

## **Capacity Building for Detection of Viral Respiratory Pathogens, Lao People's Democratic Republic**

**Khanthong Bounlu<sup>1</sup>, Thongchanh Sisouk<sup>1</sup>, Darouny Phonekeo<sup>1</sup>, Phengta Vongprachanh<sup>1</sup>, Sithat Insisiengmai<sup>2</sup>, Reiko Tsuyuoka<sup>3</sup>, Andrew Corwin<sup>4</sup>, Gary T Brice<sup>5</sup>, Juliet E Bryant<sup>6</sup>**

<sup>1</sup>National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology (NCLE), Lao PDR; <sup>2</sup>Dep. of Hygiene and Prevention, Ministry of Health Vientiane, Lao PDR; <sup>3</sup>WHO-WPRO Lao PDR, <sup>4</sup>US CDC Lao PDR, <sup>4</sup>Naval American Military Research Unit Indonesia, <sup>5</sup>Pasteur Institute Lao PDR.

In the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR), outbreaks of highly pathogenic avian influenza (HPAI) A/H5N1 in poultry were reported in 2003, 2004, and 2007. During February 2007, the first 2 human cases of A/H5N1 were reported from Lao, and confirmed at the National Center for Laboratory and Epidemiology. Strengthening surveillance systems and laboratory networks is a high priority within the « Lao National AI Control and Pandemic Preparedness Plan ». Here we report on preliminary results of the first laboratory-based surveillance program to be established in the country. Methods employed include conventional and real-time RT-PCR, as well as multiplex protocols involving Luminex technology.