

**Concept Note**

**WHO PQT/VCP Technical Consultation on Gender Mainstreaming in Vector Control Product Regulation**

**23 - 25 September 2025, Geneva, Switzerland**

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## Background

The mandate of the WHO Vector Control Products Assessment Team (PQT/VCP), which is part of the WHO Department of Regulation and Prequalification, is to increase access to safe, efficacious vector control products of high quality.

The generation of data for the purposes of vector control product regulation is often considered to be a gender agnostic activity. However, in studies that generate data by inclusion of volunteers, end users in operational settings, or that require community sensitization or participation there is the potential and historical tendency to collect information which is not representative of the human population. Regulatory assessments of VCPs, ensuring that products are safe, efficacious and manufactured to high quality, are foundational in facilitating access to products, but in the case of WHO prequalification are also relied upon to inform product selection in mass implementation campaigns. Ensuring that supporting data used in the assessments is representative of the populations the products are intended to protect is critical and without it, potential differences in protection cannot be investigated.

Gender mainstreaming is a strategy and approach to address the implications for both men and women, of actions, policies, and programmes. The application of a gender mainstreamed approach to data collection for vector control product regulation will ensure that, where relevant:

* Considerations of gender equity are incorporated into data requirements for pre-market product assessment
* Assessments that are conducted by WHO PQT/VCP include all relevant information, and are robust
* Potential differences in protection, based on the use of implemented products, can be investigated.

## Objectives of the Technical Consultation

1. To review previous and current initiatives on gender mainstreaming in product regulation in other health sectors, and identify key learnings and approaches that may be applicable to vector control product regulation
2. To conduct a review and consultation of the current guidelines, requirements and guidance of PQT/VCP and identify opportunities for the application of a gender mainstreaming approach.

## Format

A three day, in person, technical consultation in Geneva of the working group, 23 - 25 September 2025, comprised of a one-day open session followed by two days of closed working group sessions. Recommendations from the working group to WHO will be published in the form of a meeting report on the PQT/VCP website.

## Key questions for consideration

### Safety:

1. Is the selection of the point of departure (POD) gender agnostic?
   1. If so, should the selection of the POD be driven through the most sensitive endpoint related to those demographics who may have the most, or continuous, exposure?
2. Do the available models for characterizing exposure to products integrate and encompass how exposure may differ based on gender and gender roles?

### Efficacy:

1. Is the collection of data using human volunteers in semi-field studies (experimental hut trials and Ifakara ambient chamber studies) gender agnostic?
   1. Are there emerging data that indicate that there are gender differences in the susceptibility to malaria infections?
   2. Do mosquitoes, or other vectors, respond differently to people of different genders?
2. Is the collection of data in long-term community studies conducted in a gender equitable manner?
   1. Are all data that are necessary for the characterisation of the product in operational use collected from all members of the community who are using the product?
3. Are community engagement activities that are conducted prior to vector control product deployment conducted in a gender equitable manner? Are there biases in the data collected?

## Planned output

A report from the working group to WHO that contains recommendations for consideration by WHO PQT/VCP regarding the incorporation of gender mainstreaming into regulatory product assessments and procedures.