

# HEALTHY FUTURES



## HEALTHY FUTURES

Health, environmental change and adaptive capacity; mapping, examining & anticipating future risks of water-related vector-borne diseases in eastern Africa

Collaborative Project  
Seventh Framework Programme  
Cooperation

*Deliverable 7.3*

*Expert Review Panel Meeting 3*

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### History Chart

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**Report as released on project website**

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**Third Meeting of External Review Panel,  
ICTP,  
Trieste, Italy,  
May 1<sup>st</sup> 2013**

**Report on Third External Review  
Panel Meeting**

## Introduction

The HEALTHY FUTURES project deals with “Health, environmental change and adaptive capacity: mapping, examining and anticipating future risks of water-related vector-borne diseases in Eastern Africa”. The main focus of the project, which is now in its third year of implementation, is the construction of a disease risk mapping system for three high impact water-related vector-borne diseases (VBDs) (malaria, Rift Valley fever & schistosomiasis) in eastern Africa, taking into account environmental/climatic trends and changes in socio-economic conditions to predict future risk.

The Third Expert Review Panel (ERP) was originally scheduled to take place in month 27 (March 2013). As was the case with the previous ERP meeting in Arusha, in order to facilitate the interaction with participants of the 4<sup>th</sup> partners’ meeting, the ERP meeting was rescheduled for the 1st May (month 29) directly after the partners’ meeting that took place on the 29<sup>th</sup>-30<sup>th</sup> April 2013. Both meetings took place in Trieste, Italy. This enabled the external reviewers to participate in both meetings as was at requested in the 1<sup>st</sup> ERP meeting which took place in Kampala, Uganda in October 2011.

The main focus of the Work Package that the ERP falls under is to promote synergy in networking, and coordination with other climate and health-related projects - be they funded by the EU 7<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme or not – and researchers internationally and regionally. As part of this, the ERP provides oversight, results review and evaluation, assurance of quality control, guidance on next steps and use of best practices including highest compliance with ethical guidelines. At the Trieste ERP meeting, the primary goal was to carry out a formative assessment of scientific results and project aims, to make adjustments where necessary and to enhance collaboration with other stakeholders. The observations and recommendations formulated are outlined below.

**1. Meeting report:**

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The list of attendees at the meeting is as follows.

***Attendees:***

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**Professor David Taylor**, National University of Singapore, Singapore (NUS)  
**Dr. Theophile Niyonzima**, National University of Rwanda, Rwanda (NUR)  
**Dr. Mark Booth**, University of Durham, United Kingdom (UDUR)  
**Dr. Adrian Tompkins**, Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Italy (ICTP)  
**Professor Andrew Morse**, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom (UNILIV)  
**Dr. Madeleine Thomson**, Senior Research Scientist, International Research Institute for Climate and Society, The Earth Institute, Columbia University, New York, USA  
**Dr. John Malone**, School of Veterinary Medicine, Baton Rouge, LA, USA  
**Paul Lowen**, Project Officer, AquaTT, Ireland

**The following is a list of the main findings and recommendations of the ERP from the meeting per Work Package.**

***WP2: Disease information & database construction***

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The ERP recommend that the Historical Database (associated with Task 2.1) be utilised in a more research oriented manner such as to investigate the situation in Nairobi with regards to climate and disease data, especially malaria.

***WP3: Environment-disease transmission relationships & modelling***

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**Recommendation:** With regards to previous issues and concerns raised over TRAC Plus' involvement in the project, the ERP recommend and support the decisions made together by the Coordinator, WP leader and institutes that have been involved with carrying out work as part of the tasks TRAC Plus lead, and the subsequent proposed revised WP3 work plan.

**Requirement:** WP3 leader, Mark Booth (UDUR), to circulate the revised WP3 work plan to the consortium on basecamp to allow consortium members to review it and confirm their agreement.

*WP4: Disease risk and vulnerability mapping*

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**Recommendation:** Due to concerns expressed over the progress made by the WP4 PhD student, Jean-Pierre Bizimana (NUR), the ERP recommended an updated work plan for the PhD to be provided.

**Requirement:** Jean-Pierre Bizimana (NUR) to provide an updated PhD work plan covering the next 18 months by **Tuesday 21 May 2013**, outlining when tasks will be completed, to both his supervisor and the project coordinator, David Taylor .

*WP5: Adaptation and support tools: Development of decision support tools*

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**Requirement:**

- 1) The ERP are concerned by the current status of WP5 and require Stockholm Environment Institute (SEI) to provide a short report stating what they expect to get from the project and what they expect to provide. It should also address IP issues and sustainability of the tool after the end of the project. This report must be provided by **17:00 GMT Tuesday 14 May 2013**.
- 2) Following this a work plan and time frame which includes SEI forming a team comprised of project disease experts Mark Booth (schistosomiasis), Bernard Bett (RVF) and Andrew Githeko (malaria), and David Taylor as WP6 representative must be provided by SEI by **17:00 GMT Tuesday 21 May 2013**. The work plan will support SEI meeting with the team representatives, define the outputs and needs for stakeholder engagement and longer and shorter term decision support systems e.g. addressing early warning issues in Uganda and long term infrastructural sustainability, etc. This will then lead to SEI producing a plan of action for developing appropriate Decision Support Tools for schistosomiasis, RVF and malaria.

*WP6: Stakeholder engagement and empowerment through sharing of knowledge and training*

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**Recommendation:** A list of publications is recommended to be produced for the next meeting.

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*WP7: Enhancing research synergy & application*

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**Recommendation:**

- 1) The ERP recommended inviting experts from other organisations as well as the EAC to the next and final ERP meeting e.g. the EAC Climate Change Coordinator and a representative from WHO Africa. Other strategic organisational contacts to invite were also noted and reference to those will be found in the minutes. The final ERP meeting is provisionally scheduled to take place in Nairobi, Kenya in early 2014, and confirmation from experts invited should be sought well in advance of the meeting.
- 2) As the NUR travel issues raised in the 2<sup>nd</sup> ERP meeting were not resolved, the ERP recommends that the budget for this be transferred to another partner so as to purchase the air tickets for ERP members external to the project for the next meeting, thus reducing costs. It was recommended that AQUATT as WP co-leader investigates if it is possible for them to purchase these air tickets for the next ERP meeting.

*Conclusion*

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The third Expert Review Panel was strengthened by HEALTHY FUTURES members **Mark Booth**, University of Durham, United Kingdom (UDUR), **Adrian Tompkins**, Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics, Italy (ICTP), and **Andrew Morse**, University of Liverpool, United Kingdom (UNILIV). As was the case at the previous ERP meeting that took place in Arusha, Tanzania, they participated on a voluntarily basis as they are not regular members of the ERP meeting but are members of the project's Scientific Committee. The ERP benefited from their participation in debate, especially when it came to discussing the progress made in modelling and the way forward.

During the meeting, the participants scrutinised how the recommendations formulated in Arusha were addressed and discussed the overall progress made in each work package during the project's third year. The overall observation was that the ERP meeting has successfully achieved its objectives.

More in depth information of the meeting discussions can be found in the minutes, available on the project website, <http://www.healthyfutures.eu/>, along with further project information.

Dr Theophile Niyonzima

Healthy Futures Project Representative

National University of Rwanda