



# Roche Diagnostics Singapore 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 reputation 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 Singapore

## Rallying as OneRoche to uplift the community



### SINGAPORE IN 2020/2021

**The city-state of Singapore, with a population of 5.7 million people, is home to a rapidly ageing population, with about 15% being seniors over the age of 65. The nation's healthcare concerns centre around managing rising medical costs and increased demand for public healthcare services. In 2020, there were 3.7 million policyholders of Medisave, the nation's compulsory medical savings scheme, and 1.4 million policyholders of ElderShield, a severe disability insurance scheme mainly for the elderly. Government health expenditure in 2020 was \$16.65 billion on factors including COVID-19 containment measures; for 2021 it is estimated to rise further to S\$18.8 billion as the population continues to age.**

### OUR COVID-19 CONTRIBUTIONS

Thanks to strict and early border closures and tight social distancing curbs, the

republic endured the pandemic relatively unscathed. We worked closely with the government to help the nation ringfence the spread of COVID-19 in its first wave, when the virus spread like wildfire in foreign worker dormitories. We reacted quickly to roll out PCR and serology testing and set up instruments to support increased testing capabilities. In 2021, we worked with pharmacies, online retailers and corporates to support regular testing for the broader population through the launch of rapid antigen tests for self-testing.

### RAISING S\$290,000 TO HELP VULNERABLE ELDERLY AND CHILDREN

Singapore's COVID-19 strategy, lauded early on in the pandemic as one of the world's most successful at stamping out the coronavirus, involved strict curbs during the nation's two month "Circuit Breaker" lockdown. While this approach contributed to Singapore's extremely low death toll, it also put elderly at risk of social isolation,

“ *As employees working in the healthcare sector, we felt compelled to step up and lend support in any way we can during this pandemic.* ”

**Thiam Huat Low**

Head of Safety, Health and Environment, Roche Singapore

and impacted the incomes of many financially disadvantaged families, posing risks to their children's education.

To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 on elderly and children, we partnered with Lions Befrienders Service Association and New Life Community Services, rallying as OneRoche to raise over S\$80,000 from some 500 employees via an online donation drive between May and June 2020. We not only matched staff donations dollar for dollar; in addition, our organisations were able to direct additional funding to these charities, culminating in an impressive total of S\$290,690 raised.

The funds we raised went toward programmes and initiatives run by both charities. Our contribution of over S\$150,000 to the Overcoming COVID-19: 6000 At-Risk Elderly Fund enabled

Lions Befrienders Service Association to provide 6,000 socially isolated seniors with desperately-needed food rations, essential items and social activities. The charity's efforts, which are centred around providing elderly with friendship and care, helped prevent social isolation and allowed seniors to continue engaging safely with the wider community.

Meanwhile, another sum of about S\$130,000 went toward New Life Community Services' financial assistance scheme, Project Love: Overcoming COVID-19 for Families in Crisis. The scheme provided monetary support to low-income families suffering a significant loss of income to ensure children from financially disadvantaged families receive educational support and can continue learning well amid the pandemic even as schools closed and ran online classes.



With close to S\$300,000 raised in the short span of two weeks, the charities – and ourselves – were overwhelmed by the generosity of our people and what we can achieve by working together as OneRoche. Our efforts helped Singapore’s vulnerable emerge from the crisis stronger.

#### RAMPING UP COVID TESTING IN MIGRANT WORKER DORMS

Early on in the pandemic, the vast majority of Singapore’s first wave of cases came from coronavirus outbreaks in migrant worker dormitories, where the virus rapidly spread to create massive infection clusters of up to 2,800 people. As of December 2020, migrant workers accounted for over 90% of all COVID-19 cases in the nation.

To aid in containing the coronavirus outbreak in dormitories, we partnered with the Ministry of Health and worked together with our laboratory partners to rapidly roll out PCR and serology tests to support testing of workers from migrant worker dormitories and step up testing to ringfence the spread. Working closely with the government and our laboratory partners, we also installed testing instruments and offered 24/7 support across all COVID-19 and critical care testing sites, enabling the nation to contain infections and quickly ride out its first wave.

#### SPEARHEADING PERSONALISED CANCER TREATMENTS WITH DATA



Cancer is the single leading cause of death in Singapore. To unlock the full potential of personalised care and diagnosis, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2021 for a three-year partnership with the Singapore Translational Cancer Consortium, National Cancer Centre Singapore, and National University Cancer Institute, Singapore to establish critical infrastructure to advance the adoption of personalised healthcare – including cancer care – in the republic. Our contributions include access to comprehensive genomic profiling by Foundation Medicine, a molecular information company that is part

of the Roche Group, and advice on the design and implementation of a clinico-genomic database that can be used to ultimately increase the chances of survival of cancer patients.

When applied to cancer, molecular profiling can give patients more options to receive personalised care, based on the genetic profile of the tumour. Our joint efforts will expand access to molecular profiling for more Singaporeans, enable clinicians to identify the best available treatment options, and ultimately, improve cancer treatments for everybody.

## Highlights *in Numbers*

#### SOCIETY



**S\$290,000**

raised from 498 employees for charity

**6,000**

socially-isolated seniors supplied with meals, care and social activities

#### PATIENTS



**138**

assays registered with local regulatory authorities, providing patients access to quality diagnostic tests

**90**

foreign domestic workers reached with free HPV tests

#### PEOPLE



**3.3%**

attrition rate, down from 8.6% in 2018/2019

## 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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