ARC Tool

The Assessment of Data Collection, Reporting, and Analysis Capacity (ARC) Tool

Purpose

The ARC tool is part of the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) tuberculosis (TB) data monitoring efforts. It is designed to assist USAID Missions and national TB programs (NTPs) with mapping the readiness and capacity of the current TB monitoring and evaluation (M&E) and surveillance system to collect, report, analyze, and use the data generated to improve the TB situation in their country.

The ARC tool is based on the Performance-Based Monitoring and Evaluation Framework (PBMEF). This framework contains standardized indicators that measure TB program outputs and outcomes, which can then be organized into treatment cascades and patient pathways to help decision-makers identify how the TB programs are working and where they need to direct resources.

The tool follows the indicator categories in the PBMEF. It systematically reviews the TB data that are collected against the indicators in the framework and identifies the strengths and gaps in the surveillance system. This provides a critical first step in developing a comprehensive landscape analysis of a country's TB M&E and surveillance system.

Data Collection

The tool will determine whether data related to the 14 extended indicator groups of the PBMEF (e.g., TB-HIV, childhood TB, TB detection, etc.), which are captured at the health facilities providing TB services, are being collected by the NTP, other departments of the ministry of health, or non-NTP/private providers. For each domain, additional information will be collected related to the administrative levels to which data are reported, method of data reporting, and reporting coverage.

Completing the ARC Tool

Ideally, the tool should be completed in a collaborative process by a small group of experts who have knowledge of the TB data collected and reported in the country. This would be the focal person designated by the USAID Mission together with staff from the NTP, such as the NTP director, M&E officer, and TB prevention officer, if available. Alternately, the tool may be completed by an M&E consultant appointed by the TB Data, Impact Assessment and Communications Hub (TB DIAH) or any other USAID implementing partner in that country, with NTP's engagement and consensus.

The first round of data collection should be done as soon as there is a general understanding between the USAID Mission and the NTP to use this tool for the assessment of TB data reporting capacity in the country. The ARC tool responses can be subsequently updated or edited as the situation changes.

The ARC tool findings from each country will be compiled in a report with in-depth analysis and visuals. The report will help USAID and NTPs identify gaps in TB data collection and reporting and inform the development of PBMEF implementation plans. The data will also serve as a baseline for future assessments, conducted preferably every two years.

There are three options for implementing the ARC tool, in collaboration with the respective NTPs:

- Scenario 1: The Mission takes the lead with TB DIAH providing only basic technical support
- Scenario 2: The Mission takes the lead with routine TB DIAH check-ins and support
- Scenario 3: TB DIAH proactively engages in implementing the tool

Assistance with Implementing the ARC Tool

Several resources will be available to Mission and NTP staff to assist with ARC implementation:

- Detailed ARC Tool Guidance document
- A PDF of the ARC tool for reference
- ARC Tool Frequently Asked Questions brief
- A guidance video, "How to Use the ARC Tool"
- A virtual orientation by TB DIAH to the focal person(s) designated by USAID Mission or NTP

If needed, TB DIAH may provide support with check-ins or arrange for a local consultant to liaise with the USAID Mission and NTP to lead the data collection process.

For questions, please contact the TB DIAH Agreement Officer's Representative (AOR) at USAID/Washington, Sevim Ahmedov, at sahmedov@usaid.gov.