Translating science into global health impact

EDCTP Forum
Better health through global research partnerships

Workshop Report

Financing TB vaccines R&D: African priorities, needs and stakeholder perspectives

Workshop date: 19 June 2025

Report date: 23 July 2025

Introduction

IAVI convened a regional workshop on Thursday, 19 June 2025, as an official side meeting of the 12th EDCTP Forum in Kigali, Rwanda, to explore the priorities, needs, and perspectives of African stakeholders to enhance support of tuberculosis (TB) vaccine research and development (R&D).

This workshop was the third in a series of regional convenings led by IAVI to inform a concrete policy proposal for innovative joint resourcing initiatives for TB vaccine R&D. The first roundtable took place during the World Health Summit in Berlin in October 2024 followed by a session at the Regional World Health Summit in New Delhi in April 2025.

Despite TB being the leading cause of death by infectious disease globally, financing for TB vaccine R&D remains insufficient. The scarcity of funding—especially for late-stage clinical development, which is critical to bringing a vaccine to market—poses a major barrier to progress. Africa's unique demographics, high burden of disease, and health systems context must be reflected in TB vaccine R&D investments. There is a need to ensure that future TB vaccines are not only developed with African data and populations in mind but are also accessible and affordable across the continent.

Recent global momentum, including the WHO TB Vaccine Accelerator Council and increasing political interest in regional innovation, production and access, offers a pivotal moment to address funding and resource needs with an African lens. African-driven mechanisms are essential for aligning resources with needs and maximizing the public health, societal, and economic returns of TB vaccine R&D and delivery.

The global health architecture, however, has changed dramatically in the first six months of 2025 due to sharp spending cuts by the U.S. government, alongside significant cuts announced by other major global health R&D funders (including 25% from Belgium, 37% from France, 30% from the Netherlands, and 40% from the U.K.). These shifts together signal a highly uncertain funding landscape for global health R&D at large, including for TB vaccines, highlighting the urgency to mobilize renewed political will and material support from diversified funders.

The roundtable convened 20 experts from diverse global and regional institutions, including government representatives, regional public and philanthropic funders, and global health financing institutions. Held under Chatham House Rules, the workshop sought to gather perspectives from experts on the most impactful and feasible innovative financing mechanisms that could support late-stage TB vaccine development and ensure regional access to future TB vaccines. Recommendations from the first convening provided critical framing, notably regarding the need to enhance the role of high TB burden middle-income countries (MICs) in vaccine financing, align the interests of different stakeholders, and ensure robust coordination and leadership.

In this report, we synthesize key insights and recommendations across three thematic areas that emerged during the workshop:

1. **Engage early** with diverse regional actors to address **local and regional priorities**
2. **Coordinate resourcing** between funders to **maximise efficiency** and **accountability**
3. **Support a whole-system approach** to enhance broader **regional health R&D infrastructure** and **capabilities**

1. Engage early with diverse regional actors to align with local and regional priorities

Integrate African stakeholders from the get-go: The TB vaccine field must engage African partners on an equal footing in end-to-end product development, not only as hosts of clinical trials. As part of this approach, it is important to clarify the roles of different stakeholders at different stages of development and implementation and to define enabling investments by African countries and funders in these endeavours. African stakeholders also need to lead efforts to prioritize vaccine candidates that are best suited to regional needs in terms of product profile, appropriateness for target populations, vaccine supply pathways, costs, and their role in broader national TB programs. Of note, prioritising early engagement of African partners, including researchers, manufacturers, regulators, civil society, affected communities, policymakers, and industry partners, can help foster ownership of the resulting products, facilitate the development of products that are appropriate for local contexts, and strengthen capacities to lead end-to-end product development, including beyond TB. Investments are also needed to support African institutions in conducting basic research to improve understanding of TB immunology and enhance local capacity and expertise in discovery and translational science.

Define conditions for providing support: Prerequisites for investments in TB vaccine R&D and access from African funders must be met to facilitate equitable benefit sharing of the research outputs. A clear understanding of the expectations and conditions of African partners in supporting TB vaccine development will be necessary to this end. This may include terms for affordability and preferential terms for regional manufacturing, including for fill-and-finish or upstream manufacturing of the active pharmaceutical ingredient and related technology transfer. Such access conditions should also be attached to monetary and non-monetary investments made by African governments, including through the hosting of clinical trial sites or provision of critical data and biological samples. Supporting countries must in turn receive timely access to a licensed vaccine. Further, enabling policies such as duty waivers for infrastructure investments and consumables crucial to clinical development and manufacturing can be considered.

Strengthen the evidence base: A strong evidence base and value proposition for local investments is crucial. Value propositions should be tailored to the regional and national contexts and address key considerations such as target populations, demand forecasts, willingness-to-pay, and regional manufacturing readiness. Country-level asks should be quantified and aligned with domestic funding capacities and consider coordinated funding with other funders in the region and beyond. An understanding of potential cost-savings alongside broader socio-economic benefits will be key to garner material support from public and private sector investors alike. African manufacturers likewise need clear understanding of the future market, for which volume commitments and advanced market commitments can provide meaningful signals. This approach can enable African funders to more accurately assess and inform the most suitable financing model and where to direct investments.

2. Coordinate investments and resources between funders and partners to maximise efficiency and facilitate accountability

Optimise resource allocation for more efficient investments: At present, funders of global health R&D are not well coordinated. Greater transparency between funders can help optimize funding and avoid duplication across the TB vaccine R&D field, while also helping to increase funder accountability. Coordinating investments across the pipeline can help provide a more complete picture of the complex issues constraining efficient end-to-end development. This may help mitigate the risk of any single investment and facilitate a more agile resourcing response. In recognition that not all funders can make the same type of contributions, it is also necessary to better understand the financial capacities and product development resources of each funder and in which part of the end-to-end product development continuum they are able to invest.

Leverage existing models and networks: Multistakeholder and multisectoral coordination can be efficiently supported by tapping into established structures, both within and beyond the TB space. Global convening bodies, such as the WHO TB Vaccine Accelerator Council, can facilitate effective regional coordination, while networks such as the Global TB Vaccine Partnership (GTBVP) can utilize their convening power to support the development of fit-for-purpose funding and partnership models. African-driven initiatives are uniquely poised to lead these efforts, notably the Africa CDC, as well as the African Vaccine Regulatory Forum (AVAREF) and the African Medicines Agency. AVAREF, receiving crucial funding from the EDCTP, Gates Foundation, and government of Canada, has demonstrated notable success with national Regulatory Authorities in a number of African countries. European actors, such as the EDCTP and European Investment Bank, as well as high TB burden countries, notably Brazil, India, Indonesia, and South Africa, are well-positioned to ensure any joint initiative maximises the potential of North-South and South-South collaboration and resource sharing.

Employ novel approaches: Novel financial incentives, tailored to African funders, can be explored to facilitate effective and sustainable support from local actors. Innovative financing mechanisms remain necessary to de-risk product development, particularly during late-stage trials. Complementary grant funding and loan-based mechanisms can be explored together to de-risk and guarantee repayment. Relevant regional and global-level funds can also be considered to address urgent epidemic crises, such as TB, in Africa. Non-traditional funders such as regional family foundations, and company foundations can also be tapped into, both in Africa and beyond; aligning requests with their funding priorities will of course be critical.

3. Support a whole-system approach to enhance broader regional health R&D infrastructure and capabilities

Align with domestic priorities: African governments face considerable financial constraints to support a multitude of health and R&D priorities, including health security across Africa. Aligning with this context will be critical and help identify relevant synergies with TB vaccine R&D and avoid vertical, siloed funding. Domestic financing will thus be more likely if investments in TB vaccine R&D can be shown to strengthen the broader health research and manufacturing ecosystem. Local manufacturing capacity is a key priority for the region in pursuit of Africa CDC's target to manufacture 60% of all vaccine administered locally by 2040.

Move beyond siloes to a whole-system approach: Funders must work together beyond silos to support effective end-to-end product development of TB vaccines and beyond. Investments in TB vaccine R&D and delivery infrastructure must be shown to benefit the broader global health R&D field. In this way, TB vaccines can be a catalyst for other diseases, supporting the broader pipeline of poverty-related and neglected disease (PRND) R&D. Given the particular promise of the TB vaccine clinical pipeline, TB vaccines are well-placed to be a test case for joint funding initiatives for PRNDs at large. In the short-term, funders can work together to identify concrete opportunities to align funding opportunities for TB vaccine R&D that supports the broader global health R&D infrastructure in Africa. In doing so, duplicative efforts can be minimised and funding can be allocated in a more responsive and agile way. Highlighting opportunities to do more with less money will be particularly compelling.

Conclusions and next steps

This regional workshop provided vital context on the diverse ways that African stakeholders can support TB vaccine development. Importantly, this session highlighted the broad conditions that must be met to ensure that regional investments translate into equitable access and strengthen regional health research and manufacturing infrastructure in concert and highlighted the importance of early engagement, joint planning, and risk and resource-sharing across high burden and non-high burden countries. Moving forward, we will bring together the insights from the three convenings held to date and conduct further engagement with global and regional experts to refine and validate a concrete and actionable policy proposal for a novel, joint financing and resourcing initiative for TB vaccine R&D.