A working definition of a potential “TB outbreak” is helpful for planning and response and may include any of the following criteria:

Criteria based on surveillance* and epidemiology

- An increase has occurred above the expected number of TB cases
- During and because of a CI, two or more contacts are identified as having TB disease, regardless of their assigned priority, (i.e., high-, medium-, or low-priority)
- Any two or more cases occurring within one year of each other are discovered to be linked, and the linkage is established outside of a CI (e.g., two patients who received a diagnosis of TB disease outside of a CI are found to work in the same office and only one or neither of the persons was listed as a contact to the other)
- A genotyping cluster leads to discovery of one or more verified transmission links which were missed during a CI within the prior two years

Criteria based on program resources

- Transmission is continuing despite adequate control efforts by the TB control program
- CI associated with increased cases requires additional outside help

* Regular review of TB cases; epidemiologic, program, and genotyping data; and findings from CIs