

MSF in Uzbekistan: The first MSF project in Uzbekistan opened in 1998, in the region of Karakalpakstan with a specific focus on DOTS strategy of TB care. From 1998 to present, MSF has had a continuous presence in Karakalpakstan with TB remaining the primary focus. In the early 2000s MSF began working with the Ministry of Health to understand the drug resistance profile of the region, which would eventually lead to a DR-specific programme in the region in 2003. By 2010, MSF and the MoH had established the “Comprehensive TB Care for All” programme in two districts; which also marked a turning point in MSF beginning to implement ambulatory care from day one (ACD1), which remains a focus to this day. In more recent years MSF’s comprehensive care programme has become more focused on DR TB, and now includes the implementation of novel combinations using new and re-purposed drugs as well as short course regimens when and where feasible.

Comprehensive TB Care: Currently, MSF works in close collaboration with the national and regional MoH in order to implement more patient-centred models of MDR/XDR TB care. MSF’s previous operational research has been instrumental in MoH decisions about how to improve TB care in Karakalpakstan. At the end of 2018, there were more than 1700 patients receiving treatment as part of the comprehensive care programme and 103 patients enrolled in the clinical trial. As part of achieving more patient-centred approaches to care, in 2017 MSF supported MOH in the rollout of the (2016) WHO guidelines (including SCR) in five rayons of Karakalpakstan. In 2018, MSF extended this rollout to another four rayons and plans to roll out in remaining 7 rayons by June 2019. Supporting the MSF mandate for introduction of best practices in TB care in the UZB, in light of new WHO recommendations on TB Care(2018) MSF plans to support MOH KK in implementation of newest guidance in whole of KK. Additionally, there is ongoing operational research into the safety and efficacy of short course regimen (SCR) in children; which focuses on case finding, contact tracing, diagnostics and treatment. And lastly, MSF plans to develop research frame-work of fully oral/Injection free short regimen protocol for adults, get the necessary MSF, local and national R.A approvals and to conduct the research in KK in 2019.

TB PRACTECAL Clinical Trial: The clinical trial TB-Practecal, as part of MSF’s phase II/III clinical research project, is focusing on evaluating drug regimens containing two highly promising drugs, Bedaquiline and Pretomanid in combination with existing and re-purposed anti-TB drugs that are radically shorter (6M), more effective, more tolerable and without injections. The Karakalpakstan site enrolled its first patient in January of 2017. The Tashkent site of the trial opened in December 2018 and enrolled the first patient in January 2019. The MSF BSL3 lab that services the clinical trial also provides diagnostic support throughout the region in order to test for drug resistance.

HIV Care: MSF also runs an HIV project in cooperation with Republican AIDS center, based in Tashkent, which started in 2012. MSF is now working together with MoH on integration of HIV, TB, HCV and other STI services in order to provide more effective diagnostics and treatment for

co-infected patients. At the Tashkent AIDS Centre, MSF has worked closely with our MoH counterparts to establish one of the first “one-stop-shop” testing and treatment facilities capable of providing care for TB/HIV/HCV patients. In late 2017, MSF and MoH reached an agreement on services that MSF will provide in “trust points”, extending testing and treatment to key populations throughout the greater Tashkent area. These activities begin in 2018.