Welcome to the AI4PEP bi-weekly News Brief. This week, we're excited to reflect on the achievements of our teams, India, Indonesia, Malaysia, and the Philippines. We kick start our year by launching our brand-new Network Manager who will be steering the ship alongside the Executive Director.

Welcome on Board!

- Congratulations to Dr. Emmanuel Musa who recently joined the AI4PEP Secretariat as the new Network Manager. Unveiling the Manager at the last bi-weekly meeting, Prof. Kong announced that he was a renowned medical practitioner, and global health specialist with a well-rounded portfolio. Musa had reportedly served as a pandemic and epidemic preparedness and response specialist at the World Health Organization (WHO) in different parts of the Global South. He is committed to use his expertise, experience, and networks to advance the AI4PEP agenda.

Administrative Updates

- Prof. Kong acknowledged that it was time for the next batch of funding to be processed from York University's end. He committed to write an email within the next couple of days to communicate the requisition process and the requirements thereof. He mentioned that he anticipated the process to be smooth going forward because all the administrative issues had been handled during the first disbursement. The requirements for the second disbursements were as follows:

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- 1.A ***Narrative report;*** *detailing activities implemented, successes and challenges. Where applicable; partners were encouraged to share links to events and publications.*
  2.A ***Financial Report;*** *detailing expenditures of the first tranche of funding.*
  3. ***Receipts.***

- *For further details about closing the first tranche of funding and requisitioning for the second, Sheriff would be in touch with the different teams, they were also encouraged to email the secretariat for support where necessary.*

Finalization of Clearance Processes

- *Prof. Kong cautioned the teams that it had been over 6 months since the clearance processes had been initiated, and it was imperative that it came to a conclusive stage. He mentioned that AI4PEP was required to adhere to reporting deadlines, and they may be forced to move to the next stage in coming weeks. He invited the different teams to offer their updates on whether they foresaw an imminent granting of clearance and legitimacy by their various governments or not, and if there was anything that the secretariat could do to expedite the process. Teams DOMR, Brazil, and Peru were reportedly working with their universities to expedite the process. They all expressed their intentions to FastTrack the process and not risk losing the funds. They understood that failure to attain the necessary documentation could result in AI4PEP extending the funding to waitlisted applicants.*

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India- FMRI

- Prof. Kayzid reported that they had gotten their approval from their local municipality for wastewater sampling. The next step was a meeting with the municipality to finalize the MOU for the project.

- For context, Team India has had a hard time processing/ securing their national clearance because their country required an explicit provision that AI4PEP and IDRC would not be harvesting any raw data from the project. During this meeting, Prof. Kong reiterated that there was no expectation either on the part of IDRC or AI4PEP for FMRI to share any raw data. Prof. Kong referred them to Article 10 of the agreement, which he explained that it already catered for data sharing. Additionally, IDRC had already emailed FMRI to explicitly state that they would require no raw data.

Indonesia- Aldilas - Center for TropMed

- The team was reportedly challenged in their implementation as the activities required funds, and yet they had yet to receive their funding.

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- The team recorded that their university had issued Ethical Clearance.
- Dr. Aldilas was reportedly slotted for the Asia Colloquim series where he was expected to lead a session on Covid-19 Artificial Modeling experiences in Indonesia.

Philippines- ATIPAN+

- Prof. de Castro mentioned that the launch was accompanied by a rebranding process. Given that the AI4PEP was taking after a project that was just coming to an end, he mentioned that the project had been rebranded and named ATIPAN+ to mark the continuity of the ATIPAN project.

- He mentioned that besides, using the data from the ATIPAN project, the project had also extended to 15 sites, including low income and Indigenous communities. Originally, the project was meant to be concentrated in 13 sites, but they have since made it 15.