

DECIDE TB NEWSLETTER N°4

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Improve the diagnosis
of tuberculosis in children
with treatment decision algorithms

EDITORIAL

Two years and a half after its launch, the Decide TB project has reached an important milestone: health facilities in all study districts of Zambia and Mozambique have now transitioned from the standard of care to implementing treatment decision algorithms (TDAs) for childhood TB diagnosis. This turning point opens a new chapter in the Decide-TB trial, as data collection continues and we move steadily towards the remaining phases of project implementation, data analysis and results.

This achievement is the fruit of joint commitment from national TB programs, researchers, and frontline health workers who make TDAs part of everyday child TB care.

This year, Decide TB will contribute to the Union Conference on TB and Lung Health, to be held in Copenhagen, Denmark (18th to 21st November 2025), with two presentations on clinical mentoring and digital clinical decision support systems (CDSS). Beyond reporting on study progress and results, these contributions illustrate how the project is preparing to deliver evidence that can guide national policies and strengthen child TB services worldwide.

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FUNDER

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NEWS FROM THE FIELD

Decide TB scientific workshop in Bordeaux

In June 2025, the Decide TB consortium gathered in Bordeaux for an intensive workshop that combined two complementary components: a two-day scientific meeting (June 16–17) followed by a three-day scientific writing retreat (June 18–20). The event brought together investigators, PhD students, and project partners from Mozambique, Zambia, South Africa, the UK, Germany, and France.



Scientific meeting, Workshop, Bordeaux

The **scientific meeting** entailed strategic discussions with the consortium members on the main results and the publication plan, as well as preparing the upcoming report for the WHO Guideline Development Group, and reviewing analysis strategies across all work packages. Dedicated sessions explored main analyses by research component, key secondary publications, PhD outline and proposed manuscripts, and country-specific papers, results dissemination plan and perspectives for future funding opportunities.

The **scientific writing** retreat provided a structured environment to accelerate and support the write up of primary and secondary manuscripts and to develop and strengthen the scientific writing skills of junior investigators and PhD students. Through presentation on scientific writing principles and group work by co-authors on publications mentored by senior researchers, participants advanced in writing paper outlines, dummy tables, and drafts of introductions, methods, and results sections. At the end of the workshop, we had drafted the outline of the main trial paper, at least two concept notes for secondary articles for each Work Package and draft of the main PhD students' articles.



Scientific writing, Workshop, Bordeaux



Together, these publications will cover the main trial results, secondary analyses, methodological papers & country-specific insights, ensuring broad dissemination of Decide TB's findings within the global health community.

Modelling, health economics & policy

Alongside field implementation, Decide-TB investigates the broader impact of treatment decision algorithms (TDAs) through work on modelling, health economics and policy. This component examines the costs for the health system, and the cost-effectiveness of TDAs as compared to the usual care, but also the financial burden for patients before and after implementation of the intervention, as well as the policy environments in which these tools are deployed.

By combining economic evaluations with qualitative insights into national contexts, the objective is to provide robust evidence that can guide resource allocation and inform strategies for sustainable scale-up of TDAs in high-burden countries.



The in-country data teams

In the field, data collection on facility-level resource use has been completed in approximately three-quarters of districts, while central-level cost data collection is nearly complete in both countries. Patient cost surveys and qualitative interviews are also ongoing. These studies will feed into models that will help quantify both the health and economic benefits of introducing TDAs in childhood TB care.

UNION CONFERENCE 2025



Decide TB project shares 2 presentations at Union Conf 2025 (Nov 18-21 - Copenhagen):

- Clinical mentoring to support the use of treatment decision algorithms for child TB diagnosis within a programmatic pilot in Mozambique and Zambia
Emilie Desselas - SOA01 / Tuesday Nov 18 / 15:38-15:45 / Oral presentation
- Designing a digital clinical decision support system to strengthen implementation of treatment decision algorithms for childhood TB in Zambia and Mozambique
Celso Khosa - EP01 / Tuesday Nov 18 / 13:55-14:00 / Poster presentation

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