



World Health  
Organization

# Update from the Secretariat Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens

14 Oct 2021

# Scientific Advisory Group on Novel Origins (SAGO)

**In the context of the continued threat of the emergence or re-emergence of pathogens with epidemic and pandemic potential**

## The Need

- A global framework to study future emerging and re-emerging pathogens, including
  - Comprehensive and coordinated studies
  - A holistic approach to study the emergence of high threat zoonotic pathogens including the animal human interface, environmental studies, biosafety and biosecurity
  - An established framework for studying emerging pathogens where and when they emerge

## Addressing a gap

- A scientific advisory group to advise WHO on technical and scientific considerations regarding origins of emerging and re-emerging pathogens:

## The Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO)

# Functions of the SAGO

1. To advise WHO on the development of a global framework to define and guide studies into the origins of emerging and re-emerging pathogens of epidemic and pandemic potential
2. To advise WHO on prioritizing studies and field investigations into the origins of emerging and re-emerging pathogens of epidemic and pandemic potential, in accordance with the framework described above
3. To advise WHO on the development of a detailed work plan of the SAGO

## Functions of the SAGO (continued)

### 4. In the context of SARS-CoV-2;

- a) To provide the WHO Secretariat with an independent evaluation of all available scientific and technical findings from global studies on the origins of SARS-CoV-2;
- b) To advise the WHO Secretariat regarding developing, monitoring and supporting the next series of studies into the origins of SARS-CoV-2, including rapid advice on WHO's operational plans to implement the next series of global studies into the origins of SARS-CoV-2, as outlined in the Joint WHO-China Global Study of Origins of SARS-CoV-2: China Part report published on 30 March 2021, and advise on additional studies as needed; and

5. To provide additional advice and support to WHO, as requested by the WHO Secretariat, which may include participation in future WHO-international missions to study the origins of SARS-CoV-2 or for other emerging pathogens.

# SAGO - Composition

- Aim was to include 25 members
- Members must have significant expertise in one or more of the following technical disciplines:
  - infectious disease epidemiology and conducting epidemiological studies, field research, virology, ecology, molecular epidemiology, sero-epidemiology, medicine, bioinformatics, outbreak analytics, health statistics, microbiology, veterinary medicine, food safety, bacteriology, environmental science, biosafety, biosecurity, occupational health and safety, or laboratory safety and security, ethics and social sciences, or other activities related to the emergence or re-emergence of pathogens of pandemic potential.
- Geographic representation, gender balance, declaration of interest
- Members of the SAGO shall be appointed to serve for a period of 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment

# Proposed Members Announced on 13 October 2021

- Open call 20 August -17 September 2021, open 3 additional days to encourage further applicants from AFRO and SEARO
- >700 applications from >100 countries, the 26 proposed SAGO members come from all six WHO regions and represent diverse technical expertise and experiences around the world
- The composition of the SAGO reflects geographic and gender diversity
- Next steps:
  - As per WHO processes, there will now be a two-week public consultation period for WHO to receive feedback on the proposed SAGO members and set in place the modalities for the SAGO's first meeting, which is planned to take place following this consultation period
  - The final membership to the SAGO is subject to the above-mentioned public consultation period and relevant WHO practices and procedures
  - First meeting shortly following public consultation period

## Important links

- **Main Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO) page:** [https://www.who.int/groups/scientific-advisory-group-on-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens-\(sago\)](https://www.who.int/groups/scientific-advisory-group-on-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens-(sago))
- **WHO Announces Proposed Members of its SAGO** [https://www.who.int/news/item/13-10-2021-who-announces-proposed-members-of-its-scientific-advisory-group-for-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens-\(sago\)](https://www.who.int/news/item/13-10-2021-who-announces-proposed-members-of-its-scientific-advisory-group-for-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens-(sago))
- **Public notice of proposed new Scientific Advisory Group for the Origins of Novel Pathogens (SAGO) members** [https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/public-notice-and-comment-on-proposed-new-scientific-advisory-group-for-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens-\(sago\)-members](https://www.who.int/news-room/articles-detail/public-notice-and-comment-on-proposed-new-scientific-advisory-group-for-the-origins-of-novel-pathogens-(sago)-members)
- Accompanying editorial **“Preparing for Disease X”** <https://www.science.org/doi/10.1126/science.abm7796>

LEGEND

Epidemic

Pandemic

MAJOR EPIDEMIC THREATS SINCE 2000



COVID-19

Ebola (DRC)

Yellow fever (Central Africa, Brazil)

Zika

H7N9

Ebola (West Africa)

H1N1

H5N1

MERS

SARS

Cholera (Haiti)

Cholera (Yemen)

Plague (Madagascar)

INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION EFFORTS TO FIGHT EPIDEMIC THREATS

GAVI

Gavi, the Vaccine Alliance, is an international organisation that was created in 2000 to improve access to new and underused vaccines for children living in the world's poorest countries.

GOARN

The Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN) is a technical collaboration of existing institutions and networks who pool human and technical resources for the rapid identification, confirmation and response to outbreaks of international importance.

IHR (2005)

The International Health Regulations (2005) or IHR (2005) are an international law which helps countries work together to save lives and livelihoods caused by the international spread of diseases and other health risks. The IHR (2005) aim to prevent, protect against, control and respond to the international spread of disease while avoiding unnecessary interference with international traffic and trade.

PIP Framework

The Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework brings together Member States, industry, other stakeholders and WHO to implement a global approach to pandemic influenza preparedness and response. Its key goals include:

- to improve and strengthen the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential; and
- to increase the access of developing countries to vaccines and other pandemic related supplies.

PIP Review

IHR Review

R&D Blueprint

R&D Blueprint is a global strategy and preparedness plan that allows the rapid activation of research and development activities during epidemics. Its aim is to fast-track the availability of effective tests, vaccines and medicines that can be used to save lives and avert large scale crises.

Access to COVID-19 Tools (ACT) Accelerator

is a global collaboration to accelerate the development, production and equitable access to new COVID-19 diagnostics, therapeutics and vaccines.

ACT Accelerator

# Timeline

Major infectious threats in the 21st Century & collaboration mechanisms to fight against them