TBTEAM Planning Meeting
15 October 2009, Centre International des Conférences Genève (CICG)

Background
With a high-quality, well organized network of technical partners, countries could more easily implement the Stop TB Strategy, move closer to the achievement of the 2015 Millennium Development Goals and make most effective use of Global Fund and other external resources. TBTEAM (the TB TEchnical Assistance Mechanism) is the function of technical assistance (TA) coordination within existing technical coordination bodies such as Interagency Coordinating Committees, TB Technical Working Groups, Stop TB Partnerships or other. TBTEAM facilitates access of all stakeholders that implement TB control activities (e.g. NTP, NGOs, CBOs, FBOs, patients groups, etc.) to a network of technical partners and well-coordinated TA.

Executive Summary
The aim of this meeting was to enhance access to and planning for quality technical assistance to implement TB control activities in countries.

There were three main topics with recommended action points:

Session 1: National TBTEAM scale-up, National TA plans and National TB plans

Discussion: How can N-TBTEAM be established? What are the tasks/functions of N-TBTEAM?

Outcome: Countries should decide what forum is the most appropriate for hosting National-TBTEAM; some possibilities include the NTP, the national Stop TB Partnership, ICC or CCM. When establishing National-TBTEAM, a multi-stakeholder approach (ie, inclusion of civil society) is needed.

Session 2: The new TBTEAM website, launched in June 2009, including Post-mission quality assessment

Discussion: Completeness and accuracy of regional and selected country TA plans; TA assessment strategy and expert roster.

Outcome: TBTEAM focal points should have a comprehensive understanding of their TORs and what is expected of each level of TBTEAM; this training will be provided by Central and Regional TBTEAM. Central level TBTEAM will also explore the possibility of making the website more interactive for users by sending automated reminders to focal points on key actions needing attention.

Seeing that the current post-technical assistance surveys are not capturing the best feedback on mission quality, a taskforce composed of TBTEAM partners will be established to develop a revised feedback strategy. It will be led by the Global TBTEAM Secretariat based on the ongoing work of KNCV.
Session 3: TA capacity-building

Discussion: Models and priorities for local capacity building.

Outcome: Ms Charlotte Colvin proposed to lead a small taskforce on how to build local capacity in supporting TB activities for medium and long-term support to NTPs.
Opening:

Dr Mario Raviglioni opened the meeting by providing some highlights of TBTEAM’s achievement since its last planning meeting in October 2008. He encouraged partners to work together in harmonizing their Technical Assistance approach.

Dr Pierre-Yves Norval from the TBTEAM Secretariat presented the global status of TBTEAM functions. The number of missions entered into the TBTEAM web tool by October 2009 was 1102, compared to 281 in 2007. TBTEAM partners are now 35 and there are 23 National-TBTEAM focal points identified.

Dr Norval announced that the new TBTEAM website was launch in mid-2009, and he went through some of the features of the site. There was also increased completeness and accuracy of mission data entered, and the post-mission assessment has begun, although there are challenges to this process.

Dr Norval went on to further outline other challenges faced by the TBTEAM Secretariat including: TA coordination not clearly undertaken at country and global level and are still “top down” in nature (i.e. coordination is occurring more at the global level than at national level). Mission data was also not entered regularly by focal points and was often incomplete.

Some of the next steps to be taken:

- TBTEAM-GLC-GLI-GDF-GF to agree on 1 stop shop TA mechanism at global level
- Expand N-TBTEAM body or functions and promote national empowerment for bottom-up approach on TA coordination
- Develop TA feedback strategy with core partner group and link with roster
- TBTEAM Secretariat to develop guidelines on coordination at country level and share with GLC-GLI-GDF
- Decentralize mission data entry at country level through National TBTEAM and at sub-regional level through AFRO Inter-country Support Teams (Ouagadougou, Libreville and Harare)

Part 1: National TBTEAM scale-up, National TA plans and National TB plans

Dr RUHIRWA Rudoviko from Rwanda presented his country’s experience with establishing a N-TBTEAM (National TB Coordination Committee). He mentioned the advantages of having such a TA coordination body, including involvement of all partners in the development of the Stop TB Plan with input from partners with various expertise; better use of technical resources in the country for implementation; and better coordination of partners to develop synergies and complimentary collaboration. A challenge identified was the lack of local TB experts for some components of TB control activities.

Yamil Silva Cabrera, Regional focal point for TBTEAM AMRO, presented on why N-TBTEAM was needed from AMRO’s experience. Dr Cabrera stressed that countries must know their TA needs; it is important for countries to understand what is not working well and what the
expected results are, including how to measure achievements and/or failures. In AMRO, 12 prioritized countries have committed to appoint a N-TBTEAM focal point.

The following points were raised during discussion:

- There needs to be more emphasis on strengthening community/civil society involvement in N-TBTEAM;

- The National Stop TB Partnership in each country could host N-TBTEAM, but it should be highlighted that the National Partnership goes beyond this aim. Other bodies, such as the NTP, ICC and CCM sub-group, could also host or include the N-TBTEAM functions in their scope of work.

- Technical assistance plans should be included in yearly operational plans.

- There needs to be a clear understanding of TBTEAM operating procedures and clear TORs for N-TBTEAM in order to avoid confusion.

- TA planning should take into consideration short, medium and long term TA support.

- TA planning should be linked to the Mid-term Stop TB Plan, and comprehensive of Global Fund proposal preparation and implementation.

- TBTEAM should participate in the establishment of writing committees for the Mid-term Stop TB Plan and Global Fund proposal preparation.

René L’Herminez from KNCV presented on scaling up National TA plans and involving partners in this exercise. Dr. L’Herminez stressed the importance of using the National Strategic Plan as the basis for identifying and coordinating TA needs. Further, N-TBTEAM needed to ensure that there was a fixed agenda point on the TB Inter-Agency Coordinating Committee (ICC).

The following points were raised during discussion:

- Technical assistance plans should be included in yearly operational plans.

- Ensuring multi-stakeholder participation is key.

- It is important to remember that the scope of N-TBTEAM should not just cover Global Fund issues.

Andrea Braza Godfrey, from the TBTEAM Secretariat, presented the update of PEPFAR funding for partners to support countries in implementing Global Fund TB grants. The TA linked to this funding includes ad hoc TA support, capacity building workshops and coordination of support. A noteworthy observation on TA missions is that most happen between July and September, which calls for more advanced planning by partners with countries.

PEPFAR funding has helped fill a funding gap for partners to respond to country TA requests. Further, thirty-five countries have been successful in Phase 1 and 2 grant signing. It is important that partners though, use the TBTEAM web tools to successfully coordinate their TA TBTEAM/PEPFAR activities.
The following points were raised during discussion:

- For subsequent years, partners recommended to start the planning process earlier in order to better integrate with overall partner technical assistance plans and to ensure that funding is transferred in a timely manner.

**Part II: New TBTEAM software and TA assessment**

Keri Lijinsky, from the TBTEAM Secretariat, presented the new TBTEAM website that merged the existing tools (i.e. Experts Roster, TA missions database, and post-mission quality assessment tool) into one site [http://www.stoptb.org/wg/tbteam/ta/](http://www.stoptb.org/wg/tbteam/ta/). Ms. Lijinsky provided an update on the current Call for Applications for the Experts Roster and explained the process for expert approval and expert assessment using the tool.

Ms Lijinsky introduced the topic of post-mission quality assessment by presenting some initial results from R9 proposal preparation missions. The response rate was low and the scores were unexpectedly high, which suggests that the survey tools need to be revised to better capture feedback on mission quality. A session in the afternoon would be dedicated to improving this.

**Regional TBTEAM debriefing on National TA plan**

After discussions in regional break-out teams on 2010 TA planning, the following observations were made:

- The TBTEAM website should send automated reminders to focal points when missions have passed and focal points should then update the mission status and confirm other information (e.g. dates and participating experts).
- There should be more training of TBTEAM focal points so that they clearly understand their TORs.
- It would be of great value if there could be funding available to facilitate the establishment of N-TBTEAM, including support and guidance from Central and Regional levels.

**Developing a quality standard for consultancy**

René L’Herminez presented KNCV’s experience and challenges with regards to developing/maintaining standards for quality consultancies. He stressed how feedback on consultancies should be built into an institutional M&E system to measure and reflect the effectiveness and relevance of TA relative to client and partner satisfaction.

Mariatou Tala Jallow, Manager, Procurement Support Services at Global Fund, led the discussion on how to move forward in developing a feedback strategy. The following points were noted:

- It was suggested that TBTEAM have template TORs for TA missions available on the TBTEAM website to guide NTPs in establishing clear expectations for TA.
- Feedback should be given to the consultant for professional development.
The subject of assessment should be better defined: the consultant or the product, or both.

"Feedback" is considered a more appropriate and positive term to use than "assessment" as many consultants are already associated with an organization and undergo assessment internally.

A taskforce will be established to further take this task forward. It will be lead by Global TBTEAM Secretariat based on the ongoing work of KNCV.

A consultant’s ‘Response Box’ should be built into the assessment form.

There should be instructions on who can fill out the feedback form somewhere on the website and/or on the form itself.

Feedback provided by beneficiaries should be nominal for the consultant and anonymous for the beneficiary.

Charlotte Colvin from PATH presented PATH's concept paper on capacity building and improving the quality of TA. It would be ideal to utilize institutions and models already existing (e.g. TBCAP's Centers of Excellence in Africa) in addition to expanding the initiative to new models and regions. Ms Colvin stressed the need to work with civil society and build their capacity in supporting TB activities for medium and long-term support to NTPs. There is also a need to involve regional academic centers so to increase the capacity in the regions. Young professionals should be supported through mentored missions and the identification of skills gaps needing training.

Ms Colvin proposed that a small group lead the discussion to take this further. Some other recommendations included:

- PEPFAR/TBTEAM funds can be used to mentor young professionals on-site during TA missions conducted by senior consultants.
- There is a need to identify target groups within regions for training.
- Ms Colvin will provide a scope of work for establishing mentored visits.

Closing remarks

Dr Norval provided the summary points from the day's meeting:

- N-TBTEAMs are moving in the right direction, but coordination is clearly needed. Focal points need to be identified as a first step and support must be provided in encouraging their functioning.
- Countries and partners need to be encouraged to make and update TA plans. These plans should be in the TBTEAM database.
- TORs for TA missions need to be developed.
Partners are called upon to form a taskforce to provide recommendations for a post-mission quality feedback strategy. This is fundamental to ensuring the empowerment of TA beneficiaries and to a high-quality Roster of Experts.

Dr Norval thanked everyone for their support and closed the meeting.

****

Presentations and the list of participants from this meeting can be downloaded from the following website: [http://www.who.int/tb/dots/tbteam/en/index.html](http://www.who.int/tb/dots/tbteam/en/index.html)
TBTEAM Planning Meeting
15 October 2009, Centre International des Conférences Genève (CICG)

DRAFT AGENDA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Thursday 15\textsuperscript{th} October</th>
<th>Facilitator(s)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>09:00 - 09:20 Welcome</td>
<td>Pierre-Yves Norval, TBTEAM Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Objectives, expected outcomes, agenda, National TBTEAM status</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Part I: National TBTEAM for TA and TB plans**
Examples of functioning National TBTEAM - Regional and Country perspective

| 9:20 - 9:40 Country experience with National TBTEAM (advantages and challenges) | Dr RUHIRWA Rudoviko, Rwanda |
| 9:40 - 10:00 Regional TBTEAM experience - Why is National TBTEAM needed? | Regional TBTEAM Yamil Silva Cabrera |
| 10:00 - 10:40 Discussion on National TBTEAM scaling up - steps towards TA plan and partner contribution | Chair: René L’Herminez, KNCV |
| 10:40 - 11:00 Coffee break | |
| 11:00 - 11:15 PEPFAR funding for partners to support countries in relieving bottlenecks to implementation of Global Fund grants | Andrea Braza Godfrey, TBTEAM Secretariat |

**Part II: New TBTEAM software and TA assessment**

| 11.15 - 11:40 New TBTEAM web site (missions, assessment, expert roster) and TA assessment status | Keri Lijinsky, TBTEAM Secretariat |
| 11:40-12H30 Group discussion on partners contribution to National TA Plan (3 sub group AFRO- EMRO, EURO-AMRO; SEARO-WPRO discussing selected country TA plans) | 3 regional TBTEAM focal points |
| 12.30 - 14.00 Lunch | |
| 14:00 – 14:30 Regional TBTEAM debriefing on National TA plan | 3 regional TBTEAM focal points |
| 14:30 – 14:45 Developing a quality standard for consultancy | KNCV |
| 14:45 – 15:30 Discussion on TA assessment and TB expert roster | Mariatou Tala Jallow Manager, Procurement Support Services |
| 15:30 - 16:00 Coffee break | |

**Part III: Capacity-building**

| 16:00 – 17.00 Presentation of concept note and discussion on capacity building and quality of TA | Charlotte Colvin, PATH |
| 17:00 – 17:15 Summary and next steps | Pierre-Yves Norval, TBTEAM Secretariat |