

SUPPORTING, MOBILIZING, AND ACCELERATING RESEARCH FOR TUBERCULOSIS ELIMINATION



USAID
FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Supporting, Mobilizing, and
Accelerating Research for
Tuberculosis Elimination



SMART4TB

The Supporting, Mobilizing, and Accelerating Research for Tuberculosis Elimination (SMART4TB) Consortium brings together experts in TB tools development, implementation science, capacity strengthening, civil society engagement, and policy guidance, with a plan to collaborate to transform TB control in the next five years. SMART4TB's strategy involves targeted research in collaboration with local partners in priority countries, strengthening capacity for conducting future research by country partners, and ensuring that the knowledge derived from research studies is translated into policy and practice at the global, national, and local level. The consortium, led by Johns Hopkins University (JHU), includes 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.

Technical Area 6: Capacity Strengthening

Creating the opportunity for high-burden countries to locally support, design, and conduct TB research aligned with national priorities, community needs, and that effectively informs policy and practices will require multi-component and stage research capacity building. The goal is to conduct local needs assessments of research capacity and priorities to inform development and implementation of SMART4TB research protocols, and to develop Capacity Strengthening Plans to provide training and technical support to local partner institutions that will implement the SMART4TB research protocols.

Achieving SMART4TB's goals and ensuring sustained capacity strengthening will require engagement of USAID missions, national TB programs, and other stakeholders; identifying and leveraging existing capacity; incorporating national research agendas; and utilizing efficient, coordinated means of providing resources. The SMART4TB capacity strengthening team will work with consortium partners to assess country priorities and initiate an Early Stage Investigator (ESI) program.

Capacity Strengthening Objectives

- Develop and administer virtual survey focusing on both the kinds of activities that stakeholders would like and the methods for achieving them, including regional workshops and trainings; and
- Develop an ESI program that will facilitate local capacity strengthening for the next generation of TB research investigators.

Capacity Strengthening Activities

Assessing Country Priorities: Before proceeding with country level capacity assessments, SMART4TB will host webinars based on time zones and conduct a survey for 24 USAID priority countries. Participants of the webinars will include USAID missions, national TB programs, local research institutes, and other partners. Country surveys will solicit feedback on established research priorities (diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccine preparedness) and seek further input on operational research priorities and preferred engagement mechanisms.



Early Stage Investigator Program: SMART4TB will establish an ESI Mentorship Program in Year 1. Eligible ESI applicants will be matched to an identified local senior research mentor who is part of the technical area research team and who is also willing to support the ESI throughout the program and willing to work with a co-mentor from the protocol team. Consortium leadership will monitor the ESI's progress throughout the program and assess the quality of the mentorship provided to the ESI. Each ESI will develop a proposed substudy or secondary analysis from the protocol for which they will serve as lead investigator. In subsequent years we will work with operational research leads to identify and recruit ESIs to develop independent research projects to be implemented with mentorship from SMART4TB and local mentors.