



# Roche Diagnostics China Sustainability Report 2020/21

The Frontlines  
of Healthcare

## Overview

“ *Sustainable healthcare is high quality healthcare, made affordable and accessible to everybody.* ”

**Lance Little**  
 Managing Director,  
 Roche Diagnostics Asia Pacific



Home to 60% of the world’s people, Asia Pacific (APAC) is a large and diverse region with a mix of markets at different stages of their healthcare journey. But hearteningly, the region is making progress toward providing greater health coverage to citizens, improving public infrastructure and services, and making healthcare more affordable and accessible to all, particularly the marginalised communities.

While the healthcare challenges facing the APAC region are myriad, so are its opportunities. Developed, high income markets are seeing rapidly ageing populations, with rising costs increasingly becoming core concerns. Yet this can be a catalyst for the healthcare industry to innovate, adopt new and more efficient technologies, and boost preventive health programmes. For developing or low-income markets that face rapid population growth and low access to essential health services, programmes to build capacity and establish basic healthcare access, particularly in rural areas, is the first step forward. Meanwhile, in medium-income markets, their unique

circumstances call for a targeted approach to tackle high burden diseases and underserved communities to plug potential gaps in a maturing healthcare system.

The impact of COVID-19 in 2020 and 2021 on healthcare systems across APAC cannot be underscored enough. The devastating effect of the pandemic not only cost nations thousands of lives but placed immense stress on hospitals and infrastructure. Overwhelmed and struggling with limited funds, many healthcare systems restricted or postponed access to essential services for patients, creating a shadow healthcare crisis that may plague the region in the years to come.

To overcome these challenges and create truly sustainable healthcare, APAC’s healthcare systems must embrace both diagnosis and testing, as well as equitable access to these services. As COVID-19 has shown, identifying infections early and preventing them from spreading is the best way to protect the health of a population. These key preventive tools

raise people’s overall health awareness, improve treatment outcomes, and reduce the strain on healthcare resources. In our partnerships with governments across APAC to strengthen healthcare systems, we worked to show how diagnostics can both be a powerful tool in creating better healthcare systems, as well as how it should be inclusive and accessible to all patients, including the poor, rural communities, and those at risk.

Roche Diagnostics works closely with its pharmaceuticals division to search for better ways to prevent, diagnose and treat diseases and make a sustainable contribution to society and improve patient access to medical innovations through partnerships with key stakeholders.

Health is the bedrock for societies and economies to thrive and prosper. In advocating for sustainable healthcare, we are collectively strengthening the foundation of socioeconomic growth and development, while ensuring that no patient gets left behind.

# Our Commitment to Sustainability



Sustainability has been an integral part of the Roche business for 125 years. We are now moving towards simpler, more focused sustainability goals that align with both business objectives as well as environmental, social, and governmental imperatives shared by the international community.

We have built up trust and repute among our customers and successfully reached patients through total regulatory compliance. We can – and are – going far beyond simple compliance to proactively embrace and pursue greater impact in economic, societal and environmental areas.

We mapped our desired impacts of the business’ four key pillars of sustainability – patients, society, environment, and people – to the United Nations’ Sustainable Development Goals to ensure these objectives are fully integrated into our business strategy. Given our status as a global healthcare company, we resonate strongly with the goal of ensuring healthy lives and promoting wellbeing for all.



## PATIENTS

We are always innovating for patients, ensuring quality products, increasing accessibility to healthcare with improved distribution of our solutions, furthering scientific discovery with clinical trials, and operating at the forefront of personalised healthcare.



## SOCIETY

We want to improve the societies in which we operate, meeting the highest standards of business ethics and compliance, protecting human rights, supporting communities in need with humanitarian and social projects, and being a responsible and trustworthy partner.



## ENVIRONMENT

Environmental sustainability is central to humanity’s future. We seek to minimise our carbon footprint in all our operations and products, protect the climate through recycling and waste reductions initiatives, and deliver robust corporate responsibility reporting.



## PEOPLE

Making Roche a great place to work is our goal. We strive to build up our people, ensure diversity and inclusion in our workforce, champion employee wellbeing, encourage open dialogue, cultivate leadership skills and promote women in leadership roles.

## APAC: Our Impact In The Fight Against COVID-19

“ *The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated the need for public and private sectors across the globe to work together. In these unprecedented times, we are more than ever committed to work in close collaboration with all global health actors to ensure that medicines and diagnostics reach the people who need them.* ”

Since the global outbreak of Covid-19 in January 2020, Roche has been at the forefront of Asia Pacific’s battle against the coronavirus, working shoulder to shoulder with governments, frontliners and researchers to test, trace and contain the spread of infections.

As a partner to governments, we stepped up as a pillar of support, doing everything we could to support testing capacity by delivering a full portfolio of reliable diagnostic solutions and instruments in record time to meet urgent national needs. Together with other global pharmaceutical and diagnostics companies, we pledged to ensure that poorer countries could afford

the COVID-19 diagnostic products they need through donations and the distribution of products.

We worked tirelessly to obtain solutions approvals within days, moved quickly to obtain assay shipments ahead of official requests, supported research around efficacy testing, rapidly installed testing instruments in public healthcare facilities, and shared expertise with the industry and government officials. Combined, these efforts contributed significantly to the creation of an effective pandemic response and timely scale up and rollout of testing, ultimately bringing the COVID spread under control and preserving the lives of thousands.

**Severin Schwan**  
CEO, Roche



# Our Approach to Sustainability

## PATIENTS

While COVID-19 efforts were front and centre from 2020 to 2021, we did not let up on our commitment to improve the lives of patients amid these challenging times. In particular, our sustainability initiatives continued to address the most pressing non communicable diseases plaguing the Asia Pacific region, particularly cancer and cardiovascular disease, often the leading causes of death in nearly every APAC market.

With our systemic approach to raising awareness of these pressing diseases and establishing partnerships with government bodies to deliver medicines and diagnostics, we helped our affiliates create stronger, more sustainable healthcare systems where patients benefit from improved testing, treatment and care.

## SOCIETY

We believe in supporting the communities in which we operate, especially the most vulnerable groups, to strengthen our connection to local communities. In 2020 and 2021 our initiatives concentrated on women, children, and the elderly, with our people rallying as OneRoche to raise funds and marshall assistance for these groups in need.

Together, these philanthropic donations and humanitarian projects helped those most in need across Asia Pacific better tide through the turbulent changes wrought by COVID-19 and emerge stronger.

## ENVIRONMENT

At Roche, environmental commitments are at the centre of our sustainability goals for the coming decades. Across the region, our offices are working to minimise waste, reduce energy intensity, and slash our carbon footprint in ways large and small.

Our offices are migrating to paperless operations, promoting waste recycling with designated waste bins, switching to sustainable catering, and eliminating single-use plastics. As climate change and environmental pollution continue to be the world's most pressing concerns, we remain determined to responsibly operate green offices and supply chains through the entire product life cycle to be a truly zero emissions company by 2050.

## PEOPLE

At Roche, we view diversity and inclusion as an engine of innovation and key to our success. As one of the first major corporations in Europe to state our diversity and inclusion goals publicly, we have made substantial progress in achieving them – particularly around female representation, which is a notable achievement for the APAC region.

To look after the wellbeing of our people, the majority of our APAC offices rolled out wellness programmes amid COVID to protect their mental and physical health. This is part of our commitment to create a workplace where each individual is given the support they need to fully contribute their skills, experiences and perspectives.

# Our Impact in China

## Conducting COVID research at the heart of the epidemic



### CHINA IN 2020/2021

**China is home to 1.4 billion people and a rapidly developing public healthcare system in the midst of structural reform. Medical infrastructure and disease prevention have been China's healthcare focuses since 2019, to counter the growing incidence of chronic diseases related to lifestyle habits. As of 2019, chronic diseases such as cardiovascular disease, cancer, and diabetes accounted for 88% of all deaths, and over 70% of the nation's overall disease burden. From October 2019 onward, the nation became the global epicentre of the coronavirus pandemic and its borders remain sealed for the foreseeable future as it continues aiming for COVID-zero. A positive effect of the coronavirus on China's health industry was the improvement of in-vitro diagnostics**

**development, with many local manufactures launching nucleic acid tests, serology tests, and point-of-care tests.**

### OUR COVID-19 CONTRIBUTIONS

We supported the nation's COVID battle by contributing resources and medical equipment for clinical studies to better understand the nature of the virus and how to detect and contain it. At the onset of the pandemic, there was an urgent need for widespread testing. We played an integral role in helping China understand how diagnostics could be the first line of defense against infections, and supported multiple stakeholders, from the authorities to labs and healthcare providers, to trial testing solutions and conduct epidemiologic investigations around the virus to better shape China's pandemic containment strategy.

### USING RESEARCH TO BATTLE COVID-19

The prevention of the pandemic required scientific research to be conducted, and valuable clinical data to be generated. We responded quickly to the urgent need by collaborating with medical associations and key opinion leaders to provide the knowledge and data required to combat COVID-19. Through participation in various research programs, we integrated internal and external expert resources to develop the clinical studies necessary to create solutions to the medical challenges China faced. These include a Remdesivir COVID-19 China clinical research project, led by professor Cao Bin from the China-Japan Friendship Hospital, which was the first research effort to investigate the efficacy of the antiviral medication Remdesivir in the treatment of COVID-19, and research into the immunological characteristics of convalescent COVID-19 patients led by professor Wang Feng from Wuhan's Tongji Hospital.

Furthermore, we participated in a research with Peking Union Medical College's Chinese Academy of Medical Sciences, collecting over 20,000 community samples from two cities to analyse the prevalence and immunity status of COVID-19 in the population, and supported the Chinese Center for Disease Control and Prevention and hospitals across the nation with testing by our molecular diagnostics arm,

TIB Molbiol, and testing capacity and instruments for COVID-19 research.

We also participated in evaluating SARS-CoV-2 screening strategies with pooling. To expand the capacity of polymerase chain reaction tests used to detect the presence of the virus, many countries were exploring a pooling strategy at the time, and we supported the nation in assessing the pooled testing performance of nucleic acid testing.

Together, these studies generated a great amount of clinical patient data that uncovered the impact of the SARS-CoV-2 virus on patient immunity and helped the nation develop treatments and vaccines for the disease, providing leaders with valuable insights that shaped an effective response to combat the COVID-19 spread. Moreover, these collaborations impressed Chinese experts with the high-quality of Roche's SARS-CoV-2 related assays and instruments and supported our leadership position in the diagnostics industry.

### SLASHING WAIT TIMES FOR HEART ATTACK PATIENTS WITH MYLAB+ER

One in five Chinese adults suffers from cardiovascular disease<sup>1</sup>, due to unhealthy lifestyle choices prevalent among the population, including as tobacco use, poor nutrition, lack of physical activity and excessive alcohol<sup>2</sup>. As a result, Chinese hospitals see relatively high incidences



<sup>1</sup> [https://world-heart-federation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Cardiovascular\\_diseases\\_in\\_China.pdf](https://world-heart-federation.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/05/Cardiovascular_diseases_in_China.pdf)  
<sup>2</sup> <https://www.cdc.gov/chronicdisease/about/index.htm#:~:text=Many%20chronic%20diseases%20are%20caused,Lack%20of%20physical%20activity.>



of emergency department admissions for cardiovascular disease-related complaints. But compared to the 0-hour/1-hour emergency department protocol common among other developed nations, China's comparatively longer 0-hour/6-hour rule-out protocol for heart attacks in patients with chest pain complaints has led to overcrowded emergency departments and longer waits for medical attention and test results, potentially increasing patients' risk of mortality and causing stress to patients and their families. To bring down the wait times for patients with chest pain

and increase the survival rates of those suffering a heart attack, we launched the MyLab+ER campaign to implement more efficient diagnosis and treatment of ER patients, slashing the turnaround time from 3-4 hours to 1-2 hours. Already, 353 chest pain centres in top hospitals have adopted our proposed workflow and are using the 0-hour/1-hour protocol to triage patients.

### PROMOTING SAFER LUNG CANCER TREATMENT WITH TUMOR MARKER TESTS

For a nation prevalent with smokers, lung cancer is unsurprisingly the leading cause of cancer deaths in China. Once lung cancer has been diagnosed in a patient, common tools to manage the condition include routine CT scans held every three to six months. To fill the gap for simple, convenient monitoring tools, we equipped healthcare professionals with the knowledge of using tumor marker tests for cancer management and relapse monitoring. Over a three-year period, we educated over 1,000 healthcare professionals in top class "3A" hospitals on the use of tumor marker tests. Moving forward, we plan to educate an additional 500 healthcare practitioners each year on the use of these tests and cultivate more key opinion leaders for greater influence on the topic, in the hopes that adoption of these tests can offer more lung cancer patients easier and better management of their condition.

## Highlights *in Numbers*

### SOCIETY



**RMB 81,030**

raised from Roche Children's Walk 2021

### ENVIRONMENT



**7,000**

saplings planted under China's "Million Tree Planting Project"

### PATIENTS



**353**

chest pain centres in top hospitals adopted improved workflow for heart failure diagnosis

**1,000**

healthcare professionals educated in use of tumor marker tests

### PEOPLE



**42%**

women employees

**37.5%**

women in leadership team, including the Managing Director



## What's Next

*There is still much more that can be done before sustainable healthcare becomes a reality for each APAC citizen. We know this is a huge undertaking that cannot be achieved alone. That is why we have always partnered with stakeholders and engaged in open, constructive dialogue with industry and peers to collectively advance innovation, refine processes, and make progress.*

Partnership is at the heart of our sustainability strategy. Our strong and deep relationships with governments, public healthcare institutions, industry associations, research partners, and non-governmental organisations have seen us co-create frameworks for sustainable healthcare and strengthen national health systems. As the world emerges from COVID-19, now more than ever do we need public and private stakeholders to work together to ensure healthcare access for all, and good health and wellbeing for every person a reality, both now and in the future.

Together, we can craft solutions crucial to closing inherent gaps in the standard of care in the APAC region, and help it address its most pressing challenges, without sacrificing the interests of the planet or people.

*Join us in doing now what patients need next.*





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