



EXPANDING AND ACCELERATING ACCESS TO DIAGNOSTICS FOR PATIENTS AT RISK OF MULTIDRUG-RESISTANT TUBERCULOSIS

In 2009, **UNITAID** approved funding for a project to accelerate access to diagnostics for patients at risk of multidrug-resistant tuberculosis in 27 countries. The **EXPAND-TB (Expanding Access to New Diagnostics for TB)** Project is a collaboration between the World Health Organization (**WHO**), the Global Laboratory Initiative (**GLI**), the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (**FIND**) and the Stop TB Partnership Global Drug Facility (**GDF**).

The overall goal of the five-year Project is to narrow the huge diagnostic gap in MDR-TB control by expanding and accelerating access to new and rapid diagnostic technologies within appropriate laboratory services at country level, accompanied by the necessary know-how for technology transfer, and ensuring these new technologies are properly integrated within TB control programmes.

During the first year of **EXPAND-TB** a wide range of activities has been initiated in countries, including the crucial components of laboratory needs assessment and preparedness, upgrade of infrastructure, and training of staff. Technology transfer has subsequently started, paving the way for accelerated patient diagnosis and eventual routine surveillance of drug resistance at country level.

EXPAND-TB has full ownership by the Ministries of Health of the recipient countries and works on a model of best-practices, learning-by-doing, and optimising resources for laboratory strengthening at country level.

GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

The **EXPAND-TB** Project aims to diagnose at least 129 000 patients with multidrug-resistant TB. Specific operational objectives are to:

- expand and accelerate access to quality-assured new diagnostic technologies, endorsed by **WHO**, which currently include commercial liquid culture, rapid speciation by immuno-chromatography and molecular line probe assay;
- impact market dynamics to leverage price reductions for diagnostic tools, instruments, reagents, and supplies and to stimulate a greater number of suppliers of new TB diagnostics;
- improve case detection and management of TB and MDR-TB by ensuring that the new TB diagnostic tools are taken up and appropriately used in National TB Control Programmes.

MAIN PARTNERS

- **WHO** provides leadership in strategic and technical aspects of TB control worldwide, in order to reverse the epidemic and eventually eliminate TB. It guides the global response to TB epidemic and facilitates partnerships, provides evidence-based norms, standards, policies; supports Member States in adapting the Stop TB Strategy, within strengthened health systems; measures global progress; monitors & assesses national programme performance, financing & impact; and enables progress across the continuum of TB research, linked within a wider health research strategy
- **UNITAID** is a global health initiative, established to provide sustainable, predictable and additional funding to significantly impact on market dynamics to reduce prices and increase the availability of high quality drugs and diagnostics for the treatment of HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis for people in developing countries.
- **GLI** is a global network of partners, including donors, national agencies, private foundations, scientific organizations, control programmes, and technical expert groups and committees, dedicated to TB laboratory strengthening at global, regional and country levels. The GLI secretariat is hosted by **WHO**. The GLI provides the necessary policy framework, norms, and standards TB laboratory services, thereby ensuring that international standards for laboratory bio-safety, equipment, and procedures are met. The GLI provides overall strategic guidance to the Project and works closely with **FIND** and **GDF** to monitor Project indicators and assess Project impact.
- **FIND** is a not-for-profit foundation under Swiss law which facilitates the development and implementation of diagnostics tools for neglected diseases. **FIND** is the main implementing agency and responsible for project management, including support for procurement and logistics, according to ISO 13485 and 9001 certified project management standards. As part of technology transfer to countries, **FIND** shares manuals, guidelines, and operating procedures that have been developed to assist with the introduction of new diagnostics and their proper use.
- **GDF** is an initiative of the Stop TB Partnership which coordinates and manages procurement and delivery of high-quality anti-TB drugs and diagnostics and enables access to such products at the lowest possible price for countries in need. **GDF** coordinates and manages procurement and delivery of diagnostic equipment and supplies to eligible countries.

The Project builds on **UNITAID** support to maximize resources from other partners for laboratory strengthening, currently including the Global Fund, the World Bank, PEPFAR, the American Society for Microbiology; the US Centers for Disease Control & Prevention; Johns Hopkins University; KfW; KNCV; Partners in Health; Project Hope; ICRC; The Union; USAID and others.

RECIPIENT COUNTRIES

