

## Centre for Malaria & Tropical Diseases

Director: Luís Távora Távora

The Centre for Malaria & Tropical Diseases (CMDT; <http://cmdtla.org>) was created in 1992, as a R&D Centre at the Institute of Hygiene and Tropical Medicine (IHMT; <http://www.ihmt.unl.pt>), financed by the Portuguese Foundation for Science and Technology (FCT). After an excellent international evaluation in December 2004, it ranks to Associate Laboratory. Two of the research groups that integrate the Centre are located outside IHMT premises: the Biotechnology group is located at INETI campus (<http://www.ineti.pt/uo/uo/?uo=12322>) and the Health Education group is located at the Faculdade de Motricidade Humana (<http://www.fmh.utl.pt/>). Similarly, the Virology team is split between IHMT and the Hospital Egas Moniz, where the HDV and HIV groups are respectively located. In 2009, several members of National School of Public Health (ENSP) integrated the LA, reinforcing public health areas. This is part of a reorganization procedure to be presented to FCT in early 2010, including a rearranging of thematic areas and research groups within the LA.

CMDT is managed by a Scientific Coordinator (Director) and a Scientific Council, aggregating all PhD members of the Centre. Scientific Council meetings are scheduled 2-3 times per year to analyze and approve financial and RD reports presented by the Director, as well as to discuss and approve of the annual plan of activities. Some strategic activities are also discussed at this level.

Research Groups include Clinical Studies, Parasitology, Public Health, Health & Education, Virology and Biotechnology.

### **General Objectives**

The Associated Laboratory's (LA) general objective is excellence in GLOBAL & TROPICAL HEALTH RESEARCH, including four main axis/objectives:

#### Biomedical Research in Tropical Health

Biomedical Research is the core-area of activity of the Centre. The proposed objectives for this area were defined, in the initial proposition of the LA, as research implementation in infectious tropical diseases (microbial and parasitic) with an emphasis in neglected and poverty diseases, both endemic and non-endemic. The fields of study included i) Clinical sciences (diagnosis, clinical and therapeutics), ii) molecular epidemiology and population genetics, iii) Animal models, iv) Drug and insecticide resistance, v) Functional proteomics and genomics, vi) Public health and biostatistics. Also included was support for cryopreservation banks for strains and DNA.

#### Cooperation for Development

The original objectives of this area are:

- I) Technical and scientific capacity building in endemic areas; including the development and/or support of research structures and human resources, as well as training programs;
- II) Services to community and civil society; including support to the research groups for quality control and standardization of laboratory techniques, development of products / processes for

prophylactic, diagnostic or therapeutics, counseling in infection and epidemiological surveillance, health systems etc.

III) Support to Prevention & Control programs, both a national level (health education, adolescent and school behavior studies, and HIV studies) and with southern partners (health systems, endemic diseases)

IV) Scientific dissemination of information, including web-based information, a document archive and participation in Ciência Viva and ABACO programs of the FCT.

#### Advanced Training

An essential area of work of the LA, this is intimately related to the other thematic areas (biomedical research, cooperation for development and networking). The main objectives of this area concern the following training lines:

##### 1) Graduate training

a) Research initiation experience for graduates

b) Graduation thesis orientation

c) Special graduation programs (Erasmus, Leonardo da Vinci)

##### 2) Postgraduate training

a) Postgraduate courses

i) At IHMT ii) In developing countries

b) Masters Programs

i) At IHMT

ii) In developing countries

c) PhD Programs

i) At IHMT

ii) In developing countries

Furthermore, CMDT is committed to capacity building training actions in (for) endemic countries, including on-site informal training (hospitals, faculties) of health human resources, practical courses, seminars and workshops and special programs for African human resources at IHMT.

#### R&D NETWORKING

Networking has been a “trademark” of the LA and supports most of the ongoing activity of our laboratory. The main objectives are I) to establish national, regional and international sustainable networks, II) to promote human resources, equipment and technology sharing and transference,

with emphasis on mobility and, III) to translate this into scientific productivity gain and cost optimization.

An important secondary objective is to use the networking process itself to leverage all the LA's capacity to lead and support regional/thematic (European, Iberian and CPLP) research activities and enable North-South technology transference, especially regarding African and South American partners.

Please refer to <http://cmdtla.org> for further details