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UZBEKISTAN

SUCCESS STORY

USAID Support Improves Uzbek Lab Services

Eighty-six new TB labs utilize effective quality assurance technique thanks to USAID support



Photo: USAID Quality Health Care Project

Dr. Irisali Bazarbaev, Regional Lab Coordinator for Tashkent, demonstrates to training participants the techniques for proper TB smear preparation at the National TB Institute training center

“USAID support for expanding quality assurance greatly enhances TB control efforts in Uzbekistan.”

*-Dr. Dilrabo Ulmasova,
Director,
Republican DOTS Center,
Uzbekistan*

In Uzbekistan over 20,000 people are diagnosed with tuberculosis (TB) annually. Without proper diagnosis and treatment, these patients not only fail to get better but may also infect others in their communities. Ensuring that lab technicians are correctly reading TB tests is one of the vitally important pieces needed to protect the public from TB.

USAID has been working with the government of Uzbekistan since 2000 to implement a complex set of activities to improve both the diagnosis and the quality of TB laboratory services in the country. In 2011, the Uzbek National Reference Laboratory for TB requested that USAID assist in rolling out External Quality Assurance (EQA) nationally. EQA is a means by which all TB tests are assessed by at least two technicians to ensure an accurate diagnosis. In response to the need for correct diagnoses, the USAID Quality Health Care Project trained 58 laboratory workers from every region of Uzbekistan in the improved lab techniques. Close to 150 microscopy labs across the country are now performing EQA for TB diagnosis.

To ensure that the high quality lab work continues, USAID worked with the National Reference Laboratory to create a set of standardized operational procedures to guarantee quality assurances for TB tests are carried out according to international standards. Dr. Irisali Bazarbaev, Regional Lab Coordinator for Tashkent says, “For the first time in Uzbekistan, we have standard operational procedures on EQA that give a detailed description of procedures in plain language and meet international standards. Thanks to these procedures, laboratories throughout the country are now able to provide quality-assured results to physicians who can then correctly diagnose TB patients.”