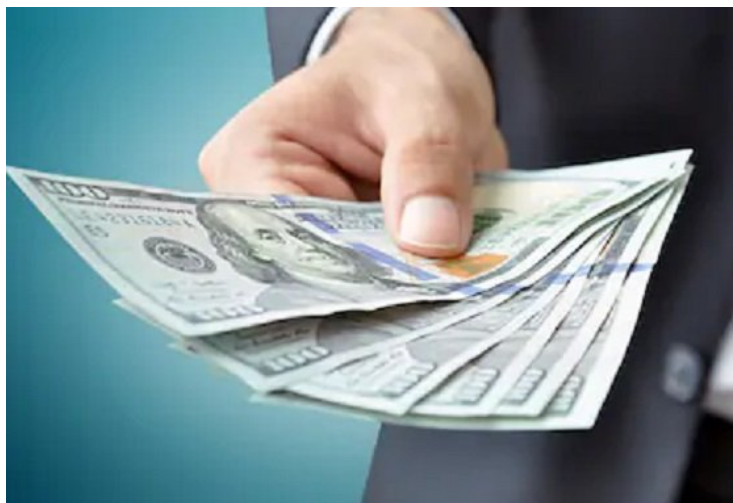


## **ADB provides \$125M to help boost Philippines' COVID-19 health response**

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**The government is seeking to more than double the daily COVID-19 testing capacity to 75,000 by the end of the year**



The Asian Development Bank (ADB) has recently approved a \$125 million loan to help the Philippine government improve its capacity to prevent and control the spread of the coronavirus disease (COVID-19) pandemic.

The Health System Enhancement to Address and Limit (HEAL) COVID-19 project will enable the Department of Health (DOH) to improve health services across the country through the upgrading of medical equipment and related training.

The government is seeking to more than double the daily COVID-19 testing capacity to 75,000 by the end of the year, compared with nearly 31,000 as of 15 August.

The project will provide medical equipment, including electrocardiography machines and defibrillators, to 17 major hospitals across the country and upgrade their laboratories and isolation facilities; provide ventilators to 70 DOH hospitals and 20 island local government hospitals; install computed tomography (CT) scan machines in 33 hospitals nationwide. Also, deliver test kits, chemicals, and reagents to at least 10 government molecular labs to increase their COVID-19 testing capacity.

In addition, the project will fund the training of staff and laboratory technicians on how to operate and maintain the equipment. Doctors and nurses in obstetrics, pediatric, and emergency departments will learn how to reduce infection and control virus transmission. Health workers will also learn how to provide psycho-social support to patients and families, including pregnant women and other vulnerable groups affected by COVID-19.

The project complements an ADB grant to the DOH, which was approved on 14 March to build a pandemic subnational reference laboratory in the Jose B. Lingad Memorial General Hospital in San Fernando, Pampanga, with a daily output of 3,000 COVID-19 tests.