Request for information (RFI): regional manufacturing of blood glucose test strips

BACKGROUND

FIND started work on diabetes in 2020, with a strong focus on improving access to existing diagnostics tools for diabetes in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). Globally, 537 million people are living with diabetes, with 75% located in LMICs. Fewer than one in ten people with diabetes in LMICs receive adequate diabetes management, leaving them highly vulnerable to the early onset of complications and premature death.

Using blood glucose test strips and meter is the simplest way to check glucose levels for diabetes management, yet, in many LMICs this essential tool is not widely available. Reasons for this lack of supply are multifactorial. While health system challenges certainly contribute, high cost of blood glucose test strips are a major contributor to this situation.

With this project, FIND aims to assess the situation of current glucose test strip manufacturing in LMICs and globally, to quantify the opportunity for local LMIC production and understand if it can achieve greater affordability and availability of these products.

This RFI is issued as part of FIND’s landscaping activities and efforts to identify In vitro diagnostics (IVD) manufacturers that can produce or are willing to invest in producing blood glucose test strips in LMICs.

CRITERIA OF RFI

The following categories of manufacturers are invited to respond to this RFI:

- **Type of respondents:** All manufacturers of blood glucose test strips (including assembly of semi-finished products, kitting only and/or full end-to-end manufacturing capabilities).
- **Location of activity:**
  - All IVD manufacturers currently producing blood glucose test strips in LMICs.
  - IVD manufacturers located anywhere (including high-income countries) that are willing to invest in production within LMICs.

The following categories of companies are **not** in scope of this RFI:

- Distributors of blood glucose test strips

INFORMATION REQUESTED

1. Do you manufacture blood glucose test strips? If yes, in which city and country is your manufacturing facility for glucose test strips located?
2. What is your manufacturing capability: full end-to-end manufacture, assembly of semi-finished products (cutting of strip sheets) or kitting only?
3. Is the product produced by your facility currently approved for commercial sale in any country?
4. Are you engaged in technology transfers with companies in other countries? If yes, in which countries?
5. Do you have supplier agreements with companies in other countries? If yes, in which countries?
6. For global producers, do you sell/export raw materials, semi-finished products, finished products?

7. What are the challenges with producing strips in LMIC markets?

**BENEFITS TO MANUFACTURERS**

Responding to our Request for Information (RFI) offers several potential benefits for glucose test strip manufacturers. By participating, manufacturers will have the opportunity to engage in in-depth discussions regarding the evolving landscape of strip production, which can lead to valuable insights and potential collaborations. Signifying your intent and technological capability could also potentially open the door to future technology transfer agreements, matching your expertise with existing needs. This collaboration can enhance your market reach and foster long-term partnerships.

Furthermore, responding to the RFI allows you to showcase your commitment to advancing healthcare solutions and improving patient outcomes in LMICs.

**CONFIDENTIALITY**

FIND acknowledges that the information received from Applicants under the RFI may be of a confidential nature. FIND shall use the same degree of care with Applicant’s confidential information as it uses to protect its own confidential information. If required, FIND can sign a CDA with interested Applicants prior to submission of information. FIND will communicate the confidential information only to its employees, independent contractors, institutional donors and other financial sponsors, legal, financial, scientific or technical advisors (together “Representatives”) who: (a) need to know such confidential information for FIND’s internal purposes, and (b) such Representative has previously agreed in writing to be bound by terms and conditions substantially similar to those contained in this RFI, including but not limited to confidentiality and non-use restrictions. Review of the submitted information will be carried out by an internal FIND team as well as a team of external experts (which may or may not include members of FIND’s independent Scientific Advisory Committee), all of whom are under confidentiality and are recused if found to have a potential conflict of interest (which they are obliged to disclose). Any specific questions concerning confidentiality should be addressed to the FIND team.

**HOW TO RESPOND**

Submit information via the FIND technology scouting submission form. The RFI application is intentionally brief, requesting basic company information and responses to the questions listed above.

This RFI is open for submission of information until 9 September 2024, information can be submitted throughout this period. We may follow up with respondents in the coming months to clarify questions or further engagements.