

Catalytic COVID-19 Action Project in Cameroon



PHOTO: EGPAF, 2022

BACKGROUND

Globally, the COVID-19 pandemic has resulted in exponential illness and death. If transmission remains high in low- and middle-income countries, the SARS-CoV-2 virus will continue to have far-reaching public health and economic consequences.

Although considerable progress has been made, additional support is still needed to not only improve access to COVID-19 screening, isolation, care, and treatment interventions but to also build the capacity of health workers to promote the adoption and implementation of innovative approaches. It is also necessary to encourage and increase the demand for these services among the population. Market disruptions also affect the critical tools needed to prevent, diagnose, and treat COVID-19, particularly in resource-limited countries.

Without access to early identification through quality and affordable diagnostics, case management, and informed isolation, mortality rates will climb—particularly in low- and middle-income countries where vaccine rollout is lagging.

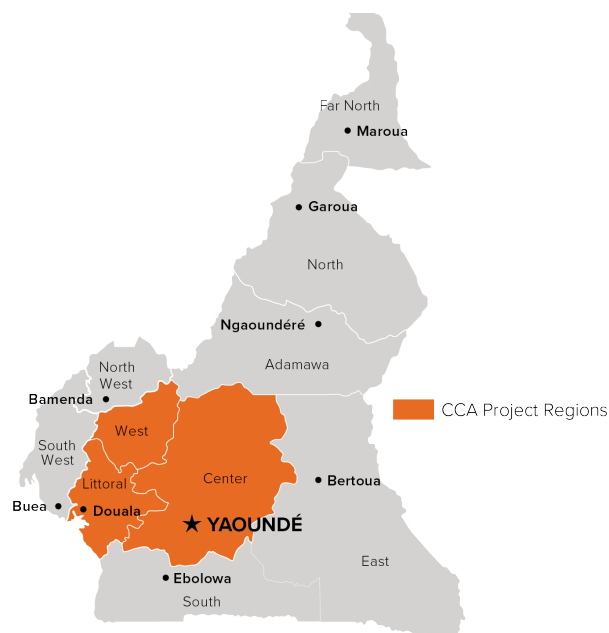
Like many African countries, Cameroon continues to face the challenges described above. Thus, a successful COVID-19 response requires a comprehensive national testing strategy, which includes complimentary, accurate, and affordable rapid diagnostic antigen testing as a key strategy to expand access to diagnosis, especially in decentralized settings integrated into TB, HIV and MNCH clinics /services and enhanced access and linkage to treatment through a Hub and Spoke model.

PROJECT APPROACH

Through the Find-Unitaid-funded Catalyzing COVID Action (CCA) Project, EGPAF is working to accelerate end-to-end

access to novel diagnostic, contact tracing, and COVID-19 treatment solutions, adapted to the needs of low- and middle-income countries—specifically, Cameroon, Kenya, and Zimbabwe.

In Cameroon, the project will be implemented in 30 sites, at all levels of the health care system, through a hub and spoke model (5 hub sites and 25 spoke sites) across three regions (Centre, Littoral, and West). The CCA project supports the Cameroonian government’s strategy to reduce mortality and the occurrence of severe cases of COVID-19 through the identification and treatment, and even isolation of COVID-19 cases, to also reduce transmission and improve the country’s preparedness for future pandemics. This will be done through improving access to COVID-19 testing, isolation, care, and treatment interventions. The project’s objectives and key interventions are detailed below.



CCA GOAL: Accelerate end-to-end access to novel solutions in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic through testing, isolation, care, and treatment approaches adapted to meet the needs of Kenya, Cameroon, and Zimbabwe.

OBJECTIVES & KEY INTERVENTIONS



EVIDENCE GENERATION

on acceptability, feasibility and effectiveness of COVID-19 services and delivery models



CATALYTIC IMPLEMENTATION and SUPPLY CHAIN

strengthening of COVID-19 solutions within existing health system platforms



ADVOCACY

for enabling environment for policy and guideline development and regulatory approval to accelerate access to effective test and treat solutions



DEMAND CREATION

for increased access to COVID-19 services, including linkage to vaccination



TRANSITION

and scale-up through linkage to national programs and other funding sources



AREA 1:

EVIDENCE GENERATION

An assessment will be done to evaluate the integration of rapid COVID-19 testing in MCH, HIV, and TB services and identify barriers/challenges. In addition, data on innovative approaches and a cost-effectiveness report may help the national response with recommendations for scale-up.



AREA 3:

ADVOCACY FOR ENABLING ENVIRONMENTS

EGPAF will work in collaboration with MINSANTÉ and Coordination Centre for Emergency Public Health Operations (CCOUSP) to update/produce and disseminate the guidelines, support CCOUSP guidance in the national response, as well as introduce new screening approaches for COVID-19.



AREA 2:

CATALYTIC IMPLEMENTATION AND SUPPLY CHAIN STRENGTHENING

EGPAF will support the integration of routine testing for COVID-19 in entry points for TB, HIV, and maternal, neonatal and child health (MNCH) services. EGPAF will also support the diagnosis of COVID-19 at project sites through capacity building of health care workers, as well as the provision of rapid diagnostic tests and personal protective equipment. EGPAF, in collaboration with MINSANTÉ and CCOUSP, will produce training materials and strengthen the capacity of health care workers for holistic and appropriate management of COVID-19 patients. A system will be put in place to strengthen linkage of positive cases to care and treatment, and eventually vaccination.



AREA 4:

DEMAND CREATION

EGPAF will work with MINSANTE, CCOUSP, regional delegations and health districts to define effective strategies for community engagement. EGPAF will also help design messages to create demand and organize community testing campaigns, with the active engagement of community leaders.



AREA 5:

ADVOCACY, SUSTAINABILITY AND TRANSITION

EGPAF will carry out advocacy activities with the MINSANTE, the CCOUSP, and the Task Force to engage them in project implementation, including scale up. EGPAF will collaborate with key partners, including Africa CDC and WHO Africa, for a sustainable transition.

Improved access to and uptake of effective COVID-19 test and treat solutions within health care systems in LMIC

OUTCOMES

Availability of rigorous evidence outlining the acceptability, feasibility and effectiveness of existing and upcoming tools

Utilization of cases and delivery models to inform global and national guidance based on evidence generated

Strengthened national level policies and guidance with strategies accessible at sub-national levels

Integrated COVID-19 test, isolate, treat solutions within existing systems to support cost-effective delivery and funding for transition and scale-up

Better clarity and visibility on procurement, supply and demand forecast for COVID-19 tools



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