



TB CAP project:

Optimizing the functioning of the supra-national TB reference laboratory network in the African Region

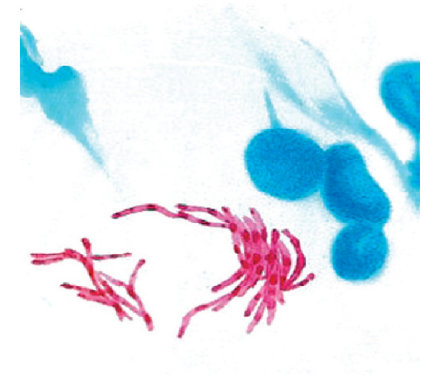
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SRLN meeting April 2010**

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- GLI/TBCAP's Lab. Toolbox
- TBCAPs SRL project
 - Expanded role of the SRLN
 - Where are we?
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TB CAP Toolbox

to strengthen lab services



- Standard Operating Procedures
- Management Information System
- Guide to purchase Lab Products, Logistics and supplies
- Culture and DST training ("workshop in a box")
- EQA training ("workshop in a box")
- Country Road map
- Manual on biosafety for labs (in progress)

http://dl.dropbox.com/u/616837/TB_CAP_LabTools.zip



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What could be the role of the SRLN?



- Provide TA to countries in establishing national policy on culture and DST
- Build a cadre of skilled laboratory personnel
- Assist with implementation of quality assured smear microscopy, culture and DST
- Assist with implementation of new tools
- Assist with Drug Resistance Surveillance (DRS)
- Provide laboratory support for MDR-TB diagnosis and treatment monitoring
- Assist countries with operational research

TB CAP's Vision

- In line with GLI
- A well functioning, financially sustainable and demand driven network of SRLs in Africa, providing regular support to priority African countries.

2-years project 2009-2010: Optimizing the functioning of the SRLN in the African Region

Strategic aim:

- to have a well-functioning quality-assured network of SRLs for the African region, based on a sustainable self-sufficient financial model, funded by the benefiting MOH/NRLs annual recurrent budget, and providing regular support to priority African countries.

Optimizing the functioning of the SRLN in the African Region

For Phase I: in APA4

- An Africa regional taskforce to develop and support a SRL network
- A consensus vision and multi-year costed action plan on the development of the SRL network in Africa.

For Phase II: in APA5

- Define priority countries for SRL support; define candidate new and existing SRL in need of further support
- Develop a general action plan:
 - linking existing SRLs with candidate new SRL
 - serving (newer) SRL in need of further support
- Perform needs assessments and action plan for each (candidate new) SRL
- Increase capacity Antwerp coordinating function: preparation, distribution and analysis of DST EQA panels, to cover all priority SRL in Africa

Cairo meeting 20-21 October 2009

Aim: prepare for a long-term multi-country action plan.

Objectives:

- Draft ToR and certification criteria for the SRL on the African continent, based on needs and potential identified
- Review outcomes of surveys of SRLs and African NRLs on existing links, needs of SRLs and NRLs; and capacity of African NRLs to become SRLs
- Select African NRLs as candidate SRLs for an initial assessment visit, and define the selection process
- Define needs of current SRLs to support African NRLs
- Discuss links between NRLs and the SRLN, particularly the candidate new SRLs that will need mentors.

Results Cairo meeting; Needs and Issues

- NRLs: wide range of issues and problems: Infection control and bio-safety; EQA in place but analysis and actions for improvement not done; C/DST, data management; staffing; funding; support from SRLs too narrow.
- SRLs: few SRLs; geographic issues; funds; staff; language issues; sending panels; lack of regular meetings to exchange knowledge and experience.

Outcomes of the Cairo meeting

Process towards ToR

Step1: discussion about the required functioning of a NRL: the so-called: " Gold Standard"

Step 2: Based on the gold standard discussion on the ToR for the SRL

Gold standard NRL

- Liaise with MoH/NTP
- Organize (QA) system of AFB smear microscopy,
- Assure QA for culture and 1st-line DST (including LPAs)
- Assure DRS (1st line)
- Support MDR TB patient care (diagnosis and treatment)
- Give guidance on Biosafety
- Evaluate indicators of the entire national network including supervision
- Organise training
- Participate in partnerships
- Contribute to administrative issues: HRD, National Strategic Plan, budget, financial mobilization, framework of a quality management system
- Assist with procurement of supplies/equipment
- Organise specimen collection/transport
- Organise MIS/Data management etc...
- Support operational research
- Prepare and distribute guidelines and SOPs

ToR for SRLs

- Liaise with WHO/GLI, SRLN and technical partners
- Support countries with technical assistance for:
 - quality assured AFB smear microscopy (basic techniques and EQA)
 - quality assured culture, identification and DST (including LPAs)
 - DRS protocols, data analysis, and quality assurance
- Provide services for SLD DST until NRLs have such capacity
- Advocate for lab staff protection using existing WHO TB biosafety manuals
- Support development of M&E indicators; good data management system
- Assure on-site training of NRL staff
- Support strategic planning of NRL together with NTP
- Provide TA on supplies and equipment as well as supply management
- Provide TA on national/international TB biological samples transport
- Support adaptation and dissemination of international standardized guidelines, manuals, and new tools

Additional potential ad hoc functions; provide TA

- for a process towards step-wise accreditation of NRLs
- for OR if relevant, in introduction of new laboratory tools

Potential new SRLs

Based on the survey conducted by The Union, discussion among participants, the following AFRO countries were selected :

- West Africa Benin and Ghana (not the Ghana NRL though)
 - East Africa Ethiopia, Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda*
 - Central Africa Cameroon
 - South Africa Madagascar
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- Uganda and Tanzania and Benin; are already supported by TBCAP, with the expectation that in 2010 at least one of them can be labelled (after an independent assessment) as regional SRLs

Proposed process for selecting new SRLs

- Adopt SRL ToR for interim use by WHO, SRLN
- Send a call to all candidate NRLs, stressing the new ToR
- Request the same to fill the WHO laboratory assessment tool
- Refine list of candidates based on response and other criteria:
 - geography/language (at least 1 in each African sub-region),
 - objective technical capacity (ability to perform some or all activities)
 - performance in proficiency testing
 - political/financial commitment (MoH/NTP),
 - transport possibilities of specimen, bio safety and IC measures
- Conduct standardized assessment missions by a team of national/international partners, WHO AFRO/HQ, and ideally the mentoring SRL.

Operating as SRLs and eventually linked for tutoring of a candidate new SRL

- Algeria (if funding available)
- Antwerp
- Atlanta
- Bilthoven (possible support for Mali)
- Borstel
- Cairo
- Milan/Rome (if funding available)
- Pretoria (if funding available)
- Stockholm
- Tokyo
- (Brisbane to further support Kenya)

SRL Network

- A network would benefit knowledge and experiences exchange
- Means: meetings, internet linkages, <http://glitblabs.blogspot.com>, Global Laboratory Initiative, TB SRLs and NRLs; This site has potential to:
 - Visualize existing linkages between SRLs and NRLs
 - Add calendar for each laboratory to improve coordination
 - Add web page for each laboratory or link to existing web page
 - Portal to share key documents/tools/resources
 - Visualize data e.g. WHO Global TB Report 2009
- EURO region has a functional Network, could be adapted for the Africa/EMRO region.

Cairo meeting outputs

- A list of SRLs that are interested to operate in Africa, but support is needed.
- A list of NRL that have potentials to become a SRL
- A selection process to select new SRLs following three phases
- A ToR comprising a list of tasks that SRLs has to perform
- Acceptance by SRLs and NRLs of the concept of a functional network

Next steps for discussion

- Establish an African SRL Taskforce (Network) coordinated by an institute. This could be WHO or one of the SRLs.
- Agree on the ToR for SRLs
- Implement the Africa regional action plan for SRL network

...cont. next steps: the action plan

- Appraisal, needs assessment of potential new SRLs
- Selection of priority countries and review their needs with regards to SRL services
- Meeting with selected key SRLs and group of GLI get consensus on:
 - Standard Deliverables and the way forward
 - match SRLs with NRLs (based on history, efficiency etc.;
- Develop a plan to support specific capacity strengthening of SRLs, based on the needs assessment (training, funds, equipment, self-sufficient financial recovery model, etc)

Thanks!

