



Change the Course of the Pandemic by Driving Access to COVID-19 Testing
Proposal to the Government of the Netherlands

Today's crisis has taught us that there is an urgent need to keep diagnosis at the centre of pandemic preparedness and response

At the heart of the Netherlands' international development strategy is the advance support for gender equality and sexual and reproductive health and rights. **COVID-19 presents the single greatest risk to equality of our times** and threatens a catastrophic reversal in the advances achieved in reducing maternal mortality, increasing access to contraceptives and safe abortion and to the economic empowerment of women. Women making up over 70% of the global health workforce and repeatedly shown to disproportionately bear the brunt of health pandemics. The Ebola pandemic and Zika epidemic provided stark evidence that major disease outbreaks interrupt normal reproductive healthcare services with drastic and lasting impacts on health indicators and health systems. With the size and ferocity of the COVID pandemic, it is imperative that we urgently take every possible measure to respond.

It has become clear that a major factor in being able to control the COVID-19 pandemic, slow the curve and reduce transmission while maintaining functioning health services is ensuring access to COVID-19 diagnostics through the development of a range of effective diagnostics, improving production capacity, and mitigating supply chain interruptions. **We cannot go back to any level of normalcy if we do not ensure access to intensive testing.**

While the private sector has rallied to develop new diagnostics, FIND plays a crucial role in channeling these innovations into prioritized areas of activity; facilitating international collaboration and coordination, and addressing the issues of access and equity for low- and middle- income countries at a time where high demand, panic and containment measure have caused shortages and barriers for sharing of tests, components, and technology.

The challenges around diagnosis for **COVID-19 are most significant amongst low- and middle-income countries**. These countries have the lowest rates of testing per population reported to WHO and the consequences are significant for both mounting an effective public health response to reduce transmission as well as providing care to patients when they do occur. *LMICs need solutions that are adapted/adaptable to the already weak health and laboratory systems and which can be deployed to the extremities of the country health systems.* This will be critical to also ensure that chances of resurgence can be reduced globally.

The work has already started. Since February, FIND has been working closely with global health stakeholders, particularly WHO on a response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

- We have built a global pipeline tracker (over 500 submissions) of critical diagnostic tests and launched evaluations of prioritized tests, with initial results already available online. A pipeline for digital tools is underway. The evaluations aim to drive availability of accurate and quality-assured tests of all types, with a key focus on the needs of LMICs yet with global applicability.
- Supply chains for COVID-19 diagnostics have been mapped.
- Initial training and capacity-building was immediately put in place at country and regional levels.
- Know-how transfer from one developer to manufacturers in Africa is facilitated, with others under negotiation.

Urgent need for a global convener to facilitate concerted and focused attention on diagnosis

Given FIND's longstanding experience and expertise in supporting diagnosis, we are poised to work with global stakeholders including businesses to elevate the global focus on diagnostics. The global pandemic has shone a floodlight on the impact of lack of diagnostic capacity, in high-, middle-, and low-income countries alike, and it is critical for FIND to continue and expand its work as global convener of diagnostics, as part of our strategic collaboration with WHO. FIND is collaborating with the Global Fund to provide an end-to-end procurement solution for COVID-19 diagnostics in the short term while building the foundation for longer term capacity building across a wider set of conditions.

The overall funding gap for COVID-19 diagnostics is approximately US\$750m according to the Global Pandemic Monitoring Board¹ and FIND's own analysis. This is required for FIND and other partners to continue driving progress in closing four critical gaps:

1. the lack of adequate access to rapid diagnostic tools,
2. massive global supply chain bottlenecks exacerbated by the absence of a marketplace,
3. minimal testing capacity in LMICs, and

¹ <https://wellcome.ac.uk/press-release/global-covid-zero-initiative-launched-fill-8bn-shortfall-coronavirus-response>
<https://www.finddx.org/covid-19/>



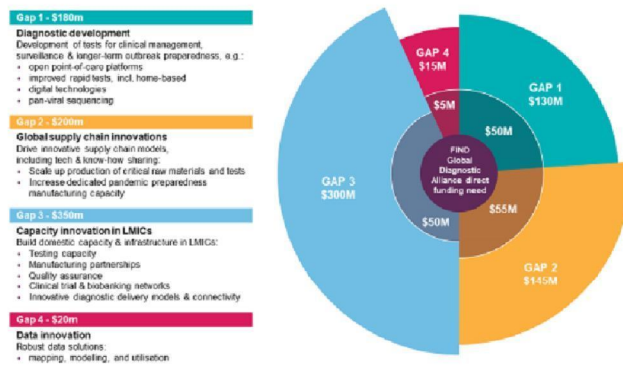
4. the void of robust data for real-time decision making.²

US\$49 million has been secured thus far from other donors. We are seeking EUR 5 million from the Government of the Netherlands for targeted interventions addressing COVID-19 diagnostics access gaps in LMICs, with particular focus on ensuring access for vulnerable groups. This amount will be invested primarily to focus on the second gap; the supply-chain bottle necks. We have identified the following actions that the Government of the Netherlands funding would enable:

1. Identifying, evaluating and supporting further development and initial roll out of truly POC tests including self-tests and digital tools to ensure the most marginalized populations including vulnerable groups have access to testing for COVID-19. With large scale restrictions on mobility and disruptions to health services, it is critical that we bring the tests closer to the people.
2. Introduce digital technology solutions that will improve data gathering on testing and data-driven decision-making; making sure such technology is available, suitable and affordable for all countries. Building on FIND’s knowledge of the diagnostic infrastructure and capacity in countries, we will design and develop a digital surveillance structure that is interoperable and tailored to the LMIC needs.

The proposal for the Government of Netherlands constitutes an essential initial and urgent element of an overall, multi-year plan to strengthen diagnostics capacity in LMICs within the larger COVID-19 response:

\$750m for diagnostics...



² See annex for explanation of how FIND aims to address these gaps.



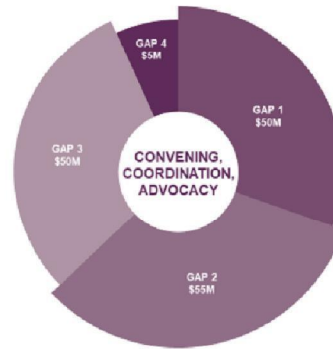
...of which \$160m for FIND,
global diagnostic alliance

- Gap 1 - \$60m**
- Diagnostic development**
- Portfolio & pipeline oversight
 - Clinical trials
 - Validation platform for digital tools
 - Market shaping through strategic investment
 - R&D fund stewardship

- Gap 2 - \$50m**
- Global supply chain innovations**
- Allocation and negotiation platform to balance supply & demand
 - Supply chain requirements for LMICs
 - Online marketplace

- Gap 3 - \$50m**
- Capacity innovation in LMICs**
- Tech transfer to LMICs
 - Infrastructure set up
 - Diagnostic delivery and policy shaping
 - Training platforms
 - Virtual biobank & trial coordination

- Gap 4 - \$50m**
- Data innovation**
- Manage open data platforms
 - Support data collection & real-time in-country mission





Annex

FIND's role in addressing four major gaps for COVID-19 and outbreak preparedness

ADDRESSING GAP 1

Drive access to rapid tests for clinical management, surveillance & longer-term outbreak preparedness

FIND will maintain a running overview of all diagnostics development efforts, highlight the most promising and steer efforts towards the most needed areas (rapid (non-lab) tests and community-based tests for mass testing, antibody testing). Digital diagnostic tools will be added into to this pipeline. FIND will expand on its diagnostic evaluation platform, evaluating new tests to assess which work and which are the most useful, and assist WHO and countries in fast-tracking approval of successful new diagnostic tools. Finally, triaging, community screening and lab-based tests for COVID-19 will require digital algorithms to enable screening, contact tracing, and clinical decision support.

ADDRESSING GAP 2

Drive innovative supply chain models, including tech and know-how sharing

FIND will remove barriers to ensure more effective supply chains for best in-class COVID-19 diagnostics. Given the specificity and complexity of diagnostics supply chains, FIND analyses the end-to-end supply chain with an aim of removing or circumventing barriers by looking outside of traditional diagnostic supply chain models. It will invest directly in end-to-end planning from manufacturer to patient. A platform that allows for more informed allocation decisions of sales of tests is crucial to access for LMICs, and negotiations around this required to ensure supply and demand are balanced and equitable. An online platform for procurement for LMICs is required to ensure pooling can bring down prices in a transparent way and follow supply chain down to users. This will address the acute gaps in availability of diagnostics for SARS-CoV-2 in the short term and build critical infrastructure to address these market failures in the long term.

ADDRESSING GAP 3

Build testing capacity and domestic manufacturing infrastructure in LMICs

FIND will negotiate and support technology and know-how transfers to LMICs to enable local production of diagnostics and meet demand. Strengthening laboratory infrastructure is vital to keep up with testing capacity, and training must now be conducted through online tools and mobilizing in-country expertise. In addition, setting up of virtual biobanks for COVID-19 and other viral agents will be of paramount importance moving forward. This would allow rapid validation of tests as they come through the pipeline and enable data-driven policy decisions. But global coordination and capacity is required for this effort. Key in addressing the pandemic is the coordinated linking up of various testing models – or network optimization – in order to capitalize on all testing being done to better inform decisions in country. Together with partners, FIND will support development and implementation of External Quality Assurance schemes.

ADDRESSING GAP 4

Introduce digital technology solutions that will improve data gathering from testing and data-driven decision-making and making sure such technology is available, suitable and affordable for all countries

Introduce digital technology solutions that will improve data gathering on testing and data-driven decision-making; making sure such technology is available, suitable and affordable for all countries. Building on FIND's knowledge of the diagnostic infrastructure and capacity in countries, we will design and develop a digital surveillance structure that is interoperable and tailored to the LMIC needs. We will also work in partnership with countries on using existing open-source digital tools to collect community-level data that will feed into the in-country surveillance network. Additionally, we will leverage FIND's existing work with supply chain management approaches that use datapoints such as geospatial data, to determine expected testing demand. This, in the context of COVID-19 and beyond, will help Ministries of Health appropriately distribute the availability of vital testing services. FIND will not only lead the development of such systems, but also exploit the potential of the data that will be gathered by such platforms, to create a centralized hub of reliable, trustworthy and verifiable information that could be used worldwide for multiple purposes (e.g. surveillance, monitoring, modelling of present and future scenarios).

