

PPHSN LabNet Technical Working Body (TWB) TORs and membership

Overview

The LabNet Technical Working Body (TWB) is established under the framework of the Pacific Public Health Surveillance Network (PPHSN) to provide advice on the development and strengthening of human (and animal?) health laboratory services in Pacific Island countries and territories (PICTs).

The LabNet TWB acknowledges the Asia Pacific Strategy for Strengthening Health Laboratory Services as the basis for the Body's Terms of Reference. This Strategy recognises that efficient and reliable laboratory services are an essential and fundamental component of an effective health system. The Strategy emphasises the need for national laboratory plans and policies, appropriate human and financial resources and infrastructure as well as methods to manage information, procurement and supply and referral networks. The Strategy also promotes quality, biosafety and occupational health.

The TWB recognises the importance of laboratory networks with local (Level 1) laboratories supported by Level 2 laboratories which have the capacity to undertake more complex laboratory methodologies and act as sub-regional reference centres and Level 3 laboratories, located mainly in developed countries on the Pacific Rim, which act as reference facilities.

Terms of Reference

Strategic Development of Laboratory Services

- Provide advice and expertise on the development of laboratory services based on the framework described in the Asia Pacific Strategy for Strengthening Health Laboratory Services
- Identify appropriate Technical support for the implementation of Laboratory Policies and Standards, launched in 2010 to the PICT
- Identify a Standardized assessment tool for the use in PICT Monitoring & evaluation
- Assist & Assess Laboratory situation analysis where needed in the PICT

Advocacy

- Advocate for the development of regional and national plans for laboratory development and the provision of adequate resources for the implementation of those plans.
- Advocate for the role of PICT laboratories in public health surveillance and testing

Communication, Coordination and Collaboration

- Promote the development of LabNet as a network which facilitates communication, coordination and collaboration for PICTs laboratories and between PICT laboratories and reference laboratories
- Promote communication and collaboration between human and animal health laboratories and between the LabNet and Pacific Animal Health Laboratory Network (PAHLNet).
- Promote the establishment of twinning arrangements between PICT and reference laboratories.

Training

- Provide advice on standardized training needs and opportunities for PICT laboratory staff.
- Provide advice to agencies responsible for developing training courses.
- Facilitate training opportunities at suitable reference laboratories for PICT laboratory staff.

- Monitor & evaluate training course in the PICT region to avoid duplication, and ensure appropriate participation for the training
- Provide ongoing IATA certification to all PICT

Technical expertise regarding appropriate methods and technology

- Provide technical expertise and advice on testing methodologies
- Provide technical expertise and advice on laboratory equipment
- Facilitate the trailing, quality testing or comparison of test methodologies and/or equipment by appropriate reference laboratories
- Provide advice on appropriate information management systems for PICT laboratories
- Provide advice and support opportunities for improved procurement and stock management
- Provide advice and support the development of appropriate sample referral networks

Accreditation and Quality Improvement

- Provide advice on the development of a regional laboratory accreditation system
- Provide advice and technical expertise regarding quality improvement and the implementation of the laboratory Quality Management System.

Membership

Members of the TWB are chosen to represent the key agencies and laboratories contributing to laboratory strengthening in the Pacific islands region.

The following membership is proposed, with a total number of members between 8 and 10:

- Representative of the WHO Division of Pacific Technical Support, Suva, Fiji. (WHO)
- Laboratory Specialist, Secretariat of the Pacific Community, (SPC – Human & Animal health)
- Representative of the Pasteur Institute of New Caledonia (IPNC)
- Representative of the National Reference Laboratory, Melbourne (NRL)
- Representative of Pacific Islands Health Officers Association (PIHOA)
- Representative of the Pacific Paramedical Training Centre, New Zealand. (PPTC)
- Representative from CDC

Reference laboratory representatives are invited to join the TWB according to their relevance to, and relationship with, PICT laboratories.

The Level 1 laboratory representatives are chosen based on expressions of interest and CVs received after advertising via PacNet. The selection is undertaken by the Chair and 2 members of the TWB. Level 1 laboratory representatives are renewed every 2 years at the LabNet meeting.

Reporting Arrangements:

The LabNet TWB reports to the PPHSN Coordinating Body through the TWB Chairperson.

Secretariat:

SPC provides the secretariat function for the TWB.

Chairperson:

The Chairperson is to be elected by TWB members, and renewed every 1-2 years.

Membership:

Membership is to be updated when decided by the PPHSN Coordinating Body according to TWB advice, possibly every 2 years.

Communication:

TWB e-mailing list, teleconference and face to face meeting or other ways if required. PacNet-lab list

Issues for discussion:

1. Does the LabNet_TWB also have a role in animal health laboratory related issues?
2. Does the LabNet_TWB also provide advice on lab issues other than those related to outbreak prone disease? If yes, then the TWG's membership and TOR should reflect the interests of haematology and biochemistry and the relevant reference labs may need to be included. Obviously the training role of PPTC will encompass these aspects. If not then the focus on PPHSN priority diseases will need to be stated. .
3. Should the NZ ESR representative be specified as the National Centre for Biosecurity and Infectious Disease? Should a representative from Biosecurity New Zealand for animal related health matters be included?
4. Other reference laboratories to be considered:
 - WHO-CC, Melbourne
 - WHO/FAO/OIE Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Leptospirosis, Australia and Western Pacific Region, Queensland,
 - Institute of Clinical Pathology and Medical Research, Westmead.
 - ? reference labs for haematology and biochemistry
5. Other possible representatives
 - Animal Health Laboratory Services
6. Will Pacific Island laboratory representatives be included, Level 1 or Level 2
Other Pacific Island laboratories to be considered:
 - Mataika House
 - Guam Public Health and Social Services laboratory
 - Malardé Institute, Tahiti
 - Level 1