

Call for nomination of experts to serve in the Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development

Background

The Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development was created in 2020 replacing the previous Sabin-IPV Advisory Panel. Sabin-IPV (Sabin-Inactivated Polio Vaccine) and Polio VLP (Virus-like Particles) are critical tools on the path towards achieving Polio eradication and, specifically Polio VLPs, to maintain eradication.

The advisory group provides guidance to the WHO on issues related to Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP vaccine development, especially those related to developing candidate vaccines as a safe and effective product for use in the field, technology transfer to establish commercialization of the vaccines in question, clinical development, regulatory considerations, identification of new research opportunities and other guidance.

Over the years, the advisory group provided guidance on sIPV development which resulted in prequalified vaccines for UN supply. The Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development continues to provide support to the manufacturers that were chosen for this process.

Polio VLP vaccines are currently in pre-clinical stage (1 manufacturer has started clinical phase 1 trials) and a significant work is underway aiming to commercialize Polio VLP vaccines. The Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development continues to play a crucial role in advising on this part of the work.

On behalf of the Director, Polio Department of WHO, the Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development has been charged to advise WHO on issues related to Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP vaccine development, especially those related to:

(For more details, see the Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development 's Terms of Reference)

- Developing a candidate Sabin-IPV / Polio VLP vaccine as a safe and effective product for use in the field, including establishing a production technology platform for the candidate Sabin-IPV, compiling all quality control tests, developing Standard Operating Procedures and evaluating the safety and immunogenicity.
- In the case of sIPV vaccine, transferring technology relating to the manufacture of the candidate vaccine to vaccine manufacturers in low and middle-income countries including appropriate bio-safety conditions.
- In the case of Polio VLP vaccine, transferring technology relating to the manufacture of the candidate vaccine in a first step to at least one Master Technology Transfer Recipients (hub) in high or low and middle-income countries and subsequently to vaccine manufacturers in low and middle-income countries
- Designing, financing and conducting clinical studies, necessary to facilitate registration of the candidate Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP vaccine with any national regulatory authority

Duration of membership and meetings

Members of the AG shall be appointed to serve for a period of initially 1 and then, if confirmed, 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment.

Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development meetings are usually organized once a year and each meeting is of one day duration. In addition, some teleconferences might be held to take up any priority projects/situations for discussion.

Expected expertise

- Expert in vaccine manufacturing and quality control of vaccines
- Expert in technology transfer for vaccine manufacturing and quality control
- Expert in purification method development and scale up for vaccine development
- Expert in Virus-Like Particle vaccines
- Expert in clinical trial design or immunization programmes;
- Knowledge of poliovirus eradication program;

Eligibility criteria

No Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development member can have a financial or professional engagement with a commercial entity the use of whose products may be influenced by the Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development or its work. In addition, Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development members may neither submit proposals for funding, nor shall they receive funds through any decision of the Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development. In addition, prior to being appointed as Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development members and prior to renewal of term, nominees and current Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development members shall be required to complete a WHO Declaration of Interest.

Process of selection

Selection of members will be performed by a panel including; current Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development Chair, WHO Polio Director, secretariat. In selection of Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development members, consideration will be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, as well as balanced geographical and gender representation.

Proposals for nominations should be sent by email to polioresearch@who.int including brief statement of interest, Curriculum Vitae, indication of relevant expertise, and a completed declaration of interest form, with a subject line "Application for polio Research Committee". Only complete nominations received by 31 July 2024 will be considered.

Terms of Reference for the Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development

The Advisory Group on Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP Vaccine Development was created replacing the previous Sabin-IPV Advisory Panel. Sabin-IPV (Sabin-Inactivated Polio Vaccine) and Polio VLP (Virus-like Particles) are critical tools on the path towards achieving Polio eradication and, specifically Polio VLPs, to maintain eradication.

The Advisory Group (the “AG”) will act as an advisory body to WHO in this field.

I. **Functions**

In its capacity as an advisory body to WHO, the AG shall have the following functions:

- 1.1. To advise WHO on issues related to Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP vaccine development, especially those related to:
 - 1.1.1 Developing a candidate Sabin-IPV / Polio VLP vaccine as a safe and effective product for use in the field, including establishing a production technology platform for the candidate Sabin-IPV, compiling all quality control tests, developing Standard Operating Procedures and evaluating the safety and immunogenicity.
 - 1.1.2 In the case of sIPV vaccine, transferring technology relating to the manufacture of the candidate vaccine to vaccine manufacturers in low and middle-income countries including appropriate bio-safety conditions.
 - 1.1.3 In the case of Polio VLP vaccine, transferring technology relating to the manufacture of the candidate vaccine in a first step to at least one Master Technology Transfer Recipients (hub) in high or low and middle-income countries and subsequently to vaccine manufacturers in low and middle-income countries

- 1.1.4 Designing, financing and conducting clinical studies, necessary to facilitate registration of the candidate Sabin-IPV and Polio VLP vaccine with any national regulatory authority
- 1.2 To advise on the project workplan and to identify new research opportunities.

II. **Composition**

1. The AG shall have up to 8 members¹, who shall serve in their personal capacities to represent the broad range of disciplines relevant to [insert subject matter of the AG]. In the selection of the AG members, consideration shall be given to attaining an adequate distribution of technical expertise, geographical representation and gender balance.
2. Members of the AG, including the Chairperson, shall be selected and appointed by WHO following an open call for experts. The Chairperson's functions include the following:
 - to chair the meeting of the AG;
 - to liaise with the WHO Secretariat between meetings.

In appointing a Chairperson, consideration shall be given to gender and geographical representation.

3. Members of the AG shall be appointed to serve for a period of initially 1 and then, if confirmed, 2 years and shall be eligible for reappointment. A Chairperson is eligible for reappointment as a member of the AG, but is only permitted to serve as Chairperson for one term. Their appointment and/or designation as Chairperson may be terminated at any time by WHO if WHO's interest so requires or, as otherwise specified in these terms of reference or letters of appointment. Where a member's appointment is terminated, WHO may decide to appoint a replacement member.
4. AG members must respect the impartiality and independence required of WHO. In performing their work, members may not seek or accept instructions from any Government or from any authority external to the Organization. They must be free of any real, potential or apparent conflicts of interest. To this end, proposed members/members shall be required to complete a declaration of interests form and their appointment, or continuation of their appointment, shall be subject to the evaluation of completed forms by the WHO Secretariat, determining that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.

¹ Members serve as full participants and partake in the decision-making process of the meeting in which they are involved.

5. Following a determination that a proposed member's participation in the AG would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest, the proposed member will be sent a letter inviting them to be a member of the AG. Their appointment to the AG is subject to WHO receiving the countersigned invitation letter and letter of agreement. Notwithstanding the requirement to complete the WHO declaration of interest form, AG members have an ongoing obligation to inform the WHO of any interests real or perceived that may give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
6. As contemplated in paragraph II.4 above, WHO may, from time to time, request AG members to complete a new declaration of interest form. This may be before a AG meeting or any other AG-related activity or engagement, as decided by WHO. Where WHO has made such a request, the AG member's participation in the AG activity or engagement is subject to a determination that their participation would not give rise to a real, potential or apparent conflict of interest.
7. Where a AG member is invited by WHO to travel to an in-person AG meeting, WHO shall, subject to any conflict of interest determination as set out in paragraph II.6 above, issue a letter of appointment as a temporary adviser and accompanying memorandum of agreement (together 'Temporary Adviser Letter'). WHO shall not authorize travel by an AG member, until it receives a countersigned Temporary Adviser Letter.
8. AG members do not receive any remuneration from the Organization for any work related to the AG. However, when attending in-person meetings at the invitation of WHO, their travel cost and per diem shall be covered by WHO in accordance with the applicable WHO rules and policies.

III. Operation

1. The AG shall normally meet at least once each year. However, WHO may convene additional meetings. AG meetings may be held in person (at WHO headquarters in Geneva or another location, as determined by WHO) or virtually, via video or teleconference.

AG meetings may be held in open and/or closed session, as decided by the Chairperson in consultation with WHO.

- (a) Open sessions: Open sessions shall be convened for the sole purpose of the exchange of non-confidential information and views, and may be attended by Observers (as defined in paragraph III.3 below).

- (b) Closed sessions: The sessions dealing with the formulation of recommendations and/or advice to WHO shall be restricted to the members of the AG and essential WHO Secretariat staff.
2. The quorum for AG meetings shall be two thirds of the members.
 3. WHO may, at its sole discretion, invite external individuals from time to time to attend the open sessions of an advisory group, or parts thereof, as “observers”. Observers may be invited either in their personal capacity, or as representatives from a governmental institution / intergovernmental organization, or from a non-state actor. WHO will request observers invited in their personal capacity to complete a confidentiality undertaking and a declaration of interests form prior to attending a session of the advisory group. Invitations to observers attending as representatives from non-state actors will be subject to internal due diligence and conflict of interest considerations in accordance with FENSA. Observers invited as representatives may also be requested to complete a confidentiality undertaking. Observers shall normally attend meetings of the AG at their own expense and be responsible for making all arrangements in that regard.

At the invitation of the Chairperson, observers may be asked to present their personal views and/or the policies of their organization. Observers will not participate in the process of adopting decisions and recommendations of the AG.

4. The AG may decide to establish smaller working groups (sub-groups of the AG) to work on specific issues. Their deliberations shall take place via teleconference or video-conference. For these sub-groups, no quorum requirement will apply; the outcome of their deliberations will be submitted to the AG for review at one of its meetings.
5. AG members are expected to attend meetings. If a member misses two consecutive meetings, WHO may end his/her appointment as a member of the AG.
6. Reports of each meeting shall be submitted by the AG to WHO (the Assistant Director-General of the responsible Cluster). All recommendations from the AG are advisory to WHO, who retains full control over any subsequent decisions or actions regarding any proposals, policy issues or other matters considered by the AG.
7. The AG shall normally make recommendations by consensus. If, in exceptional circumstances, a consensus on a particular issue cannot be reached, minority opinions will be reflected in the meeting report.
8. Active participation is expected from all AG members, including in working groups, teleconferences, and interaction over email. AG members may, in advance of AG meetings, be requested to review meeting documentation and to provide their views for consideration by the AG.

9. WHO shall determine the modes of communication by the AG, including between WHO and the AG members, and the AG members among themselves.
10. AG members shall not speak on behalf of, or represent, the AG or WHO to any third party.

IV. Secretariat

WHO shall provide the secretariat for the AG, including necessary scientific, technical, administrative and other support. In this regard, the WHO Secretariat shall provide the members in advance of each meeting with the agenda, working documents and discussion papers. Distribution of the aforesaid documents to Observers will be determined by the WHO Secretariat. The meeting agenda shall include details such as: whether a meeting, or part thereof, is closed or open; and whether Observers are permitted to attend.

V. Information and documentation

1. Information and documentation to which members may gain access in performing AG related activities shall be considered as confidential and proprietary to WHO and/or parties collaborating with WHO. In addition, by counter signing the letter of appointment and the accompanying terms and conditions referred to in section II(5) above, AG members undertake to abide by the confidentiality obligations contained therein and also confirm that any and all rights in the work performed by them in connection with, or as a result of their AG-related activities shall be exclusively vested in WHO.
2. AG members and Observers shall not quote from, circulate or use AG documents for any purpose other than in a manner consistent with their responsibilities under these Terms of Reference.
3. WHO retains full control over the publication of the reports of the AG, including deciding whether or not to publish them.