



Group photo GDF staff and manufacturers as the annual meeting in Bangkok 2018.

Stop TB Partnership's GDF Annual meeting of TB Medicines Manufacturers

GDF demonstrated its added value beyond procurement of tuberculosis (TB) medicines and diagnostics at its annual medicines manufacturers meeting in Bangkok, Thailand from 1-3 May 2018. The event was attended by generic and innovator manufacturers, freight forwarding and logistics companies, quality control agencies, IDA Foundation, Thai and Myanmar National TB Programs, WHO, the Global Fund, USAID and the USAID Promoting the Quality of Medicines Program.

GDF highlighted the dramatic reductions in lead times for second-line TB medicines Strategic Rotating Stockpile (SRS). Deliveries to countries were completed in less than 3 months with several emergency orders delivered in less than 1 month. Compared to standard 6-month lead times for orders, the SRS reduces the risk of stockouts and treatment interruptions, smoothens order cycles, and improves suppliers' visibility and production planning. In addition, Technical assistance, capacity building, and demand generation activities of GDF led to widespread, swift uptake of new fixed-dose, pediatric TB medicines providing 440,000 treatments to 74 countries as of April 2018.

GDF delivered an unprecedented amount of TB medicine and diagnostics to countries in 2017 - a feat that would not have been possible without manufacturers' commitment to supply quality-assured medicines, flexibility of IDA (GDF's contracted procurement agent), reliable performance from freight forwarders and other suppliers, and the support of WHO, Global Fund, and other key partners.

In 2017, 119 countries procured nearly USD 327 million worth of TB medicines and diagnostics from GDF – a 49% increase compared to 2016. This included procurement of USD 120 million in TB medicines and diagnostics for India alone. Despite the massive increase in 2017 procurement, the

quality of GDF's service was maintained, with on-time-in-full delivery of 85% and 76% for first- and second-line medicines, respectively. GDF's rigorous quality assurance processes at the manufacturer level, together with its quality monitoring programme, resulted in zero quality concerns or medicine recalls over 2017.

Presentations from WHO Prequalification Programme highlighted their ongoing work to promote access to TB medicines, including revision of procurement recommendations, development of a new Global Benchmarking Tool, and facilitation of country registration, including the collaborative registration pathway. The Global Fund described its Expert Review Panel (ERP) to expedite review of critical TB medicines and the role GDF plays in getting consensus among TB stakeholders to identify the most critical TB medicines to shepherd through the expedited ERP process. The WHO Global TB Programme described recent and upcoming treatment guideline changes and how these changes are expected to impact demand for individual TB medicines.

Over the course of the meeting GDF highlighted several challenges in supply and distribution and agreed on further actions to address these challenges with suppliers and partners. Among the most common and challenging of issues were those arising with domestic procurement of TB medicines, including the lack of national registration of TB medicines in many countries. Other challenges included the need to extend the shelf life of TB medicines, national registration requirements that pose barriers to accessing TB medicines, new European Union serialization requirements and the potential impact on price, and illogical procurement policies requiring 75% remaining shelf life for medicines regardless of expiry.