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Catalyzing Expanded Access to Early Testing, Care and Treatment for HIV-Exposed Infants

Unitaid/EGPAF Project to Optimize Early Infant Diagnosis of HIV through the Integration of Point-of-Care Testing into National Laboratory Networks: Expanding Access to Affordable, Effective and Equitable Testing of HIV-Exposed Infants.



In 2015 more than 1.2 million babies were born to mothers living with HIV in the 21 UNAIDS priority countries.¹ While the World Health Organization (WHO) recommends that all HIV-exposed infants receive a virological test for HIV within two months of birth, only half had access to early infant HIV diagnostic (EID) screening in 2015. Furthermore, almost 50% of infants who were tested for HIV never received the results.

Without treatment, up to 30% of HIV-infected children will die by their first birthday, and 50% by their second. While coverage of conventional, laboratory-based EID screening has increased in recent years, effective testing could be greatly expanded through the integration of point-of-care testing into national EID laboratory networks.

New-to-market, point-of-care technology ensures that infants are screened on-site and quickly receive their test results so that HIV-positive infants can be rapidly enrolled on lifesaving antiretroviral treatment. Point-of-care testing platforms are easy to use in a variety of service delivery settings, and do not require trained laboratory technicians to operate.

By late 2019, the four-year, U.S. \$63 million Unitaid/Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF) project aims to significantly increase the number of HIV-positive infants receiving life-saving treatment in nine project countries, and also develop robust global and national markets for affordable, effective and equitable HIV infant testing. The project will work in nine high-prevalence countries: Cameroon, Côte d'Ivoire, Kenya, Lesotho, Mozambique, Rwanda, Swaziland, Zambia, and Zimbabwe.

¹ UNAIDS, 2016

Public Health Goals

- Increase access to EID
- Decrease the turnaround time from testing to result acquisition
- Increase the proportion of infants and caregivers receiving HIV test results
- Increase the number of HIV-positive children on ART

Market Shaping Goals

- Increase the market share for point-of-care EID
- Decrease the price of point-of-care EID products
- Ensure quality, availability, and acceptability of point-of-care EID products

Unitaid/EGPAF Project Strategies

Multiple strategies will be used to optimize national EID networks, depending on each country’s unique needs, implementation context, and priorities. The project will work with ministries of health and key stakeholders at global and national level to identify the most appropriate health facilities for placement of point-of-care platforms, addressing existing and pressing gaps in each of the nine project countries.

Working hand-in-hand with each Ministry of Health and other national stakeholders in these countries, EGPAF will:


- Ensure that conditions for use of point-of-care EID are met;
- Procure point-of-care EID technology;
- Place point-of-care platforms in strategically-selected health facilities under the direction of the ministries of health and according to the national EID network plans;
- Generate and share lessons learned through routine project monitoring and formal evaluation studies with the WHO and other partners; and
- Develop and implement transition plans in each country, to ensure sustainability of this work within each supported setting.

Expected Outcomes


Through the strategic placement of point-of-care technology within national EID networks, the initiative aims to increase access to EID testing in the nine project countries; decrease

the turn-around time between testing and receiving results; increase the proportion of infants/caregivers who receive test results; decrease the number of days from HIV diagnosis to ART initiation; and increase the number of children on life-saving treatment.


EGPAF anticipates this project will have the following results:

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Testing

 - Test over 250,000 HIV-exposed infants and identify 14,600 HIV-infected infants
 - Increase EID testing coverage by 20%
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Treatment

 - Initiate 13,000 HIV-infected infants on ART
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Procurement

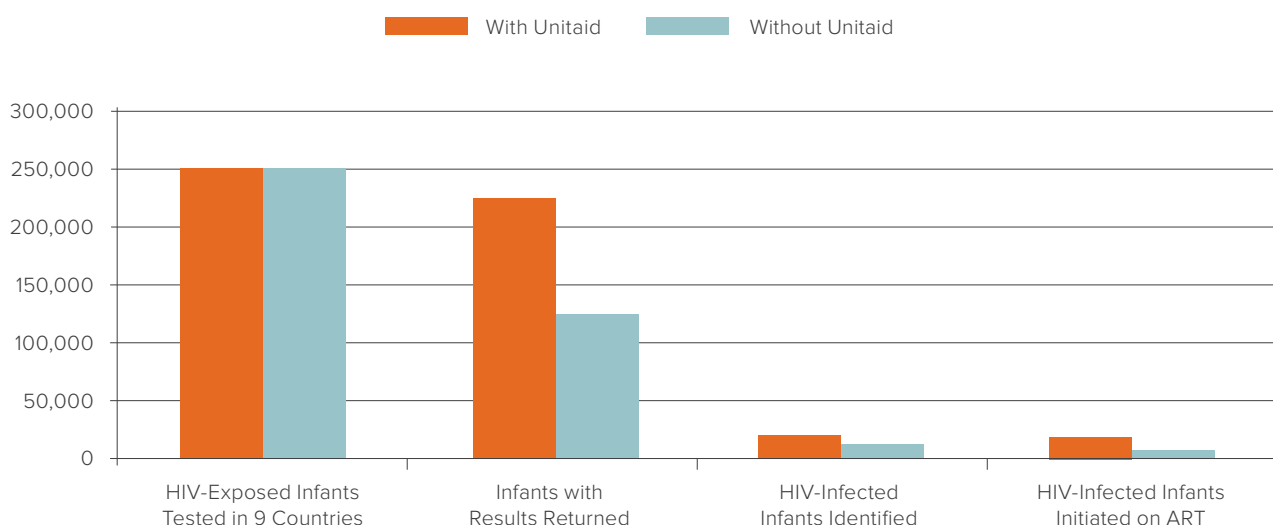
 - Procure 297 new point-of-care machines and over 250,000 test kits across nine project countries
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Market Shaping

 - Scale up point-of-care EID technology to 30% of the total EID market in the nine project countries, and reduce the price of point-of-care products

Intended Impact of the Unitaid Project

Point-of-care EID will enable EGPAF to initiate 13,000 additional HIV-infected infants on lifesaving treatment



For more information please contact the EGPAF Unitaid Project Team: unitaid.POCEID@pedaids.org