

Ministry of Health marks completion of *Wolbachia* mosquito release activities in Dili

17 March 2026

The Ministry of Health, in collaboration with Menzies Timor-Leste, Action on Poverty, and the World Mosquito Program (WMP), today held a closing workshop to mark the completion of the *Wolbachia* mosquito release phase in Dili. This initiative is a critical step forward in the ongoing fight against dengue fever.

Launched on 8 August 2025, the project aimed to introduce the *Wolbachia* mosquitoes to local mosquito populations to help prevent the transmission of dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases such as Zika, Chikungunya, and Yellow Fever. The completion of the release phase and the program represent an important milestone in Timor-Leste efforts to strengthen dengue prevention and vector control.

The program has been supported by the Australian Government through the Partnerships for Healthy Region initiative and Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), and the Macquarie Group Foundation.

Institutional Health Strengthening Vice Minister, José dos Reis Magno, highlighted the importance of the partnership and the community's role in supporting the initiative.

"I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all partners, stakeholders, and community members who contributed to the implementation of the *Wolbachia* program in Dili. This has been a truly collaborative effort—from scientists and implementing partners to decision-makers and communities—working together to address dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases.

"While we are still awaiting the full impact of the results, this milestone reflects the strength of our partnerships, including the Ministry of Health, Menzies Timor-Leste, Action on Poverty, and the World Mosquito Program, with support from the Australian Government through DFAT, the Macquarie Group Foundation, and ANCP.

"We hope this strong collaboration will continue to strengthen our health system and improve the wellbeing of the Timorese people."

Quotes attributable to Dili Municipal Authority for Planning, Investment and Integrated Development Secretary, Filomeno Smith:

"Reaching this finish line of the *Wolbachia* Program in Dili reflects the importance of strong partnerships between government institutions, research organizations, and communities. Through collaboration, transparency, and community engagement, we can build trust and ensure the sustainability of innovative public health initiatives such as the *Wolbachia* method.

"On behalf of the President of Dili Municipal Authority, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to the Ministry of Health for its leadership in strengthening dengue prevention in Timor-Leste. We also acknowledge the valuable collaboration

of Menzies Timor-Leste, the Dili Municipal Authority, community leaders and all partners who worked together to implement the Wolbachia program in Dili. We extend our thanks to the Post Administrators, Suco Chiefs, Aldeia Chiefs, delegates, Suco police officers, Community Health Volunteers, and all communities involved, as well as the Australian Government through DFAT, the World Mosquito Program, and Action on Poverty for their important support.”

Quotes attributable to Menzies Timor-Leste Senior Technical Advisor, Professor Nelson Martins:

“Menzies is privileged to support the Ministry of Health and Dili Municipality, in close collaboration with the World Mosquito Program and Action on Poverty, in delivering this novel, evidence-based, and cost-effective Wolbachia intervention to combat dengue, an endemic disease that continues to claim lives each year.

“On behalf of Menzies, we are proud to work alongside many talented young Timorese who have contributed significantly to the successful implementation of this program, and we are encouraged by the strong progress achieved to date. We believe that within the next two to three years, Dili Municipality will see a sustained reduction in dengue cases, contributing to healthier communities and a stronger public health system.”

Quotes attributable to WMP’s Executive Director of Delivery, Nelson Grisales:

“The completion of the releases in Dili marks an important milestone for the partnership between the Ministry of Health, Action on Poverty, Menzies, and the World Mosquito Program (WMP), with the support of DFAT. This project is a strong example of what can be achieved when governments, organisations and communities work together with a shared commitment to improving public health outcomes.

“The dedication and professionalism of all partners and stakeholders have been critical to the successful implementation of WMP’s *Wolbachia* method. We are especially grateful to the people of Dili for their active participation and support throughout the project. Community collaboration has been essential to making this work possible, and we hope that in the coming years these efforts will contribute to reducing the transmission of dengue and other mosquito-borne diseases for the people of Timor-Leste.”

Quote attributable to Action on Poverty CEO, Meghal Shah:

“This project demonstrates the value of strong partnerships, complementary expertise, and shared commitment, led by the Ministry of Health. Action on Poverty is proud to have supported this life-changing initiative, which goes beyond disease prevention to empower communities, strengthen local health systems, and deliver long-term health benefits for the people of Dili.”

Quotes attributable to Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste First Secretary - Health, Deidre Ballinger:

“The Australian Government is pleased to support the Ministry of Health to deliver this exciting, innovative and evidence-based initiative to put Timor-Leste well on the path to eradicating mosquito-borne illness. The hope of a future free of dengue, Zika, Chikungunya is something to be celebrated!

“Australia is proud to support initiatives that leverage innovative methods to improve health outcomes and strengthen community resilience against dengue fever.” Said Ballinger.”

ENDS

About World Mosquito Program (WMP)

The World Mosquito Program (WMP) is a not-for-profit group of companies owned by Monash University that works to protect the global community from mosquito-borne diseases. WMP uses naturally occurring bacteria called *Wolbachia* to reduce the ability of mosquitoes to transmit viruses to humans. Through our collaborative and innovative approach, we are helping to protect local communities from these diseases in Asia, Oceania and the Americas. Following decades of research and successful deployments, the World Mosquito Program is now operating in 15 countries around the world.

About Menzies School of Health Research (Menzies)

Menzies is at the forefront of health and medical research dedicated to improving the lives of peoples across the Northern Territory, Asia Pacific and beyond. By joining scientific knowledge with community wisdom, Menzies strives to Close the Gap, and shape a healthier, more equitable future where communities can thrive.

About Action on Poverty (AOP)

Action on Poverty (AOP) is an independent, secular nonprofit with over 50 years of international development expertise. We identify breakthrough, high-impact solutions to global poverty and connect them with the investors required to scale these innovations. We mobilise and collaborate with community leaders, social entrepreneurs, researchers, and philanthropists the world over to develop evidence-based models that tackle poverty at its roots. Our mission goes beyond creating measurable change - we want to solve global poverty for good.

More information about WMP's *Wolbachia* method

Wolbachia - a common bacterium found in about 50 per cent of insects - is introduced in the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes that transmit dengue, chikungunya, Zika and yellow fever. The *Wolbachia* bacterium prevents the *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes from transmitting these diseases.

The *Wolbachia* mosquitoes are then released in areas where mosquito-borne viruses are endemic. As they breed with wild mosquitoes, the number of *Wolbachia* mosquitoes grows over time until it remains high without the need for further releases.

Unlike other measures against mosquito-borne diseases, the *Wolbachia* method is safe for people, mosquitoes and the environment, and offers a long-term and self-sustaining solution to control the spread and impacts of dengue, chikungunya, Zika and yellow fever.

Media Contacts:

Alex Jackson

Global Media Relations and Editorial Manager
World Mosquito Program

Email: alex.jackson@worldmosquito.org;
Phone: +44 7919204149

Fausta da Costa

Communication and Engagement Lead - Wolbachia Program
Menzies Timor-Leste
Email: fausta.dacosta@menzies.edu.au
Phone: +670 7738 1210

Ministériu Saúde Selebra Finál husi Atividade Husik Susuk Wolbachia iha Díli, Timor-Leste

17 Marsu 2026

Ministériu Saúde, servisu hamutuk ho parseiru Menzies Timor-Leste, Action on Poverty, no World Mosquito Program (WMP), hala'ó workshop enseramentu hodi marka faze konkluzasaun husik susuk Wolbachia iha Díli. Atividade ida-ne'e hanesan pasu importante ida ba oin iha luta hasoru moras dengue.

Lansa ona iha loron 8 Agostu 2025, atividade ida-ne'e hanesan parte ida husi programa WMP Wolbachia in Timor-Leste, ne'ebé ho objetivu atu introdús susuk Wolbachia ba populasaun susuk lokál sira hodi ajuda prevene tranzmisaun dengue no moras ne'ebe hada'et husi susuk, hanesan Zika, Chikungunya no Yellow Fever.

Finál husi atvidade husik susuk no programa WMP Wolbachia, representa mós esforsu importante ida iha Timor-Leste atu hametin prevensaun dengue no kontrolu vector. Programa ne'e hetan apoiu husi Governu Australia liuhusi Partnerships for Healthy Region initiative and Australian NGO Cooperation Program (ANCP), and the Macquarie Group Foundation.

SE José dos Reis Magno, Vise-Ministru ba Fortalesimentu Institusionál Saúde, subliña importánsia hosi parseria sira noresponsabilidade hosi comunidade sira-nian ba apoia inisiativa ida-ne'e.

“Ha'u hakarak hato'o ha'u-nia agradesimentu sinseru ba parseiru sira hotu, parte relevante sira, no membru comunidade sira hotu ne'ebé kontribui ona ba implementasaun programa Wolbachia iha Díli. Ida-ne'e esforsu kolaborativu ida, hosi sientista sira no parseiru implementadór sira to'o individu sira ne'ebé foti desizaun no comunidade sira, serbisu hamutuk hodi kontrola moras dengue no moras sira seluk ne'ebé hada'et hosi susuk,” dehan Vise-Ministru Magno.

“Enkuantu ita sei hein hela nia impaktu husi rezultadu sira, marku ida ne'e refleto forsa husi ita-nia parseria, ne'ebé inklui Ministériu Saúde, Menzies Timor-Leste, Action on Poverty, no World Mosquito Program, ho apoiu husi Governu Austrália liuhosi DFAT, no Fundasaun Macquarie Group.”

“Ita hein katak kolaborasaun forte ida ne'e sei kontinua iha futuru, nune'e hametin ita nia sistema saúde no kontribui ba comunidade Timoroan nia moris saudável,” dehan Magno.

Filomeno Smith, Sekretáriu Autoridade Munisípiu Díli ba Asuntu Planeamentu, Investimentu no Dezenvolvimentu Integradu (SECAM II), hateten:

Atinjimentu faze finál hosi Programa Wolbachia iha Dili refleto importánsia hosi parseria ne'ebé forte entre entidades Governu nian, organizasaun peskiza sira, no comunidade sira. Liu hosi kolaborasaun, transparénsia, no envolvimentu comunidade nian, ita bele harii konfiansa no aseguara sustentabilidade hosi iniciativa saúde pública inovativu sira hanesan métodu Wolbachia.

"Lori Prezidente Autoridade Munisípiu Díli nia naran hakarak hato'o ha'u nia apresiasaun sinseru ba Ministériu Saúde nia lideransa hodi haforsa prevensaun dengue iha Timor-Leste. Ami mós rekoñese kolaborasaun vitál husi Menzies Timor-Leste, Autoridade Munisípiu Dili, lideransa komunitária sira, no parseiru sira hotu ne'ebé servisu hamutuk hodi implementa programa Wolbachia. Ami-nia agradesimentu ba Administradór Postu sira, Xefe Suku sira, Xefe Aldeia sira, delegadu/a sira, Ofisiál Polísia Suku sira, Voluntáriu Saúde Komunitária, no membru comunidade hotu-hotu ne'ebé involve, no mós Governu Austrália liuhosi DFAT, World Mosquito Program, no Action on Poverty ba sira-nia apoiu krusiál," hateten Smith.

Profesór Nelson Martins, Senior Technical Adviser- Menzies Timor-Leste, hateten: Menzies sente onradu atu apoiu Ministériu Saúde no Munisípiu Dili, ho kolaborasaun hosi World Mosquito Program no Action on Poverty, iha implementasaun Programa Wolbachia ne'ebé inovativu, bazeia ba evidénsia, no kustu-efetivu hodi kombate moras dengue, moras endémiku ida ne'ebé kontinua halakon ema-nia vida kada tinan.

"Hodi Menzies nia naran, ami sente orgullu bele servisu hamutuk ho joven Timor-oan talentu barak ne'ebé fó ona kontribuisaun significativu ba implementasaun susesu programa ida ne'e, no ami orgullu ho progresu ne'ebé ita atinji ona to'o ohin loron. Ami iha konfiansa katak iha tinan rua to'o tolu oin mai, Munisípiu Dili sei haree diminuisaun sustentável ba kazu dengue, kontribui ba comunidade nia moris saudável liu no sistema saúde pública ne'ebé forte liu.

Nelson Grisales, WMP's Executive Director of Delivery, hateten:

"Kompleta atividade husik susuk Wolbachia iha Dili marka marku significativu ida ba parseria entre Ministériu Saúde, Action on Poverty, Menzies Timor-Leste, no World Mosquito Program (WMP), ho apoiu hosi DFAT. Programa ida-ne'e hanesan ezemplu ida ne'ebé forte tebes kona-ba saida maka ita bele alkansa bainhira governu sira, organizasaun sira, no comunidade sira serbisu hamutuk ho kompromisu ne'ebé hanesan ba hadi'a rezultadu saúde pública."

"Dedikasaun no profesionalizmu hosi parseiru no parte relevante sira hotu mak krusiál ba implementasaun susesu hosi métodu WMP Wolbachia. Ami agradece tebes ba povu Timoroan iha Dili ba sira-nia partisipasaun ativa no apoiu iha programa ida-ne'e tomak. Kolaborasaun hosi comunidade mak krusiál hodi halo serbisu ida-ne'e sai realidade, no ami hein katak iha tinan hirak tuirmai, esforsu ida-ne'e sei kontribui ba hamenus

transmissaun moras dengue no moras sira seluk ne'ebé hada'et hosi susuk iha Timor-Leste." Hateten Grisales.

Meghal Shah, CEO of Action on Poverty, hatete:

"Programa ida-ne'e hatudu valór hosi parseria sira ne'ebé forte, péritu komplementár, no kompromisu ne'ebe hanesan, ne'ebé lidera hosi Ministériu Saúde. Action on Poverty sente orgullu tanba apoia ona iniciativa significativu ida-ne'e, ne'ebé la'os de'it ba prevensaun moras maibé hakbiit comunidade sira, hametin sistema saúde lokál, no fó benefísiu saúde ba tempu naruk ba povu Dili."

Deidre Ballinger, First Secretary - Health, Australian Embassy in Timor-Leste, hateten:

"Governu Austrália haksolok atu fó apoia ba Ministériu Saúde hodi bele implementa iniciativa inovativu, no bazeia ba evidénsia ida-ne'e hodi tau Timor-Leste iha dalan loos, hodi halakon moras sira ne'ebé hada'et hosi susuk. Esperansa ba futuru ida ne'ebé livre hosi dengue, Zika, no Chikungunya mak susesu ida ne'ebé ita bele selebra!"

"Austrália orgullu atu apoia iniciativa sira ne'ebé utiliza métodu inovativu sira hodi hadi'a rezultadu saúde no hametin comunidade nia reziliénsia hasoru moras dengue." Hateten Ballinger.

REMATA

Kona-ba World Mosquito Program (WMP)

World Mosquito Program (WMP) maka grupu empreza non-lukrutivu ne'ebé na'in husi Universidade Monash hodi servisu atu proteje comunidade globál husi moras sira ne'ebé maka hada'et husi susuk. WMP uza baktéria ne'ebé mosu naturalmente ho naran Wolbachia hodi hamenus abilidade susuk nian atu transmite vírus ba ema. Lihusi ami nia abordajen kolaborativu no inovativu, ami ajuda atu proteje comunidade lokál sira husi moras sira-ne'e iha Ázia, Oseânia no Amérika sira. Tuir dékada peskiza no implementasaun ne'ebe susesu, World Mosquito Program agora hala'o hela operasaun iha nasaun 15 iha mundu tomak.

Kona-ba Menzies

Menzies hanesan organizaun ne'ebe servisu iha liña oin iha peskiza saúde no médiku nian, dedika atu hadi'a povu nia moris iha Territóriu Norte, Ázia Pasífiku, na área sira ne'ebe besik. Ho koñesimentu sientífiku ho matenek comunidade nian, hamutuk, Menzies haka'as-an atu taka lakuna, no forma futuru ida ne'ebé saudável liu, ekuitativu liu iha ne'ebé comunidade sira bele hetan susesu.

Kona-ba AOP

Action on Poverty (AOP) maka organizaun independente, non-lukrutivu sekulár ho esperiensa dezvoltimentu internasionál liu tinan 50 ona. Ami identifika solusaun sira

ne'ebé avansadu, ho impaktu maka'as ba pobreza globál no konekta sira ho investor sira ne'ebé presiza atu hasa'e inovasaun sira-ne'e. Ami mobiliza no kolabora ho líder komunitáriu sira, emprezáriu sosiál sira, peskizadór sira, no filantropu sira iha mundu tomak hodi dezenvolve modelu sira bazeia ba evidénsia ne'ebé hasoru kiak husi nia abut kedas. Ami nia misaun hala'o liu husi kria mudansa ne'ebé bele sukat - ami hakarak rezolve pobreza globál ba buat di'ak.

Informasaun liután kona-ba WMP nia métodu Wolbachia

Wolbachia - baktéria komún ida ne'ebé eziste iha pursentu 50 husi insetu sira - maka introdús iha susuk Aedes aegypti ne'ebé transmite dengue, chikungunya, Zika no yellow fever. Baktéria Wolbachia prevene susuk Aedes aegypti atu labele hada'et moras sira-ne'e.

Susuk Wolbachia sira husik iha área sira ne'ebé endémiku ba transmisaun virus. Wainhira sira kaben ona ho susuk fuik sira, númeru husi susuk Wolbachia nian sei aumenta tuir tempu to'o sa'e maka'as no la presiza atu husik tan ona.

La hanesan ho medida sira seluk hasoru moras sira ne'ebé hada'et husi susuk, métodu Wolbachia seguru ba ema, animal no ambiente, no oferese solusaun ida ba tempu naruk no auto-sustentável hodi kontrola vektor no impaktu sira husi moras Dengue, Zika, Chikungunya, no Yellow Fever.

Media Contacts:

Alex Jackson

Global Media Relations and Editorial Manager
World Mosquito Program
Email: alex.jackson@worldmosquito.org;
Phone: +44 7919204149

Fausta da Costa

Communication and Engagement Lead - Wolbachia Program
Menzies Timor-Leste
Email: fausta.dacosta@menzies.edu.au
Phone: +670 7738 1210