



# International COVID-19 Data Alliance

## SCIENTIFIC & STRATEGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

Terms of Reference

January 2021

*The International COVID-19 Data Alliance is an independent consortium of leading life science, philanthropic and research organisations uniting to respond to the COVID-19 global pandemic.*

*The vision is to unite data from international clinical trials, biomedical and health research to derive rapid insights about COVID-19 and help shape the response to this and future pandemics.*

*Sponsored by the **COVID-19 Therapeutic Accelerator Program**  
led by Gates Foundation, Wellcome, Minderoo and a growing list of supportive funders.*

## International Alliance SCIENTIFIC & STRATEGIC ADVISORY COUNCIL

### Role

The Scientific & Strategic Advisory Council (SSAC) has been created as an independent body within the *Alliance* governing structure to provide high-level advice to inform the strategic direction of the Alliance, with a particular focus on ensuring the Alliance can deliver scientific impact and on supporting data-driven research to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic. We believe that the SSAC is paramount to guiding this global vision and to ensuring equitable data and research collaborations as well as research capacity building. This Council will be composed of approximately 15 global experts in academia, industry and healthcare and will be equitably representative of all regions of the world with gender parity. The main tasks for SSAC will be to identify opportunities to tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, ensure the alliance is truly international, select driver projects and prioritize research questions, ensure that the alliance can deliver scientific impact and that all parts of the world benefit equally from this consortium. The SSAC will be advisory in nature.

### Remit

In support the success of the Alliance, the main goals for the SSAC are to provide advice to enable the Alliance to:

- Promote mutual development and equitable, collaborative research and help to build trust;
- Encourage best practices in data storage and platform selection;
- Support the protection, safety and responsible use of data accessed;
- Foster synergies between researchers in the COVID-19 sphere to transform their siloed data and results into a comprehensive, accessible global knowledge for all;
- Help build research capacity in quality data collection, analysis, storage, and use, especially for researchers that lack the highest standards of research capacity.

Specific areas that SSAC will provide advice on include, but not be limited to:

- Identifying important developments and opportunities relevant to the Alliance's mission to help tackle the COVID-19 pandemic, including providing advice on technological innovations.
- Research priorities that should be addressed through the Alliance, with a particular focus on the selection, recommendation and progress of driver projects to address the Covid-19 pandemic.
- Fostering a truly international approach, including recommending ways to enable researchers in low- and middle-income countries to have fair and equitable access to the platform.
- Enabling the Alliance to be as effective as possible and generate scientific value, including:
  - Providing insight into the fit with other initiatives internationally;
  - Making recommendations on new collaborations and partnerships; and
  - Giving advice on ways in which the alliance can build and maintain its reputation and scientific impact.

### Membership

To ensure the successful accomplishment of the above objectives, the following criteria are sought for SSAC members. The selected individuals:

- Must have experience/expertise in one or more of the following areas:
  - Clinical trials, real-world evidence, registries;
  - Public health and epidemic response;
  - Clinical science and biomedicine;
  - Statistics / Data science;
  - Capacity building in quality research management.
- Are advocates for the vision of equitable and responsible data sharing and collaboration;

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- Show evidence of collaborating nationally and internationally while giving due acknowledgement to co-researchers in reports and publications, especially those from low- and middle-income countries;
- Advocate for education and research capacity building to ensure that all researchers including those from low resource settings can benefit fully from the data shared while contributing their own data;
- Are well connected both nationally and internationally and can use their position of responsibility/power to raise awareness and include more researchers into the movement;
- Represent all continents and both genders equally;
- Are ready to commit to walking the talk and to supporting the success of this project from beginning to end;
- Will commit the time needed to promote this responsibility and foster the Alliance's success - virtual meetings to be held four times during the first twelve months and three to four times annually or as needed.

Members shall hold office for a period of up to three years, with the possibility through mutual agreement to serve for a second term. Members cannot serve for more than three terms.

The SSAC is independent of the Alliance and its constituent members, in both its affiliations and its actions. Members will declare any Conflicts of Interest, and will be expected to respect the confidentiality of any sensitive information shared as part of discharging its remit.

### Ways of working

1. **Frequency of meetings:** Virtual meetings to be held four times during the first twelve months and three to four times annually or as needed. Ad hoc meetings may also be called.
2. **Notice of each meeting:** Meetings of the SSAC shall be called by the Co-Chairs of the SSAC in consultation with the Secretariat. Unless otherwise agreed, notice of each meeting confirming the venue, time and date, together with an agenda of items to be discussed and supporting papers, shall be sent to each member of the SSAC no later than 3 working days before the date of the meeting.
3. **Secretariat:** The Secretariat function shall be provided by the central International Alliance team.
4. **Attendance by Alliance staff:** The International Alliance Director and relevant members of the Executive Leadership Team shall attend meetings. Where appropriate, it is anticipated that other senior leaders from the Alliance and its delivery sub-groups may also be invited to attend sessions of the SSAC, at the discretion of the Co-Chairs of the SSAC.
5. **Other attendees:** SSAC may invite additional experts to join specific discussions or meetings to provide advice on specific areas of technical expertise if required.
6. **Other matters:**
  - The SSAC's role will be advisory only. It does not have a regulatory function nor executive powers or a legal advisory role.
  - The SSAC's advice will be provided to the Alliance Board and the Executive Leadership Team (as appropriate).
  - The SSAC Chair will be invited to attend the Board where appropriate.
  - Members will not be paid but will be reimbursed for all reasonable costs for attending meetings.
  - The SSAC is committed to transparency of communication in the discharge of all its functions.