

Global Fund's Matching Funds Progress

IBF1 Lab Systems Strengthening

National Centre for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE)

19 December 2025

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Capacity enhancement on Laboratory System and QM unit

CURRENT STATUS:

MF 3: Establishment of QM unit and recruitment of staff to support implementation of MF QMS related activities

(completed)

- Successfully recruited and on-boarded new staff
- Currently there are seven staff in the unit responsible for supporting different project areas
- Already participated in project progress meetings held by CCM and DPF
- On-the-Job training has been provided, and TA is their mentor
- Open communication has established
- Shared MF proposal, three years MF workplan and AOP 2024&2025 including LIMS budget reallocation proposed activities with all QM unit staff

CHALLENGES:

- Lab systems strengthening involves multiple key areas such as lab governance, workforce capacity, diagnostic infrastructure etc., thus essential skills and practical experience are needed, and staff need more real-world opportunities.

KEY ACTION:

- Provide extra assistance when needed
- Work closely with NTC, CHAS, and CMPE
- Hold semimonthly team meeting to update and review progress, identify areas for improvement, and make necessary adjustments to the plan.

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Development of Policy foundation for integrated laboratory

CURRENT STATUS:

MF 5: Guidelines Printing related to policy foundation for integrated laboratory (**Not started**)

- Final draft of national standards for infrastructure, tests, techniques and equipment for all laboratory levels is completed.
- The Framework and Roadmap for an Integrated TB and HIV Laboratory Service in the Lao PDR
 - The document was drafted with inputs from relevant stakeholders and submitted to the Global Fund on 30 September 2025.
 - It was subsequently reviewed with key stakeholders at the Department of Planning and Finance (DPF) and resubmitted to the Global Fund on 24 October 2025.

CHALLENGES:

- Await finalization of the guideline from the Laboratory TWG (members have competitive schedule) before initiating the print job.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Guideline printing is moved to Q4 2026
- Await for comment from GF team on the Framework and Roadmap for an Integrated TB and HIV Laboratory Service in the Lao PDR

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Development of Policy foundation for integrated laboratory

CURRENT STATUS:

MF 8: Consultation and technical meeting to establish national integrated EQA system- strengthening integration of existing EQA programs (**Completed**)

MF 9: Contracting waste disposal contractor to collect and dispose of expired reagents and supplies including broken equipment (**In progress**)

- The budget approval document for procurement has been signed and approved by the Minister.
- Three companies have submitted their bidding documents to the DPF, which is in the process of reviewing and finalizing the bidding results.
- All required documentation requesting approval to contract the waste management service provider has been completed.
- The procurement contract has been finalized and signed.
- The contracted company has completed the waste disposal and laboratory equipment clearance.
- Currently, the contracted company has finished conducting the activity, and the payment is now in progress

CHALLENGES:

- NTC has no EQA activity
- We have no details for EQA scheme of malaria microscopy

KEY ACTIONS:

- Send invitation early with clear agenda and objectives so that staff can prepare and this also allows them to block out their availability.
- Awaiting the contracted company to submit the report, after which the payment for the service will be processed

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Strengthening the Biosafety/biosecurity capacity

CURRENT STATUS:

MF 10: Meeting and advocacy on Biosafety/security materials updates (**Completed**)

- First meeting completed
- The second meeting is planning

MF 11: Handbook and materials printing for Biosafety/security materials updates (**Not started**)

- Await final draft and finalization from biosafety committee

MF 15: Certify 40 biosafety cabinets in 17 provincial hospital labs and in 6 central level labs (**Completed**)

- Budget approved.
- Annual calibration is currently being implemented.
- It began in mid-October and is expected to be completed by December 2025.

CHALLENGES:

- Current guidelines are outdated (2016) and no longer reflect best practices. It requires considerable time to review & update references and selection of essential content.
- Contributions from relevant technical experts are critical to ensure the revised content is consistent with current laboratory practices in Lao PDR.

KEY ACTIONS:

- NCLE, NTC, CHAS, CMPE, biosafety committee agree to schedule semimonthly meeting to ensure timely progress of National Laboratory Biosafety Guideline (2025)
- Guideline printing is moved to Q4 2026

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Strengthening the Biosafety/biosecurity capacity (cont.)

CURRENT STATUS:

LCHMP61HP0922: Procurement of biosafety HEPA filters and UV lamps and replacement service for HEPA filter in BSC (removing and replacing the exhaust HEPA filter)

(Significant progress)

- Contract signed with vendor
- Expected delivery date for HEPA filters and UV lamps including relevant supplies arriving in the country is the end of September
- HEPA filter and related equipment for biosafety cabinets have been delivered to Lao PDR.
- The contracted company has completed nationwide installation of the HEPA filters and associated components and the payment is now in progress

CHALLENGES:

- The delivery of HEPA filters and UV lamps, including relevant supplies has been delayed and is now expected to arrive in November.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Closely monitor and follow up with the company to track progress of importation of HEPA filter and its supplies
- Awaiting the contracted company to submit the report, after which the payment for the service will be processed

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Laboratory Information Management System(LIMS) Strengthening

CURRENT STATUS:

MF 26: Equipment management - GXP warranty extension plus (2 year) **(Completed)**

- Summarize GXP machine issues reported from sites semimonthly, coordinate with local ASP, and track if those issues are fixed.
- Established GXP coordination group, not only to share issues occurred but recommendations from Cepheids also shared through this e.g., installation of licensed MS
- Communicate with sites the importance of regular user maintenance of GXP and share the following job aids:
 - Daily, weekly, monthly, quarterly maintenance procedures
 - HIV-1 Viral Load test procedure
 - COVID – 19 test procedure
- Defective modules to Cepheid were returned

CHALLENGES:

- Returning defective modules to Cepheid- NCLE has no budget for shipping company's service fee/documentation fee
- NCLE do not know status of all computer connected to GXP devices.

KEY ACTIONS:

- Propose to DPF to provide monthly administrative cost
- Staff directly contact GXP sites to get computer's status (challenging as site staff have limited knowledge on computers)

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Establishment of Sample Transportation (ST) Network

CURRENT STATUS:

MF 16: Technical Consultative Meeting iSRS (Completed)

- TWG Committee formally endorsed (**18 July 2025**)
- Landscape assessment conducted by FIND (**May 2025**) informed route mapping and M&E indicators
- Rationalization and mapping of ST routes: schedule, start/end locations, daily stops drafted
- Assessment of provider options: outsourcing to courier vs. in-house operation
- Draft M&E framework developed; indicators discussed and agreed by TWG to be monitored by MoH/ST provider.

CHALLENGES:

- The existing specimen referral processes may be fragmented across diseases or programs, making integration complex.
- Administration protocol barrier is creating some delay in the process.
- Risk of transport disruptions (seasonal/weather, sample integrity, negotiation with courier service to ensure timely delivery of specimen is critical).
- Limited staff capacity on biosafety and packaging at HC/district level

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Establishment of Sample Transportation (ST) Network

MF 16: (continue)

KEY ACTIONS (Next Steps):

- Conduct pilot implementation phase of integrated ST system (endorsed at 2nd TWG meeting)
- Finalize and approve national M&E framework and SOPs
- Formalize agreements with transport providers to ensure accountability
- Develop and update training materials related to data management and stewardship including training of key personnel
- Draft the costed operational plan
- Complete route mapping
- Train and capacitate provincial/district/HC staff on biosafety, packaging, and chain-of-custody procedures

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Establishment of Sample Transportation (ST) Network (continue)

CURRENT STATUS:

MF17: Develop sample transportation SOPs - package, transport, storage of sample
(Progress)

- Budget approved
- First draft of PowerPoint slides for specimen collection, packaging, handling procedures, developed according to the national guideline.
- The Concept Note for the Pilot Implementation of the Integrated Specimen Referral System (iSRS) in Lao PDR has been developed by NCLE, with assistance from FIND and HPA. The second draft has been submitted to the Global Fund for review and comments.
- The first draft of the SOP and relevant forms for the pilot iSRS has also been developed.
- Translate the Concept Note, SOP, and forms into Lao and share them with relevant stakeholders within next week (mid-October) for review prior to the meeting .
- A Successfully organized the review and feedback meeting from 11–13 November and 19–20 November 2025 at NCLE, with participation from 3 provinces and 9 districts involved in the iSRS pilot. Participants provided useful inputs and recommendations to strengthen the system.
- Revise SOPs and forms for the iSRS, incorporating feedback from the earlier review meeting

CHALLENGES:

The budget approval process took a long time, which caused delays in the implementation of planned activities

KEY ACTIONS:

Prepare all relevant documents in advance so that activities can be implemented promptly once the budget is approved.

IBF1 : Lab Systems Strengthening

Establishment of Sample Transportation (ST) Network (continue)

CURRENT STATUS:

MF18: Printing SOPs of sample transportation - package, transport, sample storage (**Not started**).

LCHMP61HP0921: Procurement of equipment and consumables for sample transportation (**Progress**)

- Completed preparation of all required documents for budget approval related to procurement of sample transport equipment and consumables, covering both domestic procurement and international procurement through the Global Drug Facility (GDF).
- The procurement documents are currently under review by the Department of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC).

CHALLENGES:

Budget release documents are being held until approval from global fund is received

KEY ACTIONS:

The documents were revised to include procurement through both domestic suppliers and the Global Drug Facility (GDF).

Annual Operational Plan (AOP) 2026 and Reallocation

Update progress: AOP 2026 and Reallocation

Update progress: Worked within the NCLE team, with support from NPCO (DPF) for the template, to develop the 2026 Annual Operational Plan and Consultant TORs for submission to the Global Fund on 5 December 2025

Annual Operational Plan 2026 and Reallocation

BL Code	Activities/Sub-activity	Estimated Budget (USD)
2.3.2	Strengthening laboratory capacity	710.101
2.3.2.1	Capacity enhancement on Laboratory System and QA unit	78.000
2.3.2.1.1	Establishment of QA unit	78.000
2.3.2.2	Development of Policy foundation for integrated laboratory, guideline and SOPs	49.537
2.3.2.2.1	Technical Working Group meeting to review Framework and Roadmap for an Integrated Laboratory Services in the Lao PDR to review national standard for infrastructure, tests, techniques and equipment for all laboratory levels. Titled: "Policy foundation for integrated laboratory	8.105
2.3.2.2.2	Printing Framework and Roadmap for an Integrated Laboratory Services in the Lao PDR	5.569
2.3.2.2.3	Consultation and technical meeting to Establish national integrated EQA system- strengthening integration of existing EQA programs	23.760
2.3.2.2.4	Technical working group meeting to review and finalize Standard for Health Laboratories	6.534
2.3.2.2.5	Printing the Standard for Health Laboratories	5.569
2.3.2.3	Strengthening the Biosafety/biosecurity capacity	51.527
2.3.2.3.1	Revise and finalize the National Laboratory Biosafety/Biosecurity Manual	23.016
2.3.2.3.2	Printing the National Laboratory Biosafety/Biosecurity Manual	13.922
2.3.2.3.4	Certify 40 biosafety cabinets in 17 provincial hospital labs and in 6 central level labs using external certifiers	14.588
2.3.2.5	Establishment of Sample Transportation Network	531.037
2.3.2.5.1	Consultation and technical review meeting for iRS pilot validation: meeting on Rationalization and mapping of ST routes - schedule, start/end locations, daily stops Assessment of options for ST provider - outsource to courier, or operate in-house Establish M&E framework - agree on indicators to be monitored by MOH/ST provider	16.795
2.3.2.5.2	Printing for Sample transportation SOPs - package, transport, storage of sample	1.114
LCHMP61HP0921	Procurement of equipment and consumables for ST (GDF)	511.077
LCHMP61HP0923	Procurement (Local)of equipment and consumables for ST (TA)	2.051

Annual Operational Plan 2026 and Reallocation

BL Code	Activities/Sub-activity	Estimated Budget (USD)
	I. Capacity Strengthening on Biosafety Cabinets (BSCs) Certification	46.268
	1. Enrolment of 12 health personnel in basic level of accreditation for biosafety cabinet field certifier program in Thailand	26.557
	2. Enrolment of 2 health personnel who are already certified as basic biosafety cabinet certifier accreditation (NCLE & University of Health Science) in Advanced BSC Certification Course	19.711
	II. Pilot Implementation of Integrated Specimen Referral System (iSRS)	221.072
	1. Site, workflow, and transport mechanisms set up in selected pilot locations: Province: Champasak, Khammuan, and Oudomxai (3)Three selected districts in each province (9)Two selected health centres in each district (18)	50.719
	2. Training of Trainer (ToT) in safe specimen collection, packaging, storage, and transport for provincial level health personnel and laboratory technicians.	6.237
	3. Training workshops for health personnel and laboratory technicians in safe specimen collection, packaging, storage, and transport.	58.349
	4. Monthly supervision visit for district health centre levels focusing on biosafety/biosecurity measures, specimen management and handling, transport processes in pilot sites	35.843
	5. Joint supervision visit, central team (NCLE, CHAS, NTC, CMPE) together with provincial level trainers visit pilot sites where improvement needed according to findings from monthly supervision done by provincial level trainers	50.719
	6. Transport expenses covering iSRS pilot implementation for all selected sites (human-powered transport) and Transport expenses	19.205
	III. Capacity development plan for lab network in Lao PDR	17.600
	1. Conduct a survey of laboratory human resources and develop a costed capacity-building plan outlining the necessary training and skill development for laboratory staff across different types of laboratories	17.600
	IV. Laboratory Information Management System Strengthening	17.600
	1. Assessment of different lab information systems being used and organizing stakeholder consultations aimed at identifying the needs that could guide future investments; Develop a national LIMS implementation plan to guide future investments in LIMS	17.600
	Total budget (USD)	1.012.640

Thank you very much