

**Strategic paper on the Stop TB Research Movement for the Coordinating Board meeting in Jakarta, 29-30 November 2006**

**Background**

*Scope of the Stop TB Research Movement*

The Coordinating Board meeting in Abuja (24-25 April 2006) called for the establishment of a Stop TB Research Movement. The aim is to promote the research needed to achieve the international targets for 2015 and the goal of global TB elimination by 2050. This involves promoting research in four main areas:

- 1) epidemiology and modelling;
- 2) maximizing the effectiveness of the currently available tools for TB control used in programme operations;
- 3) R&D for new tools (including "retooling" as the bridge between R&D and programme operations);
- 4) the basic research that underpins progress in R&D.

Basic research is a new area of activity for the Partnership not covered in the Global Plan, 2006-2015. The Partnership's potential roles regarding basic research may involve:

- 1) developing and promoting the case for a considerable boost in investment in basic research, as part of efforts to boost overall funding for research;
- 2) facilitating the contribution of those involved in basic research and in particular their interaction with those involved in R&D for new tools.

*Objectives*

The Research Movement's main objectives include the following:

- 1) to advocate for increased support for the full spectrum of TB research;
- 2) to facilitate the research activities of partners in ways that reflect the relative advantages of different partners.

An example of a research activity that may reflect the relative advantage of particular partners is research capacity-building at country level in countries badly affected by TB.

*Key principles concerning the roles of the Working Groups and Partnership Secretariat*

Two key principles underpinning the establishment of the Research Movement include:

- 1) the need for the roles of Partners and of the Secretariat to capitalize on their relative advantages, and
- 2) the need for Partners and the Partnership Secretariat to prioritize their activities to make best use of their resources available for this work.

## **Key issues for the Coordinating Board**

The four key issues for the Coordinating Board's consideration are the following:

**1) Resource mobilization:** advocating for increased support for TB research across the whole research spectrum.

a) Tracking current spending on R&D

In order to inform the argument for increased investment in TB R&D, Treatment Action Group has undertaken a comprehensive assessment of investments in TB R&D.<sup>1</sup> This assessment provides a valuable platform for developing a mechanism for systematic and regular tracking and reporting, with scope for improvements in the methodology, including the completeness of the range of financing sources surveyed.

The Coordinating Board's approval is sought for the Partnership Secretariat to conduct a tender to award a contract for the development of this resource tracking mechanism.

b) Identifying potential new sources of research financing

The Coordinating Board's advice is sought on the suggestion to conduct a fair share analysis, that could be included as part of the contract under 1) a).

c) Advocating for increased support for TB research

The Coordinating Board's advice is sought on how the Working Group on Advocacy, Communications and Social Mobilization can best use the information obtained from tracking R&D spending and from a fair share analysis in advocating for increased support for TB research.

**2) Resource utilization:** mapping the current TB research landscape

Knowledge of the ways in which resources are used to fund research is useful in determining the gaps in research activities.

The Coordinating Board's advice is sought on forming an ad hoc group to explore and map the current TB research landscape and to identify gaps.

**3) The Partnership's organizational approach to facilitating the research activities of partners.**

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<sup>1</sup> Feuer C. Tuberculosis R&D investments: a preliminary assessment. Treatment Action Group. New York: August 2006

Two possible organizational options for promoting the full range of research activities across the Partnership are: a) having a group of key research partners to pursue this issue, for example as a Working Group or task force, and b) having a mechanism to coordinate research mainstreaming throughout the Partnership as a cross-cutting issue. The ongoing review of the structure and function of the Partnership's Working Groups provides a timely opportunity for the Coordinating Board to consider these options.

The Coordinating Board's advice is sought on the organizational approach to promoting the full range of research activities across the Partnership. In particular, the Board's advice is sought on the organizational approach to facilitating the involvement of basic researchers in the Partnership and their interaction with the R&D Working Groups.

#### **4) Resource implications for the Partnership Secretariat**

Taking forward the proposed activities implies the effort of adequate staff, starting with the current full-time equivalent in the Partnership Secretariat. Interaction with the basic research community would be facilitated by the secondment of respected staff from this community to the Partnership Secretariat or identification of resources to hire appropriately. The contract to track research resources can be awarded using funds from the project grant "Building political and financial commitments to the Global Plan to Stop TB" awarded by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to the Stop TB Partnership Secretariat and WHO.