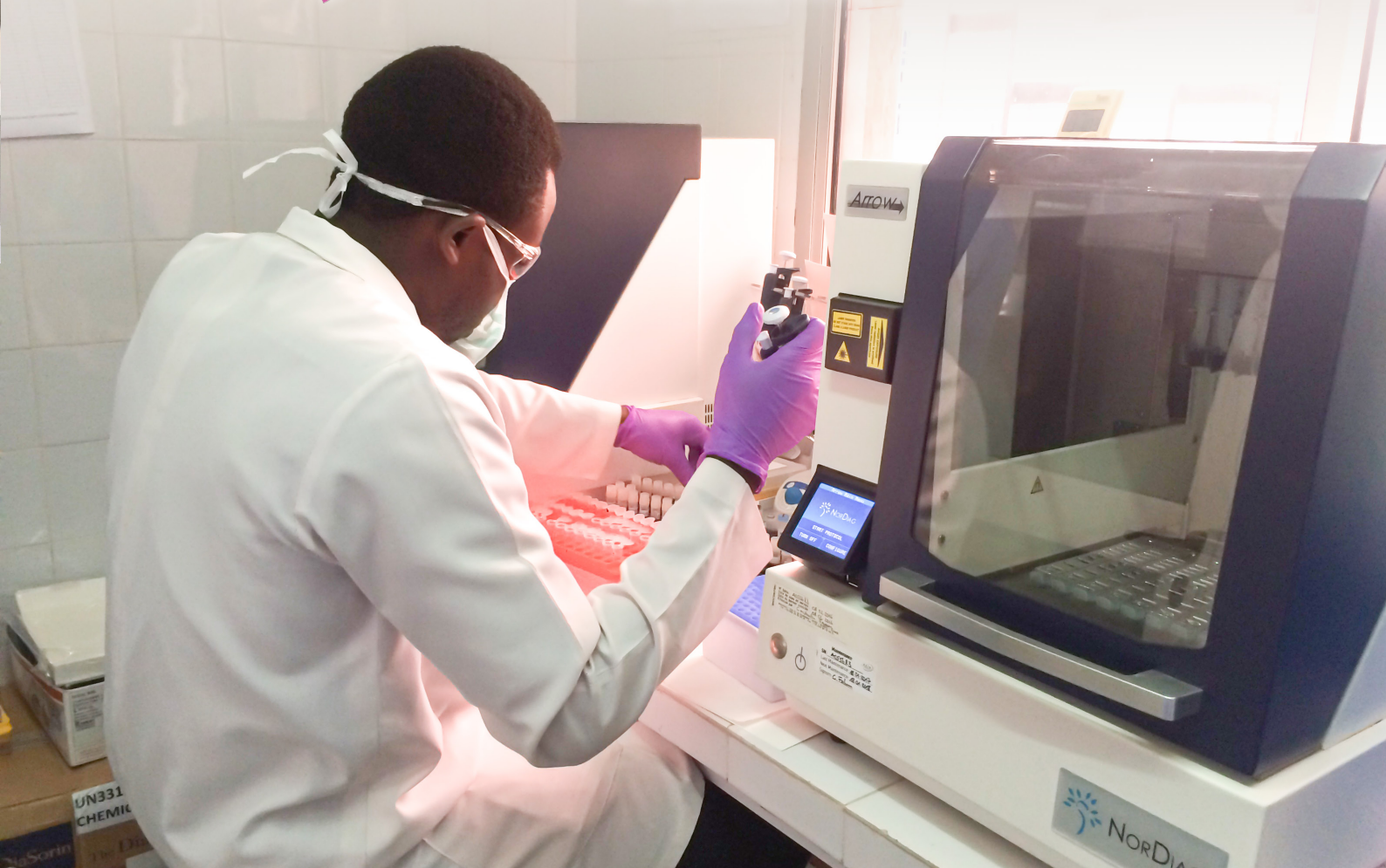




# OPP-ERA

ENDING HIV/AIDS THROUGH  
BETTER PATIENT FOLLOW-UP  
BY INCREASING ACCESS AND  
USE OF VIRAL LOAD TESTING



## OPP-ERA PROJECT CLOSURE CAMEROON – DECEMBER 2019

A project implemented by:

A project supported and funded by:



With the support of the Republic of Cameroon from :  
Health Ministry, Laquintinie Hospital of Douala, Pasteur Center in Cameroun (Garoua Unity), Yaoundé Central Hospital, Bertoua Regional Hospital

# THE OPP-ERA PROJECT

## 4 INTERVENTION COUNTRIES



## CONTRIBUTING TO ACHIEVE THE UNAIDS 3<sup>rd</sup> 90 OBJECTIVE

Performing viral load testing for people living with HIV makes it possible to monitor the effectiveness of their antiretroviral treatment and can warn of treatment failure and the need to improve treatment adherence. An undetectable viral load also helps to avoid the risk of transmission. This exam is recommended for any HIV patient on ARV treatment. However, access to it is still very limited in sub-Saharan African countries.

Since its inception, the OPP-ERA project has been part of the global strategy to respond to HIV/AIDS, including the UNAIDS 90-90-90 targets, and particularly the "3<sup>rd</sup> 90": to achieve the target of 90% of patients on antiretroviral treatment who have an undetectable viral load by 2020. The OPP-ERA project has helped improve routine access to and use of this test in four countries in West and Central Africa.

This project was supported and funded by Unitaid and implemented by a consortium, led by Solthis, responsible for operational coordination and implementation in Guinea; ANRS, providing co-financing and scientific leadership; Expertise France, providing project implementation in Côte d'Ivoire and Cameroon; and Sidaction, providing implementation in Burundi.

## CREATING FAVOURABLE CONDITIONS IN THE HEALTH SYSTEM

In addition to addressing the technical challenges of conducting this test in a laboratory, the OPP-ERA project also helped to improve all essential factors that facilitate access to viral load testing in a country.

Available at [webdoc-chargevirale.solthis.org](http://webdoc-chargevirale.solthis.org) or at [chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org](http://chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org)



## 2013-2019: PROJECT SUCCESSES

 <b>11</b> rehabilitated, equipped and functional laboratories	 <b>300</b> trained health professionals (clinicians, experts, procurement staff, laboratory technicians)	 <b>+ more than 81%</b> of patients have an undetectable viral load and up to 88% at some sites	 <b>+ over 230,000</b> viral load tests performed
---	--	---	--

# THE OPP-ERA PROJECT IN CAMEROON

## Bridging the gap in access to viral load testing in Cameroon

In Cameroon, 540,000 people were living with HIV in 2018 according to UNAIDS data and adult prevalence (between 15 and 49 years of age) was estimated at 3.6%. 75% of HIV-infected people in the country know their status but only 52% of them are on antiretroviral treatment. However, Cameroon is making significant progress in reducing HIV-related deaths from 22,000 in 2010 to 18,000 in 2018, a 19% decrease. The number of new infections also fell by a third over the same period, from 36,000 to 23,000.

The evolution of viral load coverage has also followed an upward trend over the past four years and is tending to move closer to the objectives set by UNAIDS. Since 2016, viral load coverage has increased from 22.6% to 62% in 2019. The CNLS is still seeking to increase this coverage so that, by 2020, 81% of patients can benefit from the viral load measurement.

The OPP-ERA project, in close collaboration with the CNLS, has thus contributed to accelerating access to viral load tests in Cameroon through the use of open & polyvalent platforms (OPP). Between 2014 and 31 July 2019, 63,800 viral loads were achieved on open platforms.

## Cameroonian partners :

- Public Health Ministry:
  - CNLS: National HIV Committee
  - The Directorate for Disease Control, Epidemics and Pandemics (DLMEP)
  - The Directorate of Pharmacy, Drugs and Laboratories (DPML)
  - DOST: Directorate of Health Care Organization and Technology
  - DROS: Directorate of Operational Health Research.
  - PTF: Technical and Financial Partners
- Laquintinie Hospital of Douala
- Pasteur Centre in Cameroon, Garoua Unity
- Central Hospital of Yaoundé
- Régional Hospital of Bertoua
- National Laboratory of Public Health (LNSP)
- Chemonics

## OPP-ERA project successes in Cameroon

The project has equipped 4 molecular biology laboratories at Laquintinie Hospital in Douala, Pasteur Centre (Garoua Unity), Bertoua Regional Hospital and at Yaoundé Central Hospital. Since the first 3 sites supported are regional hubs, the project contributed to the decentralization of viral load access. The start of their activity made it possible to no longer transport samples from these areas to Yaoundé and the time taken to deliver results to patients and clinicians improved.

**79% of patients tested in 2018 had an undetectable viral load**

Another success of the OPP-ERA project was the strengthening of skills of laboratory technicians in Molecular Biology and the creation of an OPP users community, able to help each other from one site to another. 16 technicians and biologists were trained to perform viral load tests on OPPs. In addition, clinicians and community health workers were sensitized on the importance of viral load testing in the patient follow-up and the interpretation of its results. The Pasteur Center in Cameroon provided key support to the implementation of the project, sharing its experience and getting involved in the initial and ongoing training of technicians working on OPP. In addition, the OPP-ERA Project has strengthened the skills of other sites not supported by the project, particularly in the areas of supply, inventory management and biosecurity.



**16 technicians and biologists trained**



**4 laboratories equipped and functional**



**63 800 viral load tests realised from 2014 to 2019**

## What transition to ensure the sustainability of the project ?

The transition of the OPP-ERA project in Cameroon will be led by the CNLS. It is the result of a dedicated plan, written in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and its various departments through participatory workshops and translated into the country's two official languages. The continuity of activities related to supply, maintenance, creation of tests demand and to laboratories are included in this plan. The purchase of OPP inputs will be managed by CNLS through the Global Fund's HIV grant.




"The OPP-ERA project was introduced in Cameroon at the right time: it laid the foundations and contributed to decision-making about setting up the viral load testing as a test of choice for routine monitoring of treatment effectiveness. It also helped create demand by training physicians, investing in the sample circuit, and reducing the turn-around time to the patients.

Dr Marinette C. Ngo Nemb Epse Tchato, Public Health Doctor, Head of the Support Section for the Health Sector, CNLS, Republic of Cameroon



## Practical resources on HIV viral load at your disposal

A handy toolkit with practical documents to download:

 [toolkit-chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org](https://toolkit-chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org)

An up-and-running website with scientific and practical resources

 [chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org](https://chargevirale-oppera.solthis.org)

A webdocumentary to explain the project's practical implementation du projet :

 [webdoc-chargevirale.solthis.org](https://webdoc-chargevirale.solthis.org)

### For more information about OPP-ERA, please contact:

SOLTHIS: [rachel.domenach@solthis.org](mailto:rachel.domenach@solthis.org)

EXPERTISE France :  
[laurent.malato@expertisefrance.fr](mailto:laurent.malato@expertisefrance.fr)

Unitaid: [mascheronisa@unitaid.who.int](mailto:mascheronisa@unitaid.who.int)

#### In Cameroon :

Dr NGO NEMB Marinette,  
CNLS Head of the Section dedicated to support the Health Sector  
+ 237 699 522 570 – [marinette.ngonemb@cnls.cm](mailto:marinette.ngonemb@cnls.cm)

Dr ETOUNDI MBALLA Alain Georges, Director of DLMEP: Directorate  
for Disease Control, Epidemics and Pandemics  
+237 677 70 21 67 – [dretoundi@yahoo.fr](mailto:dretoundi@yahoo.fr)

Dr ZEH KAKANOU Florence,  
Deputy Director of Health Technology at DOST : Directorate of Health  
Care Organization and Technology  
+ 237 677 815 250 – [florencezk16@gmail.com](mailto:florencezk16@gmail.com)