



# BRICS Tuberculosis Research Network

## ISSUES NOTE

### BRICS 2025

#### 1. Background Information

BRICS countries account for over 40% of the global tuberculosis (TB) burden and mortality, as well as at least 50% of the cases of multidrug-resistant (MDR) and rifampicin-resistant TB (RR-TB).

Despite notable scientific achievements in recent years, these advancements alone are insufficient to meet the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) targets or the commitments related to TB.

Mathematical modeling indicates that significant reductions in TB incidence require developing and implementing innovative technologies specifically designed for resource-limited settings. The WHO End TB Strategy emphasizes the urgent need for affordable, effective, and rapid point-of-care diagnostics and effective pre- and post-exposure vaccines. It also calls for safer and shorter treatment regimens for all forms of the disease.

While current pipelines for new diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines address some of these requirements, they do not meet all the needs. Progress in product development will depend on sustained and increased support and investments.

In response to this urgent need, the BRICS TB Research Network was established under the BRICS TB Cooperation Plan, which was approved at the 6<sup>th</sup> Health Ministers Meeting in New Delhi in 2016 and endorsed by BRICS Heads of State in the Xiamen Declaration in 2017.

The Network aims to identify opportunities for scientific research, development, and innovation while fostering the creation of effective, safe, and affordable preventive tools, diagnostics, and treatment regimens for all forms of TB. It also seeks to conduct multi-country cohort studies to validate new interventions.

#### 1.1. BRICS TB Research Network

The BRICS Tuberculosis Research Network envisions the elimination of TB in all BRICS countries. Its mission is to accelerate collaborative research towards this goal, guided by values of mutual trust, transparency, evidence-based approaches, high-quality data and accountability, cooperation, knowledge sharing, and strengthening social, technical, scientific, and industrial capacities across BRICS nations.

By bringing together TB program managers, research institutions, and scientists from the ministries of health across BRICS countries, the Network facilitates collaboration in developing new diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines for TB. Each country will manage a forum of TB scientists linked to the Network, promoting knowledge sharing and resource collaboration.

BRICS countries have invested at least US\$20 billion over the past decade in TB control efforts, encompassing services, programs, and research. In 2023, of the total US\$4.5 billion allocated for the TB response from domestic resources, US\$2.8 billion (63%) originated from BRICS countries.

Recently, BRICS nations have individually taken steps to advance knowledge and technology in TB nationally through strategic plans and initiatives. For instance, science and technology are prominently featured in China's new national spending plan.

Each BRICS country has made progress in organizing and promoting TB research. In 2016, the Government of India launched the India TB Research Consortium, aiming to engage all major national and international stakeholders to develop new tools for TB. In South Africa, the Strategic Health Innovation Partnerships, a unique product-development initiative managed by the SAMRC, has prioritized TB as a key research area.

In 2015, Brazil established its National TB Research Strategy, building on the decade-long experience of the Brazilian TB Research Network (REDE-TB), which includes members from universities, industry, the public health system, and civil society.

Brazil has allocated approximately R\$14 million for two calls for TB research projects (Call MS-SCTIE-Decit/CNPq No. 33/2019 and Call CNPq/MCTIC/BRICS-STI No. 19/2020) conducted within this framework, fostering partnerships between educational and research institutions from member countries.

## **2. Priorities**

- 2.1. R&D of new diagnostics, drugs, and vaccines;
- 2.2. Partnerships for the development of clinical trials, epidemiology, fundamental, operational, and public health research;
- 2.3. Capacity building;
- 2.4. Self-sufficiency and economic development;
- 2.5. Equitable access to health innovation;
- 2.6. Elimination of tuberculosis as a public health concern.

