

A group of people, including women and a man, are sitting on a wooden bench in front of a building. They are all wearing white face masks. One woman is holding a baby. The background shows a building with windows and a door. The image is overlaid with a semi-transparent white box containing text.

COVID-19 Response Mechanism (C19RM)

Points for Action

What's Going On?

The Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria has announced an opportunity for emergency funding on [C19RM](#). Each country has received a significant amount of allocation which adds up to almost 3.7 billion USD globally. As this is emergency funding, it has a very short deadline for applications to be submitted in May and June 2021. Country applications must be endorsed by all Country Coordinating Mechanism (CCM) members. In addition, COVID-19 control and containment interventions must be endorsed by the national COVID-19 response coordinating body.

The C19RM has three objectives:

(ref: https://www.theglobalfund.org/media/10749/covid19_c19rm-technical_informationnote_en.pdf, page 7)

1. COVID-19 control and containment interventions, such as testing and treatment, provision of personal protective equipment (PPE), communications and other public health and social measures (PHSM) as specified in WHO guidance;
2. activities to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria (referred to here as “mitigation”); and
3. expanded reinforcement of key aspects of health and community systems, including laboratory systems and community mobilization.

For each of these objectives please find here the information notes published by Global Fund: <https://www.theglobalfund.org/en/covid-19/response-mechanism/>

What Can You Do?

We kindly request you to reach out to the National TB Programme, Ministry of Health, the CCM members, Principal Recipients of Global Fund in the country, affected communities and civil society, and other country stakeholders in TB and COVID-19.

The purpose of your engagement would be to ensure the inclusion of TB/COVID-19 priority interventions in both the fast-track submission and in a considered, comprehensive full funding proposal. It is important to ensure everything needed to recover from the huge impact the COVID-19 pandemic on TB care and prevention is included. The Global Fund may consider approving some of the dual purpose (COVID-19 and TB) asks under the C19RM funding request and engage with the country to cover the rest from the TB grant allocation, as well as through other future opportunities. Interventions which are important from the TB perspective can be included in all 3 objectives, with the second objective specifically being important to recover from the profound impact that the pandemic has on TB diagnosis and treatment. More details are in the [Global Fund Information Note on mitigation of COVID-19 effects on HIV, TB and Malaria](#).

The important interventions with the dual purpose of addressing both COVID-19 and TB are listed below:

1. Bidirectional testing/simultaneous/integrated testing approach to detect COVID-19 and TB

- COVID-19 and TB can manifest with similar symptoms, and people with these symptoms should be tested for both COVID-19 and TB. All people who are diagnosed with TB should be tested for COVID-19 and all diagnosed with COVID-19 should be tested for TB.
- In addition, all people with respiratory symptoms for COVID 19 should be screened and tested for TB and vice versa. Diagnostic equipment such as GeneXpert and Truenat can diagnose both COVID-19 and TB. Such diagnostic technology should be expanded to ensure decentralized testing of COVID-19 and TB. For more details see the [USAID & Stop TB Partnership guide](#). This document is also referenced in the C19RM Information notes on COVID-19 and on mitigation of impact on the 3 diseases.

2. Integrated COVID-19 and TB contact tracing/investigation

Contact tracing/investigation is an important intervention in the fight against both TB and COVID-19. Integrated contact tracing/investigation is possible and can help the response against both diseases in a efficient manner. In the context of contact investigation, it is important to discuss and include needs for mobile vans with portable X-ray and computer assisted reading of X-ray, and onboard diagnostics for TB and COVID-19. For details see the [USAID & Stop TB Partnership guide](#).

3. PPE and other infection control measures

- Please ensure that the needs of PPE for TB programme, including N95 and surgical masks, for health workers and community workers are included in the request along with needs for COVID-19.
- Please also ensure that airborne infection control and prevention practices and tools, such as UV lights, are included as per need.

4. Addressing stigma, fear and discrimination

Ensure that the country C19RM proposal includes measures to monitor and mitigate stigma, fear and discrimination for both COVID-19 and TB. See the [C19RM TB Community Priorities guidance note](#) and [TB CRG Investment Packages](#).

5. Community interventions

The proposal should include what is needed for strengthening community systems, including among key and vulnerable populations, to be able to provide the care and support needed for people with COVID-19 and TB. See the [C19RM Community Priorities guidance note](#).

6. Digital tools

Ensure that connectivity solutions and digital tools as needed for the setting is included in the proposal to facilitate home based decentralized care. More details are available in this information note on [digital health tools](#).

Stop TB Partnership will provide national level technical assistance through technical experts and community advocates in priority countries. For any technical assistance please reach out to the Stop TB Partnership: ta@stoptb.org