

The Lugar Center

The Richard G. Lugar Center (now part of the National Center of Disease Control and Prevention of Georgia) was built through a collaboration between US and Georgian governments, under the scope of the Cooperative Biological Engagement Program aiming to develop a disease surveillance and public health research program, in Tbilisi, Georgia. This is the first laboratory with high-containment capabilities and is unique not only for Georgia, but for the whole caucasus region. After overcoming a number of challenges during its earlier stages of development – not uncommon for high containment laboratories – the laboratory has been commissioned and validated by US contractors.

The CPHR is the leading regional organization promoting safe laboratory practices. Through risk assessments and parallel trainings on knowledge and practical skills, the CPHR is establishing the foundation for national Biosafety and Biosecurity infrastructure that is based on international standards and regulations. However, in a national scientific community and a national regulatory environment that is still: 1) devoid of requirements regarding the implementation of Biosafety, and 2) in the process of familiarizing itself with the corresponding safety culture, the CPHR faces a **new** set of challenges related to furthering its Biosafety mission at the laboratory, and in the Caucasus region as a whole.



The CPHR has a unique regional capability to perform both human & animal health research in its BSL-2 & BSL-3E facilities equipped with state-of-art Biosafety & Biosecurity equipment, and because of the emphasis placed on compliance with regulatory guidances.



CHALLENGES

- ABSENCE of local biosafety regulations**
- DIFFERENT level of experience /trainings among staff**
- DIFFERENT organizations with DIFFERENT requirements**
- DIFFERENT attitude to Biosafety**



THE STAKEHOLDERS

- NCDC; G. Eliava Institute
- DTRA; WRAIR; USAMRIID
- Existing/anticipated science collaborators

THE TRAINING!!!

AND

THE ATTITUDE!!!



THE COMMITTEES

- ✓ Safety & Occupation Health
- ✓ IRB
- ! IBC
- ! IACUC
- ? Biosafety Committee



Location – Tbilisi, Georgia

Size – 8,000m²

Lab space – 2,551m²

Capabilities

- BSL-2
- BSL-3 Enhanced
- Small animal vivarium
- Repository for a historical EDP collection

Advanced Equipment

- VHP and CH2O Decontamination systems
- Whole Genome Sequencer
- 6 pass-through autoclaves
- Animal Isolation housing
- Modern PCR equipment

The Biosafety Program

We are focusing on creating documents, updating new and revising existing regulations in which modern experience and accumulated knowledge will be adapted and adjusted to the national necessity. These efforts are carried out in partnership with very experienced and well-known organizations from different countries.

<p>THE PROGRAMS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respiratory Protection Program • Blood borne Pathogen Program • Waste Management Program • Laboratory Training Program • Personnel Reliability Program • Occupational Health Program 	<p>THE PLANS</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biosafety Manual • Pest Control Plan • Chemical Hygiene Plan • Security Plan • Emergency Response Plan • Biosecurity Plan
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Conclusion

We have an appropriately equipped containment facility with; experienced personnel and newly trained/practicing personnel to provide a great example in implementation of modern biosafety standards and high containment operations for countries that want to establish strong public health and science reasearch programs, while also being mindful of national need and international regulations. The facility can serve as an excellent training center in the future to increase the quality of Biosafety in the region

Acknowledgements:

