



PRESS RELEASE

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New USAID Award to Combat Drug Resistant Tuberculosis in Burma, China, Thailand

Bangkok, Thailand – The U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) has awarded a new five-year project to FHI 360 to combat multi-drug resistant tuberculosis (MDR-TB) and extensively drug resistant tuberculosis (XDR-TB) in the Greater Mekong Region.

FHI 360 will focus particularly on Burma, China, and Thailand and work with national tuberculosis programs and local organizations in those countries to develop better methods to prevent and manage drug-resistant TB.

Tuberculosis remains one of the leading causes of adult deaths globally, much of that due to the rise of drug-resistant TB. This occurs when the TB bacilli is able to withstand the primary drugs, isoniazid and rifampicin, with which TB is normally treated. While treatment of MDR-TB is difficult and expensive, treatment of XDR-TB is even more difficult and expensive, as it is resistant to an even wider range of drugs and has no known cure.

USAID's Regional Development Mission for Asia (RDMA) has been working to combat malaria since 2004, concentrating over the past five years on strengthening national-level TB control programs and financed applied research in areas related to HIV/TB screening.

The new program will target MDR- and XDR-TB, both of which are increasing at alarming rates in the Greater Mekong Region. FHI 360 will provide technical assistance to health providers at the local, provincial and national levels to improve community-based approaches to control of MDR- and XDR-TB; strengthen quality assurance, forecasting and procurement policies associated with anti-TB drugs; and increase the use of data and scientific innovation in strategic planning and program management.

This is part of U. S. Government's commitment to combatting TB in the following areas:

- Preventing and raising public awareness of MDR- and XDR-TB;
- Detecting suspected cases and providing services to those most at risk;
- Improving the skills of health care workers at all levels in prevention, case management, and treatment of MDR-TB and XDR-TB;
- Introducing new diagnostic technologies;
- Strengthening pharmaceutical and supply chain management systems that effect access to essential medicines;
- Improving drug quality assurance systems in manufacturers, regulatory authorities, and health providers to reduce drug resistance due to sub-standard or counterfeit medicines;

- Increasing the contribution of local organizations to the prevention and control of drug resistant TB at the community level.

About USAID

The United States Agency for International Development has been the principal U.S. government agency extending foreign assistance since 1961. In Asia, USAID programs address many problems that cross national boundaries, such as human and wildlife trafficking, HIV/AIDS and infectious diseases, global climate change, natural resources conservation, food security, trade, and political and economic conflict. For more information, please visit www.usaid.gov and www.usaid/rdma.