

Development of International Laboratory Systems and their Quality Assurance National Serology Reference Laboratory, Australia (NRL™)



The basis for the International Quality Assurance Programme is that well-functioning laboratories provide a cornerstone of good medical practice and accurate data to track epidemics.

In September 2004 the NRL was contracted to AusAID for support and to develop international quality assurance programmes for HIV Testing and Laboratory Management. The project was aligned with the priorities and principles of Australia's International HIV AIDS Strategy, *Meeting the Challenge* in developing partnerships between AusAID and peak professional organizations in Australia, and increasing knowledge of HIV/AIDS epidemics in the region through improved laboratory facilities and epidemiological surveillance. The NRL explains the contract as an extension of its long-term commitment to health-aid specifically in promoting the quality of laboratory services.

NRL's Mode of Operations

In meeting its International Strategy the NRL seeks to be culturally sensitive, collaborative, and supportive rather than didactic or prescriptive. Therefore, we will seek to partner and collaborate with international groups with like values. The NRL attempts to improve and enhance existing systems by responding to requests for assistance as well as seeking opportunities for change and improvement in laboratories and their services.

NRL's unique contribution rests with its ability to offer the definitive range of approaches to quality development of laboratories in technical capability, management and education.

NRL will collaborate, encourage and assist all laboratories to develop quality services collaboratively. Laboratories will be well-supported in their ability to delivering accurate diagnoses and appropriate care of people with infectious diseases. Blood services will be aided in delivering virus-free blood for transfusion.



Outcomes

- Laboratory capacity building
- Policy backing laboratories
- QA systems monitoring laboratory development
- Accurate diagnosis, statistics, treatment monitoring
- Better training for laboratories
- Safer blood

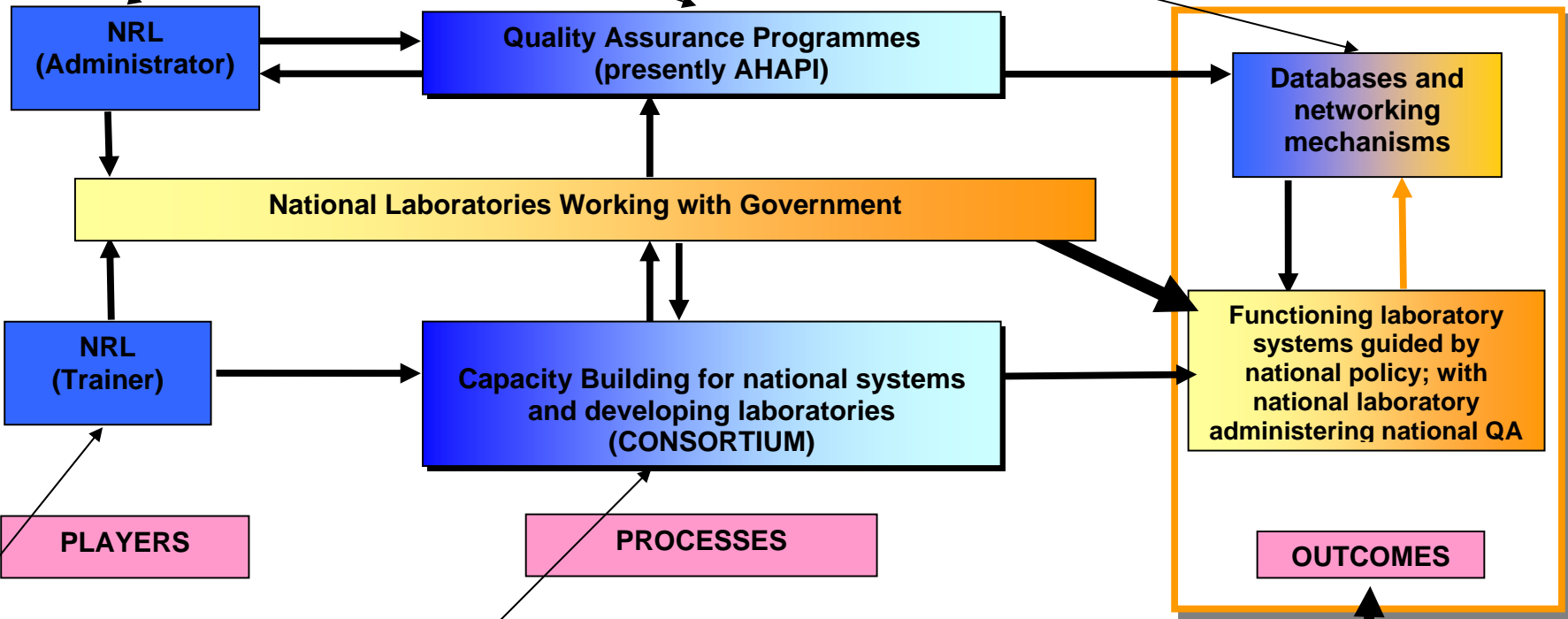
Schema of NRL's International Programme to illustrate the interactions between the Players, Processes and Outcomes. The aim in presenting this schema is to demonstrate that there are 2 major aspects to the programme. Capacity Development has not been funded before except piece-meal or *ad hoc*.

NRL quality assurance expertise transferred to national laboratories

1. NRL has conducted QA programmes since 1985. Funded by different sources including AusAID (AHAPI).

2. Programmes must be ongoing to be meaningful and infrastructure support must continue to assure this.

3. It is anticipated that in any system, as it develops its own QA, that NRL's role will decrease and the national QA administrator will take over.



4. NRL Training and development has been supported by various funders largely on an *ad hoc* basis.

5. As laboratory systems are developed QA becomes a national programme and responsibility

Goal:
Country by country independent laboratory systems operating with their own QA Systems

Development of laboratory capacity through training and feedback actions from QA