses were determined by using Fricke dosimetry system. 17.328 Gy/minute dose rate was used which was obtained from the source with current activity of 38.62 kCi. However, there is no or little study on impact of environmental/ exogenous factors (diet, low temperature, water quality, oxygen depletion) on insect quality and dose response to standardise the irradiation process.

Nutritional state is the most important component of insect rearing. A balance is essential between large scale insect production and performance of the adults. To assess the performance of three diets namely, two IAEA standard diets (50% TM + 15% BY + 35% BSF and 50% TM + 50% BSF) with our laboratory diet (fish feed), the diets were ground to fine powder and 0.7g of each diet was sprinkled on the water of the rearing trays daily depending on treatment. Experiments regarding the comparison have been completed and a manuscript is under preparation.

Water is a crucial element in mosquito's life cycle. To optimize mass rearing conditions for SIT application, a comparative laboratory study was done to evaluate the respective responses of *Aedes aegypti* life stages to water of three different qualities (in terms of electric conductivity, total dissolve solids, dissolve oxygen, and pH). Deionized, distilled and tap water were used for larval rearing. The total larval development time, pupation rate, adult emergence, body size, and longevity were determined. Preliminary results showed that rearing water with different quality have some effect on of life cycle of *A. aegypti* mosquito. Investigations on oviposition behaviour of dengue vectors are critical for effective controlling of vector breeding. Oviposition responses with respect to the texture of the ovistraps, water type and presence/absence of larvae in the water were evaluated by enumerating the number of eggs laid by the gravid female. Seed germination papers are convenient to use in comparison to the normal offset paper and filter paper because of their creped structure and wet strength as ovistraps. Preliminary findings showed *A. aegypti* mosquitoes also prefer seed germination paper lining for oviposition compared to plain regular papers. For oviposition preference, different water types were used and it was observed that the maximum number of

eggs were laid in ovitraps containing water holding larvae of the same species than ovitraps containing normal tap water.

The work plan for next eighteen months are as follows: 1) Impact of chilling temperature and rearing water temperature on the development of *Aedes aegypti*. 2) The role of oxygen depletion and subsequent radio-protective effects during irradiation of mosquito pupae in water.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On "Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control"

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Investigation of Endo- and Exogenous Factors Influencing Dose-Response and Male Quality: High vs. Low Dose Rate Irradiators and Strain Geographical Origin

AUTHOR (S): Hadian I. Sasmita, Beni Ernawan, Nurfitrianto, Bimo Saputro, Muhamad Yasin Yunus.

ORGANIZATION: Research Center for Radiation Process Technology, Research Organization for Nuclear Energy, National Research and Innovation Technology.

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

We investigated two factors that may significantly affect the dose-response and male quality, which were high versus low dose rate irradiators and strain geographical origin. In the dose rate irradiators study, we compared high dose rate irradiators (Gammacell-220, Co-60: 4575.69 Ci, dose rate: 3327.70 Gy/hour) and low dose rate irradiators (Gamma Chamber 4000A, Co-60: 222.67 Ci, dose rate: 175.36 Gy/hour). Results indicate that induced sterility was differ significantly as the high dose rate irradiator induced 69.61±7.35% sterility, which was much lower than low dose rate irradiator with 85.43±5.91% (P = 0.001). Significant lower rate was also observed in flight ability (high: 95.71±3.35% vs. low: 99.42±0.98%, P = 0.005), but not in emergence rate (high: 99.42±1.51% vs. low: 98.85±1.95%, P = 0.346), and water supplied longevity (both median = 6 day). For the geographical origin factor, we examined six local strains from four different islands in Indonesia. As the results, significant differences were found in induced sterility (P = 0.006), flight ability (P < 0.001), emergence rate (P < 0.001), sugar supplied longevity (P < 0.001), and wing length (P < 0.001). Under laboratory conditions, these results indicate that irradiated males with larger wings do not necessarily have a better dose-response and quality. This demonstrates the need for further investigation on physical or genetic features influencing dose-response and male quality. A trial to explore the possibility of irradiating non-chilled adults inside a rearing cage measuring 1 x 0.2 x 1 m using panoramic irradiator resulted in large interval between the minimum and maximum dose received, which was initially targeting 70 Gy. From 24 Gafchromic films (HD-V2) installed in every 20 cm interval (front and back vertical surface), the minimum and maximum dose received were 23.3 Gy and 93,5 Gy at lower-left corner and center of the front surface, respectively. Further trials are needed to explore different sides of irradiator and lower dose rates in order to make adjustments in the dimension and shape of the cage.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Recent achievements in the sterilisation methods, process and quality control at a medium-scale in the SIT-based project against *Aedes albopictus* in the Valencian Community (Spain)

AUTHOR (S): Tur, Carles; Almenar, David; Benlloch, Sandra; Pla, Ignacio.

ORGANIZATION: TRAGSA (Empresa de Transformación Agraria, S.A). Spain

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The SIT-based control project against *Aedes albopictus* in the Comunitat Valenciana (Spain) has been releasing sterilised males since 2018. The sterilisation protocol is based on the application of Gamma radiation to males in the pupal stage. The scaling-up of the project entails the need to implement new and more efficient sterilisation protocols. Promising results are presented on the sterilisation of adult mosquitoes using an industrially operational electron beam irradiator. The results indicate that it is possible to obtain correctly sterilised males (about 1% residual fertility) with minimal reduction in quality. Different combinations of operation, the possible residual fertility in females and the long-term preservation of sterility in males have also been explored. All results indicate that this application is feasible and operationally convenient. The results of the current quality control methodology and process control routinely applied to gamma sterilised males are also presented, including a discussion of possible factors associated with variation in dose response.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Impact of long-distance transport on the quality of *Aedes aegypti* sterile males

AUTHOR (S): Mame Thierno BAKHOUM, Gorgui DIOUF and Assane Gueye FALL

ORGANIZATION: Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA)

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Mosquito-borne viruses, such as Zika and dengue fever, are of global importance. The mitigation strategies of mosquito-borne arbovirus infections continue to rely on vector control. The sterile insect technique (SIT) is the most effective strategy for vector control. However, its success depends on the ability of released sterile males to survive, disperse, compete with wild males and inseminate the wild females. Hence the need to develop and validate sterile male quality control procedures along the production chain and release. This is how we propose in the CRP "Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization, and Quality Control" to develop and evaluate adequate quality control procedures to be used for SIT applications to control *Aedes aegypti*. Thus, we will evaluate the flight ability and the competitiveness of *Aedes aegypti* sterile males and wild males under semi-field cages and field trials, including their survival and dispersal, in order to achieve our objectives under this Research Project which are (i) to link the flight ability tool¹ developed by the Insect Pest Control Laboratories

(IPCL) of IAEA to male competitiveness of *Aedes aegypti* in semi-field cages as well as in the field; (ii) to link the flight ability of sterile males to their dispersal; and (iii) to develop of an SOP of the quality control procedures.

In the absence of an irradiator in Senegal, *Aedes aegypti* males from the AeISRA-LNERV_2019 colony (Senegalese origin) were mass-reared at ICPL, compacted, and transported from Austria to Senegal with chilling. For this year, the work performed under this CRP was to assess the impact of long-distance shipments of irradiated *Aedes aegypti* males. The survival rate of sterile males of *Aedes aegypti* after long-distance transport (2 to 4 days) was assessed, as well as their flight ability, competitiveness in semi-field cages, and dispersal.

The survival rate was 75.68 ± 17.25 % with a percentage of flight ability of 73.85 ± 7.04 % and a competitiveness index of 0.73 ± 0.30 .

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: STERILIZATION OF *Aedes aegypti* PUPAE AND ADULTS FROM ECUADOR USING A GAMMA IRRADIATOR.

AUTHOR (S): Patricio Ponce, Ximena Galarza, Carolina Molina, Edison Vera, Carlos Cherrez, Varsovia Cevallos.

ORGANIZATION: Instituto Nacional de Investigación en Salud Pública-INSPI, Quito-ECUADOR, Escuela Politécnica Nacional, EPN, Ministerio de Energía y Minas.

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Colonies of *Aedes aegypti* were maintained under controlled conditions at $27 \pm 2^\circ\text{C}$, $70 \pm 5\%$ relative humidity (RH), with a photoperiod of 12:12 h (light:dark). Larvae were reared at a density of 1 larvae/ml in 32x26x10 cm plastic trays containing 1500 ml rested tap water and were fed daily a liquid diet of water with a 4% suspension of powdered rat pellets feed (Coprobalan, Ecuador). We determined the dose rate of a semi-automatic irradiator J.L. Shepherd Model 109 using alanine dosimeter to irradiate the insects. A device with containers for specimen's irradiation was designed to map irradiations. The dose rate was 157.95 Gy/ h in the central reference position. Male pupae were irradiated with 40, 55, 60, 70 and 80 Gy, control groups were handled under the same conditions. Groups of 100 pupae were irradiated for each dose with three replicates. After irradiation male pupae were placed in screened cages to emerge and adult females were introduced in the cage in 1:1 male/female proportion. Fertility was 2.8% at 40 Gy, 1.5% at 55 Gy, 1.1% at 60 Gy, 0.5% at 70 Gy and 0 at

80 Gy. Pupae mortality after irradiation was low, between 0.9% in the control up to 3.2% in pupae irradiated at 80 Gy. Adult survival was indirectly proportional to the irradiation dose received. Number of eggs per female decreased as irradiation dose increased.

We also tested the effect of irradiation in recently hatched adults up to 36 hours old. Batches of 40 mosquitoes were irradiated for each dose with three replicates. Mosquitoes were cooled at -11°C for two minutes and placed into small plastic containers of 30ml in volume (diameter 4 cm, height 3 cm) to be irradiated. Mosquitoes were transported for two hours at about 12 °C from the laboratory to the irradiator site. Adult mosquitoes were irradiated at 55, 60, 70, 80 and 90 Gy. Control groups were handled under the same conditions. After irradiation male pupae were placed in screened cages to emerge and adult females were placed in 1:1 male/female proportion. Fertility was 4.3% at 55 Gy, 3.2% at 60 Gy, 1.8% at 70 Gy and 0 at 80 and 90 Gy. Number of eggs per female decreased as irradiation dose increased.

The data showed that recently hatched adult mosquitoes need higher doses to be sterilized than pupae. This may be due to germinal cells development stage at the moment of irradiation.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: *Recent developments in mass irradiation of Aedes albopictus pupae in Reunion Island and field performance of sterile males*

AUTHOR (S): Louis C Gouagna

ORGANIZATION: IRD

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The SIT pilot program against *Aedes albopictus* in Reunion Island is now undergoing a final round of field release and evaluation. Since the start, the implementation rationale required further elaboration, both under laboratory and field conditions, to ensure that all aspect from mass-rearing, sexing, irradiation necessary for the production of sterile, conditioning, transport and release, are improved and standardized. Previous studies have determined the desired irradiation procedures by testing a range of radiation conditions, including the effect of varying pupae densities (500, 1000, 2000, 4000 per petri dish), holding conditions (air versus water) and radiation dose (35Gy vs. 40Gy) on the level of male sterility. We determined that X-ray radiation at the dose of 40Gy reduced egg hatch by 99% when applied on a

maximum density of 2000 male pupae /petri dish held in water compared to pupae in air. Furthermore, early studies also (1) examined the fitness of male and female offspring originating from sub-sterile male parents x fertile female crosses, (2) documented the effects of releasing semi-sterile irradiated male *Aedes albopictus* on the target population gene pool, (3) investigated the response of sterile female *Aedes albopictus* to arbovirus infection, and (4) assessed field dispersal, survival and competitiveness of sterile males marked with Rhodamin B and fluorescent dust. This presentation will include summaries of the steps taken from these previous investigations to progress in optimizing and standardizing the mass-rearing conditions and irradiation procedures for the production of sexually competitive sterile *Ae. albopictus* males intended for field releases. This consisted of improving our weekly production schedule and irradiation of large number of male pupae per single irradiation cycle, and assessing the various fitness characteristics of sterile males, and finally establishing the crucial steps to demonstrate the efficacy of SIT in an urban setting in La Reunion Island.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Quality management in the mass production of the malaria vector *Anopheles arabiensis* for the development of a functional and sustainable Sterile Insect Technique (SIT)

AUTHOR (S): M. Samuel, N. Ntoyi, L. Lobb, T. Mashatola, P. Mphaki and G. Munhenga

ORGANIZATION: The National Institute for Communicable Diseases, Wits Research Institute for Malaria

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Anopheles arabiensis is a dominant malaria vector species in the WHO Afrotropical region, transmitting the disease widely across sub-Saharan Africa. A Sterile Insect Technique may serve as a bio-control alternative to the recommended approaches which namely involve pesticides that may select for resistance over time. The functional mass-production of *An. arabiensis* for release is novel and as such requires a distinct quality management approach, which can be practically applied at our facility in Johannesburg, but can be implemented elsewhere to good effect. In order for this approach to be successfully implemented, however, baseline data is required to establish acceptable control limits applicable to our mosquito strain. This paper describes the collection of such data during preparation for the first ever pilot release of sterilised *An. arabiensis* mosquitoes. In addition, we discuss

challenges in data collection, as well as data processing, and finally, persisting and newly identified gaps in the knowledge of the mosquito product and production processes.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Quality Control tests for transported irradiated *Aedes albopictus* males

AUTHOR (S): Antonios Michaelakis¹, Nikolaos Papadopoulos² and Romeo Bellini³

ORGANIZATION: ¹Scient. Directorate of Entomology and Agricultural Zoology, Benaki Phytopathological Institute, Kifissia, Greece; ²Dept. of Agriculture, Crop Production and Rural Environment, University of Thessaly, Magnisia, Greece; ³Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli”, Crevalcore, Italy (IAEA Collaborating Centre)

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

In 2018 the first sterile insect technique (SIT) pilot trial against *Ae. albopictus* in Greece showed encouraging results justifying the continuation with larger scale trials. The main scope of this trial was to investigate the efficacy of SIT on wild population egg hatch rate in Greece using mass-produced sterile male mosquitoes from another country (Italy). Assessing the quality of mass reared, sterilized males that are transported to release sites is of outmost importance for the success of the SIT programs. The current study presents a series of quality control (QC) tests that have been conducted at delivery points in Greece to assess the impact of shipping on survival during transportation, longevity, flight ability and mating performance. Furthermore, a Mark-Release-Recapture (MRR) study on the post-capture longevity of irradiated and non-irradiated males was conducted aiming to record the (remaining) lifespan of the recaptured individuals maintained under laboratory conditions.

Our results for QC tests revealed detrimental effects of long transportation period on the sterile male *Ae. albopictus* while the flight ability of sterilized males following one day transportation time was satisfactory (over 60%). Response of sterile males to food and water starvation was comparable and slightly lower than that of wild non-transported males. Longevity of sterile males was shorter than that of wild counterparts and it seems it was not affected by mating to wild females. Regarding the MRR study, results revealed that both sterile and non-sterile males that were not released and maintained under laboratory

conditions had almost the same lifespan which is almost 20 days. This finding is very important since it's highlighting that irradiation is not affecting the lifespan of the transported males. Similar average lifespan was also recorded for the non-irradiated males which were released and recaptured. Another interesting finding is that when irradiated males are released and recaptured, the lifespan was 30-35 days slightly longer than non-irradiated released males.

Overall, our results clearly demonstrate that transported irradiated males are of good quality suggesting a series of reliable QC tests and MRR study on the post-capture longevity to be considered in future SIT operations employing transportation.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: The value of combining incompatible and sterile insect technique to control mosquitoes

AUTHOR (S): Yongjun Li, Luke Anthony Baton, Dongjing Zhang, Jérémy Bouyer, Andrew G. Parker, Ary A. Hoffmann, Lee Ching Ng, Cheong Huat Tan & Zhiyong Xi

ORGANIZATION:

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

We have demonstrated the feasibility of applying combined incompatible insect technique (IIT) and sterile insect technique (SIT), or known as combined IIT-SIT, on a large scale to suppress or even eliminate the populations of vector mosquitoes. The classical SIT uses radiation to sterilize male mosquitoes, while in combined IIT-SIT, sterile matings are induced by *Wolbachia*, and the role of radiation is to sterilize *Wolbachia*-infected females that are mixed in the males (due to the imperfect sex-separation), so as to avoid the occurrence of population replacement. As female mosquitoes are more sensitive to radiation, combined IIT-SIT uses lower dose, thereby reducing the adverse effects of either the radiation itself or the handling process of radiation on the fitness of male mosquitoes. Under small-scale laboratory experiments, the dose required to sterilize the female pupae of *Aedes albopictus* HC line (infected with *Wolbachia* wAlbA, wAlbB and wPip) is about 30 Gy, whereas we found that, during the large-scale pupae radiation process with more than fifty thousands of pupae loaded in a canister, the dose required for fully sterilizing female HC pupae is as high as 60 Gy. The main reason for the need of higher dose to sterilize female mosquitoes in large-scale is

the rapid consumption of oxygen, which results in hypoxia and thereby providing strong radiological protection in insects as it boosts antioxidant defence mechanisms. Therefore, when using radiation to sterilize mosquito pupae on a large scale, we should fully consider the density dependent issues.

In order to balance the irradiation effect on sterilization and male fitness, we chose 45 Gy (rather than 60 Gy) in the combined IIT-SIT. Therefore, HC females released into the wild were not completely sterilized. In fact, we did find *wPip* positive *Ae. albopictus* larvae during mosquito releases, indicating that the accidentally released HC females had progenies in the field. However, during the two-year field monitoring, we observed that the offspring of HC mosquitoes temporarily and spatially isolated; in addition, after mosquito release activities stopped, we continued to monitor the *wPip* infection status in *Ae. albopictus* population for a year and none of *wPip*-infected individuals was detected. The above results indicate that combined IIT-SIT prevents population replacement occurring, which may be caused by the below reasons: (1) In combined IIT-SIT, HC male mosquitoes are partially sterilized (the sterilization rate was as high as 86.4%), so a large number of HC male mosquitoes released into the field also produces high sterilization effect after mating with HC females that may exist in the field. (2) HC mosquitoes, as compared to the wild-type *Ae. albopictus*, have relatively higher fitness costs in the field, as indicated by its lower larvae survival rate under malnutrition, shorter adult life span under stressed condition, and poor ability of females to locate the host.

Finally, in combined IIT-SIT, even if a small number of female mosquitoes are released, they have lower probability to transmit pathogens due to *Wolbachia*-mediated pathogen blocking. We have found that the *Wolbachia* density in ovaries and somatic tissues of irradiated HC female mosquitoes did not change, and they maintained resistance to dengue virus serotype 2. Furthermore, the greater radiosensitivity of female mosquitoes will further reduce their vectorial capacity by decreasing longevity.

In conclusion, our results show that combined IIT-SIT provides a practical way to solve current challenges due to a lack of perfect sex separation, through: (1) preventing population replacement; (2) potentially minimizing male fitness costs through the use of lower radiation doses than required by SIT (although we note that the mating competitiveness of male mosquitoes can be reduced by up to half, which can be caused by several factors during scale-up for mass production); (3) reducing vectorial capacity of any accidentally released females; and (4) facilitating scaling-up of mass production by removing the need for manual inspection after mechanical sex separation.

SECOND RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Vienna, Austria

18-22 July 2022

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Effect of chilling in flight ability and sexual competitiveness of the Tapachula *Aedes aegypti* Genetically Diverse Strain

AUTHOR (S): Ariane Dor, Génesis Sánchez, Guillermo Bond, Carlos F. Marina and Pablo Liedo

ORGANIZATION: El Colegio de la Frontera Sur

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

A pilot project on *Aedes aegypti* Sterile Insect Technique was initiated in Southern Mexico in 2018 with a Genetically Diverse Strain (GDS). Initially, mosquitoes were chilled and manually released by ground; after that, they were released by air using a drone, involving an additional chilling step in the process. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic and lack of government support, releases have been stopped since March 2020. Nevertheless, until 2022, part of the specific objective 1 (to establish the baseline of the quality parameters of the mass-reared GDS) and the whole objective 3 (to assess the sexual performance of the mass-reared males) were assessed. We tested whether the chilling processes affects sterile males' survival, flight ability and sexual competitiveness. First, we determined the effect of different chilling times on the survival and flying abilities of fertile male mosquitoes under laboratory conditions in four treatments plus a control (treatment 1: ground release protocol, with a chilling at 4 ° C for 25 minutes; treatments 2, 3 and 4: air release protocol, with a second chilling for 25, 50 or 100 minutes, respectively). To test the sexual competitiveness of irradiated males, the irradiated males were chilled under two treatments: ground (one chilling at 4°C for 25 min) and air release (two chillings at 4°C for 25 minutes each). The experiment was carried out according to the protocol established by the IAEA and the Fried (1971) competitiveness index was calculated. Results show that chilling process affect the survival and the flight abilities of the mass-reared males. Flight abilities decreased even more with the two chilling processes and their time length. Sexual competitiveness is also affected by ground chilling process and even more by the air release process. These results show that it is necessary to meet compromises regarding the chilling processes to maintain the quality of the GDS male mosquitoes.

ANNEX 8: Intercomparison of dosimetry systems

PROFICIENCY TESTING BY INTERCOMPARISON OF DOSIMETRY SYSTEMS IRRADIATED WITH GAMMA (COBALT 60 SOURCE), 10 MEV ELECTRONS OR HIGH ENERGY X-RAYS

Issued on: August 22, 2016

By: Florent KUNTZ

INTRODUCTION

The Proficiency Testing Programs by interlaboratory comparisons have proven to be a useful tool to give opportunity for participants to demonstrate their technical competence and ensure the quality and traceability of their measurements. It may also help to identify problems (if any) related to the performance of personnel, equipment calibration and adequacy of methods.

This exercise is developed to evaluate two aspects:

Part 1: The ability of participants to meet preset dose values (targeted doses).

Part 2: The ability of the participants to measure doses actually applied.

REFERENCES

ISO/IEC 13528:2005, Statistical methods for use in proficiency testing by interlaboratory comparisons.

NPL Report CIRM 29 "Guidelines for the Calibration of Routine Dosimetry Systems for use in Radiation Processing"; September 2009

ISO 14470-11 Food irradiation -- Requirements for the development, validation and routine control of the process of irradiation using ionizing radiation for the treatment of food

ISO/ASTM 51204-12 Standard Practice for Dosimetry in Gamma Irradiation Facilities for Food Processing

ISO/ASTM 51431-11 Standard Practice for Dosimetry in Electron and Bremsstrahlung Irradiation Facilities for Food Processing

ISO/ASTM 51607:2013 "Practice for Use of an Alanine-EPR Dosimetry System"

ISO/ASTM 51275-13 Standard Practice for Use of a Radiochromic Film Dosimetry System

ISO/ASTM 51650-13 Standard Practice for Use of a Cellulose Triacetate Dosimetry System

ISO/ASTM 51276-12 "Practice for Use of a Polymethylmethacrylate Dosimetry System"

ISO/ASTM 51401-13 Standard Practice for Use of a Dichromate Dosimetry

ISO/ASTM 51702-13 Standard Practice for Dosimetry in Gamma Radiation Facilities for Radiation Processing.

PROFICIENCY TESTING MANAGEMENT

Testing dosimeters

Proficiency test dosimeters: 4 alanine dosimeters (containing 4 pellets each) for each participant (1 is identified as control (Control / Do not irradiate) provided by Aérial. For each target dose value, only one provided alanine dosimeter and if necessary one dosimeter from the participant dosimetry system is irradiated.

Confidentiality

To ensure confidentiality performance of the participants, Aérial will safeguard the results issued by each participant so as to maintain the confidentiality of the data and results for the performance of participants.

Schedule

Date of reception of dosimeters by participants: **October 2022**

Deadline for reception of irradiated dosimeters by Aérial: **December 2022**

Date of report delivery: **March 2022**

Parameter to be evaluated

The parameter to determine is the delivered dose to the dosimeters and the ability to target a given dose.

Dosimeters should be irradiated to doses (to water) of 35 Gy, 70 Gy and 150 Gy.

At this stage, irradiation with gamma (Cobalt 60 source), 10 MeV electrons or with X-rays (1 MV accelerating voltage minimum) is requested.

Proficiency testing registration

For registration, each DEXAFI participant will be sent an invitation email. Individual acknowledgement for participation is required to get the dosimeters.

Aerial will send to the participants, via the IAEA IPCL a package containing:

- a) 3 alanine dosimeters (each dosimeter contains 4 pellets)
- b) 1 alanine dosimeter to preserve as control, which should not be irradiated.

Proficiency testing progress

After registration, Alanine dosimeters will be sent to each participant along with an irradiation form, which must be completed by the participant after irradiation and sent with rapid mail to Aerial along with the irradiated dosimeters at the following address:

Florent KUNTZ
DEXAFI Intercomparison
Aerial-CRT
250 rue Laurent Fries
67412 Illkirch
France
@: florent.kuntz@aerial-crt.com
Phone: +33 3 88 19 15 17

Each dosimeter referred to in paragraph a) should be irradiated only with one of the indicated doses, (35Gy, 70 Gy, and 150 Gy)

The control dosimeter referred to in paragraph b) must remain with the other 3 dosimeters mentioned in a), except at the time of irradiation. The control dosimeter should never be irradiated.

The minimum dosimeter temperature has to be measured at the start of irradiation process, using a thermometer.

The maximum dosimeter temperature during irradiation has to be measured/evaluated throughout the irradiation process, using a thermometer/GEX thermolabel/experience. (Alternatively, measure the temperature near the dosimeter before and after irradiation and calculate effective temperature).

For each dose point, only one alanine dosimeter described in paragraph a) should be used, plus routine dosimeters belonging to the participant dosimetry system.

To ensure electronic balance, alanine and participant's dosimeters must be enclosed with polystyrene or PMMA of 3 to 5 mm thickness.

The design and manufacture of container phantom of dosimeters is in charge of the participant. It must ensure that Alanine dosimeter and routine dosimeter from participant gets the same dose. The dimensions of alanine dosimeters are found in Annex.

Measurements of dose from dosimeters belonging to the participant's dosimetry system must be made using the technique and equipment used by the participant in their normal routine work.

Participants must return to Aerial the irradiated Alanine dosimeters and the control dosimeter, along with the irradiation form right after irradiation is completed.

Irradiation form should be completed with the results of the participant's dosimeters dose, temperature of alanine dosimeter before irradiation and maximum temperature during irradiation, irradiation date, irradiation duration, radiation type, participants details, ...

STATISTICAL EVALUATION

Performance evaluator

x_i dose value of the dosimeter irradiated by the participant measured by Aerial
 X dose value given by the participant (close to the assigned 35Gy, 70 Gy, and 150 Gy)
 $u(x_i)$ uncertainty ($k=1$) on dose measured by Aerial
 $u(X)$ uncertainty ($k=1$) on dose given by participant

The evaluator will be the Z performance parameter:

$$Z = \frac{x_i - X}{\sqrt{u(x_i)^2 + u(X)^2}}$$

The acceptability criterion is:

If $-2 \leq Z \leq 2$ the result is considered acceptable.

If $2 < |z| < 3$ the result is considered questionable.

If $|z| \geq 3$ the result is not acceptable.

NOTE: The statistical treatment of the data may vary from that described according to the feedback of the participant's results.

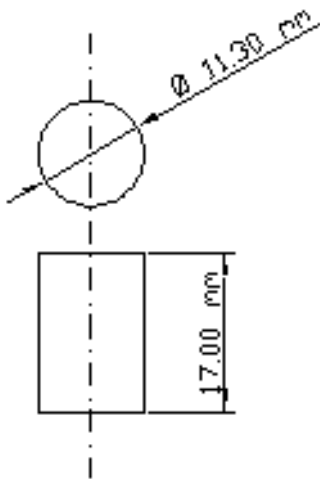
REPORT

Once the results are obtained from the participants, a preliminary report with the confidential results will be made and presented to IAEA.

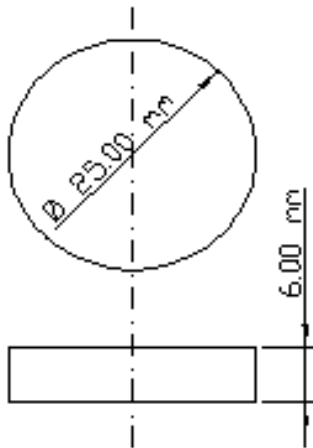
Final results will be presented during the second RCM of the CRP 'Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control'.

ANNEX

Dosimeter holder dimensions for gamma irradiation



Dosimeter holder dimensions for electron beam irradiation



Aérial	IRRADIATION FORM	ID FE/I 01 - .../.....
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IRRADIATION FORM TO BE COMPLETED BY DEXAFI PARTICIPANT

Participant details:	Contact person:
Full postal Address :	Phone :
	Fax :
	E-mail :

Irradiation information

Dosimeter ID	Irradiation date	Irradiation duration	Temperature before irradiation (°C)	Maximum temperature during irradiation (°C)	Radiation type (XRay, γ, EBeam)	Energy (MeV)	Assigned dose (kGy)

Control	Do not irradiate						

Absorbed dose readings with participant's dosimetry system(s)

Dosimeter ID	Participant dosimetry system	Measured dose (kGy)	Uncertainty (k=2) (kGy)

Date:

Visa:

Please return this form with irradiated dosimeters to:

Florent KUNTZ

DEXAFI Intercomparaison

Aérial-crt

250 rue Laurent Fries

F 67412 Illkirch

France

E mail :

ANNEX 9: Inter-lab comparison of flight ability and semi-field competitiveness

How is male *Aedes* mosquito flight ability data related to semi-field competitiveness index?

Objective: To know whether flight ability scores are correlated to male mating competitiveness.

Biological material: *Aedes aegypti* and *Aedes albopictus*

Rearing, irradiation and experimental conditions:

- Rear male mosquitoes following standard validated protocols,
- Provide 10 % sucrose solution *ad libitum* to adults
- Make sure that the rearing schedule gives males of desired and synchronized age groups

Pupae sampling: Aliquot 110 pupae/sex in 100mL- cups (males and females separate). Collect enough for each experiment and the number of replicates needed (see below for flight tests and competitiveness designs). Make sure that all females are virgin.

Adult-compaction: after emergence, chill adult cages (15×15×15cm) into the cold room (4°C for 10min) to knock down the mosquitoes; use a mouth aspirator to collect mosquitoes from each cage and transfer to 1×1×1 cm compaction boxes (100 males/cm³). Close the box with a piece of netting (5×5cm) and a plastic rubber band (1.5cm=diameter) (**Figure 1**)



Figure 1. Mosquito compaction (100males/cm³) using 1×1×1 cm boxes for adults (2-3-day-old)

Irradiation: Irradiate *en masse* (100males/cm³) using 1×1×1 cm compaction boxes for adults (2-3-day-old) or pupae (24h-30h-old) following standard irradiation procedures (See [Guidelines for Irradiation of Mosquito Pupae in Sterile Insect Technique Programmes | IAEA](#) , Appendix I and III) with the dose inducing 99% sterility for your strain/irradiator. A higher dose will be used (100 Gy more for the effect of high dose irradiation on mating competitiveness experiment). For instance, 150Gy for *Ae. aegypti* and 100Gy for *Ae. albopictus*.

Laboratory room test conditions for flight test: 26 ±2 C, RH%= 70±10, light: 500-1000 lux; time= 8-10 am (morning).

Semi-field large cage size: 175×175×175 cm, 5.36 m³ (Live Monarch. Boca Raton. USA)

Experiment. Effect of high irradiation dose

Irradiation: Adult males of 2-3 day-old will be irradiated with low irradiation (inducing more than 99% sterility) and high irradiation (100Gy more than the low dose) doses.

A_ Flight ability

- Three treatments (low, high doses and non-irradiated)
- Run the flight test on irradiated (with low and high doses) and non-irradiated

mosquitoes

- Run the test 24h after irradiation
- Three technical replicates for each treatment

B_ Competitiveness in large cages

The following design will be used for the competitiveness (**Figure 2A**). The test will be performed 1 day after irradiation with 3-4-day-old males.

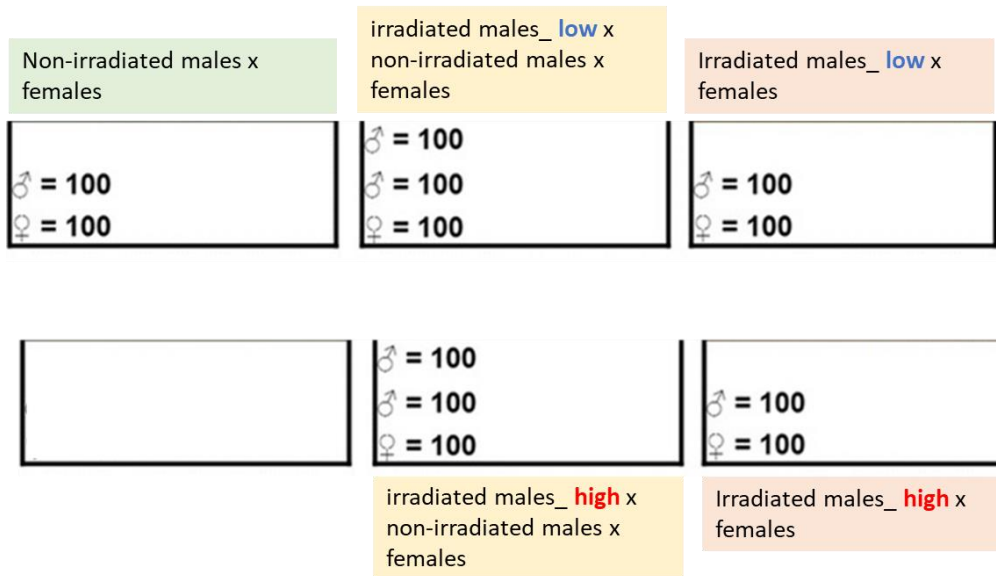


Figure 2A. Experimental design in semi-field conditions. Three control cages (irradiated (low, high doses) and non-irradiated males only) and competition cages, each containing 100 males (irradiated and/or non-irradiated) and 100 virgin females. Low and high stand for low irradiation (inducing more than 99% sterility) and high irradiation dose (100Gy more than the low dose)



Figure 2B. Example of a semi-field cage experiment setting: Nine 30×30×30cm control cages (irradiated (low, high doses) and non-irradiated males only) and six large competition cages, each containing 100 males (irradiated and/or non-irradiated) and 100 virgin females. Low and high stand for low irradiation (inducing more than 99% sterility) and high irradiation dose (100Gy more than the low dose)

Procedures as per the Figure 2B:

- Only competition cages will be used in large cages in the semi-field settings
 - Control mating cages will be 30 × 30 × 30 cm but placed in the semi-field conditions.
- Mosquitoes (males and females) from control groups (low, high, non-irradiated) will be chilled to ease the transfer into the cages (Figure 2C).



Figure 2C. Plastic cups containing chilled adult to transfer into control (low, high, non-irradiated) cages

- Three cages for each competition treatment (6 large cages in total) will be placed in semi-field conditions
- Males (irradiated and non-irradiated) will be released first and will be allowed to acclimate for 60 min prior to releasing females (3-4-day-old).
- After the mating period of 24 hours, females will be collected using mechanical aspirators, chilled to remove potential remaining males and cages.
- Females will be brought back to the laboratory
- Collected number of females will be recorded.
- Females will be offered a blood meal for 2 consecutive days (30-60min/feeding event).
- Daily survival will be monitored and egg cups for egg collection offered. One egg batch will be collected. Dead females will be kept in the freezer for dissection.
- Competitiveness index will be calculated following Fried formula (see below parameters to be measured)
- A sample of 15 females/cage will be dissected to assess insemination rates (number of spermathecae filled with sperm) after egg collection.

PS: the use of rhodamine will allow true competitiveness

Parameters to be measured:

Flight test:

Number of escaped (flyers) and non-escaped (non-flyers) males

Competitiveness:

- **Number of eggs per cage** (based on females recaptured from semi-field cages)
- **Fecundity** for each treatment by dividing the number of eggs laid by the number of females still alive (before egg collection)
- **Insemination rates** to estimate the average number of females that laid eggs and the average number of eggs laid per female; to assess mating propensity/treatment
- **Egg hatch rates** (fertility) by dividing the number of hatched eggs counted by the number of laid eggs (hatched + non-hatched). Eggs will be dried (1 week) prior to hatching (See [Guidelines for Irradiation of Mosquito Pupae in Sterile Insect Technique Programmes | IAEA](#), pages 20-24)).
- **The competitiveness index (C)** (Fried index): using egg hatch rates from the non-irradiated control (Ha), irradiated control (Hs) and competitiveness treatments (Ho) as follows: $C = ((H_a - H_o) / (H_o - H_s)) \times (N/S)$; where N is the number of non-irradiated males and S the number of irradiated males.

Each experiment will be repeated three times.

Reference of flight ability test and video:

[Frontiers | Standardization of the FAO/IAEA Flight Test for Quality Control of Sterile Mosquitoes \(frontiersin.org\)](#)

QR code_ video of the flight test operation:



Or Link :

<https://www.dropbox.com/s/22tks0hhp31qokq/Flight%20test%20device%20instructional%20video%20cut2%20with%20sub%20and%20music.mp4?dl=0>

Script of the Flight ability test video:

0:00-0:06 “The flight ability of mosquitoes can be measured using a Flight Test Device, as developed by the Insect Pest Control Subprogramme.”

0:19-0:28 “The Flight Test Device consists of six separate parts:

- a base plate;
- a transparent containment box with an open top and a circular netted opening;
- a top cover;
- the flight tube itself, composed of 40 individual tube’s each 25 cm high with an inside diameter of 8 mm placed inside a large containment tube;
- a 12V fan with an air flow of 0.218m³/min, an acoustic noise of 20.6dB and a rated speed of 6000rpm;
- and finally, a rubber base ring with a square of netting.”

0:29-0:39 “To assemble the Flight Test Device, begin by placing the base plate inside the rectangular containment box. The base should be placed with the metal rods facing downwards so that there is a space between the bottom of the containment box and the base plate.

0:39-0:51 “Next, cover the rubber base ring with the square of netting and fit it to the bottom of the large containment tube. Make sure the rubber ring fits the containment tube tightly, but do not cover the small, 1 cm hole at the bottom of the tube yet.”

0:52-0:57 “Move the tube inside the rectangular containment box and cover the latter with the top cover.”

0:59-1:06 “Put 2-3 small pellets of BG lure from Biogents, Regensburg, Germany in the decoy cap on the top cover.”

1:07-1:13 “Place the 12V fan directly on the decoy cap facing downwards so that air is blown into the containment box.”

1:17-1:24 “Switch on the fan for all Flight Test Devices. Gently aspirate 100 male mosquitoes of the same age with a manual aspirator.”

1:28-1:37 “Release them via the small hole at the bottom into the large containment tube of the Flight Test Device. Use the containment box’s netted opening to ensure mosquitoes do not escape the Flight Test Device.”

1:37-1:45 “Once all the mosquitoes are inside the containment tube, push the rubber base ring and netting upwards to cover the small hole through which mosquitoes were introduced by attaching the containment tube to the base plate. Repeat this procedure for at least 5 replicates per treatment that can be run in parallel.”

1:48-2:14 “Confined within a small volume, the instinct of mosquitoes is to fly upwards, through one of the 40 flight tubes, and out into the large, containment tube.”

2:19-2:25 “After two hours, cover the top of the containment tube with a petri dish of 9 cm of diameter and turn off all fans. At this point, the experiment is considered as complete.”

2:26-2:32 “Slowly remove the containment tube through the net of the large circular opening in the containment box.”

2:32-2:36 “When the tube is half-way out, be careful to hold the petri dish covering the top of the tube in place, to avoid any escapees.”

2:36-2:41 “The mosquitoes remaining in the tube are considered as ‘Non-fliers’ whereas the ones remaining in the containment box are considered as ‘fliers’ to calculate the flight rate.”

¹ Culbert NJ, Balestrino F, Dor A, et al. (2018) A rapid quality control test to foster the development of genetic control in mosquitoes. *Sci Rep* 8, 16179.

Hamidou Maïga, Deng Lu, Wadaka Mamai, Nanwintoum Séverin Bimbilé Somda, Thomas Wallner, Mame Thierno Bakhoum, Odet Bueno Masso, Claudia Martina, Simran Singh Kotla, Hanano Yamada, Gustavo Salvador Herranz, Rafael Argiles Herrero, Chee Seng Chong, Cheong Huat Tan and Jeremy Bouyer. Standardization of the FAO/IAEA Flight Test for Quality Control of Sterile Mosquitoes. *Front. Bioeng. Biotechnol.*, 18 July 2022 Sec. Biosafety and Biosecurity. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fbioe.2022.876675>

ANNEX 10: Participants of the 3rd RCM

D44004-CR-3
Third Research Coordination Meeting on Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control
Vienna, Austria
6 to 10 November 2023

List of Participants
(as of 2023-10-18)

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ANNEX 11: Agenda of the 3rd RCM

Third FAO/IAEA Research Co-ordination Meeting “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

November 6 -10, 2023

Vienna, Austria – Virtual

Note: please try to use a head set to minimize echo if possible, and mute when not presenting. We will turn off the video to improve the connection when presentations start.

Monday November 6, 2023

Day 1: The Americas (time zone)

Webex session open at 14:00 CET (Vienna time)

CET (local time for presenter)

14.30 – 15.00 OPENING REMARKS

15.00 – 15:30 Fabrizio Balestrino

Bulk irradiation of chilled adults

15.30 – 16.00 (10.30 – 11.00)

Jair Virginio & Aline T. M. Pinto (Brazil, -5)

Evaluation of the Radiosensitivity of Aedes aegypti Pupae under different packing Conditions during the irradiation and the Influence of Pre-Marking during Long-Distance Transportation

16.00 – 16.30 (10.00 – 11.30)

Dan Hahn & Chao Chen (USA, FL, -6)

Does the source matter for SIT? Negligible effects of irradiator source, X-ray vs. gamma, for sterilization and sterile male mating competitiveness in the mosquito Aedes aegypti.

16.30 – 17.00 (10.30– 11.00)

Heath MacMillan (Canada, (Ottawa) -6)

Can we use cold acclimation and cold-active miRNAs to improve low temperature performance of Aedes aegypti?

17.00 – 17.30 (10.00 – 10.30) Patricio Ponce (Ecuador, -7)

Effect of Gamma Radiation Sterilization on Aedes aegypti from Ecuador

17.30 – 18.00 (10.30 – 11.00) Ariane Dor (Mexico, -7)

Effect of chilling and irradiation on the vectorial capacity of Chiapas Genetically Diverse Strain Aedes aegypti females

BREAK 10 min

1 hour

Discussion

Tuesday November 7, 2023

Day 2: Europe & Africa (time zones)

Webex session open at 09:00 CET (Vienna time)

CET (local time for presenter) **session starts 2 hrs EARLIER!**

09.45 – 10.00

OPENING REMARKS

10.00 – 10.30 (12.00 – 12.30)

Varina Ramdonee (Mauritius, +2)

Optimizing the quality of sterile Ae. albopictus males released as part of a Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) feasibility study in Mauritius

10.30 – 11.00 (12.30 – 13.00)

Lucie Marquereau (France/La Reunion)?

Standardization of irradiation process of Aedes albopictus males under mass-rearing conditions in support of SIT program in La Reunion Island

11.00 – 11.30 (12.00 – 12.30)

George Balatsos (Greece, +1)

Quality control trials for drone release and irradiation process using a horizontal beam irradiator.

11.30 – 12.00

David Almenar (Spain)

New achievements in the sterilisation methods, process and quality control at a medium-scale in the SIT-based project against Aedes albopictus in the Valencian Community (Spain)

Lunch BREAK

13.00 – 13.30

Romeo Bellini (Italy)

Practicing mosquito pupae X-ray mass irradiation with RADGIL2

13.30 – 14.00

Michael Samuel (South Africa)

Investigating baseline parameters for X-Ray source dosimetry, Anopheles arabiensis sterilisation and quality control for an updated SIT pipeline

14.30 – 15.00 (12:30-13:00) Mame Thierno Bakhom (Senegal, -2)

Relationship between escape rate and competitiveness index of Aedes aegypti sterile males

15.00 – 15.30 (13.00 – 13.30) Simon Sawadogo (Burkina Faso, -2)

Study of swarming and mating behavior of sterile males of Anopheles coluzzii using 3D system

1 hour

Discussion

Wednesday November 8, 2023

Day 3: Asia (time zones)

Webex session open at 08:00 CET

CET (local time for presenter)

08.45 – 09.00

OPENING REMARKS

09.00 – 09.30 (15.00 – 15.30)

Glenda Obra (Philippines, +6)

Irradiation of Aedes aegypti L. using Gamma, X-ray and E-beam Irradiators.

09.30 – 10.00 (15.30 – 16.00) Juntao Gong (China, +6).

Optimize mosquito mass rearing for sterile male quality improvement

10.00 – 10.30 (15.00 – 15.30) Hadian Sasmita (Indonesia, +5)

Performance Analysis of 300 KeV, 5 MeV, 10 MeV Electron Beam to Achieve Mosquito Sterilization Dose

10.30 – 11.00 (15.30 – 16.00)

Pattamaporn Kittayapong & Suwannapa Ninphanomchai (Thailand, +5)

Effect of different X-ray doses on the quality of Aedes aegypti with and without Wolbachia when irradiated at egg or larval stages

11.00 – 11.30 (15.00 – 15.30) Kajla Seheli (Bangladesh, +4)

Effect of exogenous factors on sterile A. aegypti male quality

BREAK

1 hour

Discussion

Thursday, November 9, 2023

Day 4:

Webex session open at 09:00 CET

Group discussions: (re)defining R&D workplan and goals: open sessions (*use the same link*)

09.30-10.00 Vienna time: Florent Kuntz (France)

The specifics of dosimetry for low energy E Beam and X Ray applications

09.30-12.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) **Europe, Africa & Asia**

15:00-17.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) **The Americas (& Europe)**

Revision of the Logical matrix framework (to be edited on the document)

ANY TIME Other sub-group discussion, coordination & collaborations on specific activities, or One-on-one discussions on data/protocols/planned activities/etc (let me know by email if you wish to meet and when)

Final report- completion of all sections

Friday, November 10, 2023

Day 5:

Webex session open at 09:30 CET

Open sessions

10.00-12.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) **Europe, Africa & Asia**

15:00-17.00 Vienna time (see table on page 5 for your local time) **The Americas (& Europe)**

Final report compiled and completed

ANNEX 12: Abstracts of the 3rd RCM

THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

Virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Effect of exogenous factors on sterile *A. aegypti* male quality

AUTHOR (S): Kajla Seheli, Ananna Ghosh and Md. Forhad Hossain

ORGANIZATION: *Insect Biotechnology Division, Institute of Food and Radiation Biology, Atomic Energy Research Establishment, Dhaka 1349, Bangladesh.*

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Bangladesh is struggling to cope with a record-breaking outbreak of dengue, with the death toll climbing to 928 as of 2th September. Previous study of our team showed that the radiation dose of 60 Gy can be considered as the effective dose for achieving male sterility while keeping the male performances to a satisfactory level. The irradiator used in these experiments is a dry storage irradiator (BRIT, India) with a 90 kCi *Cobalt-60* (^{60}Co) gamma source located in the Institute of Food and Radiation Biology (IFRB). After Second RCM detailed workplan was set up for the next 18 months. It has been necessary to evaluate the impact of environmental parameters affecting the dose response in *A. aegypti* pupae, such as chilling temperature and water temperature to ensure optimal irradiation linked to an efficient production process.

1) In one study, the impact of chilling temperatures (4, 7 and 10°C with control) with exposure periods (1, 4, 8 and 24h) have been investigated on the survival and chill-coma recovery rate (CCRR) of lab-reared *A. aegypti* strain. Different chilling temperatures showed insignificant effect on CCRR ($P > 0.05$) except the 24h exposure duration ($p=0.001$). Similarly, it had no significant effect on survival when the exposure time was 1, 4 and 8h ($P > 0.05$). However, storing mosquitoes in chilled condition for 24h exhibited significant effect on survival ($P=0.0069$). The optimized chilling temperature and duration were 7°C and 1h. Further studies are going on induced sterility and flight ability.

2) Exploring different water temperature e.g, 7-9°C, 13-15°C and 16-18°C during irradiation process failed to show no impact on sterile male *A. aegypti* quality.

The work plan for next eighteen months are as follows: 1. The role of oxygen depletion and subsequent radio-protective effects during irradiation of mosquito pupae in water. 2. The role of different dose rates during irradiation of mosquito pupae in water with two different

irradiator units a) Panaromic batch type irradiator (90 kCi) and b) Self-contained Gamma irradiator (12 kCi) 3. Assess sterilized male flight ability using the original FAO/IAEA rapid quality control flight test device (FTD) (version 1.1).

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Irradiation of *Aedes aegypti* L. using Gamma, X-ray and E-beam Irradiators.

AUTHOR (S): Obara G.B., Hila A.M.J., Neri D.J., Angeles J., Pares P., Feliciano C.

ORGANIZATION: DOST-Philippine Nuclear Research Institute

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

In this study, *Aedes aegypti* L. male pupae were exposed to varying doses of radiation using gamma, x-ray, and e-beam irradiators at the Philippine Nuclear Research Institute. The effect of irradiation on the sterility and longevity of male *Ae. aegypti* were assessed. When exposed to gamma radiation, the mean induced sterility (IS) was 99.74% at 60 Gy. For X-ray irradiation, IS of 99.92% was achieved at a lower dose (45 Gy) than gamma. The longevity in gamma and X-ray-irradiated males was not significantly different from the untreated controls. Initial results using E-beam showed that IS at 60Gy was only 61%. An IS of 99% was not achieved even at the highest dose (90Gy). The longevity of irradiated males was significantly lower than the untreated control. The percent fliers in gamma-irradiated males were compared to the unirradiated males. Adult males from pupae irradiated with 60 and 75 Gy, unirradiated males knocked down at 4°C for 10 minutes, and untreated males were tested using the Flight tubes provided by the IAEA. The % fliers at different irradiation rates were not significantly different from the control. This result indicates that irradiation did not significantly affect the flight ability of the adult males.

THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: *Standardization of irradiation process of Aedes albopictus males under mass-rearing conditions in support of SIT program in La Reunion Island*

AUTHOR (S): Lucie Marquereau, Hanano Yamada, Jeremy Bouyer, Louis C. Gouagna

ORGANIZATION: Institut de Recherche pour le Développement (IRD) – Reunion Island

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The implementation of the sterile insect technique against *Aedes albopictus* relies on many parameters, in particular on the success of the sterilization of males, released into the target area in overflowing numbers to mate with wild females. Achieving consistent sterility levels requires efficient and standardized irradiation protocols. Here, we assessed the effects of exposure environment, density of pupae, irradiation dose, quantity of water and location in the canister on the induced sterility of male pupae. We found that irradiation of 2000 pupae in 130 ml of water and with a dose of 40 Gy was the best combination of factors to reliably sterilize male pupae with the specific irradiator used in our control programme, allowing the sterilization of 14000 pupae per cycle. The location in the canister had no effect on induced sterility. The results reported here allowed the standardization and optimization of irradiation protocols for field pilot testing of the SIT against *Ae. albopictus* in Reunion Island, which required the production of more than 300,000 sterile males per week. The long-term implication of this work will be discussed. [IAEA Research Agreement No: 23895/R0]

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Practicing mosquito pupae X-ray mass irradiation with RADGIL2

AUTHOR (S): Arianna Puggioli, Teresa Brandolini, Mario Marinozzi, Marco Carrieri, Romeo Bellini

ORGANIZATION: Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli”, Via Sant’Agata 835, 40014 Crevalcore, Italy

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

With the acquisition of a new X-ray irradiator, we have now the in-house capacity to manage the irradiation of mass reared mosquitoes. The purchased machine is the RADGIL2 made by Gilardoni, Italy, a self-contained irradiator holding a horizontal canister of 1.8 litre, with a dose rate of 6 Gy/min and a DUR > 1.5, as declared by the producer.

The canister rotates on its central axis at the speed of 20 revolutions/min. The internal side were shaped to keep the pupae in the water mixed during the irradiation, thus allowing better exposure homogeneity.

Preliminary testing was conducted to ascertain the functionality of the machine and to establish the standard nominal dose (40 Gy). The current adopted SOPs indicate to irradiate batches of 30,000-40,000 male pupae, aged 2-48 h, in 250 ml of water. This guarantee that about 1.5 litre of air is present in the canister, preventing hypoxia during irradiation. Studies are ongoing to evaluate the induced sterility rate, the male longevity and their flight capacity. Moreover, we did comparative studies on the sensitivity to radiation of several *Aedes albopictus* populations, collected in some European countries (Italy, Portugal, Switzerland, Greece) finding not significant differences between populations.

THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: **Can we use cold acclimation and cold-active miRNAs to improve low temperature performance of *Aedes aegypti*?**

AUTHOR (S): Heath MacMillan

ORGANIZATION: Department of Biology, Carleton University, Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Most insects are chill susceptible, and suffer from performance deficits, chilling injury, and death at temperatures well above those that cause them to freeze. *Ae. aegypti* have historically been restricted to tropical and subtropical regions, but adults have been recently and repeatedly found in more poleward climates. This suggests that adult *Ae. aegypti* are capable of overwintering, but very little is known about their capacity for, and plasticity of, thermal performance and whether/how this plasticity could be used to improve performance of sterile males released in the field when the climate is suboptimal for release. We have been working to characterize how thermal environments influence male performance in the laboratory and identify the physiological and molecular mechanisms that underlie any plasticity in thermal performance observed. *Ae. aegypti* are indeed capable of cold acclimation that mitigates cold-induced injury and thereby improves survival at low temperatures, yet very little is known about the molecular signals driving this phenotype. However, miRNAs are widely recognized as key regulators of thermal plasticity and low temperature survival in other animals. Most miRNA thermodynamic and binding parameters have been established assuming a body temperature relevant for endotherms (37°C). As temperature is known to directly affect RNA thermodynamics, we predicted that miRNA abundance and miRNA:mRNA interactions will be affected by body temperature. Here, we used a bioinformatic approach to identify novel mosquito miRNAs from an online database of small RNA sequencing (RNA-seq) data generated from *Anopheles gambiae*. A total of 116 novel *An. gambiae* miRNAs were identified using miRDeep2 and then mapped to the *Ae. aegypti* genome using bowtie. We identified a candidate list of 33 conserved novel miRNAs, each mapping to both mosquito reference genomes, and these candidates are now being evaluated for their potential roles in thermal plasticity in *Ae. aegypti*. Ultimately, we hope to modulate miRNA signalling and use this technique to improve the efficacy of release programs in the early spring.

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Quality control trials for drone release and irradiation process using a horizontal beam irradiator.

AUTHOR (S): Antonios Michaelakis¹, George Balatsos¹, Vassilios Karras¹, Nikolaos Papadopoulos², Arianna Puggioli³ and Romeo Bellini³

ORGANIZATION: ¹Scient. Directorate of Entomology and Agricultural Zoology, Benaki Phytopathological Institute, Kifissia, Greece; ²Dept. of Agriculture, Crop Production and Rural Environment, University of Thessaly, Magnisias, Greece; ³Centro Agricoltura Ambiente “G. Nicoli”, Crevalcore, Italy (IAEA Collaborating Centre)

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The sterile insect technique (SIT) method involves releasing large numbers of sterile males to outcompete wild males in mating with females, leading to a decline in pest populations. In the current study we present a series of quality control (QC) tests that have been conducted within the context of an area-wide (AW) strategy for the management of the *Aedes albopictus* (Asian tiger mosquito) with emphasis on the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT). In more detail, our research included a trial comparing drone and ground releases of irradiated *Aedes albopictus* males using a mark-release-recapture experiment. This approach entailed the long-distance transfer of sterile mosquitoes, and recaptures were performed using Human Landing Catches (HLC). Additionally, for the irradiation process, preliminary trials were conducted for packaging (chilled) and the irradiation procedure using a local horizontal beam irradiator.

The results concerning the distribution of sterile males from aerial and ground releases indicated that the recapture rate with ground release was significantly higher than that of drone release. Sterile males released via drone (aerial) exhibited a high correlation with wild males. However, with ground release, there was a negligible or weak correlation between catches of sterile males and wild males. Regarding the irradiation process, the preliminary findings are highly promising. In collaboration with our NLO (National Liaison Officer) we established a harmonized protocol for the transportation of chilled mosquitoes to the irradiator, which is located approximately 13 kilometres away from BPI. It is worth noting that this marks the first instance in which trials for producing sterile mosquito males have been designed, implemented, and evaluated in Greece. In our forthcoming trials, we plan to focus on producing a dose curve to determine the optimum dose for *Aedes albopictus* adults (chilled).

Optimize mosquito mass rearing for sterile male quality improvement

Juntao Gong¹, Yongkang Liang¹, Yongjun Li^{1,2}, and Zhiyong Xi^{1,3}

¹Guangzhou Wolbaki Biotech Co., Ltd, Guangzhou, China; ²Department of Pathogen Biology, School of Medicine, Jinan University, Guangzhou, China; ³Department of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, Michigan State University, East Lansing, MI, USA

Abstract

Combining incompatible and sterile insect techniques (IIT–SIT) enables near elimination of field population of the world’s most invasive mosquito species, *Aedes albopictus*. However, both mass rearing and quality control approaches need to be improved in order to reduce the number of males for release and improve the cost-effectiveness for operation and deployment. Here, we update our recent progress in mosquito mass rearing, quality control, and the successful development of an automatic mosquito pupae sex sorter that can effectively separate large numbers of males from females for population suppression of *Aedes aegypti*, *Ae. albopictus* and *Culex quinquefasciatus*. We will also provide the evidence from field trial to show that the long-term mass-production will not change males’ mating behavior and persistent population suppression will not result in change in female mating preference in the field. These results highlight that combined IIT/SIT or IIT-based mosquito control can be flexible, cost-affordable, biologically safe, and highly efficient in combating mosquito-borne diseases.

THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Evaluation of the Radiosensitivity of *Aedes aegypti* Pupae under different packing Conditions during the irradiation and the Influence of Pre-Marking during Long-Distance Transportation."

AUTHOR (S): Aline T. M. Pinto, Bianca Andrade, Mario França, Nilton Souza, Mirian Brito, Helen Khoury, Jair Virginio.

ORGANIZATION: Moscamed Brasil and Universidade Federal de Pernambuco.

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

The operational implementation of the Sterile Insect Technique (SIT) poses significant challenges, including dose rate, pupal developmental stage, and packing conditions during irradiation. In the context of *Aedes aegypti* irradiation, adult irradiation has demonstrated higher operational efficiency compared to pupal irradiation. This study investigates the impact of irradiation on pupae under varied conditions: completely dry, percolated, and submerged in water. Currently, tests have only been conducted with completely dry pupae, while trials with other conditions are in progress. Furthermore, experiments were carried out to investigate the impact of simulated transport of irradiated mosquitoes, both marked and unmarked, concerning flight ability and survival after transport. Dry pupae, aged 30-36 hours post-emergence, were irradiated at doses ranging from 20 to 70 Gy using a Gammacell 220 irradiator, Cobalt-60 source. Each pupa was placed in acrylic cubes (the same cubes used for adult irradiation) filled to 30% capacity due to limited pupa availability, and the remaining space was filled with Arborio rice. Post-irradiation, parameters like emergence rate, adult longevity, and sterility were assessed. Preliminary results showed that storage conditions did not significantly impact adult emergence (over 95% at all doses) or survival rates, which remained above 95% after 15 days. Sterility data is still being analyzed. Additionally, to assess the marking effect during mosquito transport, *Ae. aegypti* males irradiated at 65 Gy in the adult stage were divided into two groups: i) irradiated males marked and subsequently transported; ii) irradiated males transported and marked at the destination. Both groups were marked with two quantities of marking powder, 10 and 15 mg. It was observed that adult survival was above 98% for all evaluated treatments. There was no significant difference in escape rate between the two tested powder quantities for both groups; however, there was a decrease in escape rate in both powder quantities when insects were marked before transport. The preliminary results show that irradiating dry pupae has minimal impact on *Aedes aegypti* adult emergence and survival. Additionally, marking irradiated mosquitoes before transport negatively affects escape rates. These insights are crucial for optimizing SIT protocols and improving *Aedes aegypti* control efficacy."

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Performance Analysis of 300 KeV, 5 MeV, 10 MeV Electron Beam to Achieve Mosquito Sterilization Dose

AUTHOR (S): Hadian I. Sasmita, Beni Ernawan, Bimo Saputro, Muhamad Yasin Yunus.

ORGANIZATION: Research Center for Radiation Process Technology, Research Organization for Nuclear Energy, National Research and Innovation Technology.

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

According to the dose-response curve using Gamma-ray irradiator, over 99% sterility can be achieved by exposing *Ae. aegypti* male pupae or adults at a dose of 70 Gy. In an electron beam, the low target doses to sterilize mosquitoes (e.g. < 0.1 kGy) can, theoretically, be achieved by adjusting its energy, current, and the duration of the object passing through the beam (conveyor speed). Here we performed the performance test in three electron beam facilities in Indonesia, which represent low-energy e-beam (300 KeV), medium-energy e-beam (5 MeV), and high-energy e-beam (10 MeV), to reach the desired dose of sterility. The test was conducted in each e-beam by applying several different energies, currents, and speeds to target certain doses. As the results, in low-energy e-beam, the dosimeter reads of trials using two different energies (300 KeV; 250 KeV) and currents (50 μ A, 2.2 mA) combination settings were inconsistent and none of the trials reached the targeted doses. In medium-energy e-beam, the B3 film and alanine dosimeter reads of trials with different energies (3.0, 3.1, 3.2 MeV), currents (1, 2, 4 8 mA), and constant conveyor speed (4 m/min) were not consistent as well. Technically, the lowest possible dose that the machine achieved was 2 kGy (3.2 MeV, 1 mA, 4 m/min), although it is possible to lower the target dose by speeding the conveyor belt. With high-energy e-beam, trials using fixed energy (9.6 MeV), fixed current (0.5 mA), and different conveyor speeds (1 - min, 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 – max m/min) to reach the lowest dose were conducted. The B3 film reads indicated that the lowest dose that the machine could achieve was 1 kGy. Based on these results, the next trials will be only focused on high-energy e-beam, by finding additional components that can reduce the intensity of electrons.

On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: The impact of X-ray irradiation on quality and sterility of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, with and without *Wolbachia* endosymbionts

AUTHOR (S): Pattamaporn Kittayapong & Suwannapa Ninphanomchai

ORGANIZATION:

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Abstract

We addressed the impact of X-ray irradiation on quality and sterility of *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes, with and without *Wolbachia* endosymbionts, when eggs or larvae were irradiated at different X-ray irradiation dosages.

For *Ae. aegypti* eggs, irradiation process was conducted with the dosages of 1 Gy, 3 Gy, 5 Gy and 7 Gy respectively. Results showed that the dose of 7 Gy significantly induced more than 92% sterility of both wild-type males and females. For *Wolbachia* trans-infected one, the same X-ray irradiation dose significantly induced male sterility, whereas the irradiation dose of only 5 Gy could significantly induce female sterility. For the *Wolbachia* trans-infected eggs, the dose from 1 Gy significantly increased the development of the forth-instar larvae while significantly high mortality of pupae was observed at the irradiation dose of 7 Gy. For the wild-type ones, the doses from 3 Gy to 5 Gy significantly decreased the development of the first-instar larvae, whereas the doses from 3 Gy to 7 Gy significantly increased the development of the third instar larvae.

For *Ae. aegypti* larvae, irradiation process was conducted with the dosages of 10 Gy, 30 Gy and 50 Gy. Results showed that X-ray irradiation at 10 Gy did not have an impact on the pupation rate of irradiated wild-type larvae. The same dose slightly lowered the adult emergence rate to 93.32% and significantly reduced both survival rate and longevity of wild-type males and females that emerged from irradiated larvae; but the same dose did not induce complete sterility. Results were the same when *Wolbachia* trans-infected *Ae. aegypti* were irradiated at the larval stage. X-ray irradiation dose at 10 Gy significantly reduced survival rate and longevity and the impact was more pronounced in females. However, the same dose did not induce complete sterility in both males and females. Therefore, higher doses of X-ray should be further studied or tested to evaluate its effectiveness on sterility of *Ae. aegypti* males and females.

THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Study of swarming and mating behavior of sterile males of *Anopheles coluzzii* using 3D system

AUTHOR (S): Simon P. Sawadogo¹, Bouraïma Sere Jean Jacques B Tioye¹, Serge Poda¹ Agboho A. Prudenciène², Olivier Gnankine³, Roch K. Dabiré¹

ORGANIZATION: ¹*Institut de Recherche en Sciences de la Santé, Bobo-Dioulasso BP 545, Burkina Faso.* ²*Centre International de recherche-développement sur l'élevage en zone subhumide.* ³*Université Joseph KI-ZERBO*

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Due to the insecticide resistance developed by several malaria vector species and also to the lack of compliance of malaria control tools in the community level, the only use of insecticide-based control tools become challenging to reach the elimination level of malaria in the endemic African countries. The development of complementary methods became a crucial need. Among them the use of biological or genetic control of vectors being developed in lab level began promising. The objective of this study was to investigate the kinetic of swarming and mating patterns of irradiated males in the semi-field set up using 3D system. The question was how irradiation can affect swarming dynamics. We designed experiments in a semi-field setup to better address this question using a 3D tracking system. In our experiments, two different treatments were used: Males irradiated at doses of 70Gy and control males. For each treatment, a total of 400 4–6-days-old *Anopheles coluzzii* virgin males (300) and virgin females (100) were transferred to the semi-field setup 2 hours before sunset. In the compartment, a marker (1.5 x 1.5 m) was randomly placed on the floor, and the 400 mosquitoes were released 1 hour before sunset. 3D data recording started 30 minutes before sunset and lasted for two hours. We conducted a total of 5 replicates. The sensitivity analysis of our recorded 3D data showed a peak of activity for the two treatments. Finally, we sought to understand how irradiation can affect swarming characteristics, specifically swarm height, swarm shape and size and the number of couples. The preliminary results showed that there is no interaction between irradiation and these swarming characteristics analysed.

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: New achievements in the sterilisation methods, process and quality control at a medium-scale in the SIT-based project against *Aedes albopictus* in the Valencian Community (Spain)

AUTHOR (S): Tur, Carles; Almenar, David; Benlloch, Sandra; Mora, Gema; Pla, Ignacio.

ORGANIZATION: TRAGSA (Empresa de Transformación Agraria, S.A). Spain

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

The SIT-based control project against *Aedes albopictus* in the Comunitat Valenciana (Spain) has been releasing sterilised males since 2018. The sterilisation protocol is based on the application of Gamma radiation to males in the pupal stage. The scaling-up of the project entails the need to implement new and more efficient sterilisation protocols. In previous reports, we presented the achievements in the development of a protocol for the irradiation of adult males in a Rhodotron industrial electron accelerator. Cost analysis makes different approaches advisable depending on scale and context. We have economically explored the option of irradiation in a commercial facility based on the Rhodotron industrial electron accelerator, concluding that the profitability of this application depends on the particular commercial conditions of the provider and the scale of production/release. For our current project conditions, it is not yet cost-effective to outsource sterilization to this particular industrial electron beam facility. We developed an alternative protocol for the irradiation of adult males in a Gammacell 220. The results and protocol are described. Concerning quality control, we present preliminary results on blood quality assessment methods, as well as a general review of our routine quality and process control protocols.

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

Vienna, Austria

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Relationship between escape rate and competitiveness index of *Aedes aegypti* sterile males

AUTHOR (S): Mame Thierno BAKHOUM, Gorgui DIOUF and Assane Gueye FALL

ORGANIZATION : Institut Sénégalais de Recherches Agricoles (ISRA)

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Mosquito-borne arboviruses, such as Zika and dengue viruses, pose a growing global health challenge, threatening more than 40% of the world's population. Major progress in the fight against these arbovirus infections continues to rely on vector control. Integrated pest management including the sterile insect technique (SIT) is the most effective strategy for controlling vectors. However, its success depends on the ability of released sterile males to survive, disperse, compete with wild males, and inseminate wild females. Hence a need to develop and validate quality control procedures for sterile males throughout the production and release chain. Therefore, we propose in the CRP “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control” to develop and evaluate adequate quality control procedures to be used for SIT applications to control *Aedes aegypti*. Thus, we evaluated the flight ability and competitiveness of sterile males and wild *Aedes aegypti* males under semi-field cages in order to link the flight ability to the competitiveness of *Aedes aegypti* males under a formula of regression equation. The sterile males used in this study came from the AeISRA-LNERV_2019 colony (Senegalese origin) which was mass-reared at ICPL, compacted and transported from Austria to Senegal under a cold chain. The flight capacity of sterile *Aedes aegypti* males after long-distance transport (2 to 4 days) was evaluated as well as their competitiveness in semi-field cages. The flight capability percentage varied between 75.94±11 with a competitiveness index of 0.54±0.11 and 50.36±16.12 with a competitiveness index of 0.97±0.01 depending on the duration of transport of sterile males. The estimated regression equation can be written as: ***Competitiveness Index = 1.1823 - 0.007 x Escape rate***. Using this formula, for each new escape rate, we can predict the Competitiveness Index.

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Effect of Gamma Radiation Sterilization on *Aedes aegypti* from Ecuador

AUTHOR (S): Patricio Ponce¹, Varsovia Cevallos¹, Ximena Galarza¹, Edison Vera², Carlos Cherrez³

ORGANIZATION: ¹*Instituto Nacional de Investigación en Salud Pública-INSPI*, ²*Escuela Politécnica Nacional, Departamento de Ciencias Nucleares*, ³*Ministerio de Electricidad y Energía Renovable, Subsecretaría de Control y Aplicaciones Nucleares (SCAN)*.

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

In order to facilitate the irradiation, transport of adult mosquitoes in adult stage we decided to use a new container for transport and irradiation of adult mosquitoes (36 hours old). This new container (Moscamed, Brazil), it is made of plexiglass with five drawers holding nine cube boxes 24x24x24 mm, each can hold around 1,000 immobilized adult mosquitoes. The container can hold up to 45,000 mosquitoes. We use a self-shielded gamma irradiator J.L. Shepherd Category self-armored, semi-automatic, model 109-68. The assays are done in collaboration of personnel from the Department of Nuclear Sciences (DCN), of the National Polytechnic School of Ecuador (EPN).

We established five levels of irradiation A, B, C, D, E, A being the upper level and E the lower level. Each level has nine reference positions, which are the cubes of 24x24x24 mm. These positions were numbered from left to right. Dosimeters were placed in each irradiation position and at the reference point, these were coated with high-density polyurethane foam to simulate the density of mosquitoes and maintain electronic balance during irradiation. We used alanine pellet dosimeters. Prior to the irradiation mapping, the dose rate determination was performed on February 15, 2023. We determined the dose rate at 123.29 Gy/h (2.05 Gy/min).

We assessed the flight ability of irradiated male mosquitoes from Galapagos with different post-irradiation treatments. The treatments were chilling, compaction, handling and transportation. We used the flight test device (FTD) (v1.1) provided by the IAEA.

Laboratory room conditions were 26 ±2 °C, 70 ±10 (RH%), 500-1000 lux (overhead lights). Assay time: 7-9 am, 2-4 pm and 4-6 pm. We performed the assays with the group control (laboratory males no stress), irradiated and non-irradiated males with chilling, compaction, handling and transportation. The assays were performed at 48, 72 and 96 hours after irradiation under lab conditions. Five repetitions for each treatment was performed, 100 males were used per repetition. The highest escape percentage (95%) of irradiated males

(7-9 am) with chilling, compaction, handling and transportation was after 96 hours of irradiation. The control group had an escape rate of 89%.

In December 2022, 20,000 sterile males were transported to Galápagos to measure survival and effect of marking fluorescent powder (15 mg per 1000 mosquitoes). Mortality after transportation was less than 10%. Mosquitoes kept in cages (2x2x2m) in semi field conditions without sugar lived up to 12 days, while mosquitoes with sugar (10%) lived up to 22 days.

Sterilized mosquitoes were transported from Quito to Sta. Cruz, Galápagos to perform a mark-release-recapture (MRR) assay. We transported 128,000 sterilized mosquitoes in two separate shipments. Sterilized males were transported at 4-9 °C, using the device made of small plexiglass cubic containers (Moscamed-Brazil) in an insulated suitcase with phase changing material pads for chilling. The mortality post-irradiation (75Gy), after about 10 hours of transportation (Galapagos) under chilling conditions, was 3.5%. No significant difference of mortality was observed (0-0.3%) in mosquitoes marked with yellow or pink dye. Survivorship of irradiated marked males was up to 27 days fed with sugar (10%) *ad libitum* under laboratory conditions. Most of the mortality occurred between day 9 through 16.

THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER: Does the source matter for SIT? Negligible effects of irradiator source, X-ray vs. gamma, for sterilization and sterile male mating competitiveness in the mosquito *Aedes aegypti*.

AUTHOR (S): Dan Hahn & Chao Chen

ORGANIZATION: University of Florida

SHORT SUMMARY OF PAPER

Abstract:

Integrative pest management for multiple agricultural pests, and in recent years interest has been growing in applying SIT to mosquito vectors of importance to human health. SIT may be particularly useful for peridomestic disease vectors like *Aedes aegypti* that live in close proximity to humans, occupy cryptic larval breeding sites with adults that rest in places difficult to reach with sprays, and that have some populations showing resistance to common chemicals used in mosquito control. For SIT, males are typically sterilized by

exposing them to gamma radiation. However, these irradiators typically use Co-60 or Cs-137; high activity sources that are vulnerable to theft or misuse and thus require substantial security and monitoring. This study seeks to compare an established Cs-137 gamma irradiator used for an operational *Ae. aegypti* SIT pilot program with a new X-ray irradiator for sterilizing male pupae and adults while maintaining male performance after irradiation. We show negligible differences in efficacy of sterilization or post-irradiation male performance between the X-ray and gamma sources. Furthermore, when male mosquitoes were irradiated in either normal oxygen-rich air or severe hypoxia, the hypoxic treatment had a similar radioprotective effect when males were sterilized with X-rays as had previously been observed with gamma-ray irradiation, further showing equivalence of biological effects of radiation across sources. Our results show that insect SIT programs can successfully transition from gamma to X-ray sources and suggests that new programs can begin their programs using X-ray irradiation sources to avoid regulatory and cost hurdles associated with installation of new gamma-radiation sources, overall showing that X-ray irradiators provide a viable alternative technology to radioactive gamma sources for insect pest control.

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

AUTHOR (S): Michael Samuel

ORGANIZATION: NICD, Sandringham, South Africa

Bulk sterilization of *An. arabiensis* using X-Ray irradiation

Current Knowledge:

The National Institute for Communicable Diseases’ GammaCell 220 irradiator (Co⁶⁰ source), which has previously been used for all SIT investigation and use is no longer operational. Fortunately, we now have access to an X-Ray irradiator, though this is yet to be characterized. As such, gamma irradiation at our facility will indefinitely be halted and X-Ray irradiation will require optimization. A 3D-printed adapter, which can hold up to four 50ml Falcon tubes in an array around the centre of the machine’s carbon fibre canister, has been fabricated and requires testing. As we will likely pursue adult irradiation with X-Rays, there is little pre-existing information for our target species, *Anopheles arabiensis*.

Improving process and production of *Anopheles arabiensis* genetic sexing strains

Michael Samuel

Current Knowledge

Following catastrophic failure to utilize the genetic sexing strain GMK (Y-linked resistance to dieldrin) in 2022, alternative strains with viable sex selection options are being further investigated. In addition, having experienced difficulties in pupal synchronization and noting the results of Yamada *et al.* (2019), we have decided to pursue adult irradiation. This irradiation will have to be conducted using a RadSource 2400 X-Ray irradiator. The current dosimetry as of April 2022 was believed to be 19Gy/min, however the data informing this was collected while the machine was experiencing debilitating cooling issues. So further dosimetry is required once these issues are resolved. We aim to build upon the work conducted by Ntoyi *et al.*, 2022 in assessing fluorescent strains which can be separated at the L1 larval stage using a large particle flow cytometer. Life history and quality-relevant data will need to be collected relative to the SIT pipeline. Thus far, we know that the KWAG-AY2 strain has performed better than the wild-type KWAG in larval development, longevity and flight ability.

**THIRD RESEARCH COORDINATION MEETING
On “Mosquito Irradiation, Sterilization and Quality Control”**

virtually

6-10 November 2023

TITLE OF WORKING PAPER:

The specifics of dosimetry for low energy E Beam and X Ray applications

AUTHOR (S): Florent KUNTZ

ORGANIZATION: Aerial 250 rue Laurent Fries, 67400 Illkirch, France

1. Introduction

Irradiation plant control parameters help to set the radiation dose to be given to a product. Dosimetry i.e. the measurement of the absorbed dose, is the tool to determine, the dose which has been eventually absorbed by the product. The latter statement is valid if all aspects of qualifications mentioned in relevant standards have been fulfilled.

Radiation absorbed dose is the key quantity that governs the process. Dose is the mean energy imparted to a quantity of matter divided by the mass of that matter i.e. energy per unit mass. Its SI unit is the Gray (Gy) (1Gy = 1J/kg) and the doses applied in food irradiation applications are usually mentioned in kGy (1000 Gy).

Dose is influenced by many irradiation plant and product parameters, such as radiation type and energy, fluency and geometry; conveyor speed or irradiation time; product density and irradiation pattern

The overall influence of these parameters on dose distribution must be taken into account to ensure that the intended technological purpose is achieved throughout the production batch.

The required minimum absorbed dose D_{purp} must be applied, and the maximum acceptable dose $D_{\text{max,acc}}$ must not be exceeded.

‘For the irradiation of any food, the minimum absorbed dose should be sufficient to achieve the technological purpose and the maximum absorbed dose should be less than that which would jeopardize wholesomeness or would adversely affect structural integrity, functional properties, or sensory attributes.’

From:

High Dose Irradiation: Wholesomeness of Food Irradiated with Doses above 10 kGy, Report of a Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Study Group, Technical Report Series 890 WHO, Geneva, 1999; Safety and Nutritional Adequacy of Irradiated Foods, WHO, Geneva, 1994; and Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food, Report of Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee, Technical Report Series 659, WHO, Geneva, 1981

EN ISO 11137-3 stipulates ‘Information from doses measured during dose mapping is used to determine the values for process parameters, such as timer setting or conveyor speed, which are set to obtain the specified sterilization dose without exceeding the maximum acceptable dose’.

EN ISO 11137-3 Sterilization of health care products. Radiation. Guidance on dosimetric aspects of development, validation and routine control

Dosimetry indeed plays a very important role in the quality control of the radiation processing and helps to give the proof that the process has been conducted in a controlled manner.

For food irradiation and medical device radiation sterilization standards, the ISO 14470 and ISO11137 respectively, cover all aspects of this process.

When it comes to the usage of a specific dosimetry system, ISO/ASTM standards and guides (See appended list) are key documents since they help to assure traceability of the metrological system and to assess uncertainty on dose measurements.

The existence of these standards and guidance documents, demonstrate that dosimetry is well established.

Low energy Electron Beam and low energy X Ray irradiation applications may however need specific issues to be addressed linked to their short penetration ranges and interaction properties.

2. DOSIMETRY: the tool for radiation processing validation and control

As recommended in relevant standards dedicated to radiation processing, dosimetry is used so as to perform characterization of the radiation facility in operational qualification (OQ), to perform dose mappings in irradiated products during performance qualification (PQ)

programs and routine dose measurements during product processing in order to monitor the irradiation process. Whatever the purpose of the irradiation, is it for research purposes (ISO/ASTM 51900) or for industrial processing, the radiation facilities must be qualified, and dosimetry systems calibrated in a traceable manner.

For Installation Qualification (IQ) which purpose is to demonstrate that the irradiator and its associated processing equipment and measurement instruments have been delivered and installed in accordance with their specifications, dosimetry may not be of any needs. However, establishment of the use and calibration procedure of the dosimetry system is part of the IQ.

Operational Qualification

The purpose of dosimetry in the operational qualification (OQ) is to demonstrate that the irradiator, as installed, is capable of operating and delivering appropriate doses within defined acceptance criteria. OQ is carried out by irradiating appropriate test materials to demonstrate the capability of the equipment to fulfill process definition. As an example, irradiation of homogeneous materials to demonstrate the capability of the irradiator to deliver the specified dose range.

Not only, OQ helps to verify the capabilities of the irradiator, it is also to establish how the key operating parameters and how their variability can affect absorbed dose onto and in the product.

Performance Qualification

Once the installation fully characterized, dosimetry is used in Performance Qualification (PQ) to study and determine specifically to each product to be processed, the appropriate process parameters for ensuring that the dose requirements can be satisfied.

For that purpose, the dosimetry has to bring the proof that the minimum required dose (for a given technological objective) is exceeded and that the maximum acceptable dose is not exceeded in the volume of interest of the irradiated products. Dose mapping is performed on each specific product to determine the locations of the minimum and maximum dose zones, their values, and their relationships to the monitoring measurements during routine product processing.

Thanks to these data, a set of irradiation plant control parameters is determined to assure the quality of the treatment during the production.

Routine product processing

During routine product processing, demonstration needs to be given that the irradiation process has been under control. It requires attention to all process parameters that can affect absorbed dose and the use of dosimetry measurements. The later verify that the monitoring dose derived from performance qualification is situated in the required limits and thus, that the process is under control.

3. Selection and calibration of the dosimetry system

ASTM E61 'Radiation Processing' is an international group of experts which scope is mainly to establish and maintain standard practices, methods, and guides for ionizing radiation processing and dosimetry.

ASTM E61 standards and guides (see list in annex) are the main documents which are of prime importance so as to select and calibrate the appropriate dosimetry system for a specific application.

Beside, the usage of each dosimetry system is covered by a dedicated standard.

4. SPECIFICS OF DOSIMETRY FOR LOW ENERGY X RADIATION

Recent developments and improvements of low energy X and electron radiation generators (below 300 kV) reinforce the relevance of their usage for food irradiation applications and phytosanitary application especially.

As per the targeted low dose applications such as phytosanitary treatments (400 to 1000 Gy), dosimetry systems like Alanine/ESR, GafChromics HD-V2 (Ashland), OptiChromics (FWT) seem to be the most appropriate tools. However, their responses at lower energy (< 200 keV) potentially differ from the response at high-energy photon irradiation. Indeed, literature data show that dosimeter response at lower energy X radiation (< 200 keV) could differ due to energy dependent interaction coefficient ratios between water and dosimeter media. The chain of the dose measurement traceability might therefore be broken, because it might not be valid to use a cobalt-60 gamma calibration for dose measurement at low energy x-ray irradiation.

Nasreddine et al. demonstrated that up to a 30% alanine response reduction is expected when irradiating with low energy X-rays compared to Cobalt 60.

As for other higher energy radiation modalities, it is recommended to undertake an in situ calibration, so as to minimize as much as possible the effect of this issue. An ion chamber suitable for measurement at the low X-ray energy should be used as reference dosimetry system for this calibration where the dose rate of the generator is measured, and routine dosimetry systems can then be calibrated.

A second method for ensuring traceability can be the implementation of dosimetry response correction factors derived from photon spectroscopy results or from a simulation exercise. Monte Carlo simulation are here used for simulating the X-ray generator's energy spectra and the calculation of absorbed dose in the dosimetric media which then can help to establish the relevant correction factors when using a high energy X-ray or gamma calibration curve for dose measurement at low energy X-ray irradiation. It is important using this method to establish the uncertainties involved in determining the correction factors.

5. SPECIFICS OF DOSIMETRY FOR LOW ENERGY ELECTRON BEAM

Radiation surface treatment of bulk food products such as spices, herbs, cereals or seeds, with low energy electron beam is being studied for many years.

This application raises new questions and adds additional specific constraints when it comes to dosimetry. Is the size, density and shape of the dosimeter adequate to mimic as much as possible the real dose distribution in the product? Secondly, is the thickness of the dosimeter appropriate to measure the dose deposited at the surface of the product? Last but not least, can a dosimeter be used to measure the surface dose given to the product?

Product dosimetry i.e. measuring the absorbed dose on or inside the product itself would be of course of prime interest. With this respect, ESR can potentially be used for average dose measurement of dose to very small sample like seeds, grains and even their shells, but calibrating and performing traceable dosimetry might be an unachievable challenge.

Surface dosimetry, with well characterized dosimeters would of course permit traceable measurements. It is however needed to consider that low energy electrons have a short range inside the dosimeter media which can lead to very steep dose gradients within the dosimeter itself. This leads to different doses being measured with different thickness dosimeters irradiated at the same electron beam, resulting in difficulties in providing traceable dose measurements that in consequence, may cause misinterpretation of the measurements. The choice and selection of dosimeter types is limited to very thin films like GEX (18 μ m) and FWT (10 or 50 μ m) dosimeters. Their dynamic range covers the food irradiation applications from 1-2 kGy upwards.

A novel approach for determining the dose deposited in the first micrometer of the dosimeter has been proposed by Helt-Hansen et al.

This concept, overcomes the dose gradient problems by introducing a correction factor between the measured doses and the average dose D_{μ} in the first micrometer. Using this concept it is possible to calibrate and measure doses from low-energy electron irradiations with measurement traceability to national standards.

At these low energies, however, a dosimeter does not measure the dose delivered to the product, but measures the dose as seen by the dosimeter. It might be possible to obtain a measurement of dose to the surface of products by coating it with a thin radiation sensitive layer of a dosimetric material. This would improve the determination of dose deposited on the product surface or at least very close to the product surface.

6. SUMMARY/CONCLUSION

Dose measurement applied to food irradiation, radiation sterilization or any other application is indeed a very important and critical aspect of this process. It is described in many standards and guides.

Appropriate tools exist so as to ensure traceability of this dose measurement and number of dosimeters available on the market are well studied even though their response should be characterized while used in routine processing conditions.

When employed in low energy X radiation fields, these dosimeters may exhibit specific response curves compared to the usual Cobalt 60 gamma irradiation. Traceable calibration or correction factor assessment of this energy effect is mandatory.

The limited irradiation depth of low energy electron beams, applied to surface treatments may lead to strong dose gradients inside the dosimeter media and forces the user to perform an appropriate selection of the dosimeter type and thickness.

While the efficacy of an irradiation process and the release of the treated product are documented by dosimetric measurements and recording of irradiation parameters, it should be mentioned that the absorbed dose is measured in the dosimeter itself and not in the food product. So, research on novel dosimetry methods such as product coating dosimeter or in-product dosimetry should be continued to better assess the dose given to a product.

List of references

- High Dose Irradiation: Wholesomeness of Food Irradiated with Doses above 10 kGy, Report of a Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Study Group, Technical Report Series 890 WHO, Geneva, 1999;
- Safety and Nutritional Adequacy of Irradiated Foods, WHO, Geneva, 1994; and Wholesomeness of Irradiated Food, Report of Joint FAO/IAEA/WHO Expert Committee, Technical Report Series 659, WHO, Geneva, 1981
- ISO 14470 Food irradiation -- Requirements for the development, validation and routine control of the process of irradiation using ionizing radiation for the treatment of food
- ISO/ASTM51707 Standard Guide for Estimation of Measurement Uncertainty in Dosimetry for Radiation Processing
- ISO/ASTM51261 Standard Practice for Calibration of Routine Dosimetry Systems for Radiation Processing
- ISO/ASTM52628 Standard Practice for Dosimetry in Radiation Processing
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- ISO/ASTM 51900 – Guide for Dosimetry in radiation research in food and agricultural products
- ISO/ASTM 51204 – Standard Practice or Dosimetry in Gamma Irradiation Facilities for Food Processing
- ISO/ASTM 51431 – Standard Practice for Dosimetry in Electron and Bremsstrahlung Irradiation Facilities for Food Processing
- ISO/ASTM52303 Standard Guide for Absorbed-Dose Mapping in Radiation Processing Facilities
- ISO/ASTM51026 Standard Practice for Using the Fricke Dosimetry System
- ISO/ASTM51205 Standard Practice for Use of a Ceric-Cerous Sulfate Dosimetry System
- ISO/ASTM51275 Standard Practice for Use of a Radiochromic Film Dosimetry System
- ISO/ASTM51276 Standard Practice for Use of a Polymethylmethacrylate Dosimetry System

- ISO/ASTM51310 Standard Practice for Use of a Radiochromic Optical Waveguide Dosimetry System
- ISO/ASTM51401 Standard Practice for Use of a Dichromate Dosimetry System
- ISO/ASTM51538 Standard Practice for Use of the Ethanol-Chlorobenzene Dosimetry System
- ISO/ASTM51607 Standard Practice for Use of the Alanine-EPR Dosimetry System
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