

TB Situation Room

The Global Fund COVID -19 response mechanism Suggested list of interventions for TB and COVID response

The Global Fund has set up a new response mechanism to support countries to respond to COVID-19 and mitigate the impact on programs to fight HIV, TB, malaria and systems for health. The COVID-19 Response Mechanism will provide US\$500 million and comes in addition to up to US\$500 million in grant flexibilities previously announced by the Global Fund.

Ref: <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/funding-model/updates/2020-04-17-covid-19-response-mechanism-update-for-implementing-countries/>

The TB Situation Room discussed this funding opportunity and proposed the following list of suggestive interventions for countries to consider.

1. Infection Prevention and Control:

- PPE for staff in all facilities testing patients for presumptive TB and/or COVID-19.
- Respirators, masks, goggles, gloves, etc. for Covid as well as for use in TB
- Training and capacity building on infection control and lab biosafety
- Support development/updating of health facility infection control plans to cover the needs of Covid as well as TB.
- Upper-room germicidal ultraviolet (GUV) systems
- Ventilation systems (including natural, mixed-mode, mechanical ventilation and recirculated air through high-efficiency particulate air [HEPA] filters)
- Improving triaging, respiratory hygiene, patient and clinic flow modifications to ensure infection control

2. Diagnostics support:

- Support country-choice of Covid testing platforms. Certain Covid testing platforms offer opportunities for multiplexing with TB tests using GF funds. The following Covid and TB tests have: WHO approval ([WHO Emergency Use Listing](#) for Covid tests, WHO Global TB Programme recommendations for TB tests, approval of the GF Expert Review Panel for Diagnostics (TB tests), and/or emergency use authorization (EUA) by a stringent national regulatory authority (Covid tests):

Testing platform (manufacturer)	Covid test approval by WHO (EUL)	Covid test EUA by stringent regulatory authority	TB test approval by WHO (GTB)	TB test approval by GF Expert Review Panel for Diagnostics
GeneXpert (Cepheid)	Pending review	Yes (US FDA)	Yes	N/A
Truelab (Molbio)	No	No (India authorization)	Yes	N/A
m2000 (Abbott)	Yes	Yes (US FDA)	More data needed for potential recommendation	Yes
BD MAX (BD)	No	Yes (US FDA)	More data needed for potential recommendation	Yes

- For countries already using GeneXpert (Xpert tests) or Truelab (Truenat tests) machines, additional machines and consumables should be procured to cater for TB testing when Covid testing is planned or taking place using these platforms. (Xpert machines bought should be the new 10-color optics instrument as these will allow tests for resistance to isoniazid and fluoroquinolones as well as the current tests for TB and Rif resistance)
- Invest in the mechanisms to decentralize access to TB (and COVID) testing to support finding the missing people with TB.
- Appropriate specimen transport packaging and more frequent transportation for both COVID and TB specimens
- Invest in digital x-ray platforms as part of general health systems strengthening, and computer aided detection software and/or remote reading capabilities while evidence on computer-aided detection for TB continues to be gathered
- Consider additional human resource needs for testing during the COVID-19 crisis, including additional staff and/or longer shifts.

3. Medication:

- Sufficient and regular supply of TB and ancillary medications for treatment of DS-TB, DR-TB and TPT for patients at all ages
- Supporting procurement and supply management for countries' transition to newly recommended all-oral shorter and longer MDR-TB regimens.
For details: [Rapid communication: Key changes to the treatment of drug-resistant tuberculosis](#)

4. Virtual care and Digital Technologies:

- Establish real-time digital data and monitoring system for TB, DR-TB, contact tracing and preventive therapy. Use the Covid experience of real-time data and daily counts for TB.
- Invest in software and mobile apps:
 - i. Apps for data capture from mobile phones for case management, contact investigation and TB preventive treatment (TPT)
 - ii. Software and apps for dashboarding for indicators of performance.
 - iii. eLearning tools for health care workers and community workers.
 - iv. Lab data management, stock management/ quantification & logistics.
 - v. Apps for community networking and feedback.
- Invest in systems for virtual care (tele-medicine), virtual meetings and trainings.
- Invest on digital medication adherence support.

5. Invest to improve community health systems for TB

- Community support for people on treatment

6. Contact Investigation:

- COVID as well as active TB case finding amongst contacts and TPT

7. Immediate post lockdown catch-up

- Activities to re-establish diagnostic facilities, including review of HR situation, additional hiring if required etc- expect some health worker shortage during continued Covid pandemic.

- Active TB case finding and treatment to diagnose and treat TB that was not detected during the lockdown period.