

FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics
Minutes of the Sixth Meeting of the Donors Council
Virtual Meeting
Wednesday 8 September 2021
(11:30-13:30 CET)

Donor Participants:

Switzerland:

Christian Frutiger, Assistant Director General and Head of Global Cooperation at the Swiss Agency for Development SDC (**CHAIR**)

Olivier Praz, Senior policy advisor & Health Focal Point, Global Programme Health, Federal Department of Foreign Affairs, Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation

Australia:

Miriam Carter, Director, Indo-Pacific Centre for Health Security, Australian Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade

United Kingdom:

Saul Walker, Deputy Director, International Strategy - Covid19 Vaccines, Therapeutics and Diagnostics, Department for International Development

Dirk H. Mueller, Senior Health Adviser, Health Research Team, Research and Evidence Division, Department for International Development

Rockefeller Foundation:

Manisha Bhinge, Managing Director Managing Director, Program and Partnerships, Health Initiative

Canada:

Kylie Luu, Senior Development Officer (Infectious Diseases), Global Affairs Canada

Germany:

Birgit Pickel, Director for Global Health, Pandemic Prevention, One Health at the German Federal Ministry for Economic Cooperation and Development (BMZ)

Dorothee Schwill, (observer on behalf of BMZ)

Julia Long, GIZ (observer on behalf of BMZ)

Kai Gesing, Senior Director, Health and Population Expert at KfW (representing BMBF)

Melina Albat, Portfolio Manager, Health, Education and Social Protection, East Africa and African Union, KfW Development Bank (observer on behalf of BMBF)

Norway:

Austen Davis, Senior Adviser, Department for Human Development Section for Global Health, NORAD

Saudi Arabia:

Abdullah Algwizani, Executive Director of the Saudi Center for Disease Prevention and Control

PDP Funder's Group (Observer):

Alex Fullem

Absent: Netherlands, Kuwait and Portugal

FIND officials:

Bill Rodriguez (CEO), Sergio Carmona (Chief Medical Officer), Louisa Chaubert (Director of Finance), Emma Hannay (Principle, ACT-A Dx Secretariat and Chief Access Officer), Willo Brock (Director of External Affairs), Ayushi Agnihotri (Head, External Relations),

Attached: full presentation

Welcome

All Donor Council members were extended a formal welcome to the sixth Donor Council meeting by the Chair, Christan Frutiger. Norway is specifically welcomed as new Donor Council member. The Donor Council members ratified minutes from the last meeting. Bill Rodriguez also extended a welcome to all the participants and thanked them for their participation and input.

Minutes of the proceedings

The key agenda for the meeting was to update on the activities undertaken by FIND as part of the ACT-A Dx Partnership and discuss highlights of FIND's core activities.

Presentation of Act-A and Act-A Diagnostics

An update on the ACT-A Dx activities were shared by the FIND team. The key discussion points are summarized below.

1. Despite availability of key tools, access to these tools for LMICs remains a challenge due to supply chain and manufacturing issues on the one hand as well as suboptimal human capital and low country ownership on the other.
2. Based on current information an estimated 100 tests per 100,000 population per day are needed (including both rapid and molecular tests) alongside significant sequencing for the detection of variants to support an adequate response to the pandemic. There are still significant gaps in ensuring this basic capacity in large numbers of LMICs and high levels of inequity continue to prevail and hamper access. The Council requested that further data from modelling and operations research will be collected in the coming period to further refine this target.
3. Surge of the Delta variant has highlighted the need for a concerted response which needs all three pillars, vaccines, therapeutics and diagnostics, to work in tandem on a multi-pronged response.
4. The Council stressed that access is an important issue and FIND needs to play a critical, catalytic role but watch out for duplication of efforts. FIND presented its role as coordination and facilitation with a wide range of stakeholders, and with a growing focus on national and local stakeholders.
5. Financing the ongoing response and the focus on testing within the existing financing mechanisms and priorities are challenging but will continue to remain critical with the evolving pandemic and longer term priorities. The Dx pillar (with the health systems pillar) are the most underfunded
6. It was highlighted that since local manufacturing is a big priority for other pillars, particularly the vaccine pillar, it is critical that we optimize these investments and find opportunities to leverage work across the pillars. The COVAX Task Force is deeply involved in local manufacturing discussions, and it was suggested that FIND discusses collaboration and possibilities of synergies.
7. An ACT-A review is underway and results and plans for 2022 will be presented in October at the Facilitation Council and at the next meeting.

Donor Roundtable and FIND's Strategy

A short update on FIND's ACT-A financing was provided followed by an update on non-COVID work. The key discussion points are summarized below.

1. The decision by Cepheid to withdraw OMNI was discussed. It was highlighted that this was a business decision from Cepheid who have enjoyed a monopoly position in the diagnostics space.
2. Learning lessons from this challenge, FIND will deploy a multi-pronged approach including improving its contracts to ensure stronger access provisions, milestones and controls during the development process as well as spur further competition in the market. This is already underway with the new RfPs being put out to invite developers to support directly competitive

products. Promising leads have been identified and a more detailed analysis including price analysis will be shared at the next meeting.

3. Norway informed the group that they are working closely with SDC, WHO and the NCD Alliance on diabetes and are formulating their strategy for the disease area. This is a priority NCD for FIND and close collaboration would be extremely beneficial.
4. FCDO will be handing over the G7 Presidency to Germany and are evaluating development priorities going forward. They emphasized the need for continued investment in testing alongside vaccines, therapeutics, local manufacturing and health systems. It was emphasised that testing has consistently yielded significant return on investments.
5. All Council members emphasised that they are determining their longer investment priorities in pandemic preparedness and testing will remain a critical pillar.
6. Ambassador Frutiger closed the session by thanking all the members and FIND team. He also announced SDC's further commitment to FIND in the form of core and ACT-A funding. The German Government also announced additional funding to FIND for TB and Buruli Ulcer.

Closure:

- The meeting ended on time at 13.30 CET.

Next Steps

- FIND should formulate expectations and direction for next year as Donor Council members are determining their long-term investments in pandemic preparedness. These will be presented in December
- FIND is requested to update the Donor Council on details of promising technologies and competition in near patient point-of-care molecular opportunities, identified through the RfP process that is now closed.
- FIND should get in touch with DFAT about AMR opportunities and provide language on testing for their use. They also offered to talk about outreach to New Zealand.
- FIND will provide in-depth information on activities and progresses on
 1. Addressing community based testing;
 2. Promote local manufacturing.
- Next call to be scheduled for 15 December 2021.