



Zambia MOH Laboratory Technical Working Group



Introduction

- The MoH Lab TWG comprises of Zambia's Lab team of Experts.

GOALS:

Strengthens national laboratory
systems

Drive scientific progress



Governance and Structure

- TWG Terms of Reference (TORs) were prepared by a select team of experts
- Outlines clear leadership roles & accountability.
- Defined accountability to PS Technical Services.
- Pathology and Laboratory services unit is responsible for coordination of TWG activities and meetings
- Chaired by AD Lab services
- Secretariat is the PLSU



Governance and Structure

- Contribute to the development and enforcement of national laboratory policies, strategies and guidelines.
- Advocate for regular review of the national laboratory policy.
- Approves and monitors evaluations and validations of new diagnostic tools
- Developing indicators to monitor and evaluate laboratory system performance.
- Develop and track progress toward specific, measurable, and time-bound objectives of the laboratory TWG



Membership and expertise

Based on technical expertise, Laboratory managers, academic staff, Cooperating Partners

- Core Government Members
 - MOH leadership, QMS, provincial biomedical scientists, and national lab officers.
- National Laboratory Institutions
 - UTH, CDL, CDH, LMUTH, other major labs.
- Development & Technical Partners
 - CDC, CIDRZ, CHAZ, GHSC-PSM, APHL, ZIH/PACT, WHO, UKHSA, ICAP, etc.
- Supply Chain Agencies
 - ZAMMSA, GHSC-PSM supply planning teams.
- Research & Academia
 - Zambart. UNZA
- Vendors (as needed)
 - To support technology evaluation and decision-making.

This ensures technical depth and inclusivity.



Meeting Functionality

- Chaired by the Assistant director Pathology and Lab Services representing the PS
- Meets every 2nd Thursday of the month
- Usually 9 to 12hrs, but sometimes takes the whole day
- Adhoc meetings for urgent matters
- Annual 4 day retreats for strategic review
- Physical, Virtual or blended.
- Agenda collated by the secretariat and circulated prior to the meeting day
- Minutes circulated within 7 days of meeting.



Meeting functionality

- Attendance across meetings remains high and consistent, typically ranging between:
- 25–40 participants per meeting, representing each of the institutions mentioned
 - For example:
 - July 2024 meeting: 19 participants Fully virtual
 - March 2025 meeting: 36 participants Physical
 - May 2025 meeting: 29 participants Hybrid
 - July 2025 meeting: 30 participants Hybrid
 - Sept 2025 meeting: 20 participants Virtual

This level of participation shows strong national ownership and partner engagement, even when meetings are virtual.



Decision-Making Process

- Agenda shared in advance
 - share 5-7days before the meeting members are asked to input agenda items.
- Majority-based resolutions
 - when an issue needs to be addressed the members attending the meeting need to be in agreement by way of vote
- Ad-hoc meetings for urgent matters
 - When a matter is not resolved or something urgent comes up ad-hoc meetings are called



Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

- Firstly, the virtual format has enhanced national and provincial alignment
 - Provincial Biomedical Scientists (PBSs) are now able to participate consistently regardless of their location
 - Provinces such as Muchinga, Luapula, Western, and Copperbelt have been able to join meetings regularly, ensuring that provincial priorities and challenges are incorporated into national planning discussion



Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

- Equipment and diagnostic kits evaluation is done by accredited labs
- Supply chain processes are reported by the Zambia Medicines and Medical supplies agency
- TWG approves these reports and advocate for Continuous Improvement of laboratory services nationwide



Evidence-Informed Decision-Making

- Virtual meetings have also improved technical planning across programs.
- Teams responsible for TB, HIV, QMS, digital health innovations such as SmartCare/DISA, supply chain functions, and diagnostic evaluations can all present updates within the same session.
- This has reduced fragmentation and created a consolidated platform for joint planning and problem-solving.



Performance and Accountability

- TWG resolutions are reported to PS-TS
- enabled rapid dissemination of national priorities
MOH is able to communicate urgent technical updates such as
 - the rollout of acute HIV detection strategies,
 - adoption of the TB XDR assay
 - emerging commodity riskin real time, ensuring that all stakeholders receive timely guidance for immediate action.
- Monitoring and follow-up on implementation



Funding and Resource Availability

- No dedicated budget for the TWG
- Relies on the good will from partners
- Primarily uses cost-effective modalities such as virtual meetings



Coordination Across TWGs and Subcommittees

- Affiliated TWGs have representation in the Ministry of Health Lab TWG.
- Subcommittees created for specific tasks report to the TWG



Summary

- The Lab TWG draws its strength through:
 - Governance (TORs)
 - Multisector engagement (Team of Lab experts),
 - Regular meetings,
 - National system coordination.



Coordination & Communication

- Secretariat ensures documentation of the meeting
 - the responsibility of recording is given to the provincial representatives.
 - A schedule is made in advance
- Secretariat also tracks the action points
- Stakeholder engagement mechanisms
 - Emails, Whatsapp, Phone calls



Conclusion

The MOH Lab TWG demonstrates full operational capacity and national-level impact on laboratory policy, quality, and diagnostics.



Thank You

- Ministry of Health – Pathology & Laboratory Services Unit
- TWG Secretariat