FIND SIGNS MEMORANDA OF UNDERSTANDING WITH TWO STRATEGIC PARTNERS IN INDIA TO ACCELERATE DIAGNOSTIC INNOVATION AS AN ENABLER OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

- 5-year partnerships inked with Social Alpha and the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) to accelerate diagnostic innovation in India through innovative financing models, development of new tools and training programmes
- Memoranda of understanding signed at an international meeting of agencies, implementers and funders to discuss the critical role of diagnostics as an enabler of universal health coverage in India and beyond, held during the 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health

New Delhi, India – 1 November 2019 – The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) announced that memoranda of understanding (MoUs) have been signed today with Social Alpha and the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) to address diagnostic needs that are critical to enabling universal health coverage (UHC) in India and beyond. The 5-year collaboration with Social Alpha will focus on initiation and scale-up of innovative business models and financing mechanisms, including exploration of funding opportunities and mentoring of potential innovators in the development and delivery of market-appropriate diagnostic technologies. THSTI will work with FIND, also over a period of 5 years, to develop point-of-care tests for tuberculosis and hepatitis C, and tools that can identify causes of fever (including malaria) to reduce antibiotic overuse, alongside development of key training programmes.

Both agreements were signed during an event held at the 50th Union World Conference on Lung Health in Hyderabad, India, titled In India for the World – accelerating diagnostic R&D and innovation to achieve universal health coverage. The globally renowned faculty at the meeting included Dr K S Sachdeva, Deputy Director General, Central TB Division, MoHFW, Govt. of India; Prof. Gagandeep Kang, Executive Director, THSTI; Prof. N K Ganguly, Visiting Professor of Eminence, THSTI; Dr Jayeeta Chowdhury, Programme Director at India Health Fund, Social Alpha; Dr Ramanan Laxminarayan, Chair, GARDP Board of Directors; Ms Renuka Gadde, Vice President Global Health, Becton Dickinson; Dr Harish Iyer, India Country Lead, R&D and Senior Scientific Advisor, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation; Ms Cat Oyler, Vice President Global Public Health, Tuberculosis, Johnson & Johnson; Dr Catharina Boehme, Chief Executive Officer, FIND; Dr Rangarajan Sampath, Chief Scientific Officer, FIND; and Dr Sanjay Sarin, Head of FIND India, among others.

Speaking at the occasion, Dr Sanjay Sarin, Head of FIND India, said, “We are pleased to partner with Social Alpha and THSTI to spur new diagnostic innovation, which is critical for achieving UHC. With these new partnerships, we aim to leverage the R&D ecosystem in India to accelerate the development and delivery of new diagnostics relevant to the Indian and global context, and strengthen local capacity for diagnostic development.”

Mr Manoj Kumar, Founder and CEO, Social Alpha, said, “There is an urgent need to develop innovative technologies to serve the community, and through this collaboration, Social Alpha will work with FIND to develop innovative financing models to drive diagnostic development and delivery in India.”
Dr Gagandeep Kang, Executive Director, THSTI, said, “We are excited to partner with FIND and leverage the expertise of the two organizations to drive development of much needed point-of-care diagnostic technologies in areas of mutual interest, and work towards establishing a training programme on diagnostics innovation, development, evaluation and access.”

The MoUs are significant in light of the ambitious “Ayushman Bharat” initiative, one of the world’s largest government-funded healthcare programmes, launched by the Prime Minister of India in 2018. Through this programme, the government aims to provide health coverage for over 500 million people. Achieving coverage at this scale needs quality diagnosis to enable patients to be linked to quality care as quickly as possible. But too often, fit-for-purpose diagnostics are unavailable, unaffordable or inappropriate for application in public health settings.

About FIND
FIND is a global non-profit organization that drives innovation in the development and delivery of diagnostics to combat major diseases affecting the world’s poorest populations. Our work bridges R&D to access, overcoming scientific barriers to technology development; generating evidence for regulators and policy-makers; addressing market failures; and enabling accelerated uptake and access to diagnostics in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Since 2003, we have been instrumental in the development of 24 new diagnostic tools. Over 50 million FIND-supported products have been provided to 150 LMICs since the start of 2015. A WHO Collaborating Centre, we work with more than 200 academic, industry, governmental, and civil society partners worldwide, on over 70 active projects that cross six priority disease areas. FIND is committed to a future in which diagnostics underpin treatment decisions and provide the foundation for disease surveillance, control, and prevention. For more information, please visit www.finddx.org.

About Social Alpha
Social Alpha promotes innovations and entrepreneurship with a mission to create large scale sustainable social, economic and environmental impact. Social Alpha nurtures start-ups through their lab to market journey, helping them create high quality, commercially viable, accessible and affordable solutions. Social Alpha is focused on catalysing entrepreneurship for impact and provides critical technology and business incubation support to the mission driven start-ups. Foundation for Innovation and Social Entrepreneurship (FISE) forms the core of Social Alpha architecture and hosts a nationwide network of technology and business incubation infrastructure, sponsored and enabled by Tata Trusts, Government of India and a number of academic, philanthropic and corporate partnerships. For more information, please log on to: www.socialalpha.org.

About the Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI)
The Translational Health Science and Technology Institute (THSTI) is an Autonomous Institute under the Department of Biotechnology of the Ministry of Science and Technology, Government of India, located in the National Capital Region-Biotech Science Cluster, Faridabad. THSTI is a collective of physicians and scientists who work to improve health in India by the creation of new knowledge for innovation, development of innovative solutions based on existing knowledge, and new strategies for implementation of existing solutions. By integrating the fields of medicine, science, engineering, and technology into translational knowledge, we aim to make the resulting biomedical innovations accessible, to improve the health of the most disadvantaged people in India and throughout the world. Point of care diagnostics is a key focus area for THSTI.

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