

PREZODE governance

Terms of reference

PREZODE members agree on Terms of Reference (ToRs) describing the governance of PREZODE and its functioning.

Becoming and being a member of PREZODE is not legally binding and does not imply any financial commitment.

Introduction

PREZODE is an international initiative with a central aim to foster research and international cooperation to prevent the emergence of zoonotic diseases, while ensuring ecosystem services, food security and sustainable livelihoods for the poorest communities. The PREZODE Initiative is a dynamic network for sharing innovative knowledge and a resource center for decision-makers enabling the implementation of risk-reduction public policies and actions to reduce pandemic risks. Launched in January 2021, during the One Planet Summit, the initiative is supported by several member countries, by the European Commission and the Quadripartite Collaboration for One Health (FAO, UNEP, WHO, WOA).

Goals and main outcomes

The PREZODE Initiative aims to improve the understanding of the mechanisms leading to zoonotic disease emergence in socio-ecosystems, to identify the main biological, ecological and socio-economic drivers influencing the risk of emergence and the capacity of human societies to respond to them. The PREZODE Initiative will strengthen and integrate knowledge, innovation, capacity building and operational actions to reduce risk and rapidly detect the emergence of zoonotic diseases in countries and globally. It will deploy academic research, cross-sectoral collaboration in the field, and engagement of operational actors on the frontline of epidemics - to consider prevention strategies against emerging risks, in coherence with the recommendations of the IPBES report on Biodiversity and Pandemics (IPBES-2020).

The PREZODE Initiative will combine:

- An integrated One Health scientific framework for the implementation and coordination of research programs, surveillance networks and operational projects to maximize their impact.
- A platform for sharing knowledge from past, current and future projects and capitalizing on activities in different regions of the world.
- A resource center available for decision-makers to enable the definition and implementation of public policies aimed at reducing the risk of zoonotic infectious diseases emergence.

Membership

Any State, legal entity or group of organizations having or willing to have activities related to the One Health approach and to the prevention of zoonotic diseases can become a member of the PREZODE initiative.

- Becoming and being a member is voluntary and free of charge;
- The first step to apply for a membership is to sign the PREZODE declaration of intent;

- The PREZODE Secretariat will contact applicants having signed the PREZODE declaration of intent to check their eligibility and to propose their membership for decision by the GA.

Eligible applicants will automatically get the status of observers before endorsement of their membership by the annual GA meeting following their application.

PREZODE members agree to:

- Support the goals of PREZODE,
- Endorse its core values, as stated in the declaration of intent,
- Express their agreement with the Terms of reference adopted by the Initiative,
- Contribute to PREZODE's goals with local, national, regional, and/or international activities,
- Communicate about their activities and plans with PREZODE and its members,
- Participate in knowledge sharing and capacity building activities,
- Explore possibilities for cooperation and joint actions with other members.

Engagement and participation

Members are entitled and encouraged to:

- Actively participate in general meetings and working groups, to initiate projects and networks, thereby contributing to PREZODE,
- Share information and data made available through PREZODE platforms and the PREZODE website on the basis of bilateral or individual agreements established for this purpose,
- Share information about research, monitoring and operational activities supporting PREZODE's goals,
- Become ambassadors of PREZODE in networks, conferences and events related to its goals.

Membership of other initiatives, projects and programs

The PREZODE Initiative forms a network to facilitate and strengthen interactions across member organizations, including existing and future initiatives, projects and programs.

Becoming a member of PREZODE is in no way exclusive. Community building and synergies between projects, programs and initiatives are at the core of PREZODE.

Collaboration principles

Membership is based on mutual understanding and on the view that sharing contrasted viewpoints is essential for achieving PREZODE's goals. By joining, members agree and commit to the following collaboration principles:

- All members have equal rights and duties,
- Collaboration among members is based on trust and absence of discrimination,
- Meetings among members are held following Chatham House Rules, unless agreed otherwise,
- Traditional, local, and indigenous peoples' knowledge systems are respected,
- Conflicts of interest are communicated with transparency as they arise.

Ending membership

A member may withdraw from PREZODE at any time by giving notice in writing to the Secretariat. Such notice will be effective upon 90 days after the date of receipt by the Secretariat.

Decision to put an end to a membership by the GA occurs in case of:

- repeated or serious actions contrary to the interests of PREZODE, or
- repeated violations against values and collaboration principles of the membership.

When a member who leaves PREZODE for any reason holds an elected position within PREZODE's bodies, the position is re-opened for election as soon as possible.

Organization

The governance is governed by 3 main bodies:

1. The General Assembly (GA), reviews and adopts the strategy and the deliverables of the initiative based on proposals elaborated by the Steering Committee.
2. The Steering Committee (SC) proposes a strategy and time bound deliverables to the GA and oversees the implementation of the initiative. Part of the SC members represent PREZODE's world regions.
3. The Donors Committee (DC) gathers representatives of public and private donors allocating funds to PREZODE related projects and programs. It mobilizes resources in support of the initiative and secures commitment of funds for research and for operational activities

These three bodies are supported by the Secretariat (S), which coordinates and implements the day-to-day activities of the PREZODE initiative, and by two additional advisory bodies:

- An independent Scientific Advisory Board (SAB) providing scientific and technical recommendations to the SC and to the GA;
- An independent Ethics Committee (EC) providing advice on ethics, biosafety and biosecurity issues in the field of prevention of emerging zoonotic diseases, as well as advice on any ethical issue connected to PREZODE membership and activities.

To guarantee the independence of each body, it is precluded to belong to more than one body, except for the General Assembly.

General Assembly

Aims and Activities

The General Assembly (GA) is the body in charge of reviewing and adopting the orientations and deliverables prepared by the Steering Committee.

In particular, it will:

- adopt the governance and its terms of reference,
- adopt the Strategic Agenda,
- adopt annual work-plans and budgets,
- adopt other strategic orientations,
- reviews progress of the initiative and provides overall guidance,
- accept or exclude members as specified in Membership section above.

In addition, the GA will have the possibility to make proposals for new initiatives or complementary activities to be taken up and further elaborated by the Steering Committee.

Finally, the GA will be in charge of electing its President and Vice-president.

Composition

The GA is composed of one representative for each member.

The GA is chaired by a President and a Vice-president.

Roles of the President and Vice-president of the GA

The President of the GA shall chair meetings of the GA. The President may be assisted by the Vice-president, who may stand in for the president if necessary.

The President and Vice-president shall:

- advise, on behalf of the GA, the SC and Secretariat on how the GA decisions should be implemented in between meetings of the GA;
- represent the PREZODE initiative in meetings of similar status, in bilateral and multilateral relations;
- contribute to the prestige and influence of PREZODE in the international arena;
- facilitate connections to governments, regional and international organizations at highest levels.

Election

President and Vice-president are elected by members of the GA among the representatives of the signatory countries for a 2-year term.

After the end of this term, the Vice-president becomes President and a new Vice-president is elected.

The President and Vice-President of the first GA will be appointed among the first signatory countries. The Secretariat will then organize the election of the President and Vice-President of the next GA within a period of one year.

Meetings

The GA meets at least once a year, but may organize extraordinary additional meetings, either in presence or virtually, convened by the Secretariat.

The annual meeting of the GA may be hosted by the country holding the presidency or the vice-presidency, or by any country member willing to do so.

Members of the GA may make proposals for agenda and voting items. The GA meeting draft agenda will be circulated in advance, and meeting documentation will be provided afterwards by the Secretariat.

Procedure and voting rights

Each member of the GA has one vote.

All decisions shall be made by consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions may be reached by simple majority vote, with a quorum of 50% of the members in each of the world regions of the GA. The world regions for the PREZODE initiative are indicated in the “Regional groups” section below.

Regional Groups

The world regions for PREZODE initiative are: Africa, America, Asia, Europe, Oceania.

PREZODE members belonging to a Region are encouraged to organize regional groups or expand regional One Health networks with a view to facilitate regional cooperation and coordination with PREZODE bodies.

PREZODE members from the same region must elect or nominate their regional representative to the PREZODE Steering Committee for a 2-year term.

Regional groups may be supported by the Secretariat.

Steering Committee

Aims and Activities

The Steering Committee (SC) is the body that elaborates and proposes the strategic orientations for the initiative.

In particular, it will:

- propose annual work-plans and budgets for the initiative,

- propose other strategic documents,
- propose revisions of the Terms of Reference of the governance of the initiative,
- propose revisions of the Strategic Agenda for the initiative every 2 years.

The SC will also be the body that makes decisions on several actions related to the initiative. In particular, it will:

- decide on the endorsement (under PREZODE label) by PREZODE of projects, programs and networks on the basis of the evaluation by an ad-hoc working group,
- decide on working groups or task forces on specific topics, guide and review their activities,
- engage and communicate with potential partners and with stakeholders.

The SC will guide the Secretariat and review its activities.

Composition

The Steering Committee is composed of 5 colleges:

- Scientific college: 5 internationally acknowledged scientific experts, in their individual capacity, one per pillar of the initiative. Members are elected for a 2-year term by the General Assembly.
- Region's college: 5 delegates, one per world region, elected for a 2-year term by the PREZODE members of the same region.
- One Health International Organizations college: 1 representative per signatory organisation, with a limit of 4 representatives in total.
- Donors Committee: 1 representative nominated by the Donors Committee.
- Civil Society College: 3 representatives from non-profit NGOs.

The Secretary General and the Chair of the SAB sit in the Steering Committee as observers.

A balance between regions, genders and between human, animal and environmental health dimensions will be sought when organizing the SC elections.

Role of the chair of the SC

The chair of the SC shall chair the meetings of the SC.

The chair of SC shall:

- Consult members of the SC on proposals for the GA;
- Ensure that proposals to GA are prepared and finalized for the GA meetings
- Guide the secretariat in the preparation of the SC meetings;
- Advise the president and vice-president of the GA;
- Oversee the implementation plan of PREZODE.

Election

The Steering Committee elects a Chair among its members.

Election for the representatives and the chair of the SC will be organized by the Secretariat.

Voting rights

Each member of the Steering Committee has one vote with the same weight.

To validate decisions, a quorum of 50% of the members of the SC must be reached.

All decisions shall be made by consensus wherever possible. If consensus cannot be reached, decisions may be reached by simple majority vote.

Meetings

The Steering Committee may meet each month, online or in presence, and convene additional ad-hoc meetings, through sub-groups. The Chair of the Steering Committee has regular meetings with the President and Vice-President of the General Assembly and the Secretariat.

Scientific advisory board

Aims and Activities

The SAB shall provide the SC, including its working groups, and the GA with scientific and technical advice/recommendation.

Specifically, the SAB shall be able to:

- Monitor the knowledge produced by the international and scientific community on the topics of the initiative,
- Gather and follow-up the knowledge produced by the initiative,
- Produce synthetic reports identifying the most promising research avenues and the remaining gaps,
- Propose updates on PREZODE strategic agenda based on these reports,
- Liaise with other scientific panels such as OHHLEP, IPBES, etc., to foster synergies.

Composition

The SAB shall comprise no more than 10 high-level scientists, mainly experts contributing to international and intergovernmental scientific panels on topics relevant to the PREZODE Initiative. Experts in the SAB are nominated in their individual capacity.

The composition of the SAB shall be balanced with complementary disciplinary skills.

The composition of SAB shall ensure gender and regional balance whenever possible.

The SAB may consult any expert or actor it considers relevant to its proceedings when necessary.

Selection of SAB members

SAB members shall be appointed for a two-year term renewable once.

A chair and co-chair shall be elected by the SAB among its members.

A call for applications to the SAB shall be opened by the Secretariat and circulated among PREZODE members.

A list of eligible candidates will be proposed by the Secretariat to the SC.

The SC shall establish a final shortlist of candidates to be submitted to the GA.

The GA will then elect no more than 10 SAB members among the proposed candidates.

Ethics committee

An Ethics Committee (EC) will be created by the GA upon proposal of the Steering Committee. Its composition shall rely on proposals submitted by the PREZODE members to the Secretariat: the members of the EC must be renowned and competent experts in the ethics and biosafety fields and/or members of their own ethics or biosafety committees.

The Ethics Committee could be called upon:

- to advance ethics, biosafety and biosecurity issues in the field of prevention of emerging zoonotic diseases,
- to provide an ethical opinion within the framework of the PREZODE activities,
- to provide advice to the SC and the GA in case of issues related to membership (new members or revocation of past members)

It may also act on its own initiative to seize opportunities and to advance issues within its purview.

Composition

The EC shall comprise no more than 5 members with complementary disciplinary skills. The composition of the EC shall ensure gender and regional balance whenever possible.

EC members shall be appointed for a two-year term renewable once.

Donors Committee

Aims and Activities

The Donors Committee (DC) is the body that takes responsibility for mobilizing resources in support of the Initiative and securing the commitment of funds to PREZODE for research or operational activities.

In particular, it shall, in line with the orientations voted on and designed by GA:

- identify and ensure synergies, equity and consistency of funds allocation and earmarking to reach the goals of PREZODE by combining internally and externally funded projects and programs,
- takes responsibility for mobilizing resources and funds to research or operational activities supported by PREZODE and to projects and programs labelled by the initiative,
- elaborate, when relevant, joint Calls for projects with the support of the Secretariat and of the SC and the SAB for practical and scientific aspects,
- strive to secure sustainable funding for PREZODE.

The DC elects a Chair and delegates a representative to the SC.

Composition

The DC is composed of one representative per entity, public or private, having provided funds with a minimal contribution of €1 M in support of PREZODE related activities.

One Secretariat representative sits in the DC as observer.

Secretariat

Aims and Activities

The Secretariat is the body that coordinates and implements the day to day activities of the PREZODE Initiative.

In particular, it:

- supports the SC and the GA for the organisation of meetings and reports,
- prepares draft proposals that the SC would discuss, validate and submit to the GA,
- organizes elections for GA and SC,
- supports the additional working groups, or operational committees, on specific topics created by the SC,
- ensures the availability of tools to facilitate coordination, collaboration and communication between members,
- prepares communication materials to foster exchange with external stakeholders, or potential partners,
- supports the review and evaluation of the activities performed,
- reports each year on its activities and on budget related issues,
- deals with all issues relating to personal data protection, in pursuance of applicable rules.

To conduct its activities with efficiency, do the follow-up of the activities and the reporting and to operationalize activities, the Secretariat sits in the SC and in the DC as observer.

Composition

The Secretariat will be composed of project managers and administrative staff.

The Secretariat will be led by a General Secretary who will be appointed for a 4-year term.

The Secretariat's human, financial and material resources shall be provided on a voluntary basis by PREZODE members. A call will be launched among members to support the Secretariat. Members agreeing to do so will enter into a specific Consortium Agreement.

As a provisional measure, the meetings of the Secretariat shall be convened by the preparatory committee established prior to the creation of the Secretariat. The definitive hosting arrangement for the Secretariat shall be approved subsequently by the members of the GA.

Working language

English is the working language in the PREZODE Initiative.