

# A TB Strategy Toolkit for developing and strengthening national TB programmes in European Union and European Economic Area countries

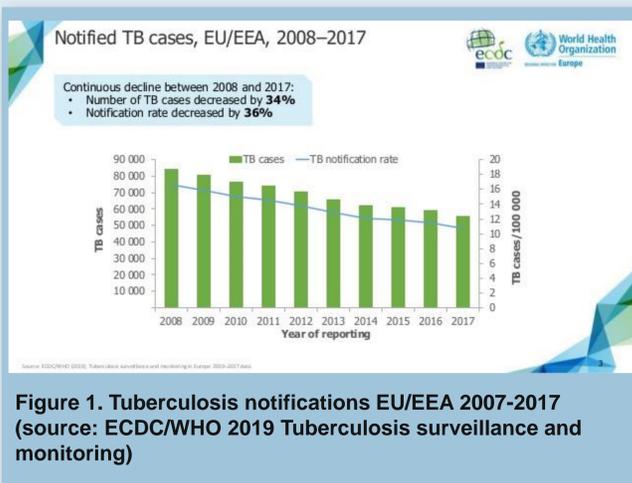
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Protecting and improving the nation's health

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## INTRODUCTION

- Under the auspices of the global TB strategy and post-2015 milestones and goals, including TB elimination in low incidence settings, a coordinated and coherent approach to national TB control is fundamental to delivery.
- A more targeted and supportive approach is required to ensure that EU/EEA member states develop evidence-based national action plans or strategies. These should include ambitious, context-specific goals, which account for EU/EEA-specific TB epidemiology and some of the structural, financial and political barriers.

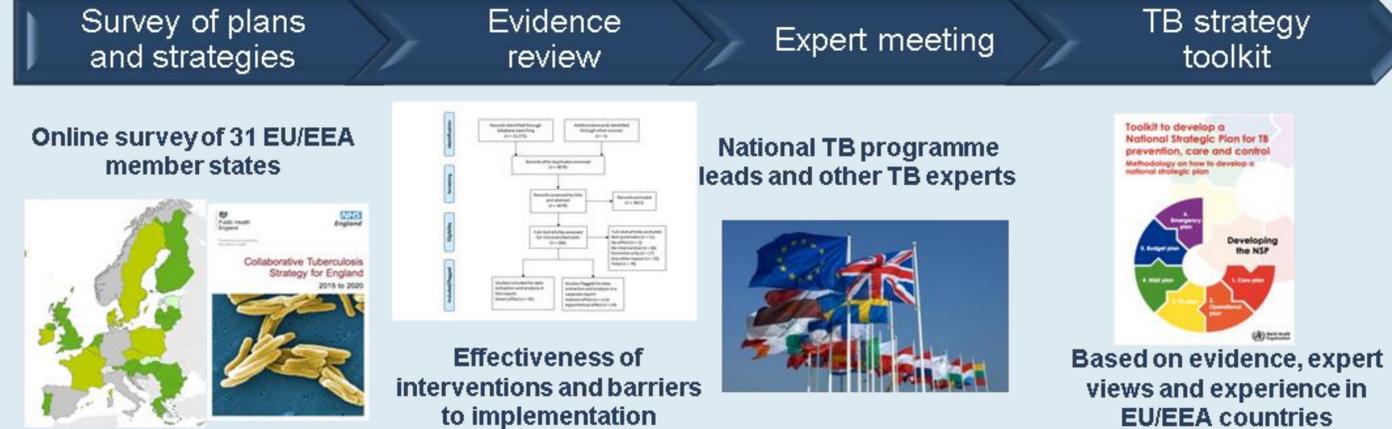


- TB incidence continues to decline across the EU and EEA and this can in part be attributed to timely diagnosis and prompt initiation of treatment of infectious TB cases.
- Despite this, projected trends suggest that an intensification of TB control efforts is needed to improve access to high quality care, which will primarily improve health outcomes for treated patients, and indirectly achieve public health impact.
- EU member states are affected by changes in migration patterns into and within EU/EEA settings, bringing increasing social and political impact. Programmes and interventions which support integrated care and prevention and target immediate health and social needs highlights the importance of targeted screening programmes to identify TB and LTBI in high risk groups.

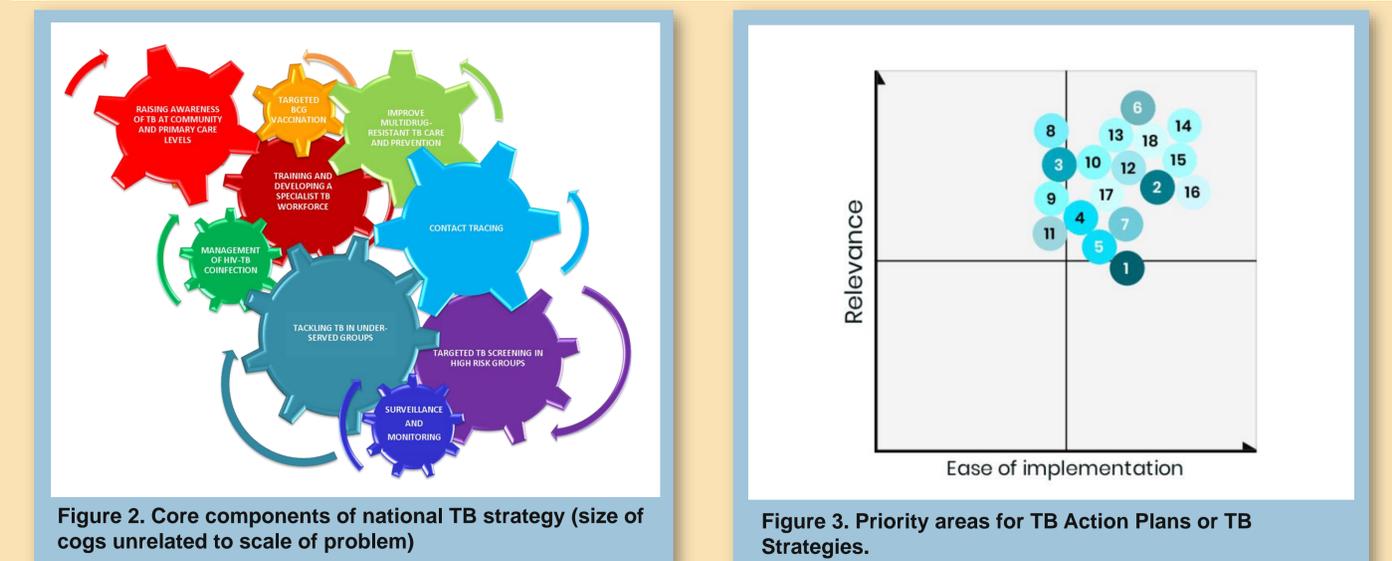
## AIM

- This TB Strategy Toolkit aims to assist national TB plan development or refinement by providing up-to-date guidance on core components of a TB Action Plan or Strategy by bringing together the latest EU/EEA-focused evidence and expert opinion.
- This EU/EEA TB Strategy Toolkit has been developed in collaboration with European TB stakeholders, ECDC and WHO based on evidence, expert views and cumulative country experience in EU/EEA member state settings. It uses findings from a pan-European survey of national TB control plans and strategies, policy reviews and consensus on policy options at an expert stakeholder meeting.

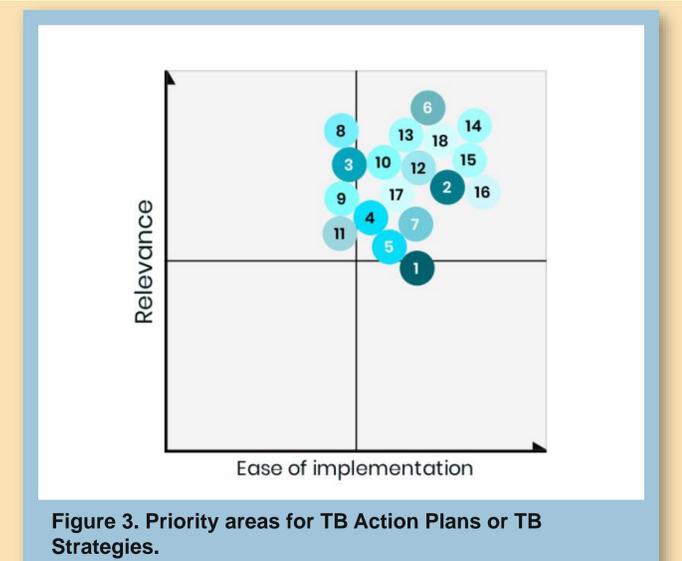
## METHODS



## RESULTS



- To deliver a strategy and make significant advances in TB control, core components of a national TB plan or TB strategy were identified through findings from a pan-European survey. Each of the core components in Figure 2 can be broken down further into sub-components to inform clinical and support services and local and national providers and commissioning groups
- Decisions on which core components to prioritise for a country's national programme will be decided at national level and led by national programme representative. Choices of interventions will need to be pragmatic, evidence-based and informed by local and national TB epidemiology, experience and expert opinion
- We supported this process by providing:
  - A background and justification for each core component
  - Evidence on effectiveness of interventions in this area and factors that impede or enable implementation to deliver these
  - Expert opinion on core components where there is consensus on barriers to implementation and any activities that could be undertaken to mitigate these



- Expert consensus using a modified Delphi approach (over three rounds) showed against a continuous scale the majority of options were considered relevant to TB control and prevention action plans and strategies and were considered to be relatively easier to implement. Publishing and disseminating guidelines, ensuring the continuity of drug supplies and implementing electronic case registries were considered to be highly relevant and easier to implement. Comparatively, establishing and managing local TB control boards and managing HIV-TB coinfection in high risk groups was less so.
- The following four options were selected as they are both relevant to TB control and prevention action plans and strategies but difficult to implement:
  - Raising awareness of TB in the community and primary care
  - Reaching under-served groups
  - Screening for active TB in migrant from high incidence settings
  - Latent TB infection screening in high risk groups

## DISCUSSION

- National strategic planning is a core component of a national TB programme and provides the over-arching framework for the operationalisation of key activities and functions to tackle TB control and prevention priorities.
- This TB Strategy Toolkit focuses on helping to prioritise core components of TB control, such as reaching out to under-served groups, targeted screening for active TB and latent TB infection in high risk groups, implementing electronic TB case registries and tackling MDR-TB care and control. This TB Strategy Toolkit should:
  - provide a point-of-reference for EU and EEA-specific priority areas of intervention for TB control and prevention to facilitate implementation
  - support national level planning and resource allocation based on peer-reviewed evidence and primary data
  - provide support for mobilising high-level political commitment and for engaging with stakeholder groups
- As part of their national TB strategy, each Member State will need a consolidated approach to stimulate actors and key implementers who are pivotal to implement locally-relevant solutions in areas where there is high unmet need and where greatest reductions in incidence can be achieved. The development of national plans are dependent on well-budgeted plans to strengthen cases for national and international financing. Involving all stakeholders with budgetary responsibilities for TB prevention and care, including social protection, national surveillance, and research will support the mobilisation of resources, upon which to implement the goals and vision of a national strategic plan.

## CONCLUSIONS

- Developed with funding from the European Commission, this TB Strategy Toolkit is firmly grounded in the European context.
- It aims to provide policy makers, TB programmes and services, and many other relevant stakeholders with an overview of the available TB control tools together with their evidence and provide information on barriers and enablers to implementation. This creates a menu of choices, which we hope will help national TB programme representatives and national focal points them to be equipped to successfully develop and implement their own strategy in their own context.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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