

INDIA TB RECOVERY PLAN TO MITIGATE THE IMPACT OF COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had far-reaching effects on the global tuberculosis (TB) response, threatening to erase years of progress. In India, there was a **26 percent decline**¹ in TB case notifications and a **25 percent decline**² in drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) case notifications in 2020, compared to 2019. There was an additional 8 percent drop³ in TB notifications in March 2021, compared to January 2021, as the country entered a severe wave of renewed COVID-19 infections. To address these concerning declines, USAID developed this TB Recovery Plan⁴ in support of the National TB Elimination Program’s (NTEP) larger efforts to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19 on the country’s TB response. Table 1 below provides detail on the interventions that USAID will support to address TB setbacks and further make progress towards the United Nations High-Level Meeting on TB (UNHLM) targets. USAID is dedicating more than **\$20,000,000** in assistance towards the recovery plan activities described below.⁵ This is expected to restore 2021 TB and DR-TB case notifications back to 2019 levels.⁶ These activities were planned in coordination with and are complementary to the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria’s recovery efforts.

Table 1: Snapshot of USAID-supported TB activities to mitigate the impacts of COVID-19.

TB activities most affected by COVID-19	USAID-supported Key Interventions
Interruptions in the TB diagnostic algorithm	Develop and implement an operational framework for continuing essential TB services during the COVID-19 pandemic.
Reductions and delays in TB case finding in both the public and private sector	Pilot, scale up, and intensify models of active case finding (ACF) in the public and private sector, particularly for vulnerable and marginalized populations.
Sample collection and transportation services and other lab resources redirected to COVID-19	Strengthen strategic lab institutions and support the development of an inclusive and innovative system to enhance efficiencies of TB and DR-TB diagnostic care cascade and build systems that simultaneously test for TB and COVID-19.

¹ Based on data collected by the National TB Program.

² Based on data collected by the World Health Organization and National TB Program.

³ Based on data collected by the World Health Organization.

⁴ This TB Recovery Plan is implemented over a nine-month period from March to December 2021.

⁵ No additional funding was provided to USAID for implementation of this TB Recovery Plan. While there are other interventions that also require attention and resources, USAID prioritized support for key interventions that could produce the greatest impact on recovery efforts within existing, limited budget levels.

⁶ Given the uncertain trajectory of the COVID-19 epidemic, these plans are made with the assumption that the COVID-19 containment measures are successful in 2021.

TB activities most affected by COVID-19	USAID-supported Key Interventions
Disruptions in TB treatment services	Strengthen TB institutions to improve the programmatic and clinical management of TB, DR-TB, pediatric TB, extra-pulmonary TB (EPTB), TB Infection (TBI), and TB preventive therapy (TPT) by providing technical expertise as necessary during the COVID-19 pandemic.
	Improve the cascade of TB care and support services among tribal populations disproportionately affected by COVID-19 by undertaking vulnerability mapping, ACF drives, etc.
Limited provision of patient support services (including direct benefit transfer [DBT])	Scale up innovations and technologies that provide patient support to address treatment disruptions and improve treatment adherence and outcomes.
	Improve data standards and data sharing policy for the national TB information system to further improve evidence-based decision making, and also implement predictive analytics to more swiftly identify and intervene in patients with difficulty adhering to treatment.
	Scale up TB online drug delivery system by increasing e-pharmacy services to offer doorstep delivery of drugs and ensure treatment adherence.
Decrease implementation of TB demand generation activities	Increase demand for TB services by supporting the TB Harega Desh Jeetega (TB will lose and the country will win) Campaign to advocate at all levels especially bringing attention to the decrease in TB case notifications due to the COVID-19 pandemic; this will include advocacy with elected representatives at local levels and create advocates for rights-based TB care, anti-stigma campaign for TB.
Disruptions in management of TB program and support services	Establish a technical support unit to provide technical and managerial support, as well as facilitate advocacy for policy and guideline decisions, to NTEP for priority areas.
	Expanding the reach of the health system by employing community based referral service to further improve TB case finding.
	Enable a TB-free India by 2025 by supporting a variety of interventions that address the needs of TB patients, align with NTEP priorities, build off USAID's priorities and competitive advantage, and are a value added to the recovery plan across all areas of TB prevention, diagnosis, care, and management

TB activities most affected by COVID-19	USAID-supported Key Interventions
Delays in rolling out the TBI program	Provide support to the NTEP in rolling out of the TBI program by initiating TBI related activities and enabling sub-national certification for TB-free districts.