

KT Corp unveils global epidemic prevention platform in Laos

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Lao Ministry of Health, KOFIH Cooperate for Platform Operations



KT Corp. said its Global Epidemic Prevention Platform (GEPP) began service in Lao PDR on September 6 to help the Southeast Asian country enhance its epidemic preparedness and control. Laos is the second country to use the GEPP after Ghana, where service began last month.

KT, South Korea's leading telecommunications company, said that Laos GEPP, a joint endeavor between KT, the Ministry of Health of Lao PDR and the Korea Foundation for International Healthcare (KOFIH), was launched during a ceremony at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Vientiane. The ceremony included a forum marking the tenth anniversary of the Lee Jong-wook Fellowship in Lao PDR, operated by the KOFIH.

"I am pleased contribute to the safety of Lao people through GEPP services based on Big Data analytics technology," said Yun Hea-Jeang, KT's executive vice president and head of the Big Data Business Support Unit. "We will continue expanding abroad using the launch of Laos GEPP, the first in Southeast Asia, as a springboard."

Minister of Health Bounkong Syhavong and Phonepraseuth Sayamoungkhoun, deputy director of the Health Ministry's Department of Communicable Diseases Control, represented the Ministry of Health of Lao PDR at the ceremony. Korean attendees included Sung-soon Shin, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Lao PDR; Jeong Hong-Geun, director-general of the International Cooperation Bureau, Ministry of Health and Welfare; Choi Won-Il, secretary general of the KOFIH; Yun Hea-Jeang, executive vice president of KT who heads the KT Big Data Business Support Unit; and Jacob Lee, professor at the Hallym University Medical Center.

Lao PDR will be capable of issuing warnings to travelers in epidemic-prone areas through GEPP. The Laos GEPP smartphone app will inform users if an epidemic disease has broken out at their location, describe the symptoms and give prevention advice. GEPP will also allow users to report their symptoms to nearby health offices.

The Department of Communicable Diseases Control of Lao PDR will be able to gauge and monitor a public health crisis based on data collected from Laos GEPP. The multi-function platform will likely help cope with dengue fever and measles outbreaks in Southeast Asia.

In view of the rising number of Koreans visiting Laos, the service is also expected to contribute to their safety and help

prevent infectious diseases from spreading internationally.

In August, KT introduced GEPP Ghana to offer similar services in the West African country, enabling its citizens to stay informed while visiting epidemic-prone areas and make real-time reports to health offices when an epidemic erupts. The Ghanaian government can also gauge and monitor a public health crisis based on data collected through the platform.

KT looks forward to continuing its cooperation with the Ministry of Health of Lao PDR and the KOFIH, further contributing to Laos' public health preparedness by using its up-to-date information communication technologies. The telecom giant plans to build a system for the vaccination and immunization records of infants using a fingerprint reader on smartphones.

Meanwhile, at the ceremony, the Korea Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, KOFIH and the Ministry of Health of Lao PDR signed a revision to the 2016 Agreement for Strengthening Communicable Diseases Control.

The agreement stipulated the installment of a diagnosis and quarantine system for infectious diseases in Lao PDR that will begin this year. The revision provides for strengthened monitoring, risk evaluation and preparedness; training of epidemiologists and experts in healthcare and epidemic management; support for laboratory diagnosis and management; and consulting for the development of quarantine guidelines. Through the revised agreement, the parties are expected to accelerate its drive for Laos GEPP.