RBM Partnership To End Malaria | Vector Control Working Group

FEEDBACK

20TH MEETING OF THE RBM VECTOR CONTROL WORKING GROUP

3-5 March 2025 in Cotonou, Benin

THANK YOU

We sincerely appreciate everyone who contributed to the feedback for the 20th VCWG Annual Meeting in Cotonou, Benin. This year, the RBM VCWG-20 meeting took place in Cotonou, Benin, bringing together 338 participants—195 attending in person and 144 joining online. We received feedback from 56% of in-person attendees and 9.7% of online participants. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, and a summary of the key points is provided below.

Regarding the results of the feedback survey, five-star satisfaction ratings are regarded as very satisfied, somewhat satisfied (4 stars), neither satisfied nor dissatisfied (3 stars), somewhat dissatisfied (2 stars) and very dissatisfied (1 star). In the survey, ratings of 4&5 stars are denoted as "satisfied".

DATES and VENUE

Participants expressed a high level of satisfaction with the overall meeting arrangements. The date, timing, and 2.5-day duration were particularly well-received, each with more than a 93% satisfaction rate. The location in Cotonou, Benin (74.5%), and transportation to and from the hotel (89.1%) were also positively rated. Participants were generally satisfied with the Golden Tulip Hotel and its meeting room, receiving a 77.3% satisfaction rating. However, sound and audio quality in the room, including Zoom sound, were identified as areas for improvement respectively. Catering and meals were appreciated by 74.6% of participants, contributing to a generally positive experience. See *Figure 1*.

ORGANIZATION, AGENDA & SPEAKERS

The organization of the event received positive feedback, with the online registration process (97.2%) and the information provided (91.8%) being highly rated. The event website also saw positive responses (91%), while the use of the Attendee App or Web during the meeting had a satisfactory rating of 81.9%. See *Figure 2.*

Regarding the event content, the theme of the meeting was well-received with an 85% satisfaction rate. The quality of sessions and the number of sessions also received positive feedback, both at 86%. The quality of speakers stood out with a high satisfaction rating of 93%. See *Figure 3.*

However, the e-posters and exhibition fair received lower satisfaction ratings, at 63.7% and 56.8%, respectively. See *Figure 3.*

Figure 1: How satisfied are you with the dates and venue?

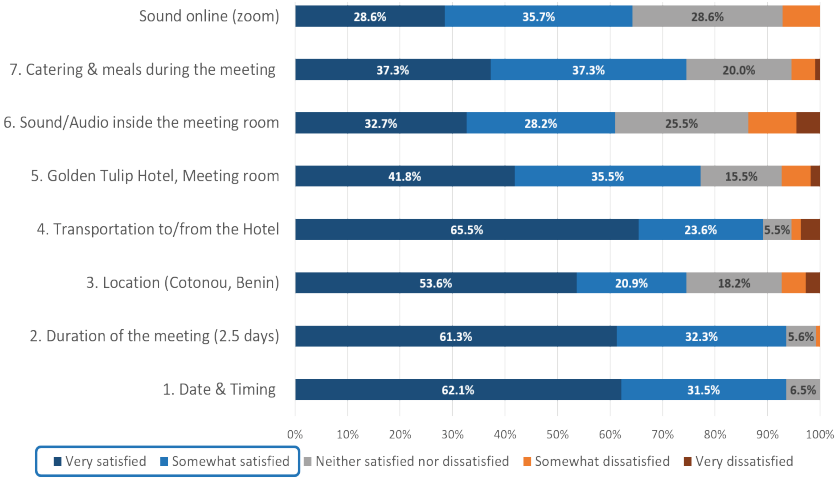


Figure 2: How satisfied are you with the organization?

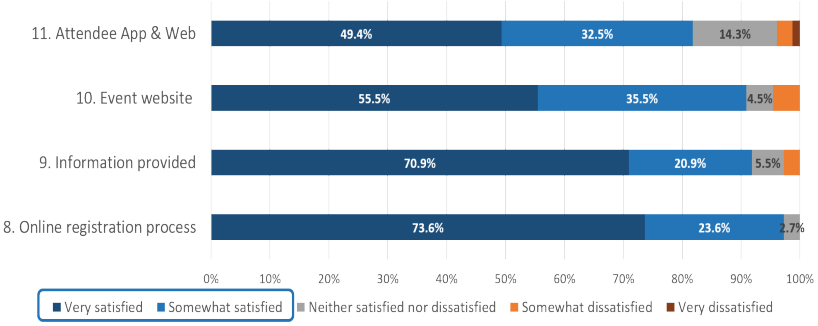
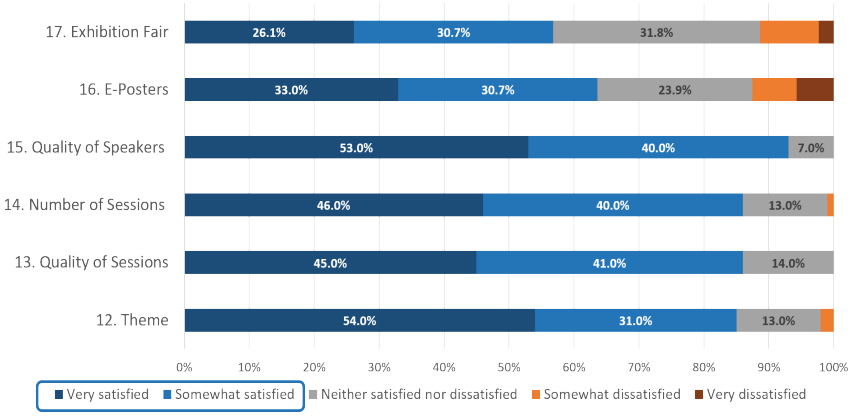


Figure 3: How satisfied are you with the Theme, Agenda, Sessions, Speakers, E-posters and Exhibition Fair?



SESSIONS

The satisfaction feedback on the sessions was generally positive. The Plenary session, covering introductions, objectives, and key updates, received an 80.4% satisfaction rate. Workstream 1 (WS 1) on enhancing the impact of core interventions was rated highly at

89.4%, while Workstream 2 (WS 2) on expanding the vector control toolbox garnered an even higher rating of 91.7%. Workstream 3 (WS 3), focused on implementing the global vector control responses, had a strong rating of 85.4%. The Roundtable Discussions received a satisfaction rate of 76.3%, while the Joint Meeting of the VCWG & MSWG saw an 82.5% satisfaction rate.

BEST LIKED

The mostly liked parts of the meeting were 1) Sessions, Contents & Speakers, followed by 2) Networking & Exchanges, 3) Organization, 4) Stakeholder Engagement & Diversity, and 5) Theme & Topic. See *Figure 4*.

1) Sessions, Contents & Speakers

The quality and diversity of sessions were highly appreciated. Participants valued the workstreams, panel discussions, informative presentations, and the expertise of speakers.

"The panel discussions were very engaging and informative."
"Scientific presentations were well-researched and insightful."
"Third day panel discussion: it was the only one where there was enough time for real exchange among panelists and community."

2) Networking & Exchanges

Many attendees highlighted the value of face-to-face engagement, informal side conversations, and the opportunity to connect with stakeholders across sectors.

"Networking with ALL malaria stakeholders, updates from the ecosystem."
"Small enough to really talk to everyone… it's a useful way to catch up with the community."
"Opportunity to meet the VC community in person and network."

3) Organization

Participants acknowledged the smooth coordination, clear structure, and overall event logistics, including language services and session timing.

"The organization was excellent—congratulations to the team!"
"Well organized. Translation was very helpful and on point."
"The efforts that went into the organisation—well done team!"

4) Stakeholder Engagement & Diversity

The diverse mix of attendees and inclusive engagement across sectors made the event dynamic and representative.

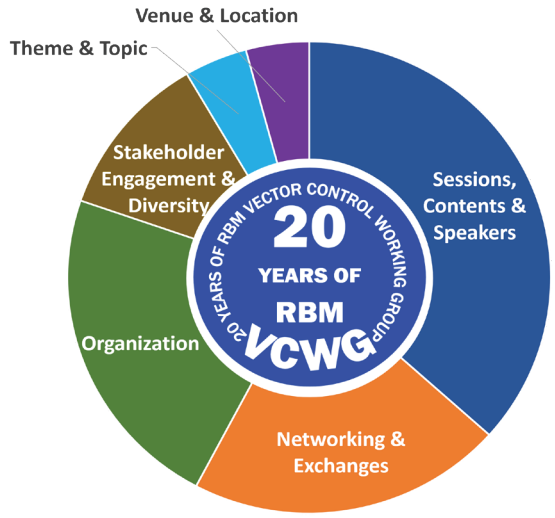
""The convening of different segments of our stakeholder environment."
"Diverse participants leading to lots of interesting discussions."
"Opportunity to discuss with a range of stakeholders."

5) Theme & Topic

The relevance and depth of the selected themes stood out. They were seen as timely and aligned with current challenges in vector control.

"The themes chosen were insightful and addressed plausible solutions."

Figure 4: Best Liked



"Very informative agenda… the talks in different work streams were detailed and solution-oriented."

SUGGESTIONS for NEXT MEETINGS

Participants appreciated the well-organized meeting but suggested improvements in venue accessibility, audio-visual setup, and inclusivity, including translation and diverse representation. Many recommended alternating locations between Africa and Geneva, enhancing remote participation, and also allowing more time for discussions and side meetings.

Venue & Accessibility

We have received suggestions for venue and accessibility:

- **Choose venues with better international flight connections** – Benin posed major challenges for participants, especially from South America and elsewhere though the no-visa requirement was very positive.
- Proximity to major airports is appreciated to reduce travel burden and delays.
- A few suggestions for next year's location: Zanzibar, Tanzania, Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda, Geneva
- Alternate between Africa and Geneva
- Asia/Southeast Asia

Sessions, Topics & Speakers

For the next VCWG meeting, it suggested to extend the meeting to three or three-and-a-half days, and ensure gender-balanced panels. Including more African-led sessions and speakers from diverse sectors like agriculture will broaden perspectives. A frequently made comment was to give more time to Q&A and discussions in addition to presentations. There were several suggestions made to **expand the range of topics** to include:

- AI and malaria
- Climate change and vector control
- Societal roles in malaria control
- Community engagement and behavior change
- Other vector-borne diseases (e.g., arboviruses)

- Sharing successful case studies and stories
- More discussion on socio-political and economic aspects and workshops on pressing challenges (e.g., resistance, financing).

Additionally, suggestions were made on format and inclusion:

- Invite more African-led panels and discussions led by NMCPs
- Encourage less scripted, more interactive and reflective panel discussions.
- Allow audience-driven formats (e.g. fishbowls, open mic, Menti-based Q&A).
- Increase the presence and active participation of donors, including virtual attendance.
- Invite speakers from non-health sectors (e.g. sugar/rice factories, agriculture) to talk about vector breeding and industry practices.
- Allow more parallel sessions and consider additional vector-borne disease topics.
- Include private sector and agricultural stakeholders (e.g., sugar/rice growers)

Web, Attendee App, Live Q&A and Technical Support

We received rather positive feedback on the website and attendee app, which were described as clear, concise, and easy to use. Many participants also appreciated the paper-free approach. A few suggestions were made for technical improvements, including:

- Include more details about the talks (titles, abstracts, objectives).
- Ensure poster and oral presentation materials are available earlier, with links shared well before the meeting.
- Improve agenda details, with clear timing for each session and sub-session.
- Promote the app early: Highlight it before and at the start of the meeting (e.g., during opening session).
- Conduct a short app demo during the meeting kick-off.
- Offer universal Zoom links and recordings for online attendees.

E-Posters and Exhibition Fairs

As part of our paper-free event, we organized E-Poster sessions to showcase participants' work. Based on attendee feedback, several suggestions emerged for improvement. These include allocating individual time slots for each presenter, and splitting sessions into smaller groups for more focused engagement. Participants also recommended offering a 1-minute pitch opportunity to introduce each poster, ensuring displays are placed in visible and accessible locations, and avoiding crowded or high-traffic areas such as hallways. Additionally, some attendees suggested providing the option of traditional wall posters alongside the digital format.

The Exhibition Fair drew mixed feedback, with comments that it was cramped which limiting movement and interaction. Attendees suggested providing a larger, better-ventilated area with improved layout and visibility. Additional recommendations included organizing guided tours, increasing the number of exhibitors, and placing the exhibition in a more central, accessible location to enhance engagement.

Venue, Meeting Room and Service

Feedback on the venue in Cotonou, Benin, was largely positive, with participants expressing satisfaction. However, points for impovements include:

- Provide stable and reliable internet throughout the venue.
- Ensure working sockets and charging stations for participant devices. Need for additional electric sockets to accommodate the charging needs of attendees.
- Ensure microphones and presentation displays are clearly audible and visible to all.
- Ensure adequate water supply and consider sustainable water solutions (e.g. refillable bottles instead of plastic).
- Choose locations with better international flight connections.
- Ensure enough space and quieter areas for meals and informal meetings.
- Avoid vendors selling items (e.g. photographers) inside the venue.

Other Suggestions and Comments

To enhance inclusivity and accessibility, future meetings should ensure diverse representation in panels and seating, with more African voices featured across sessions. Travel grants should support participants from challenging contexts, and care should be taken to avoid overlapping with other major meetings (e.g., SOVE, AMCA, AMP). Additionally, organizers should improve translation tools for both in-person and virtual attendees, avoid parallel workstreams in favor of a unified agenda, provide on-site guides to assist participants, and consider merging meetings with similar agendas (e.g., AMP, PAMCA) to streamline efforts.



Group photo from VCWG-20 in Benin

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