



Country Coordinating Mechanism (BCCM)

Health Services Division
Ministry of Health and Family Welfare
BCCM Secretariat

Subject: Meeting notes of the BCCM Expert Committee meeting for TB SR's (Demien Foundation)

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| Date (DD.MM.YY) | 27 th November 2023 |
| Venue of the meeting | Mini Conference Room of HSD, MOHFW, Dhaka |
| Meeting started | 12:00 pm |
| Meeting adjourned | 01.00 pm |
| Meeting Chaired By | Md. Saidur Rahman Additional Secretary (Admin and WH), HSD, MOHFW & Chair, BCCM Expert Committee |
| Meeting facilitated by | Manaj Kumar Biswas BCCM Coordinator, BCCM Secretariat, HSD, MOHFW |
| Total participants | 13 |
| Meeting attendance | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Committee Members: 08 (Physical-06 and Online-02)• MOHFW Officials: 02• BCCM Secretariat: 03 |
| Attendance list | Yes |
| Supporting document | Yes |

Agenda Items:

| Agenda Item | Title of Agenda Item |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <i>Agenda Item: 1</i> | Review of meeting minutes: BRAC and Demien Foundation |
| <i>Agenda Item: 2</i> | Review of related/supporting documents |
| <i>Agenda Item: 3</i> | Recommendation on the basis of last meetings and document review |

At the commencement of the meeting **Respected Md. Saidur Rahman, Additional Secretary (Admin and WH), HSD, MOHFW & Chair, BCCM Expert Committee** welcomed all the participants. He directed the Global Fund Bangladesh CCM Coordinator to facilitate the meeting.

Discussions by the constituencies:

BCCM Secretariat: Mr. Manaj Kumar Biswas reminded that the committee has already conducted meeting with PR-BRAC and SR-Demien Foundation separately. Meeting notes for these meeting is included in the meeting folder. He informed the meeting that according to the last two meeting on the SR issue of Damien Foundation, DF Foundation provided their clarifications justifying their self defence as SR under PR BRAC. BRAC also provided all documents and communication alarming DF's performance and indicators time to time. BCCM Secretariat provided all the documents in the meeting folders today for the respected members review and make recommendations to resolve the issue. He noted that BRAC time to time communicated DF about their performance and below indicators according to performance framework. He discussed that according to analyses of both PR BRAC and SR DF documents on their performance and BRAC communication, this committee can recommend any of the followings:

Option 1: This committee can delegate this issue to NTP to resolve this issue as NTP signed Performance Framework with high case notification targets in GC7. As it is an implementation arrangement issue of PRs and SRs within NTP, BRAC and DF, They should discuss by themselves in in TB Technical Committee and resolve this issue there and NTP would inform the BCCM as soon as possible.

Option 2: If NTP agreed with DF's current performance in the Performance Framework of GC7 and get approval from the GF Secretariat on the target with the DF's current performance level then BRAC can continue Damien Foundation accordingly.

Option 3: This Committee can recommend to Continue DF in their 13 districts for next six months to one year. After 6 months One Evaluation will be done or taken place by third party and compare DF's performance in accordance of performance framework and its' indicator with other areas, if DF can make improvement, then they will continue, if fail to make any improvement then BRAC and NTP will decide to reduce their working area in GC7.

Finally, he requested the meeting to decide recommendation in this regard.

The Chairperson: Mr. Md. Saidur Rahman, Additional Secretary (Admin & WH), HSD and Chair, BCCM Expert Committee requested members of the Committee to comment. He suggested to start with NTP representative.

Dr. Rupali Sisir Banu, National Program Coordinator informed the meeting that Demien Foundation is working for TB since She argued following points in favour of Demien Foundation to continue as SR in National TB Control Program:

1. Damien Foundation's continuing partnership with the Directorate General of Health Services (DGHS) since 1993. This collaboration involves periodic renewals and updates based on the jurisdiction of implementation, as outlined in a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU). As of now, the current MoU between Damien Foundation and DGHS is valid until 2026. Under this MOU, DF has been assigned to implement TB Program in Tangail, Jamalpur, Mymensingh, Kishorganj, Netrokona, Faridpur, Madaripur, Rajbari, Gopalganj, Shariatpur, Noagaon, Chapa Nawabganj and Rajshahi districts.
2. DF TB Program Implement following a cost-effective embedded model with GOB system utilizing the Upazilla Health Complex (UHC) infrastructure, engage UHC, UHFWC and Community Clinic staff of GOB and don't provide intensive for TB case notification.
3. Being a pioneer organization in implementing TB program in Bangladesh – DF demonstrated an outstanding technical leadership in the field of TB Study, Operational Research and accomplished more than 39 Global Publication – The 9-month Regimen of DR TB treatment – has been invented by DF and this Shorter Regimen has been recognized by WHO as “*Bangladesh Regimen*” in 2016 and has been implemented all over the world.
4. Apparently, it seems DF reporting a low case notification trend in their assigned areas, NTP reviewed the data, performance trend and it may be described as such:
 - a. 2022 there was a sharp decline of TB case notification in the context of COVID-19 Pandemic which was reported by NTP – however the deeper analysis of data revealed that–in 2022 the case reporting was significantly dropped i.e 44 % drop in BRAC implementing areas and all major partners like HEED, TLIMB, others NGO also declined the notification trend, whereas, due to intensive effort by DF the case notification was increase in DF area by 5.31%.
 - b. The effort by DF was further revealed that – DF intensified the Active Case Findings since 2020 and the TB presumptive was increased (in 2022-it was 15, 584, in 2021 it was 21,219, in 2022 it was 23,701) which supports the positive drive by the organization.
 - c. However, there was not such a significant increase in TB Cases even such a higher number of TB Presumptive: In Mymensing, Rajshahi, and Faridpur respectively, there has been an increase number of cases by 12%, 16%, and 7% in 2022 in comparison with 2021. These increases in recent years are justified due to the introduction of Gene-Xpert as a highly sensitive tool.
 - d. It has been observed since 2004 that the TB case notification varies in the three different regions although the same strategies for case finding have been applied by DF. In Rajshahi and Faridpur

region case notification was around 90/ 100,000 population, whereas in the Mymensingh region, it was over 160/100,000 population. This variation might be due to epidemiological variations in the distribution of TB in the country. This can't be an indicator of bad performance.

DF 's resources, infrastructure, and technical capacity are strengths of National TB Control Program – NTP would like to continue the partnership to enhance NTP readiness toward sustainability.

Expert Committee Members: Dr. Ahmedul Kabir, ADG (Planning and Development), DGHS highlighted following issues:

- a. statistical evidence demonstrates that case notification of BRAC declined prior to 2022 which led to a decrease in overall performance of PR and SR. Throughout that time, there was an increase in DF case notifications and other activity.
- b. Although case notification is not significant in certain districts due to lower TB case density, this does not imply that case notification and treatment coverage are lower at the Damien Foundation implementation area. Additionally, he stated that the number of case notifications in Damien Foundation is rising now.
- c. Although there are lower case notifications, DF's other indicator performance is significantly higher. Hence, cancelling DF as SR is not a good idea.
- d. 4.NTP and DF had a legal contract till June 2026. Thus, Demien Foundation will be the part of TB program in upcoming period.

Dr. Asif Mustaba Mahmud, TB Expert Member, BCCM Oversight Committee opined that a periodic evaluation of DF can be conducted to oversee their performance under The Global Fund grant. After six months, an evaluation may take place to take decision for next period

Dr. Shakil Ahmed, TB Expert Member, BCCM Oversight Committee opined that case notification and management of TB Qualitative data should predominate over quantitative data. Thus, it makes more sense to concentrate on providing high-quality services rather than sending out more case notifications report. Additionally, he said that while treatment was administered in Bangladesh in about 90% of cases, case notifications about 80–85% of cases were received but disease burden is still rising every day. He suggested to concentrate on gap identification, mobilizes resource toward TB elimination and fortify the nation's system in addition to identify the case identification.

He added that DF instituted a nine-month TB regimen. In fact, Damien owns a few organizations, such as “Jolchotro”, with proper maintaice and utilization which will turn into a resource hub once Bangladesh enters its phase of transitioning out of tuberculosis. Those centres can act as training centres for TB.

Prof. M. A. Faiz, Former Vice Chair (CSO) BCCM stated that PR has the authority to choose, select, terminate, or scale back the activities of the SR, but the decision is to be endorsed by CCM members, so PR should to assess the SR performance and give the results to CCM members officially. He also stated that the involvement of CCM members in endorsing PR's decisions suggests a collective decision-making process, aiming to ensuring transparency and accountability in the selection and assessment of SRs. He mentioned that DF's extensive involvement in the TB control program implies that DF holds a critical role in the program's operations. The performance review may have implications for the effectiveness of the program itself. He also specified that the performance review of DF should be done after six months.

The Chairperson: Mr. Saidur Rahman, Additional Secretary (Admin and WH), HSD opined to recommend extension with condition to an evaluation of Demien Foundation after six-months. This will serve as an official notification which may aware them for upcoming performance the impending evaluation. The performance evaluation report will include details about DF's contributions, achievements, adherence to grant objectives, and any relevant performance metrics to justify their continuation or discontinuation. CCM members will review the report and make decisions accordingly.

Decision: *The meeting of the Expert Committee also decided to recommend performance assessment after six-months of implementation in next phase comparing the last six-months of current grant.*

The meeting of the Expert Committee decided to recommend continuation of Demien Foundation with current set-up till further assessment.

The meeting of the Expert Committee also decided to recommend to present the assessment result in BCCM for endorsement on time.

Having no other issues to discuss, the Chairperson thanked all participants for their attendance and active participation and wrapped up the meeting.



Md. Saidur Rahman
Additional Secretary (Admin & WH)
HSD, MOHFW
&
Chair, BCCM Expert Committee