

Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG) launched, coordinated by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) along with MoH&FW, ICMR, and CSIR

The consortium will ascertain the status of new
variant of SARS-CoV-2 (SARS-CoV-2 VUI
202012/01) in the country

INSACOG will have a high level Inter-Ministerial
Steering Committee; it will have a Scientific Advisory
Group for scientific and technical guidance: Dr
RenuSwarup, Secretary DBT

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The government has launched the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomic Consortia (INSACOG), comprising 10 labs namely DBT-NIBMG Kalyani, DBT-ILS Bhubaneswar, ICMR-NIV Pune, DBT-NCCS Pune, CSIR-CCMB Hyderabad, DBT-CDFD Hyderabad, DBT-InSTEM/ NCBS Bengaluru, NIMHANS Bengaluru, CSIR-IGIB Delhi, and NCDC Delhi.

The overall aim of the Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium is to monitor the genomic variations in the SARS-CoV-2 on a regular basis through a multi-laboratory network. This vital research consortium will also assist in developing potential vaccines in the future. The consortium will ascertain the status of new variant of SARS-CoV-2 (SARS-CoV-2 VUI 202012/01) in the country, establish a sentinel surveillance for early detection of genomic variants with public health implication, and determine the genomic variants in the unusual events/trends (super-spreader events, high mortality/morbidity trend areas etc.).

Dr RenuSwarup, Secretary DBT, informed that INSACOG will have a high level Inter-Ministerial Steering Committee which will provide guidance and oversight to the consortium specially for policy matters and it will have a Scientific Advisory Group for scientific and technical guidance.

Coordinated by Department of Biotechnology (DBT) along with MoH&FW, ICMR, and CSIR, the strategy and roadmap of the National SARS CoV2 Genome Sequencing Consortium (INSACOG) has been prepared.

In the backdrop of the emergence of a newly identified variant of the novel SARS-CoV-2 Virus in the UK, South Africa and some other parts of the world, the Government has taken action to accelerate Virus Surveillance, Genome Sequencing and Characterization. A new variant, which that was found in the UK, especially in the London region, is defined by multiple mutations in the Spike region, as well as

mutations in other genomic regions. As per DBTDBT, these mutations are rapidly increasing the number of variants of the virus. This variant is significantly more transmissible than previously circulating variants, with an estimated potential to increase the reproductive number with an estimated increased transmissibility of up to 70%, it said.

The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) will monitor the genomic variations on a regular basis through the multi-laboratory network. Knowledge generated through this vital research consortium will also assist in developing diagnostics and potential therapeutics and vaccines in the future.

DBT-NIBMG as the Co-ordinating Unit of Genome Sequencing Consortium and will closely work with a Nodal Unit of NCDC activities like SOPs, data annotation, data analysis, data release etc. NCDC will maintain a database of all samples of the new variants of public health significance. The data will be epidemiologically analysed, interpreted and shared with state/district for investigation, contact tracing and planning response strategies. All the genomic sequencing data will be maintained in a National database at two sites, DBT-NIBMG, Kalyani and CSIR-IGIB, New Delhi. The virus isolated will be deposited in the notified SARS-CoV-2 virus repository etc RCB, Faridabad and NIV, Pune

NB/KGS/(DBT inputs)

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