

Netherlands Commits €30M for New, Better Diagnostics, Drugs and Vaccines to Combat Deadly Global TB Pandemic

Funding Comes as Mounting Threat of Drug Resistant TB Prompts Calls for Increased Investment in Development of New Tools

PARIS (Nov. 2, 2006) – Responding to a tuberculosis (TB) pandemic that is growing more threatening and deadly, the Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS) today announced more than €30 million investment in three nonprofit “Product Development Partnerships” (PDPs) that are leading the global effort to develop new TB drugs, vaccines and diagnostics. This is the largest investment that any single country has made to research and development of new tools to combat the pandemic. Over a four year period, DGIS is investing:

- €18.4 million in the Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation for preclinical work and clinical trials of two of the world’s most promising vaccine candidates to develop a more effective TB vaccine.
- €8 million in the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) to expand its portfolio of new, novel TB drug discovery projects; develop tools and processes to speed clinical development; and accelerate efforts at the country and global level for the introduction of new TB drug regimens.
- €4 million in the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) to accelerate the development, evaluation and demonstration of rapid diagnostic tests to detect TB in sputum and urine.

The announcement was made as experts discussed critical TB issues at the World Conference on Lung Health meeting convened in Paris this week by the International Union Against Tuberculosis and Lung Disease.

Killing nearly 2 million people per year – approximately one person every 15 seconds – TB is the second deadliest infectious disease behind AIDS. Mounting drug resistance, including multi- and extremely drug resistant TB (MDR-TB and XDR-B) coupled with a growing number of patients co-infected with TB and HIV heightens the need for immediate action and development of new tools to control this emerging pandemic. Urgent action is required and substantial investment from donors is needed from the international donor community.

“We highly appreciate the Dutch government’s support in helping FIND accelerate its work in developing affordable and rapid diagnostics for poverty-related diseases, especially at a time when XDR and MDR-TB require our urgent response,” said Dr. Giorgio Roscigno, Chief Executive Officer of FIND.

“This is a tremendous affirmation of the Netherlands’ recognition of the vital need to develop new TB vaccines, drugs and diagnostics through Product Development Partnerships (PDPs). Combining the best expertise of the public and the private sectors,

we will one day eliminate a disease that has plagued humankind throughout history and is now devastating entire countries," said Dr. Jerald Sadoff, Aeras' President and CEO.

"The Netherlands' prompt response with a strong investment in TB new tools research and development comes at a critical time, as we face the deadly spectre of a disease that has been ignored for too long," said Dr. Maria Freire, CEO and President of the TB Alliance. "It is crucial for other governments to follow the Dutch example in what is literally a race to save millions of lives."

Despite the best efforts to prevent, detect and cure TB, new tools are imperative to radically transform the fight against this disease, and halt the threat of new, more deadly drug resistant strains such as MDR-TB and XDR-TB.

Harnessing the collective resources of government, industry, academics, and philanthropies, PDPs are leading the fight to develop new and better tools to fight TB. In the past five years alone, TB Alliance, FIND and Aeras have created the largest pipeline of new TB drugs, diagnostics and vaccines in history.

- Today's drugs are **more than 40 years** old and must be taken for 6-9 months. Erratic or inconsistent treatment breeds drug resistance. TB Alliance is developing new TB drugs that will dramatically shorten treatment time, improve treatment of latent TB, works against drug-resistant TB, and works safely with HIV anti-retrovirals.
- Today's most commonly used diagnostic is **over a century old**, takes a week to give a diagnosis. In cases of drug sensitivity testing it takes several weeks to get results, costing patients' valuable time in receiving treatment. FIND is developing more rapid and accurate point-of-care diagnostics and rapid tests to detect drug-resistant forms of TB.
- Today's vaccine is **more than 85 years old**, provides only marginal protection for infants and provides very little, if any, protection beyond childhood. Aeras is developing new, safe and effective vaccine regimens that prevent TB in children, adolescents and adults, targeted for licensure in 7-10 years.

DGIS made the investment as part of a program to support 'Public-Private Partnerships for research into and the development of medicines, vaccines and diagnostic aids in the domain of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria.' This is the fourth grant to the TB Alliance from DGIS and the first grants from the Dutch government to Aeras and FIND.

About the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is the channel through which the Dutch Government communicates with foreign governments and international organisations. It coordinates and carries out Dutch foreign policy. Through its Directorate General for International Development Cooperation (DGIS) it channels and coordinates development aid.

The Ministry has two halves: its headquarters in The Hague and its missions abroad (embassies, consulates, and permanent representations). The five key objectives of Dutch foreign policy are:

- to promote the international order;
- to promote international peace, security and stability;
- to promote European integration;
- to promote sustainable poverty reduction;
- to maintain and promote bilateral relations.

About the Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics

The Foundation for Innovative New Diagnostics (FIND) is a leading non-profit organization dedicated solely to the development of rapid, accurate and affordable diagnostic tests for poverty-related diseases, such as sleeping sickness and tuberculosis, in the developing world. FIND was launched at the World Health Assembly in May 2003 as a non-profit Swiss foundation. FIND receives funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, USAID and the European Union. FIND collaborates with numerous public and private organizations and research institutes. FIND is based in Geneva, Switzerland. For more information, please visit www.finddiagnostics.org.

About the Global Alliance for TB Drug Development

The Global Alliance for TB Drug Development (TB Alliance) is a not-for-profit, product development partnership accelerating the discovery and/or development of affordable, new, TB drugs that will shorten treatment, be effective against drug resistant strains, be appropriate for patients with HIV-TB co-infection, and improve treatment of latent infection. Working with public and private partners world wide, it is leading the development of the first, most comprehensive portfolio of TB drug candidates in decades. The TB Alliance operates with the support of the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Rockefeller Foundation, the UK Department for International Development (DFID), the United States Agency for International Development (USAID), the Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs (DGIS), and Irish Aid. For more information on TB Drug Development and the TB Alliance, please visit www.tballiance.org.

About Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation

The Aeras Global TB Vaccine Foundation is a PPP leading an international effort to develop new and more effective tuberculosis (TB) vaccines for the world, and ensure their availability to all who need them as rapidly as possible. Aeras develops candidate vaccines in its own laboratory and actively pursues and helps fund joint development activities with other leading TB vaccine developers around the world. Aeras' goal is to develop, test, characterize, license, manufacture and distribute at least one new TB vaccine within 10 years. Aeras is supported by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation and has received funding from the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the Government of Denmark, as well as the Netherlands. For more information please visit www.aeras.org

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