



RPHL
Regional Public
Health Laboratory
Network

NEWSLETTER

Issue 1 - March 2026

Brunei Darussalam Advances National Laboratory Strategic Plan to Strengthen Laboratory Systems

A National Laboratory Strategic Plan provides countries with a clear roadmap to strengthen laboratory systems, align stakeholders, and guide sustainable investment.

For Brunei Darussalam, developing an NLSP represents a national commitment to strengthen coordination across institutions and ensure laboratories are prepared to support public health priorities. By defining shared goals, responsibilities, and investment needs, the plan helps translate vision into coordinated national action.



Building on a SWOT Analysis conducted with peer support through the RPHL Network, 35 stakeholders from across Brunei's health and laboratory sectors met from 2–4 December 2025 to develop a national Plan of Action, including responsibilities, timelines, and a monitoring framework. The strategic document is set to be officially endorsed during the RPHL Network APF 2026, hosted by Brunei Darussalam.



Jintana Sriwongsa
Regional Programme Director
RPHL Network

On behalf of the RPHL Network Secretariat, I warmly welcome you to our first newsletter. This platform highlights the dedication of laboratories, experts, and partners working together to strengthen public health systems across Asia & the Pacific. Your commitment continues to drive the Network forward and build a more connected laboratory community.

In this issue, we feature efforts to foster a self-sustained laboratory network, including the Thailand-Timor-Leste EQA sharing initiative and peer-to-peer support in strengthening the national laboratory strategic plan in Brunei Darussalam. We also share timely updates on emerging diseases to support regional preparedness and coordinated responses.

Stay tuned for the next issue in June 2026. Together, let us strive to build a Responsive Public Health Laboratory Network for our region.



Regional Public Health Laboratory Network



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Fostering Self-Sustained Laboratory Quality Assurance: RPHL Network's First EQAS/PT Sharing

The first EQAS/PT shipment marks a milestone for the RPHL Network— demonstrating how member laboratories can work together to strengthen regional quality assurance through trust, collaboration, and shared expertise.

For a regional network, staying connected is essential. Regular exchanges allow member laboratories to share progress, discuss operational challenges, and align priorities – ensuring the Network continues to respond to emerging public health threats collectively.

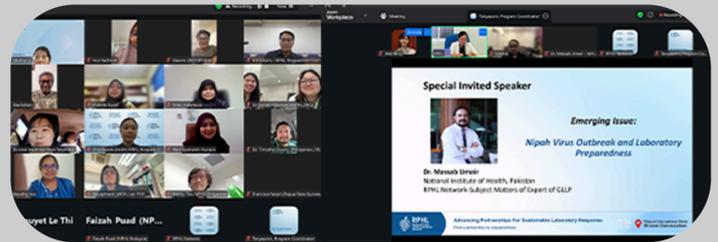
On 12 February 2026, the RPHL Network Secretariat convened more than 70 laboratory leaders, RPHL Network Focal Points, and Subject Matter Experts from 14 member countries for the Member Virtual Conference. Participants shared updates from their national laboratories and discussed upcoming regional initiatives.

A highlight of the session was a presentation by Dr. Massab Umair from Pakistan's National Institute of Health, which sparked a dynamic regional exchange on Nipah virus preparedness and laboratory response.

Ensuring reliable laboratory results across countries requires strong and accessible quality assurance systems. To address gaps in access to External Quality Assessment (EQA), the RPHL Network launched an EQA/Proficiency Testing (PT) sharing initiative, turning a shared challenge into a collaborative regional solution.

On 30 January 2026, the Network coordinated its first international panel shipment from Thailand's Department of Medical Sciences to the National Health Laboratory of Timor-Leste, where testing has been completed and verification is underway.

This milestone reflects growing trust and member-led collaboration. With additional PT panels sharing planned from Viet Nam and Indonesia, the initiative demonstrates how regional cooperation can strengthen sustainable laboratory quality systems.



RPHL Network Strengthens Regional Preparedness Through Member Collaboration

Strong laboratory networks are built through regular dialogue, trust, and the willingness to share experience across borders.

KNOWLEDGE CORNER

LAB CAPACITY AND PREPAREDNESS FOR NIPAH VIRUS (NIV) IN PAKISTAN

Discover how Pakistan is strengthening laboratory preparedness to respond to the emerging Nipah virus threat and reinforce national public health capacity.



By **Dr. Massab Umair**
Principal Scientific Officer
National Institute of Health
Pakistan



GLLP COMMUNITY OF PRACTICE (COP)

Join our CoP on 20 March 2026 at 5:00PM to learn from our GLLP expert on:

1. Risk Communication
2. Proposal Writing

REGISTER NOW



UPCOMING ACTIVITIES

1. RPHL Network Annual Meeting 2026 **25-27 March 2026**
Bangkok, Thailand
2. Papua New Guinea NLSP Development Workshop **8-10 April 2026**
Papua New Guinea
3. Thailand Biological Waste Disposal Teach Back Workshop **22-24 April 2026**
Chiang Mai, Thailand
4. RPHL Network Twinning in BRM Workshop **27 April-1 May 2026**
Singapore
5. Training on Pathogen Genomics for Public Health Laboratories with RITM in Philippines **11-15 May 2026**
Philippines
6. Post-secondment: Progress review in Timor-Leste **18 –22 May 2026**
Timor-Leste