

PHILIPPINES 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 the Philippines, there was a **37 percent decline**¹ in TB case notifications in 2020, compared to 2019. To address this concerning decline, USAID, has developed this TB Recovery Plan² in support of the National TB Program’s (NTP) 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 **\$10,000,000** in assistance towards the recovery plan activities described below.³ This is expected to contribute to an estimated 15 percent increase in TB case notifications and an estimated 32 percent increase in DR-TB case notifications in 2021, compared to 2019.⁴ 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
Decrease in access to healthcare due to restriction in movement, fear of COVID-19, and limited transportation	Scale up of social and behavior change communication (SBCC) campaigns to combat fear and stigma in communities and increase access for those with TB symptoms.
	Provision of technical assistance (TA) to improve laboratory network and sputum transport system including the specimen referrals in both private and public health facilities.
Drastic decrease in community-based and other types of active case-finding (ACF) activities	Scale up ACF including community-based and outreach activities by increasing access to free Chest X-ray (CXR) and introducing a one-stop shop model for mobile CXR and GeneXpert testing.
	Expand ACF activities through implementation of the FAST (Finding cases Actively, Separating safely, Treating effectively) Plus Strategy to ensure early TB detection and treatment initiation with appropriate infection control measures in place.

¹ Based on data collected by the World Health Organization.

² This TB Recovery Plan is implemented over a nine-month period from March to December 2021.

³ 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.

⁴ 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
Lack of funding due to inefficient use of current resources and low political will to allocate sufficient local government resources for TB	Scale up advocacy activities targeting Local Chief Executives (LCEs) and legislators to maintain and increase domestic resources and attention for lifesaving TB services.
Shortage of TB-related commodities	Expand the TB diagnostic consortium to include private sector providers to increase access and use of private sector GeneXpert instruments to alleviate the existing burden on public sector machines.
	Procure TB-related commodities and equipment including GeneXpert cartridges.
Limited human resource (HR) capacity for TB screening and testing	Increase HR capacity by supporting the deployment of nurses, midwives, and other community workers for TB case finding and service delivery provision.