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International Pathogen Surveillance Network launches catalytic grant fund for pathogen genomics

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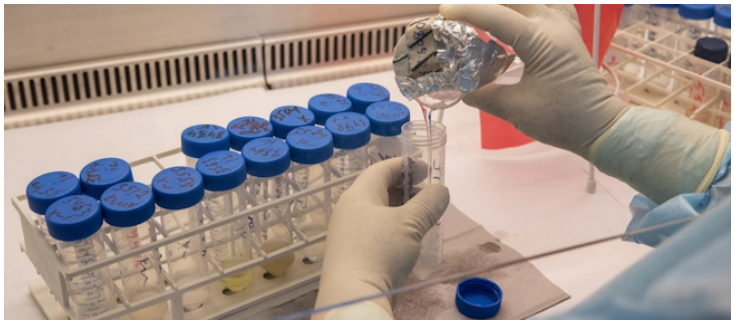
Identify and track pathogens to prevent and respond to outbreaks



The World Health Organization (WHO) has announced $4 million in funding from donors to create a catalytic grant fund for organisations working in pathogen genomic surveillance.

The fund will support projects across the world, particularly in low- and middle-income countries (LMICs), to pilot projects and in doing so, create an evidence base for how to quickly scale-up pathogen genomic surveillance. The results of this kind of surveillance help countries and the world to respond more quickly and effectively to prevent outbreaks and to respond to them.

The initial grants for the catalytic fund have been provided by the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, The Rockefeller Foundation and Wellcome, to support the International Pathogen Surveillance Network (IPSN). IPSN is a new global network of pathogen surveillance actors convened by WHO through a Secretariat at the WHO Hub for Pandemic and Epidemic Intelligence in Berlin. The fund is hosted by the UN Foundation on behalf of the IPSN.

The fund is intended to support equity of engagement across IPSN members and provide catalytic funding for LMICs to scale-up competencies in pathogen genomic surveillance.

Pathogen genomics analyses the genetic code of viruses, bacteria and other disease-causing organisms to understand, in conjunction with other data, how infectious they are, how deadly they are, and how they spread. With this information, scientists and public health officials can identify and track pathogens to prevent and respond to outbreaks as part of a broader disease surveillance system, and to develop treatments and vaccines.