

Canada awards CAD20 million to FIND to expand COVID-19 testing in low- and middle-income countries

- Funding will optimize new diagnostic tools for COVID-19 and support their implementation into primary care and community settings, to ensure access for vulnerable populations in low-resource settings
- Funds awarded to FIND as part of Canada’s commitment to the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND – 14 DECEMBER 2020. The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) announced today that the Canadian government has awarded CAD20 million to the organization to help expand COVID-19 testing in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The investment will enable new, quality rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) to be optimized for affordability and ease of use in LMICs, generate evidence on their use outside of clinical and laboratory settings, and support the implementation of testing in primary care and community settings. The funding was announced today as part of an [update](#) on Canada’s commitment to the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator.

The Honourable Karina Gould, Minister of International Development in the Canadian government, said: “We will be living with COVID-19 for years to come, and testing will remain critical to our response as we roll out vaccines and treatments. Canada supports the work that FIND is conducting to ensure that the best quality rapid tests for COVID-19 are suitable, affordable, and available to those who need them most.”

Effective testing strategies rely on a portfolio of test types that can be used in different settings and situations. Significant diagnostic progress has been made since the start of the pandemic, including the [recent announcement](#) by the ACT-Accelerator of a set of agreements involving multiple global health organizations to make 120 million affordable, quality COVID-19 antigen RDTs available to LMICs. However, we still do not have tests – including affordable self-tests – that can easily enable crucial elements of the global economy to remain open, including for example, border crossings, workplaces, sports gatherings, or schools.

Catharina Boehme, CEO of FIND, said: “Canada has long recognized the value of testing to provide equitable healthcare to the world’s most vulnerable people. The investment announced today will be crucial to ensuring that low- and middle-income countries have not only the tests they need, but also the evidence to support implementation of testing strategies that will enable people to live with COVID-19 until the pandemic is defeated globally.”

The ACT-Accelerator Diagnostics Pillar is co-convened by FIND and the Global Fund, working closely with the World Health Organization and over 30 global health expert partners to

accelerate innovation and overcome the technical, financial, and political obstacles to achieving equitable access to effective and timely testing.

The ACT-Accelerator investment case was [updated in November](#) with the urgent priorities and financing requirements needed to ensure equitable access to the tests, treatments and vaccines that are needed to defeat COVID-19. The Diagnostics Pillar aims to enable affordable, accessible testing for everyone who needs it, including facilitation of the supply of 500 million tests to LMICs within 12 months. To achieve this, US\$6 billion is needed over 12 months – US\$1 billion for diagnostic innovation and implementation, and \$US5 billion for procurement. WHO is tracking the commitments made [here](#).

#

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 used in 150 LMICs. Over 50 million FIND-supported products have been provided to our target markets 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 the ACT-Accelerator

The Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator, is a new, ground-breaking global collaboration to accelerate the development production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. It was set up in response to a call from G20 leaders in March 2020 and launched by WHO, the European Commission, France and the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation in April 2020. The ACT-Accelerator is not a decision-making body or a new organization but works to speed up collaborative efforts among existing organizations to end the pandemic. It is a framework for collaboration that has been designed to bring key players around the table with the goal of ending the pandemic as quickly as possible through the accelerated development, equitable allocation, and scaled up delivery of tests, treatments and vaccines, thereby protecting health systems and restoring societies and economies in the near term. It draws on the experience of leading global health organizations which are tackling the world's toughest health challenges, and who, by working together, are able to unlock new and more ambitious results against COVID-19. Its members share a commitment to ensure all people have access to all the tools needed to defeat COVID-19 and to work with unprecedented levels of partnership to achieve it. The ACT-Accelerator has four areas of work: diagnostics, therapeutics, vaccines and the health system connector. Cross cutting all of these is the workstream on Access & Allocation.

The Diagnostics Pillar of the ACT-Accelerator is focused on ensuring that everyone who needs a test can get one. Workstreams span research and development, market readiness, procurement, and country preparedness. Achievements to date include laboratory trainings in partnership with Africa CDC in early February, and a suite of online courses deployed within weeks. Nearly 20 million tests have been procured with the Diagnostics Consortium, ensuring diagnostic access for LMICs and readiness for test-and-treat implementation in these countries. Independent evaluations of antibody tests are also being conducted, as high-quality antibody tests are essential to understand population immunity for future vaccine roll out.

Media contact

Sarah-Jane Loveday
Head of Communications
M: +41 (0) 79 431 62 44
media@finddx.org

#