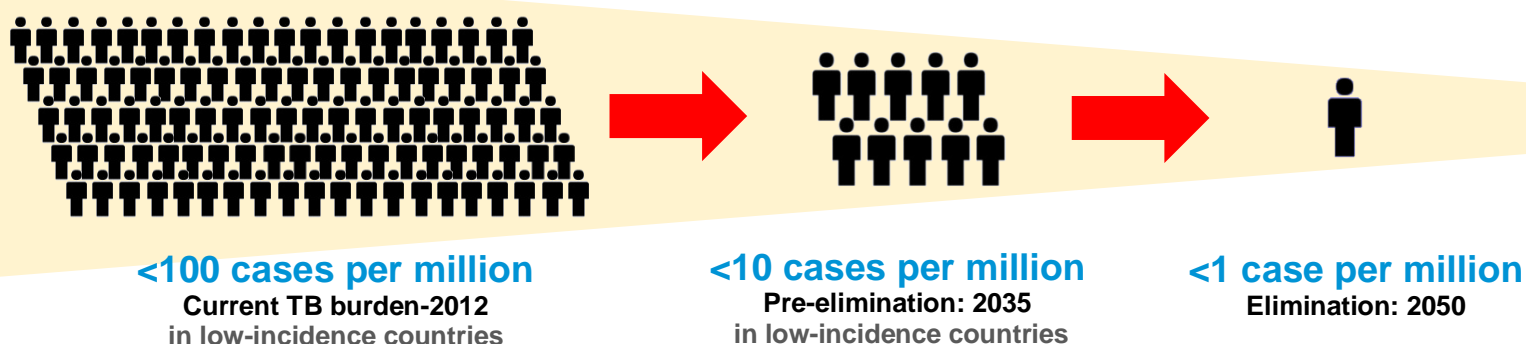


TOWARDS TB ELIMINATION IN LOW-INCIDENCE COUNTRIES **ACTION FRAMEWORK**

In May 2014, the World Health Assembly adopted the World Health Organization's (WHO's) post-2015 Global TB Strategy, which aims to reduce global TB incidence by 90% before 2035. Given the special challenges of TB in countries with low levels of the disease, WHO in collaboration with the European Respiratory Society (ERS), and with experts from low-incidence countries has developed an eight-point framework adapted from the post-2015 Global TB Strategy to target pre-elimination and, ultimately, elimination.



BACKGROUND

TB SITUATION IN LOW-INCIDENCE COUNTRIES

TB is a major **global public health problem** that predominantly affects low- and middle-income countries. However, although incidence is lower, it is also a **persistent health threat in high-income countries**, especially among the poorest and in the most vulnerable population.

In 2012, **155 000 people fell ill with TB** in low-incidence countries, and there were **10 000 deaths (30 TB deaths a day)**.

15 000 people with TB are still missed each year by health systems in these countries and therefore do not get the TB care that they need and deserve.

The TB situation in most low-incidence countries is characterised by: **low rate of transmission** in the general population; **outbreaks**; majority of people with TB fall ill because of progression of **latent TB infection***; high degree of concentration in **groups at risk**; and challenges posed by **cross-border migration**.

COUNTRIES WITH LOW TB INCIDENCE

Low-incidence countries are defined as those with a TB notification rate of ≤ 100 cases (all forms) per million population a year. There are 33 countries in this category today: Australia, Austria, Bahamas, Belgium, Canada, Costa Rica, Cuba, Cyprus, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Israel, Italy, Jamaica, Jordan, Luxembourg, Malta, Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, Puerto Rico, Slovakia, Slovenia, Sweden, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United States of America, West Bank and Gaza Strip.

** Latent TB infection: About one-third of the world's population has latent TB, which means people have been infected by TB bacteria but are not (yet) ill with disease and cannot transmit the disease.*

CHALLENGES FOR TB CARE AND PREVENTION IN LOW-INCIDENCE COUNTRIES

CONCENTRATION IN VULNERABLE GROUPS

In low-incidence countries, TB is more concentrated in certain vulnerable groups, such as the poor, the homeless, newly-arrived migrants, people living with HIV/AIDS, people who use substances including drugs and alcohol, prisoners, and also among elderly people or children.

These groups are at increased risk of exposure to infection with TB or have a risk of falling ill due to compromised immune systems.

Many of the affected vulnerable groups also have a higher risk of not having access to TB treatment and to poor treatment outcomes.

LOW TRANSMISSION

TB transmission is often very low in low-incidence countries. The majority of people with TB fall ill through re-activation of latent TB infection* (LTBI) acquired in the past.

CROSS-BORDER MIGRATION

In many low-incidence countries, TB incidence rates among the foreign born are several times higher than among the non-foreign born. Migrants may have an increased risk of having acquired TB in their country of origin, as well as high risks of falling ill due to socioeconomic vulnerability, which may be augmented by stressful conditions in moving or settling in new countries/settings.

DWINDLING POLITICAL COMMITMENT AND VISIBILITY

In these countries, due to low incidence of TB, political commitment for TB care and prevention has declined leading to decreased financing and diminishing visibility in clinical care as well as among the public and among policy makers.



LOW TB-INCIDENCE
COUNTRIES OR TERRITORIES

The **WHO Global TB Programme** together with WHO regional and country offices: develops policies, strategies and standards; supports the efforts of WHO Member States; measures progress towards TB targets and assesses national programme performance, financing and impact; promotes research; and facilitates partnerships, advocacy and communication. www.who.int/tb

The **European Respiratory Society**, ERS, is a professional medical organisation with members in over 100 countries across the globe representing medical and scientific experts in the field of respiratory medicine and lung science. <http://ersnet.org/>