

IMPLEMENTATION RESEARCH FOR DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES AND TB (IR4DTB)

A TOOLKIT TO INFORM THE SCALE-UP OF DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES ACROSS THE TB CONTINUUM OF CARE



Building evidence as digital innovations are implemented
in support of efforts to end TB by 2035

THE CHALLENGE:

Implementing and scaling up digital tools for TB care

The persistence of the tuberculosis (TB) epidemic demands innovative approaches to TB care and prevention. Digital technologies present novel ways to improve patient-centred care or to make better use of resources by TB programmes. In 2015, WHO released the *Digital health for the end of TB strategy: an agenda for action*¹ describing four broad functions into which digital technologies can support TB prevention and care (Figure 1).

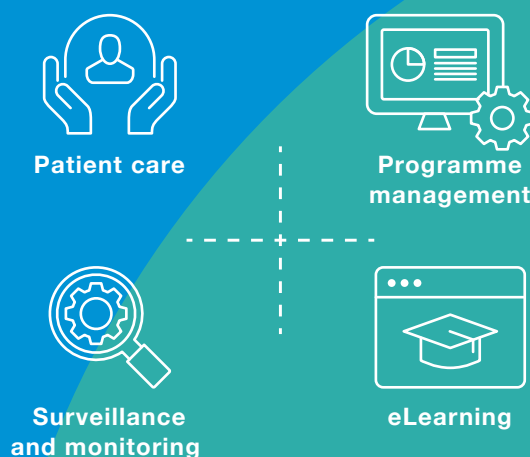


Figure 1: Four functions of digital technologies
for TB prevention and care

Digital technologies are emerging as important tools to advance progress towards the End TB Strategy. However, barriers to effective implementation and scale-up of innovations are often context-specific and may require different approaches depending upon the setting.

THE SOLUTION:

An implementation research toolkit for digital technologies and TB

Implementation research (IR) is the systematic approach to recognizing, understanding and addressing barriers to implementation and scale-up of effective and quality health interventions, strategies and policies. IR provides an important approach to evaluating how innovations like digital technologies can be used to overcome challenges in TB care, and to generate evidence that can guide their future introduction and scale-up in other settings.

The Special Programme for Research and Training in Tropical Diseases (TDR), in partnership with the WHO Global TB Programme (WHO/GTB), has developed an interactive toolkit to address demand from national TB programmes and other partners to mount IR projects specifically geared towards evaluating digital technologies. The Implementation Research for Digital Technologies and TB (IR4DTB) toolkit aims to generate new evidence to bridge the knowledge gaps on the optimal application of digital technologies for TB and to inform future WHO guidance on their use.

Based on the previous IR Toolkit developed by TDR and the Access and Delivery Partnership in 2014², IR4DTB has been developed for TB programme managers and other decision-makers interested in integrating digital technologies under routine programmatic conditions to accelerate efforts to End TB.

TOOLKIT OVERVIEW

The interactive IR4DTB toolkit contains six modules that reflect key steps in the IR process for users to work through.



Practical activities have been built into the toolkit to promote learning and interactivity. The activities provide opportunities to apply new learning and have been designed to inform the development of an IR proposal to be used to support resource mobilization for IR projects. Users have the option of creating a profile on the IR4TBD site, which allows them to track and save their progress throughout the toolkit as they develop their IR proposals.

The toolkit will be complemented by TDR's Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) on Implementation Research, which users are recommended to complete prior to using the toolkit.

The toolkit can be accessed at: <https://www.ir4dtb.org>.

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² TDR, 2014. *Implementation Research Toolkit, second edition* (<http://adphealth.org/irtoolkit>)