



# AfroLabNet\_Covid

## Strengthening National Capacity to Address the COVID-19 Health Crisis

### Duration

2021 – 2023

### Budget

approx. 1,650,000 EUR

### Partner countries

The Republic of Benin  
Guinea  
Nigeria

### Challenges addressed by the project

Since 2016, the Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine has been working with the Global Health Protection Programme (AfroLabNet) in Nigeria, Benin and Guinea to strengthen stationary and mobile laboratory capacities on viral haemorrhagic fevers (VHFs) of the risk group 4 such as Lassa fever. The COVID-19 pandemic confronted the partner laboratories with a very high number of samples that exceeded their capacity in terms of available equipment as well as trained staff. Thus, the new AfroLabNet\_Covid programme builds on previous work and specifically focuses on filling gaps that have been identified since the start of COVID-19.

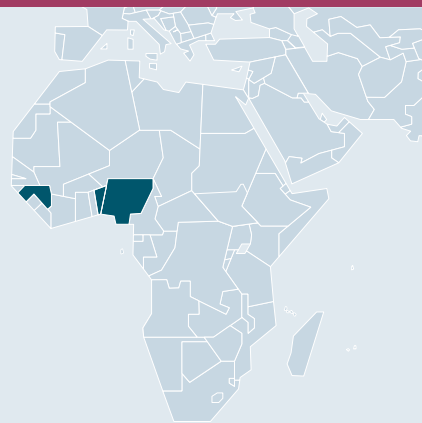
### Objectives

In order to enable the stationary and mobile laboratories in Nigeria, Benin and Guinea to address the COVID-19 pandemic, support the Ministry of Health and the overall public health response in the respective country, the project will have the following objectives:

- » Reinforce the VHFs AfroLabNet programme by tackling COVID-19
- » Build and strengthen diagnostic capacity for SARS-CoV-2 in both stationary and mobile laboratories
- » Facilitate the detection of circulating SARS-CoV-2 (i. e. variants tracking)
- » Reinforce the quality assurance management system of partner laboratories and training on new COVID-19 assays
- » Support the deployment of mobile laboratory for COVID-19
- » Understand the COVID-19 seroprevalence in communities

### Overview of activities

This project will not only ensure that the endemic VHFs are not neglected (AfroLabNet), but also specifically address the capacity building needs due to COVID-19. This will enable both the stationary and mobile laboratories to take on their national responsibility in the COVID-19 pandemic to provide diagnostics service, identify variants, and understand the dynamic of how the disease spreads. The first core activity is the modernization of the laboratories in the partner countries with additional equipment and reagents for SARS-CoV-2 testing and implementation of a sequencing facility in Guinea. Additionally, laboratory training will be conducted on newly developed assays for SARS-CoV-2 along with quality management and knowledge transfer. Operational support for the Nigerian mobile laboratory for COVID-19 will be offered and sentinel studies to research the spreading of COVID-19 in communities will be implemented.



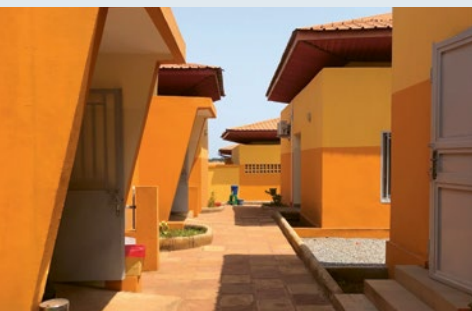
Supported by:



on the basis of a decision  
by the German Bundestag



Laboratory team performing the enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) on project study samples in the serology laboratory at ISTH, Nigeria (Photo ©Dr Deborah Ehichioya, ISTH)



New Laboratory building (LFHVG) of  
Dr Magassouba in Conakry, Guinea  
(Photo ©Emily Nelson, BNITM)



New Glovebox for secure inactivation at LFHB,  
Cotonou, Benin (Photo ©Nathalie Vielle, BNITM)



Covid Sequencing training at LFHVG in Conakry,  
Guinea (Photo ©Emily Nelson, BNITM)

## Partner institutions/Contact

- » Irrua Specialist Teaching Hospital (ISTH), Nigeria  
Dr Danny Asogun [asogun2001@yahoo.com](mailto:asogun2001@yahoo.com)  
Dr Deborah Ehichioya [ehichioya@bnitm.de](mailto:ehichioya@bnitm.de)  
Dr Cyril Eramah [cyrilerameh@gmail.com](mailto:cyrilerameh@gmail.com)
- » Nigeria Center for Disease Control (NCDC)  
Elsie Ilori [elsie.ilorin@ncdc.gov.ng](mailto:elsie.ilorin@ncdc.gov.ng)
- » Laboratoire des Fièvres Hémorragiques Virales de Guinée (LFHVG), Guinea  
Dr N'Faly Magassouba [cmagassouba01@gmail.com](mailto:cmagassouba01@gmail.com)
- » Laboratoire des Fièvres Hémorragiques Virales de Gueckédou (LFHV-GKD), Guinea  
Fara Raymond Koundouno [lfhv\\_gueckedou@yahoo.com](mailto:lfhv_gueckedou@yahoo.com)  
Dr N'Faly Magassouba [cmagassouba01@gmail.com](mailto:cmagassouba01@gmail.com)
- » Laboratoire de l'hôpital régional de N'Zérékoré (HRNZE), Guinea  
Youssef Sidibé [yousidibe50@gmail.com](mailto:yousidibe50@gmail.com)  
Dr N'Faly Magassouba [cmagassouba01@gmail.com](mailto:cmagassouba01@gmail.com)
- » Laboratoire des Fièvres Hémorragiques Virales de Cotonou (LFHV-Cot), Benin  
Dr Angés Yadouleton [anges33@yahoo.fr](mailto:anges33@yahoo.fr)

## Supporting institution in Germany/Contact

Bernhard Nocht Institute for Tropical Medicine

Virology Department

Prof. Dr Stephan Günther [guenther@bni.uni-hamburg.de](mailto:guenther@bni.uni-hamburg.de)

Dr Meike Pahlmann [pahlmann@bni-hamburg.de](mailto:pahlmann@bni-hamburg.de)

Dr Sophie Duraffour [duraffour@bnitm.de](mailto:duraffour@bnitm.de)

[www.bnitm.de/en](http://www.bnitm.de/en)