

## Preparing the landscape for TB vaccines: South Africa's strategic planning

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**Background:** The South African TB Think Tank is a national collaboration of TB stakeholders, including researchers, policymakers, clinicians, and civil society. Chaired by the Chief Director of the National TB Programme (NTP), members consolidate TB research through several technical task teams, providing evidenced-based policy recommendations to the Department of Health. To support the national TB vaccine initiative, the TB Think Tank provided recommendations for the recently released NTP Strategic Plan, 2023-28.

**Methods:** Informed by the End TB Strategy and previous strategic planning, five pillars were identified through a consultative process with NTP managers to guide planning. TB Think Tank task teams and relevant national technical partners and sectors were consulted to produce evidence-based guidance. Concurrent workshops with provincial Departments of Health were held to articulate and refine priority activities, categorised by objectives under each pillar. A draft document was then reviewed and finalised by the NTP and key stakeholders.

**Results:** The TB Strategic Plan includes three major activities under two objectives to promote TB vaccine preparedness (see Figure). As part of engagement, a TB vaccine working group was established within the National Advisory Group on Immunizations (NAGI). An indicator on TB vaccine readiness was introduced to monitor the uptake of international recommendations in each province. Average performance targets for vaccine readiness have been set at 40% by 2025 and 80% by 2028.

**Discussion and Conclusion:** While a public-ready TB vaccine is still in the pipeline, South Africa has prioritised vaccine preparedness as reflected in the NTP Strategic Plan, 2023-28. In collaboration with the national TB Think Tank and NAGI, preparatory work for the introduction of TB vaccines is currently in progress.

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### Conflicts of Interest

None

