



VIETNAM TUBERCULOSIS ROADMAP OVERVIEW, FISCAL YEAR 2024

This is an overview of the USAID/Vietnam FY 2024 Tuberculosis (TB) Roadmap, implemented with the FY 2023 budget. The roadmap was developed in consultation with the National TB Control Program (NTP) and with the participation of national and international partners involved in TB prevention and care in the country.

Vietnam has been designated by the World Health Organization (WHO) as a country with a high burden of TB and multidrug-resistant/rifampicin-resistant TB (MDR/RR-TB). In 2022, the estimated TB incidence was 172,000, equivalent to an incidence rate of 176 per 100,000 population. In 2022, the country notified 102,479 cases, a 60 percent case notification rate. Of the estimated 9,200 incident MDR/RR-TB cases (4.5 percent of new cases and 15 percent of previously treated cases), only 3,577, or 39 percent, were notified, resulting in a large gap between the number estimated and those diagnosed and reported.

The Ministry of Health (MoH) has approved the National Strategic Plan (NSP) 2021-2025, designed to end TB in Vietnam by 2030. This NSP proposes a model of care with essential interventions that build on the successes of NSP 2016-2020 and is aligned with the National Action Plan to End TB by 2030.

NSP 2021-2025 Goals

- Find and treat all TB cases to decrease transmission.
- Find and treat those who are infected with TB to prevent progression to active disease.

Three Pillars of the NSP 2012-2025

Pillar 1. Person-Centered Care:

- A. People not accessing the health system: Improve access by raising awareness, removing barriers to seeking care, and improving outreach to close the gap in pre-care settings.
- B. People accessing services but not diagnosed or not reported: Improve and expand the quality of services in facilities to serve people seeking care.
- C. People diagnosed but who fail or do not complete treatment: Improve linkages between community and facility care and provide comprehensive support to ensure treatment completion.

Pillar 2. Bold Policies, Expanded Partnerships, and Strengthening Systems:

Support health insurance and social protection to decrease catastrophic costs and strengthen partnerships with communities to address barriers to accessing TB services.

Pillar 3. Innovations and Research:



Introduce innovations through all pillars of the NSP, namely through innovations in thinking, technology, approaches, and investments.

The proposed FY 2023 USAID TB budget for Vietnam is \$10 million. With this level of funding, USAID will support the following technical areas:

REACH

TB diagnosis

To better understand the NTP's vision on the TB laboratory development and specific aspects of the TB laboratory system where USAID TB interventions can have the most impact, USAID conducted a small-scale TB laboratory network assessment in selected USAID-priority provinces and districts in 2022. Based on findings from these assessments, USAID/Vietnam has supported the NTP in improving diagnostic networks to ensure decentralized quality molecular diagnostics as a first-line test at the district level. USAID will support the following technical areas in 2024:

- Helping the NTP decentralize and improve the diagnosis of DS and DR-TB, including the scale-up of X-ray and GeneXpert/Truenat implementation.
- Supporting the NTP on GeneXpert and Truenat distribution, quantification, maintenance, costing, sample referral, monitoring, and evaluation.
- Focusing efforts on technical assistance, which will include training and coaching to improve NTP diagnostic network capacity with a focus on TB diagnostics connectivity and laboratory information systems, application of artificial intelligence (AI) to radiology services, specimen referral monitoring, diagnostic data management, and feedback to minimize primary loss to follow-up(LSTFU), continuous laboratory quality management, as well as biosafety and infection control.
- Supporting the NTP to apply new phenotypic and genotypic drug susceptibility testing (DST) for essential second-line TB drugs recommended by WHO to optimize DR-TB treatment regimens and outcomes, as well as other newly endorsed diagnostic tools to generate evidence and lessons learned to prepare for a national scaling up.

Engaging all care providers

In 2022, the private health sector notified 4,307 individuals with TB, the highest number of annual notifications ever from the private health sector under NTEP, contributing 17.2 percent of notifications. There is an increasing trend in TB notifications from the private sector.

USAID/Vietnam will continue implementing facility-based intensified case finding (ICF) and integrating TB contact investigation into existing services provided at TB facilities. USAID will expand utilization of computerized aided diagnostic (CAD) AI in 2024 for household contacts and people at high risk of TB, including individuals presenting with respiratory symptoms,



individuals with diabetes, inpatients with respiratory diseases, smokers, people with alcohol use disorder, and especially pediatric patients, to improve early detection and treatment of DS and DR-TB.

USAID has implemented ICF among children at all healthcare facilities providing pediatric clinical care to address gaps in pediatric TB care, utilizing stool-based GeneXpert testing and clinical consultation. USAID will continue this work in 2024 to generate experience and lessons learned for further scaling up TB detection in children nationwide. USAID will also improve collaboration between NTP and non-NTP providers to improve service quality and facilitate social health insurance (SHI) TB service provision at private clinics and hospitals. Private providers will also implement contact investigations for household contacts of individuals with TB who access detection and treatment services at private facilities. USAID will develop and implement a capacity-building plan for private facilities, focusing on TB clinical and management practices. USAID will also work with the NTP and MoH to integrate TB clinical management into continuing education training requirements.

Community TB care delivery

With FY 2023 funds, USAID/Vietnam plans to expand ACF implementation involving healthcare networks at sub-provincial levels, private providers, and community-based organizations. Efforts will focus on strengthening community systems to provide high-quality ACF implementation and establish a clear referral network to increase efficiency and reduce health facility visits. Priority will be given to meeting clients and families at their homes, building trust in the ACF process, and implementing a robust system to track contacts. USAID will collaborate with the NTP to expand the single X and QR code self-screening model to high-burden provinces to enhance community case finding efforts. A qualitative study on gender and stigma barriers was conducted, and gender-based analyses will be integrated into planning and implementation to address potential inequities in care-seeking behaviors and health service accessibility. Collaboration with local governments and organizations will continue in 2024 to implement advocacy, communication, and education activities aimed at delivering accurate knowledge about TB and promoting early detection and treatment adherence.

Both online and offline educational materials, including client stories, will be utilized for TB education.

CURE

Drug-susceptible TB (DS-TB) treatment

Although Vietnam has maintained a relatively high DS-TB treatment success rate for the last several years, there are still many challenges to achieving its treatment success targets. USAID has supported the NTP in updating national DS and DR-TB detection and management guidelines to increase treatment quality and success rates for both DS and DR-TB,



incorporating new WHO recommendations to ensure standard TB detection and management quality.

With FY 2023 funds, USAID will support in the following areas:

- Supporting the NTP in applying treatment support standard operating procedures (SOPs) in other provinces and expanding successful treatment support approaches.
- Assisting the NTP in improving its training and supervision plan and developing continuation training policies, materials, and approaches that will be applied to its broader network, including private service providers.
- Building the capacity of TB network staff on data monitoring and analysis so that TB treatment quality of care issues can be identified and addressed rapidly.
- Monitoring the SHI TB service delivery to address possible issues and advocate for free TB treatment for all individuals.
- Initiating TB community case management models that promote treatment completion and provide direct support to TB-affected clients and their families, including patient education about the disease and case management support resources available.

Multidrug-resistant TB (MDR-TB) treatment

USAID has supported the NTP in updating the national DS and DR-TB detection and management guidelines, incorporating new WHO recommendations to ensure standard TB detection and management quality. To help the NTP optimize the management of adverse events, USAID will continue to strengthen monitoring and reporting for active drug safety monitoring (aDSM). Training and coaching on the detection and evaluation of clinical signs and symptoms, as well as the management of adverse events, will also be provided to DR-TB network staff, especially those at the commune and district levels. USAID will evaluate current treatment support packages for individuals with DR-TB and develop standardized DR-TB treatment support guidance to increase treatment retention nationwide.

Since 2021, USAID/Vietnam has supported the NTP in developing a new Vietnam TB Information Management Electronic system (VITIMES) to assist with electronic patient data management and reporting. The new VITIMES system will include managing individuals with DR-TB, contact investigation, and TB infection (TBI) treatment monitoring components. To improve data quality and data use at each level of the NTP network, USAID will use FY 2023 funds to support the NTP in applying the new VITIMES system and developing connectivity solutions to ensure data sharing and connection between Hospital information systems, Vietnam Social Security (VSS) health insurance data system, and the new VITIMES, to improve data quality and data use at each level of the NTP network.



PREVENT

Prevention

With FY 2023 funds, USAID will support NTP in developing a plan to strengthen TB contact investigations (TBCI) implementation. USAID will also continue to improve and expand community and facility TBCI among children and adults in priority provinces. TBCI will also be initiated in private and non-NTP health facilities. In coordination with the NTP, USAID will demonstrate integrated TBCI into routine TB services and adjust the program to optimize results. Results, best practices, and lessons learned will be used to update national guidance on TBCI and TBI treatment and to scale up best practices to reach a more comprehensive network of clients. With FY 2023 funds, USAID/Vietnam will support the NTP in collecting national TBCI and TBI data in 2024. USAID will also continue to provide on-site infection control technical support to new DR-TB service facilities in USAID priority provinces in alignment with its support for decentralizing of DR-TB services.

INNOVATE

Research

USAID completed a private-sector TB service quality assessment in 2022. It also implemented a qualitative study to identify barriers to optimal care related to gender and stigma, which will be completed in May 2023. To study the processes and outcomes related to the transition of TB services to SHI, including financial and budget aspects, USAID will use FY 2023 funds for three assessments:

- Assessing the transition of the TB program to SHI. This implementation assessment aims to capture the quality of SHI TB services, identify possible challenges, limitations, and opportunities during the SHI transition process, and provide recommendations to improve SHI TB service provision.
- Assessing the willingness to pay and out-of-pocket expenditure for TB treatment and care.
- Analyzing cost-effectiveness and budget impact, including several new anti-TB drugs in the SHI drug list. USAID will also conduct operational research on C-TB and other new TBI detection tools to replace the current, less reliable, TBI detection methods.

Scale up of New Tools

With FY 2023 funds, USAID will continue supporting the NTP in scaling up the utilization of Ultra-portable X-rays in community TB screening and will also continue evaluating CAD AI implementation in both facility and community-based settings. USAID/Vietnam will work with the NTP and GF to scale up molecular testing, including GeneXpert and Truenat, as the first TB diagnostic test, aligning with WHO recommendations. Further costing exercises for GeneXpert, Truenat, and AI options will be conducted to provide data to advocate for,



including those new tools in SHI. USAID/Vietnam will also introduce newly recommended LTBI detection tools, including C-TB and QIAreach.

SUSTAIN

Commitment and Sustainability

With FY 2023 funding, USAID/Vietnam will continue to monitor and evaluate the transition of TB services to SHI. Supportive supervision will be conducted in selected provinces to ensure a smooth reimbursement from SHI, uninterrupted drug and commodity distribution, and maintained SHI service quality. Efforts will be made to ensure efficient data exchange between SHI's Electronic Logistic Management Information System (eLMIS) and the NTP's VITIMES. Furthermore, USAID/Vietnam will support the NTP to advocate for more public funding from provincial governments for the provision of TB services that are currently not covered by SHI, including TBCI, treatment support, and prevention.

Capacity and functioning systems

Since July 2022, DS-TB services have been under the SHI. The National TB program is responsible for quantification and procurement at the central level. Commodity distribution is provided directly by the local suppliers to health facilities. USAID has provided TA to the NTP to facilitate the smooth transition from subsidized services under the National targeted program support to SHI. USAID will maintain the supply chain advisor at the central NTP to assist in central procurement and SHI reimbursement.

Monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and Health Management Information Systems (HMIS) [and implementation of the Performance-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PBMEF)]

USAID will assist the NTP in rolling out the new VITIMES, ensuring operational data is transferred fully to the new system and new indicator data is collected appropriately. It will continue providing TA and training related to data for decision-making to TB network staff. All USAID-managed mechanisms will align their Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning Plans with the PBMEF indicators.

To assist the transition of TB services to social health insurance (SHI), USAID/Vietnam liaised with the NTP and Vietnam Social Security (VSS), facilitating information sharing and collaboration to ensure interoperability between the SHI's eLMIS and the VITIMES, creating a seamless interface at each level and in each facility. In 2024, USAID will continue supporting the connectivity and interoperability of the two systems.

Human Resources for Health (HRH)

USAID provided training and support to TB staff, while also implementing Continuous Quality Improvement in high-burden provinces. They will continue to provide targeted assistance to improve NTP network services and advocate for greater political commitment and funding. Due to the impact of COVID-19, USAID/Vietnam will prioritize improving airborne disease



screening and diagnostic capacity, as well as integrating TB services into general healthcare and engaging community individuals and groups in identifying and referring at-risk individuals.