

HEALTH SYSTEMS FOR TUBERCULOSIS (HS4TB) PROJECT

India Country Program



Photo Credit: MSH

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 India, this work started in 2022.

BACKGROUND CONTEXT/RATIONALE

The Government of India (GoI) and its National TB Elimination Programme (NTEP) have set ambitious targets to achieve TB elimination. As part of its TB response, the GoI is awarding contracts with a large variety of private sector actors to expand the reach of TB activities, provide surge support in new areas, and form innovative partnerships and service delivery models. This includes the government-led contracting of Private Provider Support Agencies (PPSAs), which are intermediaries who engage with private providers to facilitate quality TB care and prevention (a priority, since up to 80% of people infected with TB first contact the health system in the private sector).

The GoI is using results-based financing for these contracts, which requires special processes across the contracting cycle — defining scopes of work and performance metrics, costing, soliciting and evaluating responses, and verifying and processing invoices. These contract management and reimbursement processes are not yet fully developed, leading to severely delayed contract finalization, late payments, and cash flow issues. In turn, these challenges significantly hinder the providers' ability to operate effectively and deliver timely services.

HS4TB is supporting the GoI's Central TB Division (CTD) and governments in five states to strengthen TB contracting via structural processes that reduce the turnaround time for contracting and reimbursements. HS4TB is also scoping an innovative financing mechanism to increase the access of private TB organizations to affordable capital, and setting up partnership and innovation units in states to facilitate public-private dialogue that leads to improvements in contract management.

KEY INTERVENTIONS AND TAKEAWAYS

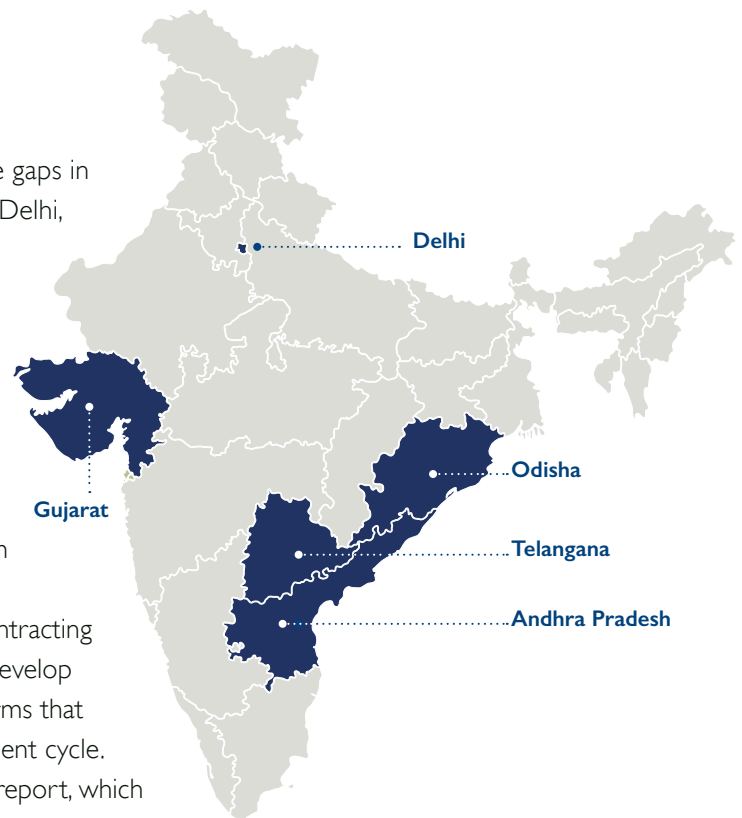
HS4TB conducted a needs assessment to determine gaps in TB service delivery in five states (Odisha, Telangana, Delhi, Andhra Pradesh, and Gujarat). Findings informed the selection of state-specific partnership options suitable for government-issued contracts, which would fill the identified TB program and system needs. These were in technical areas including diagnostics, care and treatment services, labs, and human resources.

To improve contract management, HS4TB drew from technical experts and local experience to document challenges and best practices at each stage of the contracting cycle. HS4TB also worked with state authorities to develop a number of practical tools, interventions, and platforms that can improve each sub-step of the contract management cycle. These challenges and solutions are summarized in a report, which is aligned with the NTEP's Guidance on Partnerships and the accompanying operational manual.

HS4TB also assessed post-contracting processes to understand the root causes for long delays in invoice payment. The turn-around time for payment can reach as high as 296 days, creating major impediments to the provision of TB services. Findings revealed that bottlenecks were due to delays in invoice submission, the verification/validation processes, and the release of funds after administrative approvals. HS4TB is working on the recommended solutions, which included upgrading MOUs to have clear standards and expectations, developing SOPs and tools to streamline the validation process and track payments, and providing skills-building for administrators. The use of Third Party Administrators to make the claims verification and validation process more efficient is also being explored.

As an additional approach to payment delays, HS4TB analyzed innovative financing options that would increase access to affordable capital for PPSAs and other private sector TB implementers. Promising mechanisms that met the assessment criteria for timeline, feasibility, and desired impact were shortlisted for further exploration and eventual implementation.

HS4TB is institutionalizing capacity building modules on contract management within the NTEP, and training stakeholders on the suite of tools and procedures that are now available to improve contract management and reduce the turn-around-time for TB contract payments. Finally, HS4TB is facilitating the Gol's formation of a partnership collaborative to improve public-private dialogue, share knowledge, facilitate skills-building, and identify further approaches to strengthen the contract management ecosystem.



To learn more about HS4TB, scan the code below:



For questions related to HS4TB work in India, please contact Neelam Makhijani (nmakhijani@msh-india.in), MSH India Country Director.

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