

DONATION OF 450,000 ABBOTT RAPID DIAGNOSTIC TESTS FOR SLEEPING SICKNESS TO ENDEMIC COUNTRIES WILL GALVANIZE EFFORTS TOWARDS ELIMINATING THE DISEASE

- **The rapid tests will scale up testing for the potentially fatal disease across multiple Sub-Saharan African countries and accelerate progress towards elimination through programmes supported by FIND, WHO, partners and countries**

Geneva, Switzerland – 10 May 2021 – The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) announced today that 450,000 rapid diagnostic tests (RDTs) have been donated by global healthcare company [Abbott](#) to scale up testing for sleeping sickness. The disease, also known as human African trypanosomiasis or HAT, is endemic to 36 countries in Sub-Saharan Africa and continues to threaten millions of people in rural areas where access to healthcare is limited.¹ It is also one of the neglected tropical diseases (NTDs) targeted for elimination by 2030 in the new World Health Organization (WHO) 2021–2030 NTD roadmap.²

Transmitted by the bites of infected tsetse flies, the Gambian form of the disease (gHAT), which accounts for 98% of cases, is a chronic, potentially fatal disease that affects the central nervous system if left untreated. Efforts to control it rely on effective diagnosis to enable early treatment and prevent further transmission, and reducing the density of tsetse flies. Based on this dual approach, gHAT is now on track to meet the WHO elimination targets.

The introduction of RDTs has transformed the management of sleeping sickness as they do not require specialized equipment and allow testing in rural areas where the disease is most active. FIND and Abbott have been collaborating since 2010 to develop an RDT (Abbott's SD BIOLINE HAT / BIOLINE HAT 2.0) for sleeping sickness that has become integral to disease elimination efforts across multiple gHAT endemic countries. This simple, rapid test can be performed by health workers with minimal training, using fresh blood from a finger prick, providing results within 15 minutes.

FIND will distribute 150,000 tests, primarily as part of the Trypa-NO! partnership (which includes FIND, the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine), which is supporting elimination programmes in five countries – Chad, Guinea, Ivory Coast, South Sudan and Uganda – in collaboration with national governments; two additional countries are expected to soon be included in the partnership.³ FIND will also deliver the tests in Angola and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).

¹ World Health Organization. Trypanosomiasis, human African (sleeping sickness) [www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/trypanosomiasis-human-african-\(sleeping-sickness\)](http://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/trypanosomiasis-human-african-(sleeping-sickness)) (accessed 8 March 2021)

² World Health Organization. Ending the neglect to attain the sustainable development goals. A road map for neglected tropical disease 2021-2030 https://www.who.int/neglected_diseases/Ending-the-neglect-to-attain-the-SDGs--NTD-Roadmap.pdf?ua=1 (accessed 23 March 2021)

³ Ndung'u JM, Boulangé A, Picado A, et al. Trypa-NO! contributes to the elimination of gambiense human African trypanosomiasis by combining tsetse control with "screen, diagnose and treat" using innovative tools and strategies. *PLoS Negl Trop Dis*. 2020;14(11):e0008738. Published 2020 Nov 12. doi:10.1371/journal.pntd.0008738

Some of the tests will also be distributed by WHO in multiple countries, and by the Institute of Tropical Medicine (ITM) in Antwerp which is focusing its elimination activities in the DRC.

“NTDs affect 1 billion people throughout the world, impacting health and causing economic hardship for individuals and communities. FIND’s continued collaboration with Abbott has been incredibly productive and is a great example of how partnerships can help tackle neglected tropical diseases,” said Professor Joseph Ndung’u, Executive Director of FIND Kenya. “With almost half a million new tests for sleeping sickness, we will be able to drastically scale up screening efforts and bring the world closer to meeting the global elimination target.”

“While better-known tropical diseases grab most of the world’s attention, neglected tropical diseases also need support in order to achieve elimination,” said Damian Halloran, vice president of infectious diseases of Abbott’s rapid diagnostics business. “Abbott is committed to tackling the entire range of vector-borne diseases, and we play the leading role in supporting research and development work, as well as providing the manufacturing capability required to provide tests for early diagnosis of NTDs.”

FIND’s contribution to the development, evaluation and roll-out of the RDT for HAT in partnership with national disease control programmes, WHO and ITM has already led to more than 2.2 million tests being supplied to endemic countries, including 700,000 as part of FIND-supported activities. These efforts are resulting in excellent outcomes; in March 2021, Ivory Coast was the latest country to achieve “elimination of gHAT as a public health problem” – a first step towards complete elimination of the disease in the country.⁴

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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

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⁴ WHO validates Cote d’Ivoire for eliminating sleeping sickness as a public health problem. <https://www.who.int/news/item/25-03-2021-who-validates-cote-d-ivoire-for-eliminating-sleeping-sickness-as-a-public-health-problem> (accessed April 7)