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Unitaid and Tuberculosis

Unitaid invests in new ways to prevent, diagnose and treat tuberculosis (TB) more quickly, more affordably and more effectively.

What is TB?

Tuberculosis (*Mycobacterium tuberculosis*) is a bacterial infection spread through tiny droplets in the air. When infected people cough, sneeze, spit, or even just speak, they can propel TB bacteria into the air and bystanders can be infected by inhaling only a few of the bacteria.

Without treatment, 45 percent of people with TB will die, as well as nearly all HIV-positive people with TB. In 2015, 1.8 million people died of TB, about one person every 18 seconds.

TB is curable. Unitaid projects aim to get the right medicines and diagnostics to patients.

New Unitaid grants

- **TB & HIV:** The Aurum Institute in South Africa leads a US\$ 58.8 million project to expand short-course preventive TB therapy for HIV-positive people and children under five years old. The project will operate in 12 countries in Africa, Asia and South America.
- **Reaching children:** Elizabeth Glaser Pediatric AIDS Foundation's CAP-TB project, funded by a US\$ 36.3 million grant, will work to improve the treatment services and market for paediatric TB medicines and incorporate TB control into HIV, maternal and child health services, among others. The project includes nine African countries and India.
- **More accurate tests:** University of Bordeaux will lead an effort to widen the availability of child-hood TB diagnosis using fast, state-of-the-art tests that can be performed even in small local clinics. Supported by a US\$14.6 million grant, the TB-SPEED project will operate in six African countries and Cambodia.
- **Collaboration with WHO:** A US\$ 7.4 million enabler grant will support the Global TB Programme as it works to improve the diagnosis and treatment of paediatric, latent and multidrug-resistant TB in high-burden countries, and to incorporate newly generated evidence into global practice.



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Earlier grants

- **Access to new drugs:** The endTB project has been widening the availability of bedaquiline and delamanid, new TB drugs, in an effort to reshape the market for multidrug-resistant TB treatment in 17 countries. Funded by a US\$ 60 million grant, the project is led by Partners in Health, Médecins Sans Frontières and Interactive Research & Development.
- **Formulations for children:** The US\$ 16.7 million STEP-TB project, with TB Alliance and WHO, led to the development of high-quality, affordable TB formulations for children.
- **Technology for diagnosis:** Unitaid invested US\$ 30 million to boost the use of GeneXpert®, a machine that can diagnose TB, including drug-resistant varieties, in two hours. Common practice has been to culture TB bacteria from a patient's sputum with TB drugs, which takes up to eight weeks and sometimes yields inaccurate results.

New core investment areas

- Widen access to short, high-quality treatments for multidrug-resistant TB. Current MDR-TB regimens are long, complicated, toxic and often ineffective.
- Help speed up the adoption of TB treatment for children using new paediatric medicines launched in 2015. TB is a leading cause of death in children, yet childhood TB is often treated with substandard medicines, if at all.
- Invest in helping vulnerable groups get access to shorter preventive TB treatment. Small children and people living with HIV are at high risk of developing active TB.

Our main partners

Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics, Global Drug Facility, The Global Fund, The Aurum Institute, Global Laboratory Initiative, Interactive Research & Development, Médecins Sans Frontières, Partners in Health, Stop TB Partnership, TB Alliance, World Health Organization, University of Bordeaux.