



# INFORM ASIA: USAID HEALTH RESEARCH PROGRAM

Inform Asia: the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Health Research Program helps generate and apply strategic, scientifically sound data in health programming in the region. Malaria, HIV, tuberculosis, pandemic influenza and other emerging infectious diseases pose a significant public health threat throughout Asia, and in particular, the Greater Mekong Sub-region. Headquartered in Bangkok, Inform Asia, implemented by RTI International, is a five-year program that works with the research community and program implementers to conduct research focused on strengthening health systems and promoting the use of science in that research in Thailand and in the Lao People's Democratic Republic (Lao PDR). The program currently focuses on malaria and HIV.

## MALARIA

More than half of the populations of Thailand and Lao PDR live in malaria-endemic areas and are at risk of infection and disease. Through the U.S. President's Malaria Initiative's support to the Greater Mekong Sub-region, the project provides assistance in malaria surveillance and generates information and evidence for the National Malaria Control Programs in Thailand and Lao PDR to support both countries in their quest to achieve malaria elimination. Inform Asia's team of locally and internationally-recognized malaria experts, epidemiologists, researchers and program managers build upon and learn from past and current efforts to deliver on malaria monitoring and surveillance.

## HIV: MITIGATING STIGMA AND DISCRIMINATION

Reducing stigma and discrimination in health care facilities is a crucial part of HIV-prevention efforts. Inform Asia works with national programs in Thailand and Lao PDR to develop curricula and key interventions to reduce stigma and discrimination experienced by key populations and people living with HIV in health care facilities. Health facility personnel are also trained to increase their awareness of HIV stigma and discrimination experienced by those seeking care.

## IMPACT AND RESULTS:

Inform Asia works to continually put forward evidence that can lead to better health outcomes and supportive health policy. As part of its contributions to malaria elimination and HIV prevention efforts, the program has:

- Undertaken a partnership with the Bureau of Vector Borne Diseases, under the Thai Ministry of Public Health, and provided support for a cost-benefit analysis to advocate for domestic financial resources to support ongoing efforts towards malaria elimination;
- Provided assistance to the national malaria programs in Thailand and Lao PDR to strengthen the national malaria surveillance systems and help generate strategic information to inform planning and decision-making;
- Strengthened malaria surveillance systems to improve data quality, timely reporting, data analysis and information use;
- Supported implementing and documenting the therapeutic efficacy studies in Thailand implemented by the World Health Organization;
- Conducted research to evaluate new models and strategies to eliminate malaria;
- Provided assistance to the Thai Ministry of Public Health and the Center for HIV/AIDS and Sexually Transmitted Infections in Lao PDR to measure the scope and level of stigma and discrimination in health care facilities and to use this data to implement policy and program reforms; and
- Developed customized stigma and discrimination measurement tools and “training-of-trainers” curricula to support activities. As a result, Thailand is now one of the first countries globally to have included stigma and discrimination targets within their national HIV strategy.

## PARTNERS

Inform Asia is implemented by RTI International. The program collaborates with the Bureau of AIDS, Tuberculosis, and Sexually Transmitted Infections, Thailand; Research Institute for Health Sciences, Chiang Mai University, Thailand; Center for HIV/AIDS/STI, Lao PDR; Bureau of Vector Borne Diseases, Thailand; Centre for Malariology, Parasitology and Entomology, Lao PDR; FHI 360; WHO Country Offices, Thailand and Lao PDR; UNAIDS; and the UNDP.

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