

SOUTHEAST ASIA REGION

STRATEGIC FOCUS

Located at the Thailand Ministry of Public Health (MOPH) in Nonthaburi, Thailand, the CDC/PEPFAR Southeast Asia Regional Office (SARO) collaborates with and provides technical assistance to government and non-governmental partners in Lao PDR and Thailand, including civil society organizations (CSOs) and multilateral organizations, to discover, evaluate and implement new tools and programs to combat HIV, sexually transmitted infections (STIs), and TB. It supports the UNAIDS 90-90-90 goals (90 percent of all people living with HIV know their HIV status; 90 percent of all people with a diagnosed HIV infection receive ART; and 90 percent of all people receiving ART are virally suppressed). The SARO aims to catalyze broad sustained HIV epidemic control in Lao PDR, Thailand and the region by working with partners to evaluate, pilot and scale-up effective approaches to reach, test, treat and retain priority populations in settings with the greatest burden of HIV.

SARO activities are focused in 13 provinces in Thailand and three provinces in Lao PDR with high HIV prevalence. In Thailand, the SARO works through two cooperative agreements - one with the MOPH and a second with the Bangkok Metropolitan Administration (BMA) – that focus on HIV, STIs, and TB prevention, care and treatment. In Lao PDR, the SARO provides technical assistance on HIV prevention, care, and treatment through its cooperative agreements with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and the World Health Organization (WHO). SARO initiatives focus on key populations that include men who have sex with men (MSM) and transgender women. SARO initiatives promote and demonstrate sustainable epidemic-control solutions that can be replicated, integrated, and/or scaled-up into existing health systems by national governments.

SARO's laboratory and strategic information sections provide the foundation for much of the program's technical work. The strategic information section works with the Thai Government to develop health information systems that generate evidence to support and strengthen national public health policies, inform national guidelines, and help sub-national and national public health officers and health care providers to effectively plan and implement programs and make timely clinical-care decisions.

KEY ACTIVITIES AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

THAILAND

In Thailand, the SARO supports the national "Ending AIDS" strategy (less than 1,000 new HIV-infections a year by 2030). It regularly provides technical support to revise national HIV management guidelines as well as develop and implement HIV-related policies, such as the national HIV "Test & Treat" and "same-day test results" policies. It continues to collaborate with partners to develop and implement "Test and Start" initiatives, which promote access to quality, rapid HIV testing and diagnosis, and immediate links to sustained prevention and treatment interventions, including pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) and anti-retroviral therapy (ART).

CDC-Southeast Asia Regional Office Staff: 47

Locally Employed Staff: 41

Direct Hires: 4

Fellows & Contractors: 2

Southeast Asia Region Includes:

Lao People's Democratic Republic (PDR) (Laos) and Thailand

		COUNTRIES	
		Lao PDR	Thailand
Country Quick Facts	GNI Per Capita (2015)	\$1,740	\$5,720
	Population (2015)	6.802 Million	67.959 Million
	Under 5 Mortality (Per 1,000 Live Births) (2015)	67	12
	Life Expectancy (2014)	66	74

Source: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country>

Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic (2015)	Estimated HIV Prevalence (Age 15–49)	0.3%*	1.1%
	Estimated AIDS Deaths (Age ≥15)	N/A	14,000
	Estimated Orphans Due to AIDS	N/A	140,000
	Reported Number Receiving Antiretroviral Therapy (ART) (Age ≥15)	3,657	278,322

Source: <http://aidsinfo.unaids.org/>

*Source: LAO PDR COUNTRY PROGRESS REPORT, Global AIDS Response Progress Country Report, 2016

N/A: Data Not Available

Global Tuberculosis Epidemic	Treatment Success Rate (2014)	86%	80%
	Estimated TB Incidence (Per 100,000 Population) (2015)	182	172
	Estimated % Who are HIV Positive (2015)	8%	13%

Source: <http://www.who.int/tb/country/data/profiles/en/>



The SARO supports the integration of HIV quality improvement programs into the MOPH's national health facility accreditation system and laboratory quality management system. The SARO is also working with the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID), multilateral partners, and CSOs to develop accreditation and health financing systems to support CSOs to transition from external funding to domestic funding in the near future.

In collaboration with the Government of Thailand and other government and non-government partners, CDC-SARO:

- Developed and implemented disease specific certification (DSC) programs for HIV and STIs (including those for testing and counselling), promoting adherence to quality standards for healthcare facilities.
- Accredited 86 laboratories by Medical Technology Council in Thailand and established a web-based external quality assurance (EQA) program which provides key-data to guide quality improvement activities.
- Implemented demonstration projects that have developed effective "reach and recruit" outreach models which, using target mapping, mobile testing clinics, community-facility referral networks and facility-based services, successfully increased testing rates among key populations. The model has since been integrated into Thailand's National HIV/AIDS Treatment and Prevention Guidelines;
- Conducted integrated behavioral and biological assessment surveillance (IBBS), size estimations of people living with HIV and key populations, HIV drug resistance surveillance, and HIV program impact evaluations which have contributed to Thailand's national HIV policies, and continue to guide national and sub-national strategic plans for ending AIDS by 2030.
- Provided technical support for the national prevention of mother-to-child transmission (PMTCT) program that contributed to Thailand receiving WHO certification for having eliminated the mother-to-child transmission (EMTCT) of HIV and syphilis in June 2016. The WHO validation was achieved, in part, due to the long-standing collaboration between CDC-Thailand and the Thailand MOPH, with the CDC team taking a leading role in the WHO validation process.
- In collaboration with the MOPH, BMA, and 13 health facilities, initiated a new demonstration project in 2016, which introduces HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP) – a new prevention intervention – in combination with same-day testing, as part of routine medical services. The project results will inform the program feasibility and advocate for free PrEP nationwide.
- In collaboration with the Thailand Bureau of Tuberculosis, national institutes of health laboratory and other partners, the CDC team conducted a multicenter trial in 22 healthcare facilities (10 in Thailand and 12 in Vietnam). The trial evaluates the effectiveness/impact of a novel infection control intervention, aiming to reduce nosocomial TB transmission.

LAO PDR

In Lao PDR, SARO initiatives promote access to prevention services, link HIV-positive MSM to HIV care including ART, promote continuous quality improvement activities for HIV care and treatment and laboratory services, and support the utilization of strategic information for program monitoring and evaluation. CDC- SARO's accomplishments include:

- Pilot projects have successfully improved the quality of HIV counseling, testing, care and treatment services and contributed to the development of updated standard operational procedures.
- With technical assistance from the SARO, the people living with HIV and key populations size estimation and the IBBS report on MSM and HIV/AIDS in Lao PDR were completed. The estimation and report continue to play a key role in informing priority areas for the National Strategic and Action Plan for HIV/AIDS and STI Prevention and Control (NSAP).
- The CDC team developed the health information management systems to monitor HIV counseling and testing services (MERS) and HIV cascade cohort monitoring (HIVCAM-plus). The two systems: (1) can monitor and link individual patient data using unique identifier code in both community and facility-based services; (2) enable complete cascade cohort monitoring from HIV testing, HIV-positive referrals, ART initiation, viral suppression, and ART retention rates; and (3) increase the capacity of CDC-trained ART site staff and MOH public health officers in quality data management and allow them to utilize the data for program improvement and planning.

