

REQUEST FOR PROPOSAL (RFP)
COVID-19: PROGRAMME MANAGEMENT SUPPORT FOR ANTIGEN RDT TRAINING

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1. LIST OF ACRONYMS AND DEFINITIONS:

ACT-Accelerator	Access to COVID-19 Tools Accelerator
Ag	Antigen
COVID-19	2019 novel coronavirus disease
RDT	Rapid diagnostic test
LMICs	Low- and middle-income countries
NAAT	Nucleic acid amplification technology
RFP	Request for proposal
SARS-CoV-2	Severe acute respiratory coronavirus 2
SOW	Scope of work

2. STATEMENT OF PURPOSE:

The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND), through the ACT-Accelerator, is seeking the services of an organization or group of organizations with a proven record of providing project and programme management to support the development and management of the request for proposals for the implementation and monitoring of training on SARS-CoV-2 Ag RDTs at the local level.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION:

An expanded and sustained focus on diagnostic testing for COVID-19 is crucial for an effective response to the pandemic. Testing supports clinical care, public health interventions, including distribution of vaccines, and economic reopening. Effective test-trace-isolate strategies are essential to keeping COVID-19 under control and to prevent future waves.

SARS-CoV-2 Ag-RDTs are rapid tests that can be used at the point of care, with results typically available in under 30 minutes. Ag-RDTs have the potential to greatly expand access to testing during COVID-19 and enable the timely implementation of public health and infection control measures. Given the urgent need to scale up testing during COVID-19, Ag-RDTs need to be rolled out rapidly over the coming weeks and months across a variety of settings. Although laboratory-based nucleic acid amplification tests (NAATs) continue to be the gold standard, a combination of different test types will be needed to expand testing capacity to meet demand for COVID-19 in all settings. SARS-CoV-2 Ag-RDTs can be incorporated into testing strategies where NAAT methods are not available, or turnaround time is too long to inform clinical decision-making and public health measures such as contact tracing. Prolonged turnaround times may be secondary to multiple factors, including limited human or financial resources, sample transport requirements, and reagent shortages. Ag-RDTs can both fill gaps in access to testing and alleviate pressure on laboratories performing NAAT, thereby reducing delays in diagnosis and optimizing use of available tools.

The ACT-Accelerator (ACT-A) is a global collaboration focused on accelerating the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. ACT-A aims to deliver 2 billion vaccine doses by the end of 2021, 245 million courses of treatment, and 800 million diagnostic

tests to low- and middle-income countries (LMICs). The diagnostics pillar of ACT-A is co-convened by FIND and the Global Fund. It aims to rapidly identify game-changing new diagnostics, and bring 800 million affordable, high quality tests to LMICs by 2022. ACT-A has secured affordable pricing for 120 million Ag-RDTs for LMICs at a maximum price of US\$ 5 per unit [over a 6-month period].

Training and supervision are critical components of Ag-RDT roll-out, to ensure quality testing is performed everywhere, especially as these tests are used in remote and non-clinical settings. Although Ag-RDTs may be considered 'easy to use', experience with other rapid tests, including HIV and malaria, have demonstrated that errors are common and can occur at all stages of the testing process, from sample collection to interpretation of results and linkage to appropriate patient management and decision-making.

Training materials and implementation guidance have been developed by WHO and FIND (<https://www.finddx.org/covid-19/rdt-imp/>) and are freely available in multiple languages. However, countries will need to tailor these materials to their local context, develop or revise national testing strategies, rapidly scale up testing to health workers who will perform testing, and monitor implementation. Similarly, as Ag-RDTs have only recently been introduced and country experience is still limited, monitoring of training and performance of testing during early introduction is critical to inform the evidence on national and global testing strategies.

4. OBJECTIVE

Through ACT-A, FIND plans to train at least 5000 healthcare workers to roll out Ag-RDTs in LMICs, and is looking for an organization or group of organizations to support FIND to:

- 1) Roll out training of end users in select LMICs, and
- 2) Track the uptake of Ag-RDT testing by trained users through the collection and reporting of key performance indicators.

5. SCOPE OF WORK

The programme will involve issuing a request for proposals to identify suitable local partners who will then implement the training at the local level, including engaging with ministries of health to revise and align the training with national testing strategies, and monitoring implementation of testing and impact. This programme is intended for direct implementation based on current WHO recommendations on the use of Ag-RDTs and is complementary to many ongoing initiatives, including clinical trials and operational research.

Detailed responsibilities will include:

- Contributing to the development of the overall programme strategic framework with FIND project personnel
- Managing the 'request for proposals' documents for country grantees, develop application criteria and manage the resulting applications in a systematic way to facilitate ease of assessment and evaluation

- Receiving, collating, and sorting applications into categories based on their compliance to required application criteria – filtering out non-compliant applications, working with largely compliant applications to meet requirements, and informing applicants of progress with their applications
- Managing the assessment committee in collaboration with the FIND team: preparing applications and providing them proactively to the assessment panel members; convening the assessment meeting; managing the proceedings of the assessment committee meeting; collating results and recording meeting proceedings reports; communicating results to applicants
- Working with grantees to refine grant concepts and activities under the overall programme strategic framework
- Developing grant and subcontract budgets in accordance with standard templates and in collaboration with the finance and operations and technical teams
- Gathering and verifying supporting documentation, as necessary
- Providing technical assistance (including remote trainings) to grantees and potential grantees during the programme development process and in the implementation process
- Managing the successful applicant(s)' contracting processes to conclusion and approval of applications, including obtaining approval from FIND
- Designing a monitoring and evaluation framework and conducting regular monitoring of grant activities and performance monitoring of grantees
- Ensuring that grant documentation is prepared in a timely fashion for review
- Monitoring grant and programme activity expenses against activity budgets
- Assessing performance of grantees and informing impact assessment of projects
- Preparing a report on lessons learned, including guidance on best practises for healthcare worker training on Ag-RDTs and impact

FIND is looking for an organization(s) with the following characteristics:

- Experience managing large-scale implementation programmes across multiple LMICs
- Ability to manage multiple small grants simultaneously (50-100 K USD), with ability to manage contracting to the highest standards and within short turnaround time
- Experience in grants management and budgeting, specifically in assuring procurement, disbursements, logistics, and programmatic aspects are implemented on-time and according to approved specifications
- Strong monitoring and evaluation experience
- Proven experience in knowledge management – compilation and analysis of project findings into best practises and implementation guidance
- Ability to work with various partner institutions, including international and local NGOs, governmental entities, and the private sector
- Familiar with grants management rules and regulations

6. DELIVERABLES:

- Template documents for RFP launch and proposal review
- Subawards to 10-15 implementing partners
- Template M&E documents to assess training rollout
- Final report on project implementation

7. BUDGET AND TIMELINES:

The total budget for this work is up to US\$ 500,000 to the programme management support partner(s) to conduct operations. The successful organization(s) will manage multiple subawards between US\$50,000–100,000 of up to a total for subawards of US\$1,000,000.

Project timelines is as follows:

Activity	Date
Organization(s) selected to manage RFP and training implementation with FIND	Mar 2021
RFP for local partners (led by selected organization(s)) launched	May 2021
Local partners selected	July 2021
Implementation of training	Aug 2021
Project completion	Dec 2021

8. REQUIREMENTS FOR PROPOSAL PREPARATION:

Organization(s) are asked to include the following in their proposal:

- 1) Completed proposal document (PDF, max 5 pages, appendices do not count in the proposal length). Proposals must include the following categories:

a. Organization information

- Name, address/location
- Mission statement
- Organization structure
- Geographical presence
- Relevant experience

b. Previous experience in managing multi-site projects

- i. List and provide at least two (2) detailed examples of relevant experience managing similar projects that demonstrate the company ability to satisfactorily perform the work in accordance with the requirements of this RFP)
- ii. Include reference contract information

c. Project proposal, which should include:

- i. Rationale
 - Problem Statement

- What Can Be Done
 - How Organization Will Successfully Execute the SOW
 - Risks and Mitigation Strategies
- ii. Strategy
- Outline of the approach for contract implementation
 - Team members and CVs (indicate relevant members of the team that will be part of this project)
 - a. If applying as a consortium of organizations, a description of roles and responsibilities should be included.
- iii. Timetable of activities

- 2) **Financial proposal** (up to US\$500,000) in Excel/XLS file format supplied by FIND and using the [template distributed with the RFP](#)

Proposals must be received by FIND at the email address specified in section 12 below no later than **1 March 2021** before **9h00 CET**. Any proposal received by FIND after the closing date for submission may be rejected.

9. EVALUATION AND AWARD PROCESS:

Submissions will be evaluated on the following:

- Organizational profile (30%): Submissions will be evaluated on their organizational strategy, experience, and capability as they pertain to project and programme management in the global health domain.
- Previous experience (20%): Submissions will be evaluated based on similar projects conducted by the organization, particularly those with partners in LMICs.
- Project proposal (40%): Submissions will be evaluated on how the project proposal aligns with the statement of work, the strategy for implementation, and the quality of the team that will work on the project.
- Financial proposal (10%): Submissions will be evaluated on the quality of the financial proposal for this RFP as well as the transparency and breakdown of all financial elements comprising the proposal. Submissions should provide as much information as possible to explain their proposed budget.

10. CONFIDENTIALITY:

FIND considers any proposal received under the RFP as confidential. If required, FIND can sign a Confidentiality Disclosure Agreement (CDA) prior to proposal submission. FIND will not disclose the proposal to third parties without the prior written agreement of the proposal submitter. Review of proposals will be carried out by FIND, all members of which are also under confidentiality and who will

recuse themselves 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.

11. PROCESS SCHEDULE:

Timetable	Date
RFP release date	12 Feb 2021
RFP question period until	26 Feb 2021
Submission of RFP deadline	1 March 2021 (by 9h00 CET)
Provider selected	Mar 2021
Project start	Apr 2021

12. POINTS OF CONTACT FOR FUTURE CORRESPONDENCE:

Email for submission of all queries: RFP_ET@finddx.org (use subject: FIND RFP Ref RP21-0001).

The project team at FIND will respond in writing (via email only) to any request for clarification to the RFP that is received by the deadline indicated above.