

The Global Fund grants US\$37 million to FIND to advance tuberculosis prevention and control in India

- Investment will optimize access to quality diagnosis, increase private sector engagement, address the burden of latent tuberculosis infection (LTBI) and catalyse community action towards TB elimination

NEW DELHI, INDIA & GENEVA, SWITZERLAND – 12 August 2021. FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, and the Global Fund announced that FIND has been awarded over US\$37 million to ensure the inception and continuation of three projects dedicated to advancing TB prevention and control in India: project SHAQTI (Strengthening Health systems for sustainable Access to Quality diagnosis towards TB elimination in India); project [JEET](#) (the Joint Effort for Elimination of TB); and Unite to ACT (Amplifying Community action for TB elimination).

The investment by the Global Fund will optimize TB diagnostic capacity, improve laboratory quality and data management across India's public sector laboratory network thereby renewing focus on early diagnosis to guide appropriate TB treatment. The grant will strengthen capacity for genome sequencing for TB surveillance and will expand laboratory capacity for drug-resistant TB (DR-TB) treatment monitoring at district level. Further, the funding will catalyze addressing LTBI burden in India; sustain the gains under [JEET](#); and build capacity of TB-affected communities by engaging TB survivors as champions and enable meaningful contribution to the design, implementation of the program by promoting rights-based, gender responsive and equitable services to all.

TB remains one of top 10 causes of death worldwide and the leading cause of death from a single infectious agent. COVID-19 is critically derailing global efforts to tackle it. In 2020, the World Health Organization (WHO) reported a 50% drop in the number of TB patients diagnosed, which may have resulted in up to 400,000 additional TB deaths.¹

India accounts for more than one-quarter (26%) of global TB burden and has the largest share of the global burden of drug-resistant TB. In this country, people newly diagnosed with TB rose from 1.2 million in 2013 to 2.2 million in 2019. But the impact of lockdowns, TB diagnostic services being reallocated to COVID-19, and pandemic-related disruption of procurement and transportation of medicines and laboratory consumables led to a drastic reduction in notifications between January and June 2020 despite the government's efforts to contain the pandemic and mitigate its impact on TB programmes. It is estimated that the notification rate fell by 25% compared with the same period in 2019.¹

¹ World Health Organization. Global tuberculosis report 2020.
<https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240013131> (accessed 24 July 2020)

Dr Eliud Wandwalo, Head of Tuberculosis at the Global Fund, said: “As India is grappling with the devastating impact of the COVID-19 pandemic, we need, more than ever, to continue supporting the country to advance tuberculosis prevention and control. FIND is an essential partner of the Global Fund and we are excited to join our efforts to expand testing capabilities in India, to maximize our impact in the fight against TB while mitigating the knock-on effects of COVID-19, and to strengthen the health systems to protect the most vulnerable.”

Dr Sanjay Sarin, Director of Country Programmes at FIND and head of the organization’s India office, said: “India has been a long-standing champion of diagnostic testing as an enabler of equitable, accessible and accurate healthcare services to all citizens. This investment by the Global Fund is crucial to ensure our country not only has the tests it needs, but also the quality assurance strategies that can sustain and improve laboratory services. All three projects being supported are already playing a pivotal role towards a TB-free India and we thank the Global Fund for ensuring they can continue at this critical time.”

Project JEET, project SHAQTI and Unite to ACT are planned to continue running in India until 2024.

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About the Global Fund

The Global Fund is a worldwide movement to defeat HIV, TB and malaria and ensure a healthier, safer, more equitable future for all. We raise and invest US\$4billion a year to fight the deadliest infectious diseases, challenge the injustice which fuels them and strengthen health systems in more than 100 of the hardest hit countries. We unite world leaders, communities, civil society, health workers and the private sector to find solutions that have the most impact, and we take them to scale worldwide. Since 2002, the Global Fund has saved 38 million lives.

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

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