

# SUPPORTING, MOBILIZING, AND ACCELERATING RESEARCH FOR TUBERCULOSIS ELIMINATION



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Supporting, Mobilizing, and  
Accelerating Research for  
Tuberculosis Elimination



## Overview

In August 2022, USAID launched the Supporting, Mobilizing, and Accelerating Research for Tuberculosis Elimination (SMART4TB) Consortium. SMART4TB, a five-year cooperative agreement, will invest up to \$200 million to identify more effective methods and tools for finding, treating, and preventing tuberculosis (TB) with an emphasis on locally driven research and capacity building in USAID priority countries. Ultimately, the goal of this effort is to see a decline in TB incidence and mortality and to help prepare priority countries for managing the disease.

Progress towards achieving the End TB targets will require research to fill critical knowledge gaps and to develop and evaluate new tools, approaches, and technologies for detecting, treating, and preventing tuberculosis. SMART4TB will strengthen research capacity in high TB burden countries and support studies that evaluate novel approaches, interventions, and tools to combat TB, including diagnostic tests, new regimens for treatment and prevention, socioeconomic and health system interventions, methods to interrupt TB transmission, and TB vaccine readiness and delivery. The Consortium has five primary partners organized around seven technical areas (TAs) to address the key objectives identified by USAID as having the potential to transform global TB prevention and care and accelerate progress towards the End TB targets.

## Mission

SMART4TB will design and implement research studies with local partners to identify effective person-centered methods for finding, treating, and preventing TB; strengthen local capacity to conduct high-quality research; and engage communities to build demand for new interventions, drive policy change, and improve implementation of new and existing interventions to reach the End TB targets.

## Partners

The SMART4TB Consortium consists of Johns Hopkins University (JHU) and its partners the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF), KNCV Tuberculosis Foundation (KNCV), the Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation (EGPAF), the Treatment Action Group (TAG), and regional collaboratives strategically based at research institutions in high-burden countries. SMART4TB brings together researchers in TB tools development, implementation science, capacity strengthening, civil society engagement, and policy guidance.

## Regional Collaboratives

SMART4TB will work with USAID priority country partners, utilizing five strategically located collaborative platforms hosted by local organizations with strong connections to partners and regional TB prevention and care programs. SMART4TB will engage with countries, in partnership with regional collaboratives, through a consultative process with USAID missions, national TB programs, and other stakeholders involved in End TB activities. SMART4TB has proposed this structure to ensure that the consortium has an efficient and cost-effective way to facilitate dialogue with partners, provide pathways for country-level and regional needs to be discussed in a supportive forum, and enable a consistent, open mechanism for all countries to share knowledge and best practices.

## Research Agenda Development

Through an iterative process of concept development with partners and community, and feedback from USAID, SMART4TB has specific diagnostic, therapeutic, and vaccine preparedness studies planned, and a process for empowering local investigators to conceptualize and plan their own research projects, facilitated by the capacity strengthening team. The proposed studies will have global relevance but will be customized to address specific needs of collaborating regional and national partners. Studies will be designed and implemented in a participatory manner, and all will be co-led by local partners (national TB programs, knowledge institutions, non-governmental organizations). Engagement with national partners will include a webinar to introduce a country-level survey, data collection on how to engage with SMART4TB, and regional launch meetings that will help to further define the research agenda. Reprioritization of the research questions will occur annually following stakeholder consultation and needs assessments.

## Technical Areas (TAs)

We have constructed a coordinated and integrated approach to developing the activities of seven TAs, ensuring a holistic plan, while recognizing the interconnected nature of the work. Five TA teams address important research needs in Diagnostics (TA1), Therapeutics (TA2), Operational Research (TA3), Reducing Transmission (TA4), and Vaccine Preparedness and Uptake (TA5). Additionally, we will focus on Capacity Strengthening (TA6) and Policy and Community Engagement (TA7) to ensure lasting impact.