

SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium

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The Indian SARS-CoV-2 Genomics Consortium (INSACOG) was set up for genomic surveillance of SARS-CoV-2 in India. The consortium involves ten Regional Genome Sequencing Laboratories (RGSLs) namely NIBMG Kalyani, ILS Bhubaneswar, ICMR-NIV Pune, NCCS Pune, CSIR-CCMB Hyderabad, CDFD Hyderabad, InStem/NCBS Bengaluru, NIMHANS Bengaluru, CSIR-IGIB Delhi, and NCDC Delhi. The RGSLs are currently utilizing their internal funds and resources for undertaking the activities of the consortium. The proposal for sanction of fund is under the financial appraisal process in the Department of Biotechnology.

In INSACOG, 10 laboratories were designated in India for Whole Genome Sequencing (WGS) with the objectives: to ascertain the current status of new variant of SARS COV-2 in the country; to establish a sentinel surveillance for early detection of genomic variants with public health implication; to determine the genomic variants in the unusual events/trends (super spreader events, high mortality/ morbidity trend areas etc).

It was initially proposed to sequence five percent of all positive samples from each state in order to identify potential outbreaks and related strains as part of continuous surveillance with priority given to COVID-19 laboratories/ hospitals in urban areas and tertiary care District Hospitals as per the defined Standard Operating Procedure (SOP). As of 10th March 2021, a total of 19,092 RT-PCR positive samples for SARS CoV-2 have been received from various states/UTs (across the 10 designated RGSLs), in which 4869 samples have been processed. Among the processed samples, 284 samples have been detected to be positive for the 'UK strain' and 11 samples positive for the 'South African strain' and 1 sample positive for the 'Brazil strain'. The details regarding number of samples received for sequencing since the launch of the consortium till the 10th March has been provided in the Annexure-I.

State/UT-wise distribution of samples

State/UT	Total Number of Samples Received for Sequencing
Andaman & Nicobar Islands (UT)	80
Andhra Pradesh	449
Assam	80
Bihar	41
Chandigarh (UT)	180
Chhattisgarh	173
Dadra & Nagar Haveli & Daman & Diu (UT)	5
Delhi (UT)	1232
Goa	65
Gujarat	519
Haryana	1183

Himachal Pradesh	539
Jammu & Kashmir (UT)	195
Jharkhand	146
Karnataka	137
Kerala	5191
Ladakh (UT)	13
Madhya Pradesh	335
Maharashtra	2826
Manipur	81
Meghalaya	102
Mizoram	149
Odisha	682
Puducherry (UT)	5
Punjab	1174
Rajasthan	1963
Sikkim	88
Tamil Nadu	102
Telangana	377
Tripura	131
Uttar Pradesh	85
Uttarakhand	181
West Bengal	583
Total	19092

This information was given by Dr. Harsh Vardhan, Union Minister for Science & Technology, Earth Sciences and Health & Family Welfare in a written reply in Lok Sabha today.

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