

On World NTD Day, over US\$7 million new funding announced to expand efforts towards sleeping sickness elimination in nine African nations

- New funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation will build on the success of the Trypa-NO! partnership – a project led by FIND, the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD), and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) – that has supported Chad, Côte d'Ivoire, Guinea and Uganda to progress towards elimination of sleeping sickness
- The funding will support cost-effective, sustainable strategies to develop and maintain post-elimination surveillance programmes, while also enabling expansion of activities into Angola, Central African Republic, Sierra Leone and South Sudan
- Additional funding from the Canton of Geneva will further enable the continuation of support for national elimination programmes in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola

GENEVA, SWITZERLAND; LIVERPOOL, UK & MARSEILLE, MONTPELLIER, FRANCE – 30 January 2023. On World Neglected Tropical Disease (NTD) Day, FIND, the global alliance for diagnostics, together with the French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development (IRD) and the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM), today announced an award of nearly US\$6.8 million from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation to extend the work of the Trypa-NO! partnership for a further 3 years.

The Trypa-NO! partnership supports the elimination of the *gambiense* form of [human African trypanosomiasis](#) (HAT), also known as sleeping sickness. To date, the Trypa-NO! partnership has supported Côte d'Ivoire and Uganda to achieve elimination as a public health problem. In addition, the partnership has been working with Chad and Guinea, both of which are on track to achieve this milestone soon. The new funding will ensure that each of these four countries has a sustainable, long-term strategy to independently monitor the disease and achieve full interruption of transmission. The grant will also allow Trypa-NO! to begin or expand work in four other nations: Angola, the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone and South Sudan.

FIND has also received new funding from the Canton of Geneva in Switzerland to complement and augment activities in Democratic Republic of the Congo and Angola, focused on integrating screening and testing at the primary care and community levels, raising awareness among healthcare workers and communities and developing strategies for the two countries to combine learnings and coordinate action. This support brings the total new funding committed today, World NTD Day, for sleeping sickness elimination to over US\$7 million.

For the [past two decades](#), the World Health Organization (WHO) has recognized the elimination of HAT as a major priority. This disease, transmitted by the bite of the tsetse fly, can be fatal if

missed and left untreated. HAT is endemic to 36 sub-Saharan African countries and primarily affects people living in remote and rural areas, which has made monitoring the disease a challenge. Fortunately, coordinated efforts by national programmes, supported by public-private partnerships, NGOs, donors and academia have made the elimination of HAT a realistic target. From an estimated 30,000 cases reported [at the turn of the century](#) to fewer than 1,000 cases annually since 2018, the incidence of sleeping sickness has dropped dramatically in recent years, in particular in Western and Central Africa, where the *gambiense* form is found.

The Trypa-NO! partnership between FIND, IRD and LSTM, launched in 2016, supports country efforts to stamp out sleeping sickness by integrating diagnosis, treatment and tsetse fly control. The partnership has deployed innovative tools such rapid diagnostic tests and supported capacity building and training of healthcare workers in remote areas to enable them to screen for HAT more effectively. The project also uses community-level diagnostic information to help target its screening activities and the use of panels of cloth impregnated with insecticide (called “tiny targets”) to attract and kill tsetse flies.

The new Trypa-NO! grant allows the partnership to build on past successes and move towards a new phase of support for several countries over the next 3 years. With HAT numbers low and falling, Chad, Côte d’Ivoire, Guinea and Uganda are now pivoting towards a goal of zero new infections – adapting current approaches and implementing country-specific, tailored strategies that are sustainable, integrated and cost-effective, with strengthened country-level data management for strategic decision making. Trypa-NO! support will be gradually scaled down.

In addition, by beginning or expanding efforts in Angola, the Central African Republic, Sierra Leone and South Sudan, the Trypa-NO! partnership will help these countries take steps to eliminate the disease and prevent its reintroduction into areas that have dramatically cut the number of cases.

Dr Mamadou Camara, coordinator of the HAT National Control Programme in Guinea, said: “For the Ministry of Health in Guinea, the renewal of Trypa-NO! is very good news. Not only because it validates all the efforts made with the partnership of IRD for the last 10 years, but it will also galvanize the team to progress toward the goal of interrupting transmission. The strategy of combining medical and vector control was good, but it will need to be adapted to the low prevalence context. Further integration of activities in the peripheral health system and at the community level and building synergies with other NTD programmes will be key to achieve this goal.”

Dr Sylvain Biéler, Principal Scientist in charge of the HAT portfolio at FIND and Coordinator of the Trypa-NO! Partnership said: “The continued support to Trypa-NO! will ensure that more countries can benefit from tailored elimination strategies that use the latest tools that have been developed for diagnosis, treatment, vector control and data management. Building on recent successes and on the strong partnerships that have been established, we are committed to working with countries so that the WHO elimination targets are met, and HAT soon becomes a disease of the past.”

Dr Andrew Hope, Senior Programme Manager leading the Tiny Targets portfolio at LSTM said “Achieving elimination of sleeping sickness as a public health problem in Côte d’Ivoire and Uganda were huge successes for the Trypa-NO! partnership. The next phase is critical in ensuring that these gains are sustained and that we continue to drive towards elimination in other affected countries.”

Professor Joseph Ndung’u, Executive Director of FIND in Kenya, said: “We have never been closer to putting an end to this devastating disease, and we warmly congratulate country leadership for their dedication and commitment to stamping it out. As these countries shift to cost-effective strategies that can not only achieve but also sustain disease elimination, we are also building an evidence base that can help inform elimination efforts in other countries and ensure that every last patient can be linked to treatment.”

The Trypa-NO! programme extension will commence early in 2023 and run for 3 years. Support from FIND towards elimination efforts in Angola and the DRC will continue until 2025. The work is funded by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and the Canton of Geneva through grants to FIND.

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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 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. Founded in Geneva, Switzerland, in 2003, we have regional hubs in Kenya, India, South Africa and Viet Nam. With partners across the public and private sectors, we are working to make sure that everyone who needs a test can get one. For more information, please visit www.finddx.org.

About IRD – French National Research Institute for Sustainable Development

IRD is a multidisciplinary French public research organization committed to equitable partnerships with countries in the Global South for nearly 80 years. As a contributor to the achievement of the international development agenda, its research priorities are aligned with the implementation of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Together, scientists and the Institute's partners propose concrete solutions to the global challenges facing societies and the planet. This win-win relationship makes science and innovation one of the primary levers for development. IRD has been involved since the beginning of the Trypa-No partnership, through its joint IRD-Cirad research Unit “Intertryp” dedicated to NTDs.
<https://en.ird.fr/>.

About LSTM

Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine (LSTM) is the world's oldest centre of excellence in tropical medicine and international public health. It has been engaged in the fight against infectious, debilitating and disabling diseases since 1898 and continues that tradition today with a research portfolio over £320 million and a teaching programme attracting students from over 65 countries. For further information please visit www.lstmed.ac.uk.

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