

South-to-south collaboration: A learning model for oxygen ecosystem strengthening

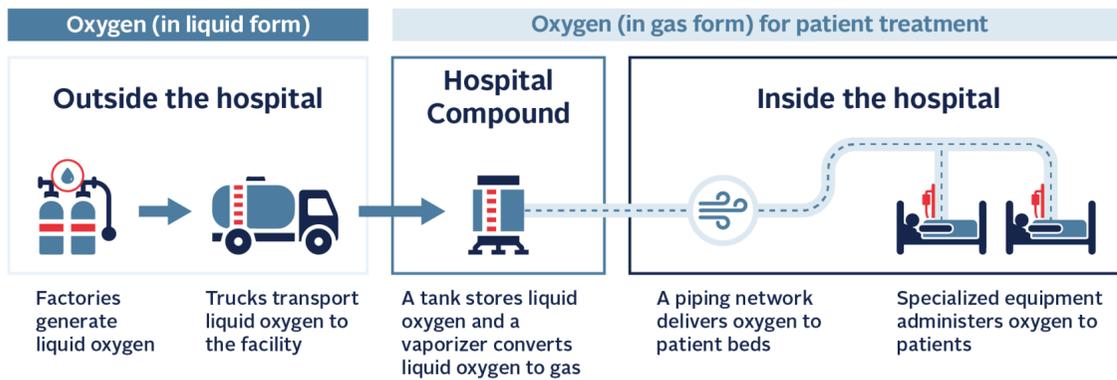
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BACKGROUND

At the peak of the COVID-19 epidemic in 2021, USAID pledged funding to Vietnam to expand liquid oxygen (LOX) infrastructure. Based on the success of its initial investment in select countries including Vietnam, USAID identified 10 countries to receive LOX infrastructure funding through the Meeting Targets and Maintaining Epidemic Control (EpiC) project, including Vietnam and Papua New Guinea (PNG). Since PNG did not yet have any LOX systems, the EpiC PNG team traveled to Vietnam to learn more about functioning systems.

FIGURE 1. The operation of the LOX system at health facilities



DESCRIPTION



April 10th to 12th, 2023



LOX-supported sites in Tay Ninh, Vietnam

- Trang Bang District Health Center
- Tan Bien District Health Center
- Tay Ninh Provincial General Hospital



Participants

- Site and provincial representatives from Tay Ninh, Vietnam
- Representatives from the PNG Department of Health
- EpiC Vietnam and EpiC PNG
- Technical experts
- USAID/Washington representatives



Expected outcomes:

Knowledge shared between Vietnam and PNG to foster the successful installation of 10 new systems in Vietnam and two new systems in PNG

2021 - 2022
Vietnam receives USAID funding and installs 13 LOX systems

2022
Vietnam receives additional funding for 10 more LOX systems, PNG receives funding for the first two LOX systems in the country

2023
Vietnam hosted a south-south learning tour for government officials and project partners from PNG

2023 - 2024
Vietnam and PNG install 12 new LOX systems, 10 in Vietnam and two in PNG

RESULTS

The PNG team was familiarized with Vietnam's processes for site selection, approvals, and system design. Discussions focused on roles and responsibilities, technical specifications and considerations, as well as successes, challenges, and corrective actions.



PHOTO CREDIT: EpiC Vietnam

Representatives from the PNG Department of Health and EpiC PNG debriefed after visiting three LOX sites in Vietnam.

Through the learning tour, the PNG team gained insights into how Vietnam:

- Adapted partnerships
- Flexibly responded to evolving hospital needs
- Managed the operationalization of LOX systems and vendors

The visits also enabled the PNG delegation to observe LOX system differences between sites and gain insights from facility leaders that informed their planning.

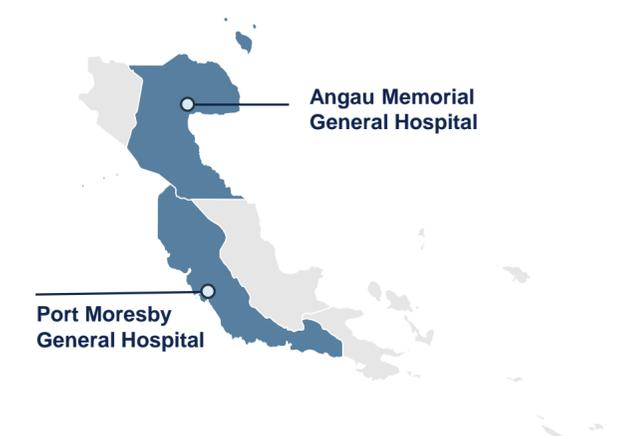


PHOTO CREDIT: EpiC PNG

Site visit of the PNG delegates at their homeland for LOX support identification.

As a result, the PNG team was able to expedite its scope and strategy for the inaugural LOX systems investment in the country.

FIGURE 2. Overview of LOX support in PNG



The learning tour created an opportunity for EpiC Vietnam to review and document experiences and learning to inform areas where Vietnam could pivot for the second phase.

FIGURE 3. Overview of LOX support in Vietnam

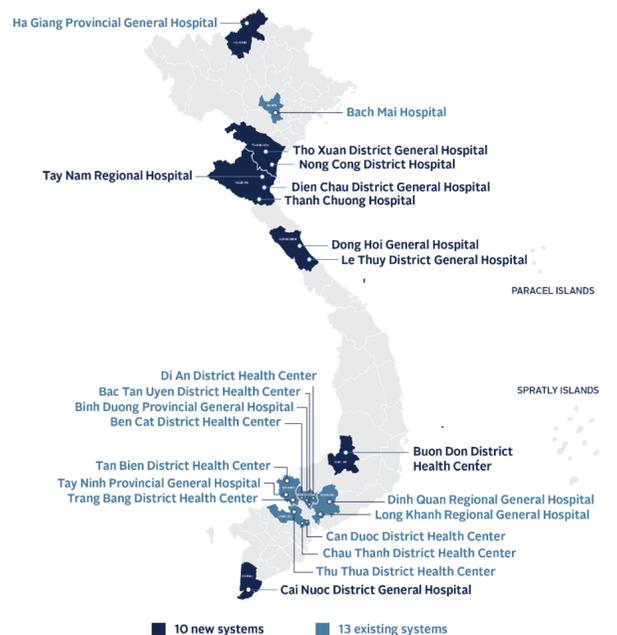


PHOTO CREDIT: Dreamer's Theater

An installed LOX system in Tan Bien District Health Center in Tay Ninh, Vietnam.

CONCLUSIONS

South-south learning visits can serve as a lower-cost and balanced approach by diversifying global alliances to improve oxygen ecosystems and maximize positive geopolitical influence for the healthcare sector.

This regional exchange boosted knowledge and understanding for PNG to accelerate its oxygen scoping phase, drawing from Vietnam's experience. It also positioned Vietnam as a regional technical assistance provider, bolstering pandemic preparedness for both countries and the region.



PHOTO CREDIT: EpiC Vietnam

Vietnamese technical experts introduced the PNG delegation to the LOX system in Trang Bang District Health Center in Tay Ninh, Vietnam.

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