



Athletics Integrity Unit and LANCET Group of Labs establish the first ever WADA-approved anti-doping laboratory in East Africa

27 August 2018, Monaco: Following a nine-month project initiated and funded by the Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU), with support from the International Athletics Foundation, the LANCET Group of Labs East Africa (operating as Pathologists Lancet Kenya) has successfully applied for its Nairobi laboratory to become a World Anti-Doping Agency (WADA)-approved laboratory for Athlete Biological Passport (ABP) blood analysis.

The AIU project engaged the services of the Centre of Research and Expertise in Anti-Doping Sciences (REDS) at the University of Lausanne (Switzerland) to select a candidate laboratory in the region and then provide training and technical advice to achieve WADA's approval. The initial training has been completed and further training will be carried out as required.

Starting in early September 2018, the laboratory in Nairobi will perform blood analyses to support the AIU's ABP programme as well as other anti-doping programmes operating in the area such as that of the Anti-Doping Agency of Kenya (ADAK).

With the laboratory now in the region, blood samples collected in East Africa will no longer have to be transported to anti-doping laboratories in Europe or South Africa for analysis. The practice was expensive and posed serious logistical constraints for the samples to be analysed within the required time frames.

The AIU implements one of the most robust and effective ABP programmes worldwide to detect and deter blood doping in athletics, especially in distance running events. Over 3500 blood samples were collected worldwide by the AIU in 2017 in the context of the ABP, including over 25% in East Africa or from East African athletes. The ABP programme has resulted in over 100 international-level athletes being sanctioned for anti-doping rule violations so far.

Brett Clothier, Head of the AIU, stated: "From now on, the analyses of blood samples will be performed locally. This will give us more efficiency, more responsiveness and less predictability in our testing programme in the region and a foothold in neighbouring countries where it was extremely difficult to collect blood samples in the past. This is very timely especially in the context of next year's IAAF World Championships in Doha."

"This laboratory is a major development towards the fight against doping in Africa for athletics and indeed for all sports," said David Howman, Chairman of the AIU. "This is the first time since WADA's inception that an International Federation has taken the initiative to establish a WADA-approved laboratory in an area of real need. It shows that the AIU is not accepting of the status quo, but is taking responsibility for the integrity of athletics and getting things done with a proactive and innovative approach."

“The AIU warmly thanks LANCET Group of Labs East Africa for putting their resources at the service of the fight against doping. We also thank REDs at the University of Lausanne for their significant contribution through providing training and technical advice in support of LANCET through the application process. Finally, we thank the International Athletics Foundation for the funding contribution it made to this important project.”

LANCET Group of Labs East Africa operates primarily in the private healthcare environment and offers specialist pathology services to doctors and their patients directly or through clinics and hospitals, industrial sectors, corporates and insurances.

Dr. Ahmed Kalebi of the LANCET Group of Labs East Africa said: “LANCET Group of Labs East Africa is proud to contribute to the fight against doping through this partnership. WADA’s approval is a great recognition of the professional standards and skills of our facility in Nairobi. We will endeavour to provide quality service throughout what we hope will become a long-standing involvement in the fight against doping.”

The laboratory is expected to analyse between 800 and 1000 blood samples a year as part of the AIU doping control programme in Kenya, Ethiopia, Uganda, Tanzania and Eritrea.

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NOTES TO EDITORS

About WADA’s laboratory accreditation process

Laboratories seeking to carry out analysis of doping controls for sports under the World Anti-Doping Code must achieve and maintain accreditation from WADA. The International Standard for Laboratories (ISL) and its related technical documents specify the specific and stringent criteria that must be met for accreditation. As per Article 6.1 of the World Anti-Doping Code, for cost and geographic access reasons, WADA may approve laboratories which are not WADA-accredited to perform particular analyses, such as analysis of blood for ABP. Before approving any such laboratory, WADA ensures it meets the high analytical and custodial standards required. More information can be found at <https://www.wada-ama.org/en/what-we-do/science-medical/laboratories>.

About the Athletics Integrity Unit

The Athletics Integrity Unit (AIU) is the independent body that manages all doping and non-doping integrity-related matters for the sport of athletics. The remit of the AIU includes anti-doping, the pursuit of individuals engaged in age or competition results manipulation, investigating fraudulent behavior with regards to transfers of allegiance, and detecting other misconduct including bribery and breaches of betting rules. It is the AIU’s role to drive cheats out of our sport, and to do everything within its power to support honest athletes around the world who dedicate their lives to reaching their sporting goals through dedication and hard work.

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