

Bangladesh Country Program



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Launched in 2020, USAID's Health Systems for Tuberculosis (HS4TB) project supports high TB burden countries with financing and governance strategies, tools, and approaches to achieve TB elimination goals. Funded by USAID and implemented by Management Sciences for Health (MSH), HS4TB is currently working in Bangladesh, Ethiopia, India, and Kenya, where it supports policy reforms for increased and improved domestic contracting of TB services, greater domestic financing, and more efficient use of resources, while building in-country financial and managerial skills and leadership. In Bangladesh, this work started in 2020.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT/RATIONALE

Bangladesh has made significant progress in improving its TB program by successfully leveraging the complementary strengths of the Government of Bangladesh and non-governmental and civil society organizations (NGOs/CSOs). Twenty-six NGOs are working across the country to support the national response in TB case detection, diagnosis, and treatment. However, that non-governmental part of the national TB response has been solely funded by external development partners, including the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria (GFATM), whose support will decrease as Bangladesh's economy grows.

The Government of Bangladesh remains the overall steward of the national TB response but does not have a mechanism to contract health services, including TB services, to NGOs through the public procurement system. This puts the government in a less powerful position to guide the response and leaves the TB program in a challenging situation as the country reduces its reliance on external financing.

PUBLIC PROCUREMENT OF TB SERVICES THROUGH CONTRACTING IN BANGLADESH

With technical support from the USAID HS4TB Project, the National TB Control Program (NTP) with the support of the Health Economics Unit (HEU) in the Ministry of Health and Family Welfare are leading an initiative to establish government-led contracting of select TB/health services to NGOs, CSOs and private entities. The NTP and HEU conducted an assessment of the legal and regulatory environment, political economy, and government capacity for contracting TB/health services in Bangladesh. The assessment revealed that the existing legal and regulatory framework provides only limited scope for the contracting of TB/health services to NGOs, CSOs, and other private entities. Further, government entities like the NTP and HEU have limited experience managing contracting of TB/health services through the public procurement system. The NTP and HEU have developed a roadmap outlining the pathway to establish government-led contracting of TB services over the next several years.

Subsequently, HS4TB and the government have outlined a 3-stage approach to regulatory reforms related to health services contracting, identified a possible package of activities for a contracting pilot (see below), and the associated cost, and started working on a capacity building curriculum.

EMERGING LESSONS AND NEXT STEPS

The NTP plans to launch a pilot in 2024 to test the government mechanisms for contracting TB services to NGOs/CSOs/private entities and to facilitate the NTP's capacity through a practical learning-by-doing approach. Specifically, the pilot aims to:

1. Test a novel approach for tendering TB services through the public procurement system;
2. Assess the NTP's capabilities to contract, steward, and oversee third-party TB services provision;
3. Gauge the interest, capacity and performance of NGOs/CSOs/Private entities to effectively compete and deliver on public procurement contracts;
4. Gain operational experiences and lessons to inform how the public procurement system can contract TB and other health services in the future.

With the learnings from the contracting pilot, the NTP will engage with the Ministry of Planning and the Central Procurement Technical Unit (CPTU) to revise the government procurement act, rules and policies to better enable contracting of selected TB and health services to NGOs/CSOs/private entities through the public procurement process. The NTP has also identified financing that would then allow for the scaling up of contracting for TB services using domestic financing.

To learn more about HS4TB,
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For questions related to HS4TB work in Bangladesh, please contact
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