

Gates Foundation lobby campaign for the release of genetically engineered mosquitoes carrying a gene drive

Documents show how an international UN conference is being targeted
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As documents published today show, an international campaign is underway behind the scenes to pave the way for the release of genetically engineered insects and mammals, carrying a so-called gene drive. The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation is particularly active in this regard. The foundation has, amongst other things, hired a specialised consulting agency (Emerging Ag) specifically to influence public opinion and future regulatory systems.

Gene drives are intended to accelerate the spread of artificial genes throughout natural populations. The technology could be used to eradicate specific species. Gene drive technology is extremely error-prone and especially its long-term effects are unpredictable. Even in the laboratory, the methods do not function as originally expected. Many experts are, therefore, warning against rushing to apply the technology.

The attention of the lobby campaign is currently centred on an international meeting of experts that is convening from tomorrow under the auspices of the UN Convention on Biodiversity (CBD) in Montreal (Canada). Amongst the experts taking part in the Montreal conference are some who are supported by the Gates Foundation in the development of genetically engineered mosquitoes with gene drives; at some stage these risky mosquitoes are intended for release to fight malaria.

Against this backdrop, the documents made public today were investigated by the Prickly Research organisation. Testbiotech was also involved in the analysis. The documents show that an extensive network is acting behind the scenes, which includes lobby organisations, academic institutions and employees of authorities. Most recently, this network tried to influence the outcome of an online discussion forum in relation to preparations for the meeting in Montreal.

“If the Gates Foundation is particularly interested in the risky gene drive technology it should make sure there is complete transparency, as well as initiating a broad public debate and ensuring independent risk assessment,” says Christoph Then, who is taking part in the conference for Testbiotech and the European Network of Scientists for Social and Environmental Responsibility (ENSSER). “Trying to influence public opinion behind the scenes is not in the interests of the common good, which is something the Gates Foundation claims to promote.”

The documents further reveal that the US military is highly interested in the development of gene drives. Projects being supported include the characterisation of gene drives and the application of the technology in rodents, such as rats and mice. The actual aim of these projects seems to be unclear. There is in general a high risk of abuse in the application of this technology since it could also be used to develop biological weapons.

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Further information: [Documents published today](#) [2]

[CBD activities](#) [3]

[Further analysis](#) [4]

Source URL: <https://www.testbiotech.org/en/press-release/gates-foundation-lobby-campaign-release-genetically-engineered-mosquitoes-carrying>

Links

[1] <mailto:info@testbiotech.org>

[2] <http://www.pricklyresearch.com/AutoIndex/index.php?dir=genedrivefiles/>

[3] <https://bch.cbd.int/synbio/open-ended/discussion/>

[4] <https://www.independentsciencenews.org/news/gates-foundation-hired-pr-firm-to-manipulate-un-over-gene-drives/>

