

# **Southeast Asia Work Plan Lao PDR**

**FY 2022  
Program Year 4**

**October 2021–September 2022**



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## ACT | EAST PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) | East Program (Act | East) supports national NTD programs in reaching World Health Organization (WHO) goals for NTD control and elimination through proven, cost-effective public health interventions. The Act | East Program also provides critical support to countries on their journey to self-reliance, helping them create sustainable programming for NTD control within robust and resilient health systems. The Act | East Program is being implemented by a consortium of partners, led by RTI International and including The Carter Center; Fred Hollows Foundation; IMA World Health; Light for the World; Results for Development (R4D); Save the Children; Sightsavers; and Women Influencing Health, Education, and Rule of Law (WI-HER).

In Lao PDR, Act | East program activities are implemented by RTI International.

## COVID-19 PANDEMIC IMPACT ON ACT | EAST ACTIVITIES AND WORK PLANS

The coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic continues to impact neglected tropical disease (NTD) programs. On April 1, 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) issued guidance to NTD programs, recommending that almost all in-person activities be postponed until further notice. With the support of USAID, Act | East stopped all activities that matched the criteria outlined.

On July 27, 2020, WHO issued further guidance on assessing whether NTD activities could restart safely. Act | East, in collaboration with Act | West and the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), developed activity restart guidance and resource documents to support each country to adapt activities appropriately.

Decisions on all supported activities continue to be made in close coordination with ministries of health and are context-specific, varying by country, region, and activity type, and are subject to changes in COVID-19 dynamics. Act | East continues to provide regular updates to USAID on the plans for specific activities through the submission of monthly updates.

Unless noted, work plans for fiscal year 2022 assume a full year of activities and are written with the best information available at the time of submission. Nevertheless, the situation may change in some countries and will result in adjustments to work plans. Act | East will continue to communicate with USAID to discuss these changes as the situation evolves.

## ACRONYMS LIST

Act   East	Act to End Neglected Tropical Diseases   East
CMPE	Center for Malariaology, Parasitology and Entomology
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease 2019
DCDC	Directorate of Communicable Disease Control
FY	Fiscal Year
LF	Lymphatic Filariasis
MDA	Mass Drug Administration
Mf	Microfilaremia
MMDP	Morbidity Management and Disability Prevention
MOH	Ministry of Health
NIMPE	National Institute for Malariaology, Parasitology and Entomology
NTD	Neglected Tropical Disease
TAS	Transmission Assessment Survey
WHO	World Health Organization

## LAO PDR

### 1. NATIONAL NTD PROGRAM OVERVIEW AND SUPPORT

Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), with a population of 7 million, is divided administratively into 17 provinces and 1 prefecture, with 148 districts and 10,781 villages. In 2012, the Directorate of Communicable Disease Control (DCDC) within the Ministry of Health (MOH) was established to provide direct oversight of the Center for Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology (CMPE), which is responsible for implementing the lymphatic filariasis (LF) and schistosomiasis programs, and the National Ophthalmology Center, which is responsible for implementing trachoma activities. The CMPE collaborates with the Ministry of Education and Sport to implement school-based soil-transmitted helminth MDA.

Lao PDR is endemic for LF caused by *Wuchereria bancrofti*, with approximately 140,000 people identified at risk at the time of baseline mapping. Following rapid assessment surveys and microfilaremia mapping from 2002 through 2007, only Phouvong District in Attapeu Province in 2007 was found endemic. The first round of LF mass drug administration (MDA) with albendazole and diethylcarbamazine was conducted in 2008. In 2009, antigenemia mapping identified four more endemic districts, all in Attapeu, and the MDA program was extended to cover all five districts in 2010. CMPE conducted pre-TAS1 in October and November 2016; results were below the WHO-recommended cutoff for treatment (<2% antigenemia). CMPE continued to implement MDA in the Attapeu Province through February 2017.

Lao PDR completed MDA in its one LF-endemic province, Attapeu, in early 2017 and passed a Transmission Assessment Survey (TAS)1 in October 2017 and TAS2 in November 2019. The TAS1 survey included a total of 34 schools (target 34) and tested samples from 1,833 children (target 1,532); zero positive cases were found. TAS2 was completed in November 2019 with assistance from WHO, with zero positive cases among the 1,607 children tested. A final TAS3 is currently planned for late 2021 with funding from WHO Western Pacific Regional Office. Lao PDR aims to be validated as having eliminated LF as a public health problem in early 2022.

### 2. ACT | EAST FY22 ACTIVITIES

#### LF Dossier Development Support

Beginning in FY21 and extending into FY22, Act | East Asia Regional Advisor James Johnson and consultant Dr. Ramaiah Kapa will collect, compile, and review LF data and discuss priority activities for LF elimination; this work will be conducted remotely. Mr. Johnson and Dr. Kapa will work with WHO, DCDC, and CMPE to update the draft dossier. The Act | East Senior LF Advisor will also review the updated document, and the draft dossier will be shared with WHO. Mr. Johnson's STTA will also include collaboration with WHO regional and country offices and the Act | East Communications Manager to identify opportunities to mark the validation of LF elimination in Lao PDR and with the global NTD community.