The 4-week old rats are trained to be at ease in their surroundings and with human interaction.

The rats are trained to associate the sound of a click with food. Then they learn that if they go to a tea egg containing TNT they hear the click sound and receive the food.

The three hole stage is the first stage where the rats begin to identify the target smell (a sample of TB). There is one hole with a positive sample and two holes with neutral samples.

The rat will move to a larger cage, which holds sample bars each with 10 samples placed under ‘sniffing holes’. In this training stage, the rat learns to evaluate large numbers of samples.

APopo’s TB rats must pass an internal accreditation process before working under operational conditions. To become a HeroRAT, it must find every TB positive patient in the test sample base.