Advancing STI control and prevention through new innovations for STI testing technology: Integrated Point-Of-Care Testing (POCT)

### Current Project Brief

#### Objectives and Background

**Overall goal:**

To support and facilitate universal access to high-quality testing of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) through the development and implementation of appropriate, low-cost point-of-care tests to detect STIs (STI POCTs).

**Background:**

WHO recognizes the global impact of STIs on global public health and individual sexual and reproductive health and well-being. A component of the WHO Global Health Sector Strategy for the control and prevention of STIs, integrating STI POCTs into overall strategic planning has been increasingly acknowledged as an important objective.

One of the major barriers to advancing STI control and prevention is the unavailability of reliable, low-cost STI POCTs. These tests, including self-tests purchased over-the-counter or online, in addition to providing a definitive diagnosis and appropriate treatment in a single visit, offer potential for improved STI surveillance, facilitating effective STI control.

WHO established an international research platform and organized two technical consultations. WHO will further facilitate and coordinate STI POCT research (basic, for products and clinical trials), standards development (WHO prequalification and WHO procurement scheme, guidelines) and implementation (online training and technical assistance platform).

#### Geographic location

Global

#### Main deliverables

1. Advise WHO Member States and other relevant public health institutions on STI diagnostic tests that can be used at the point-of-care.
2. Ensure accessibility of low-cost WHO prequalified STI POCTs through a WHO procurement scheme.
3. Support further implementation and roll-out of STI POCTs within national STI programmes with technical assistance tools (mainly online).

#### Partners

Under the WHO leadership the main partners are:

1. International development and research foundations.
2. National research and innovation centres in Australia, Brazil, China, Ethiopia, France, Guatemala, Italy, Latvia, Malta, Morocco, Slovenia, South Africa, Spain, Uganda, Ukraine, United Kingdom.

#### Products and Progress

- Landscape analyses of available (near) STI POCTs, those in the pipeline and prototypes
- Core protocols for independent validation studies of promising (near) POCTs
- Webpage WHO: www.who.int/reproductivehealth/topics/rtis/pocts/en/
- Supplement on STI POCTs in Sexually Transmitted Infections: goo.gl/2SC4iE
- Initiation of STI POCT clinic-based evaluation studies in Australia, Italy, Peru, South Africa and United Kingdom
- Initiation of STI POCT clinic-utility evaluation studies in France, Latvia, Slovenia, Spain and Ukraine

Sources of funding

HRP and international development foundations.

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