



PHILIPPINES TUBERCULOSIS ROADMAP OVERVIEW, FISCAL YEAR 2023

This is an overview of the USAID/Philippines Fiscal Year (FY) 2023 Tuberculosis (TB) Roadmap, implemented with the FY 2022 budget.

In 2021, the estimated TB incidence in the Philippines was 741,000; an estimated 61,000 people died from the infectious disease that year, and the Philippines reported 321,564 TB case notifications. The same year, approximately 90 percent of notified bacteriologically confirmed individuals with TB were tested for rifampicin resistance; 7,589 individuals were diagnosed with drug-resistant TB (DR-TB), and 5,946, or 78 percent, were put on treatment.

The country strategy for TB elimination is embodied in the Updated Philippine Strategic TB Elimination Plan 2020-2023, otherwise known as PhilSTEP¹. The plan aims to achieve a 15 percent reduction in mortality and a 12 percent reduction in incidence. PhilSTEP1 uses the cascade of care framework and describes major strategies in screening, testing and diagnosis, treatment, and prevention. The strategies have been adopted to new public health standards following the COVID-19 pandemic.

For testing and diagnosis, there are two focus areas:

1. Laboratory expansion to improve access to new diagnostics: This includes rapid diagnostic test (e.g., GeneXpert, TrueNat etc.) expansion to achieve universal access to drug-susceptibility tests (DST) for all individuals with presumptive TB and optimization of line probe assay (LPA) as well as DST, to ensure all identified individuals with rifampicin-resistant TB (RR-TB) undergo second-line susceptibility testing.
2. Build on gains of mandatory notification by pushing nationwide implementation, including the private sector. At the same time improving quality of diagnosis and treatment adherence among notified cases.

In line with Universal Health Coverage (UHC), treatment strategies are all anchored in establishing a healthcare provider network, specifically at the local government unit level, that integrates all TB services (specifically drug-susceptible and drug-resistant treatment) and adopting people-centered care. Expansion of treatment services will fully implement active drugs safety monitoring (aDSM) and management and TB-HIV collaboration. Lastly, TB prevention priorities include rolling out shorter TB preventive therapy (TPT) and enhancing

¹ Department of Health Report, 2020



infection prevention and control (IPC) in all facilities.

The proposed FY2022 USAID TB budget for the Philippines is \$22 million. With this level of funding, USAID will support the following technical areas:

REACH

TB diagnosis

USAID/Philippines will focus TB Roadmap activities on continuing the recovery and rapid scaling up of TB case finding, TB detection, and treatment coverage and further continuing to expand activities described in the National Adaptive Plan. To catch up with the gaps in TB case findings brought about by the COVID pandemic, USAID plans the following actions in 2023:

- **Screen-all approach in public health facilities.** This ensures all those seeking care from public health services will be able to get free screening using available tools such as simple TB symptoms questionnaires and chest X-ray (CXR).
- **TB and COVID-19 Simultaneous, Integrated Screening and Testing Approach/Bidirectional Screening.** USAID will continue improving bidirectional testing and implement algorithms to test COVID-19 and TB. CXR will be used in TB screening; those with lesions suggestive of TB will receive confirmatory TB testing.
- **Expanding X-Ray screening, Active Case Finding and Finding, Actively, Separating, and Treating (FAST) implementation.** USAID will introduce ultra-portable CXR and use of computer-assisted diagnostic (CAD) in selected project areas. To ramp up TB case finding activities, USAID will expand one-stop shops for TB diagnosis to incorporate CXR and GeneXpert testing. USAID will use data and artificial intelligence (AI) mapping to help target village locations that provide information on the number needed to screen and estimate the best possible yield for active case finding.
- **Optimizing Existing Laboratory Network and Expanding a Public-Private Diagnostic Network.** In 2023, USAID will continue supporting the consortium and provide technical assistance to support the development of a diagnostic optimization plan to cover TB, HIV, and COVID workload.
- **Ensuring World Health Organization (WHO) recommended Rapid Diagnostic Tests (RDTs), including GeneXpert and Truenat testing for all people diagnosed with TB.** In 2023, USAID will assist the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau (DPCB) in optimizing use of GeneXpert instruments through lab spatial analysis and diagnostic network optimization, expand its use in the private sector through a private sector pooled



procurement consortium model, capacitate a cadre of staff involved in testing and assist the TB program to achieve higher RDT testing rates among people with TB who are clinically diagnosed. A sputum transportation network will also be established to optimize use of RDTs; USAID will introduce stool-based GeneXpert to improve the quality of childhood TB diagnosis.

- **Expansion and institutionalization of new TB diagnostic tools.** USAID started introducing new TB diagnostic and preventive treatment tools to the TB program. In 2023, USAID will focus on generating evidence and assisting the TB program in the possible expansion and institutionalization of these new tools. USAID will also work with the national and local government partners on sustaining these tools beyond project life.

Engaging all care providers

Non-National TB Program (-NTP) providers, such as public and private hospitals and general physicians, play an important role in the country's healthcare network. In 2023, USAID is planning to prioritize the following actions:

- **Engaging private sector providers in screening and confirming individuals with TB.** USAID will continue supporting capacitate private healthcare providers, pharmacies, workplaces, and non-NTP facilities to improve TB screening, TB testing and mandatory notification and referrals. In order to increase private sector utilization of rapid bacteriologic testing, USAID will partner with private sector institutions and professional societies, expand consortium reach to increase case finding and reporting to the NTP, and improve turnaround time using digital connectivity and artificial intelligence in screening. USAID will work with the Department of Health (DOH) and Local Government Units (LGUs) to develop incentivization schemes linked to mandatory notification. USAID will also work with smaller providers to expand access to TB testing through provider networks, linking them to sputum transport and public laboratory testing.
- **Partnering with civil society organizations.** USAID will continue partnering with the local organization network of civil societies and organizations of key affected populations at the national level. USAID will expand and strengthen the partnership and network to bring together local Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs), people affected by the disease, and advocates to demand an urgent response to issues and concerns affecting the TB community.

Community TB care delivery

- USAID will focus on local government unit (LGU) facilities, health stations, and community health workers. USAID will strengthen partnerships with community-based organizations (CBOs) to mobilize local financial resources for CBO-managed TB case finding and TB treatment support.
- USAID will invest in activities scaling up and institutionalizing effective digital technologies for TB case finding, referral, treatment support, and monitoring treatment adherence.

CURE

Drug-susceptible TB (DS-TB) treatment

In FY 2023, USAID will scale up people-centered, differentiated TB service delivery models, including use of digital adherence solutions, to enhance treatment adherence. USAID will also support developing mechanisms to provide TB case notification incentives to private doctors. Furthermore, in order to improve the quality of TB services, USAID will assist in the institutionalization of conducting user satisfaction surveys in directly observed therapy (DOTS) facilities to assess system responsiveness.

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) treatment

DR-TB is one of USAID/Philippines' key technical areas, along with TB case finding and TB preventive therapy (TPT). USAID will focus on the following priority interventions:

- **Full integration of DR-TB services into DS-TB and primary healthcare.** To ensure all primary healthcare facilities that provide DS-TB care also can serve and support individuals with DR-TB, USAID will continue working with partners to strengthen the capacities of all facilities to implement full integration of DR-TB detection and treatment services into the TB treatment network,
- **Adoption of New DR-TB Guidelines.** USAID will work with the Disease Prevention and Control Bureau (DPCB) to adopt the WHO new DR-TB guidelines in 2023. USAID will work with the DPCB DR-TB technical working group to review and update the current manual of procedures as well as the Clinical Practice Guidelines.
- **Strengthening Drug Safety and Management (DSM) and monitoring the implementation of all-oral short treatment regimen for DR-TB.** In 2023, USAID will work with local governments and the DPCB to ensure pharmacovigilance reporting and strengthen capacity to manage adverse drug reactions and ensure treatment compliance. USAID will assist the DOH to ensure that there will be seamless procurement

and delivery of drugs to DR-TB service delivery points.

- **Scaling up digital tools to monitor adherence and adverse drug reactions and provide support to individuals with TB.** In 2023, USAID will continue to expand the adoption of Video Observed Treatment (VOT) as a new digital tool focusing on treatment support and monitoring of treatment adherence.
- **Partnering with private providers for DR-TB care.** In 2023, USAID, together with DPCB, the Global Fund, and partners, will introduce DR-TB treatment in several pilot areas.

PREVENT

Prevention

In 2023, the USAID/Philippines will prioritize the following activities using micro-data to focus efforts in high TB burden areas:

- **Expanding contact investigation.** USAID will assist the DOH with implementing the new screening algorithm with steps necessary to detect TB infection (TBI). USAID will continue establishing TB Contact Centers to streamline and create efficient models for contact investigation and build on the models, resources, and lessons learned from COVID-19.
- **Screening all individuals at risk for developing TB.** In addition to contacts of people with TB, USAID will work with the DOH to scale up screening for TBI among all those screened for TB disease. USAID will pilot laboratory tests to detect TBI in select high-burden sites, helping collect best practices and early experiences. USAID will collaborate with TB Innovations to support using the interferon gamma release assay (IGRA) to identify TB infection and those eligible for TPT in selected sites.
- **TPT for eligible TB contacts and introduction of shorter TPT regimens.** In 2023, USAID will work with selected technical partners to support health providers at the LGU level to acquire knowledge and scale up shorter TPT options, like 3HR and 3HP. USAID will work with LGUs to improve access to required baseline laboratory testing for TPT treatment.
- **Infection Prevention and Control (IPC) for TB and COVID-19** will continue in 2023. TB surveillance among health workers has been poorly implemented in the country for the past few years. USAID will develop a technical package to establish a TB/COVID-19 surveillance system among health workers and integrated into the national IPC guidelines. It will continue to promote the IPC eLearning courses, building on the gains from all the COVID-19 work, to further strengthen the IPC practices at service delivery



points and the monitoring of these practices by the DOH.

SUSTAINABLE SYSTEMS

Commitment and sustainability

Below are priority support areas to help the country achieve sustainable development by strengthening financing and governance.

- Support selected sites in integrating local health systems under the framework of UHC
 - Contribute to the establishment of integrated service delivery through the Primary Care Provider Networks and Health Care Provider Networks;
 - Foster cooperative governance in the context of province-wide health systems;
 - Strengthen strategic and investment planning; and
 - Promote efficient pooling and use of resources through the Special Health Fund.
- Support the development of the TB sub-plan as part of the overall public health strategic plan;
- Support to strategic planning and program implementation at the national (DPCB) and subnational (regional and local) level in the context of the integrated public health programs;
- Support monitoring of government counterpart financing to GF and TB Budget Formulation at the national and local levels;
- Strengthen the National Coordinating Committee (NCC), Regional Coordinating Committee, and Provincial Coordinating Committee (PCC) to facilitate multi-sectoral action;
- Strengthen Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) to engage national and local policymakers to increase TB budget and investments;
- Support DOH in budget execution, overcoming procurement bottlenecks, and tracking to maximize utilization of funding commitments; and
- Support the Philippine Health Insurance Corporation in expanding the benefit packages for TB and enhancing mechanisms to access these packages,



Capacity and functioning systems

USAID/Philippines has identified selected priorities :

- Support the enhancement of the collection and analysis of consumption data and inventory reports from various levels to better inform procurement and distribution plans;
- Assist in building and institutionalizing regular drug quantification exercises, including developing quantification tools and training appropriate staff at the various levels of the supply chain on quantification. Supporting DOH in rolling out a mechanism for rational allocation, distribution, and inventory control to avoid stock-outs and over-stocks at the service delivery level;
- Assist in further adopting strategic alternative procurement mechanisms, such as framework agreements backed with multi-year obligation authority and international procurement, central price negotiations, and pooled procurement across regions and LGUs to have greater flexibility in procurement given the COVID-19 logistical challenges;
- Incorporate newer TB medicines into the Philippine National Formulary and work with the DOH to encourage drug suppliers and manufacturers to register products in the country and working with the FDA to improve the system to approve new drugs and medicines more rapidly;
- Support the implementation of the TB transition plan on registration, procurement, and distribution of Second Line Drugs (SLDs) from GF/PBSP to DOH;
- Provide technical assistance to the Philippines Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and the DOH Pharmaceutical Division to establish a functional pharmacovigilance system that includes enhancing and streamlining the pharmacovigilance information system and training the users for a more accurate causality assessment and operationalizing a DSM;
- Build the capacity of supply chain staff at the central and regional DOH to improve supply chain management;
- Support the local government units' supply chain management through the implementation of local technical assistance providers (LTaPS) Assisting the DOH in the rollout of electronic logistics management information system (eLMIS) to the selected LGUs; and
- Improve the mechanism for preventive and maintenance measures of Xpert machines



and donated equipment through GF assistance.

Research

Research topics in the monograph that have committed USAID support through implementing partners in 2022 and might be expected to continue until 2023 are:

Reach:

- Use of Chest X-ray AI in TB Triage in Private Hospital in Metro Manila to improve TB Case Finding;
- Use of Ultraportable Xray in Geographically Isolated and Disadvantaged Areas (GIDA);
- Initial country experience utilizing Xpert MTB/Rif Ultra Assay by the Philippine Private Sector Diagnostics Consortium – a retrospective study;
- City-wide TB Elimination Campaign (CiTEC) utilizing UHC elements to strengthen systematic case finding; and
- Knowledge, Attitude, and Practice (KAP) survey of TB screening, diagnosis, treatment, and prevention in two urban poor barangays in Cebu City, Philippines.

Cure:

- Use of different types of Digital Adherence Technologies (DAT) in improving treatment adherence of people with TB at iNTP sites.

Prevent:

- Testing the feasibility, acceptance, and use of the QIAreacH QuantiFERON-TB (QFT) test in diagnosing TB infection among the household contacts of people with bacteriologically confirmed TB in high TB-burden areas;
- Content analysis of users' posts in #TBFreePH patient support community group; and
- Reliability of "Am I TB-free?" online self-assessment tool.

Sustain:

- TB reportage in the Philippines: Compliance with ethical guidelines and effect of media engagement initiative;



- TB Catastrophic Cost Survey; and
- Documentation of enterprise models of service delivery implemented by CBOs.