



GLOBAL TASK FORCE ON
CHOLERA CONTROL

**Meeting of the Global Task Force on Cholera Control
(GTCC) Surveillance and Laboratory Working Group
02-05 May 2023
Mozambique, Maputo**

Laboratory Gaps and Needs – SEARO Region

Laboratory Status – SEARO region

- Confirming AWD, especially cholera - limited diagnostic tests/laboratory capacity at the sub-national level.
- Culture is **gold standard** for confirmation/RDTs used in surveillance settings
- PCR, molecular methods, toxigenicity testing, serology used in research settings mainly
- Confirmation is typically done opportunistically in clinical settings based on capacity or on a fixed proportion of AWD cases in surveillance settings.



Key Challenges

- Limited laboratory capacity for confirmatory diagnosis and limited availability of diagnostic tools such as RDTs and culture
- Use of PCR for cholera diagnosis is not widely adopted due to a lack of trained personnel and necessary resources.
- Strengthening laboratory capacity and ensuring wider availability of diagnostic tools are essential to overcome these challenges and effectively respond to cholera outbreaks.



Key needs

- Adequate funding and resources - laboratory capacity building and the procurement of diagnostic tests and equipment.
- Training and education for laboratory staff to improve their skills in AWD diagnosis and quality assurance.
- Collaboration and coordination among stakeholders to develop and implement the diagnostic roadmap and other initiatives for AWD control.
- Timely and accurate data collection, analysis, and reporting to inform decision-making and evaluate the impact of interventions.



Way Forward

- Develop and implement a diagnostic roadmap that includes strengthening laboratory capacity for AWD confirmation at the sub-national level.
- Ensure the rapid response team is equipped to detect, investigate, and test suspected cholera cases by supporting the transportation of samples to laboratories.
- Plan, obtain and stockpile necessary materials such as RDTs, sample collection supplies, and laboratory reagents, including in districts not currently affected by cholera, in order to be prepared for potential outbreaks.
- Train health staff on laboratory diagnosis and sample collection (including use of case definition, cholera testing strategy, use of RDT), data collection using standard forms, data management and timely reporting, investigation and confirmation of suspect cases. In addition to sample collection and transportation.
- Leverage genomic sequencing to understand AWD transmission patterns.
- Implement quality assurance measures for testing and networking with existing capacities, such as WHO Collaborating Centers.

Thank you