

# China to open first high security bio laboratory

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China's first high-security biosafety laboratory will be ready for use by December, a move hailed as a 'crucial' in the fight against Ebola

China's first high-security biosafety laboratory will be ready for use by December, in a move hailed as a "crucial" moment in the fight against pathogens such as the Ebola virus, officials said.

The facility, which has been under construction since July 2011, has been billed as the first in China that will be equipped to handle Class 4

pathogens (P4)—dangerous viruses that pose a high risk of person-to-person transmission, such as those that cause haemorrhagic fevers like Ebola.

The laboratory in Wuhan, Hubei province, was built in cooperation with French bio-industrial firm Institut Merieux and the Chinese Academy of Sciences. It joins just a handful of labs around the world cleared to handle the most highly pathogenic germs.

The Wuhan P4 laboratory comes "at a crucial moment", said Institut Merieux president Alain Merieux in Beijing on Tuesday.

"Now we are all working side by side on Ebola," he added, referring to French and Chinese efforts to address the crisis in affected African countries.

The announcement comes amid heightened global efforts to fight the world's worst-ever Ebola epidemic in Africa, which has killed more than half of the 6,500 people it has infected, according to the World Health Organisation.

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