

## US\$3.9 million investment in diagnostic network optimization enables OptiDx partnership to scale up activities across 15 countries

- New funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to FIND will support the expansion of OptiDx use and local capacity building for diagnostic network optimization (DNO) across 15 low- and middle-income countries in the next 3 years
- DNO enables countries to design diagnostic networks that align with national health goals and support efforts towards universal health coverage
- DNO will feature in three sessions at the African Society for Laboratory Medicine (ASLM) annual meeting this week

**GENEVA, SWITZERLAND – 15 November 2021.** FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, announced today a new grant from the [Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation](#) of US\$3.9 million to scale up crucial diagnostic network optimization (DNO) activities in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), including the launch and scale-up of the [OptiDx](#) tool that has been developed by a consortium of public and private sector global health partners.

Designed to improve access to diagnosis, increase network efficiency, optimize resource use, and enable better network visualization, OptiDx uses national data to create a digital model of a country's current diagnostic network. It helps create various scenarios or alternative network designs, and compares them to identify a "best-fit" approach that can improve access, equity and cost-efficiency for testing.

Following completion of a successful pilot in four countries for diseases including tuberculosis, HIV, HPV, and COVID-19, the funding announced today will support DNO capacity building and enable scale up of OptiDx into a total of 15 LMICs over 3 years. Learnings from OptiDx implementation in the pathfinder countries will be shared with the broader DNO community.

An OptiDx steering committee, comprising FIND, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, [USAID](#) and the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention ([US CDC](#)), will guide the implementation of the tool across the 15 countries.

**Powell Choonga**, Laboratory Advisor, Ministry of Health, Zambia, said: "The vision of the Zambia Ministry of Health is to ensure a Nation of Healthy and Productive People. DNO will assist in achieving this vision by ensuring that the existing laboratory network is utilized optimally to maximize resources and bring testing services as close to the family as possible."

A dedicated session on OptiDx is being held during the African Society for Laboratory Medicine ([ASLM](#)) annual meeting this week, alongside two other sessions on DNO, all arranged in partnership with the Integrated Diagnostics Consortium ([IDC](#)):

- ***How to maximize public health laboratory impact by visualizing, analyzing and optimizing the diagnostic network.*** Tuesday 16 November 2021, 7:00–8:00 GMT
- ***Increasing access and efficiency of diagnostic networks using OptiDx- an open-access network analytics tool.*** Thursday 18 November 2021, 7:00–8:00 GMT
- ***Diagnostic network mapping, analysis and optimization: learnings from countries.*** Thursday 18 November, 12:30–14:00 GMT

In parallel, a [guidance document](#) on DNO has also been published, describing the concepts of DNO, the process to conduct a DNO analysis, and how outputs from the analyses can be used to inform decision-making.

**Heidi Albert**, Head of FIND South Africa and DNO lead at FIND, said: “In too many instances, patients are unable to access life-saving testing in a timely manner, while diagnostic equipment is either under-used or over-subscribed, leading to wasted resources – just because it is not located where patients need it. DNO is gaining momentum as a critical approach that uses data to optimize diagnostic systems and improve access to tests. This vital new funding allows our consortium to take the OptiDx tool to the next level, as well as building out the body of evidence on DNO for the community at large.”

For more information on DNO as an approach, the OptiDx tool, or to express interest in being considered for the next stage of this project, please [contact us](#).

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#### **About FIND**

FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, seeks to ensure equitable access to reliable diagnosis around the world. We connect countries and communities, funders, decision-makers, healthcare providers and developers to spur diagnostic innovation and make testing an integral part of sustainable, resilient health systems. We are working to save 1 million lives through accessible, quality diagnosis, and save US\$1 billion in healthcare costs to patients and health systems. We are co-convenor of the Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator diagnostics pillar, and a WHO Collaborating Centre for Laboratory Strengthening and Diagnostic Technology Evaluation. For more information, please visit [www.finddx.org](http://www.finddx.org)

#### **About OptiDx**

OptiDx is a web-based, open-access tool developed by FIND, Coupa and the USAID Global Health Supply Chain Program-Procurement and Supply Management ([GHSC-PSM](#)) project, to enable countries to improve the planning of diagnostic testing services. By improving diagnostic networks, the aim is to increase patient access to testing for tuberculosis, HIV and other diseases and to make the networks more efficient. OptiDx uses national data to create a digital model of the country’s diagnostic network, which includes the location and capacity of diagnostic services, current and projected future needs for testing, and referral connections between health facilities and testing sites. OptiDx then enables the user to run a series of customizable scenarios aimed at improving access and cost efficiency of services, including the design of an optimal sample transport system. OptiDx may be used to support strategic health planning, to improve and monitor performance of a diagnostic network and to guide the adaptation of the network to evolving testing demands, new data as it emerges and the introduction of new diagnostic tools and approaches. Development of OptiDx is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation through a grant to FIND. Hosting and maintenance of the tool is supported by U.S. President’s Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief ([PEPFAR](#)) via the USAID GHSC-PSM project. For more information, please visit [www.optidx.org](http://www.optidx.org)

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