



**3rd Partners' meeting on the Better
Labs for Better Health initiative:
Improving the quality of laboratory
services in the WHO European
Region**

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**Almaty, Kazakhstan
9-10 October 2018**

**21 June 2018
Original: English**

Scope and purpose

Background

Well-functioning, sustainable laboratory services operating according to international principles of quality and safety are an essential part of strong health systems and are crucial to improving public health. In the same way laboratory-based surveillance of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) is a key component of health system strengthening and is critical to the enhancement of health care delivery, and disease prevention and control. In 2012 the WHO Regional Office for Europe launched the Better Labs for Better Health (BLBH) initiative fundamentally to improve laboratory services in Member States in Eastern Europe and central Asia.

In June 2014 the 1st Partners' Meeting on the BLBH Initiative was conducted jointly with the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta and the HIV/AIDS team of WHO Regional Office for Europe, and took place in Copenhagen, Denmark¹. The 2nd Partners' Meeting was held in Tbilisi, Georgia in 2016 and included a joint session with the European Tuberculosis Laboratory Initiative (ELI)². The meeting emphasized the need to improve regulatory frameworks pertaining to laboratory licensing and accreditation, and to develop guidance on public health laboratory systems to support countries undergoing reforms.

Scope

This 3rd Partners' Meeting is conducted jointly with the Antimicrobial Resistance program at WHO Regional Office for Europe and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, Central Asian Region (CDC CAR). This meeting offers the opportunity to review the activities carried out in the region and discuss how they can support country-driven reforms of public health laboratory services. It will provide models for public health laboratory system reform, for training and mentoring in laboratory quality, and for the establishment of laboratory networks for preparedness and response. A special focus will be laboratory surveillance of AMR.

¹ "Report of the WHO Regional Meeting on Strengthening Laboratory Capacities to Support National Programmes in Eastern Europe and Central Asia (2014)." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 18 Mar. 2017, www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/laboratory-services/publications/report-of-the-who-regional-meeting-on-strengthening-laboratory-capacities-to-support-national-programmes-in-eastern-europe-and-central-asia-2014.

² "Better Labs for Better Health - Second Partners' Meeting, December 2016 Report." World Health Organization, World Health Organization, 26 Apr. 2017, www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/Health-systems/laboratory-services/publications/better-labs-for-better-health-second-partners-meeting,-december-2016-report.

Objectives

The main objectives of the meeting are to:

- Disseminate to a wide audience the progress of the Better Labs for Better Health initiative from 2016 to the present and inform on current activities;
- Show progress in national reforms of laboratory systems, national capacity building in the area of laboratory quality and safety and discuss priorities for the establishment of laboratory networks for preparedness and response;
- Discuss the role of laboratory quality management systems in AMR surveillance;
- Provide a forum for countries to work together to strengthen their laboratory services by sharing expertise, experience and lessons learned including an open discussion on how to enhance countries' involvement and ownership of laboratory reforms.

Working methods and translation

There will be a combination of plenary sessions, videos and group discussions throughout the meeting. The working language of the meeting will be English with simultaneous interpretation into Russian.

Target audience

Representatives of Member States that are currently implementing activities as part of the BLBH initiative, including Kyrgyzstan, the Republic of Moldova, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Ukraine and Uzbekistan, and other interested countries of the Newly Independent States; partners and donors; professional associations in the areas of laboratory quality and biosafety; and representatives from WHO country offices, regional offices and headquarters, World Organization for Animal Health (OIE) and other United Nations organizations.