



What is the IndoPacLab Program?

IndoPacLab is an AUD 5.2 million investment funded under the Australia Government's contribution to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria

The **Strengthening Laboratory and Diagnostic Capacity in the Indo-Pacific (IndoPacLab) Program** aims to strengthen laboratory functions for accurate, timely and scalable testing of COVID-19, HIV, TB and malaria across three countries – Papua New Guinea (PNG), Cambodia and Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR).

The program is working closely with the Ministry of Health in each country, and Phase 1 of the Program has seen in-country laboratory situational analysis and needs assessments conducted with a focus on building a strong understanding of the laboratory strengthening needs and gaps in technical support.

Country workplans are built around four key objectives:

- Protect existing testing services for HIV, TB and malaria
- Optimise testing capabilities through integrating testing systems for COVID-19, HIV, TB and malaria
- Enhance quality, capacity and safety of laboratory testing for high impact infectious diseases in the COVID-19 era
- Enhance laboratory networks and cross-country collaboration

How IndoPacLab works in Cambodia

Leadership: Work in Cambodia is guided by the Bureau of Medical Laboratory Services (BMLS) and national disease programs.

Key areas of activity:

- Technical support for a sample transportation system pilot
- Diagnostic network optimization
- Update lab information system to improve usage
- Integrated HIV point of care testing
- Preventive maintenance
- Strengthening laboratory networks



Other key partners: Foundation Merieux, GIZ, WHO.

Contact: Giselle Hadley ghadley@clintonhealthaccess.org

How IndoPaLab works in PNG

Leadership: IndoPaLab PNG working group - a subgroup of members from National Laboratory Technical Working Group (NLTWG).

Key areas of activity:

- Inventory management
- Equipment maintenance
- Sample referral
- Laboratory quality manual and indicators for lower-level labs
- Human resources systems
- Laboratory networks
- Staff laboratory quality training and laboratory manager's training



Other key partners: Fleming Fund, FHI-360, USAID, World Vision International.

Contact: Michaela Riddell mriddell@kirby.unsw.edu.au

Country level spotlights

Cambodia: Integrated HIV point of care testing

The team in Cambodia is working towards furthering the goal and moving closer towards the elimination of Mother-to-Child Transmission (eMTCT) of HIV. Currently, HIV Viral load (VL) tests for mothers and early infant diagnosis (EID) for exposed infants remain centralized at two locations. At the same time, Point-of-care (PoC) technology provides an opportunity to bring testing closer to patients, reducing the time for result availability leading to improving care outcomes.

With support from IndoPaLab, as well as Global Fund, National Centre for HIV/AIDS, Dermatology and STD (NCHADS), National Centre for Tuberculosis (CENAT) and National Maternal and Child Health Center (NMCHC), a pilot project has been initiated to expand the use of TB GeneXpert machines to do VL and EID testing for the prevention of mother to child transmission. The focus is on reducing turnaround time (TAT) of results by utilizing PoC technology. Instead of sending samples to Phnom Penh or Siem Reap, with TAT of up to 6 weeks, these will be done near the point of care within provincial/referral hospitals with ART clinics. The effective implementation of this pilot will determine feasibility of an integrated diagnostics model by utilizing multi-disease PoC technologies.



Site visit to Siem Reap provincial hospital which is one of the POC sites to understand the patient flow under PMTCT, ART/HIV clinic and lab where GeneXpert is located. This trip was joined by POC focal point person from NCHADS, CENAT, NMCHC, and CHAI lab team.

Lao PDR: Laboratory Information Management System

The IndoPacLab Program Laboratory Information Management System (LIMS) work is being undertaken in collaboration with NCLE, the Department of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC) and US-CDC, to review strategic priorities for a national LIMS. An approach for the development and implementation of LIMS has been agreed upon by key stakeholders, with the objective of supporting Lao PDR to improve the diagnostics and management of high priority infectious diseases, including COVID-19.

Four (4) pilot sites were selected by the Ministry of Health (MOH) and national stakeholders against agreed criteria: high-volume labs with capacity to conduct diagnostics for multiple diseases considered. NCLE, Champasak Provincial Hospital, Khammouane District Hospital, Setthathirath Central Hospital were chosen, with a task force formed to provide technical input on project implementation.



LIMS product selection workshop with National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE), National TB Center (NTC), Center for HIV/AIDS/STI (CHAS), US-CDC, FIND and representatives from selected provincial hospitals.

PNG: Inventory Management

Four provinces are the focus locations for the IndoPacLab program in PNG – Gulf, Milne Bay, West Sepik, and West New Britain – with activities to be undertaken at a Provincial and District Hospital, and a Health Centre in each province. Three scoping visits were conducted as an initial step to strengthen laboratory inventory management. During the scoping visits to Milne Bay, West Sepik and West New Britain, the team were able to engage with key stakeholders and learn about the current procurement and inventory management methods, bottlenecks and needs across the provinces. The learnings will be used to inform implementation of an inventory management and procurement system.



Alotau Provincial Hospital, Milne Bay, PNG

We look forward to providing further updates as the program progresses throughout 2023.

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[Kirby Institute](#), [Doherty Institute](#), [Burnet Institute](#), [Clinton Health Access Initiative](#) (CHAI) and the [Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics](#) (FIND).

