



Preventing zoonotic
disease emergence

2024 PREZODE GENERAL ASSEMBLY

21th November 2024

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DRAFT REPORT

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On 21st November 2024, PREZODE held its first General Assembly (GA) in a hybrid format accommodating the participation of GA delegates both online and in person in Brussels, Belgium. The GA meeting was chaired by the PREZODE President of the GA, Dr Papa Seck. The video recording of the meeting can be found [here](#).



Opening Remarks



Dr Papa Seck, President of the General Assembly of PREZODE 2024

The Chair, **Dr Papa Seck** opened the PREZODE 2024 General Assembly by welcoming the delegates to the first hybrid meeting. He expressed his gratitude for the involvement and engagement of PREZODE members in supporting the initiative's work through its different activities. He particularly thanked the Kingdom of Belgium for its strong support in organising the event.



Mr. David Clarinval, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Belgian Federal Government

Mr. David Clarinval, Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of the Belgian Federal Government delivered opening remarks. He highlighted the crucial role of PREZODE and its added value in preventing disease emergence through coordinated international and intersectoral research. After this address, Dr Seck gave his introduction speech, emphasizing that the GA meeting was an excellent opportunity to celebrate the progress made in achieving PREZODE's main mission: preventing the risks of zoonoses with pandemic potential through an integrated One Health approach. He expressed his gratitude to everyone involved in implementing PREZODE activities, particularly the French scientific and technical agencies such as CIRAD, IRD, and INRAE, along with their partners.



Adoption of the agenda and presentation of the 2023 PREZODE General Assembly draft report

The Chair presented the draft agenda. As no comments or objections were received in advance or raised during the meeting, the agenda was considered adopted.

The Secretary-General (SG) of PREZODE, **Dr Zeev Noga**, presented the draft report of the 2023 General Assembly. He highlighted the actions and decisions that were discussed, mainly the election and installation of the new President of the PREZODE GA Dr Papa Seck (from Senegal) as well as the new Vice-President, Dr Soawapak Hinjoy (from Thailand), the launch of the Pillar Working Groups (PWGs), the sustainability of PREZODE, and the increased promotion of PREZODE's goals at both local and global levels. He underlined that the minutes were circulated among the members in advance and no comments were received, therefore, the minutes are considered as approved.



Endorsement of the new PREZODE members

The Chair reminded the delegates that, according to PREZODE's rules, organizations applying for membership must be endorsed by a majority of PREZODE members to become full members. A list of 24 observer members had been submitted for endorsement before the General Assembly (GA). With a positive response rate of 56%, the required quorum was achieved, allowing the organizations to be officially endorsed by the GA. The chair warmly welcomed the new PREZODE members who expanded the PREZODE community to more than 250 members and encouraged them to actively participate in PREZODE activities.



PREZODE Progress report



Dr Zeev Noga,
Secretary General of PREZODE

PREZODE SG **Zeev Noga** presented the initiative's progress report, outlining key achievements since the 2023 GA. **Since its launch in January 2021**, the Initiative has grown to over **250** members, with **27 governments** and more than 220 organizations, **representing over 80 countries and a broad range of expertise**. To enhance its operational capacity and independence, PREZODE is currently formalizing its status as an association under French law, which will enable it to secure funding, apply for projects, and form official relationships with international organizations.

The **governance structure** includes the GA, **Steering Committee** (SC), and five Pillar Working Groups. The President of the GA Dr Papa Seck with the assistance of the Vice-President Dr. Soawapak Hinjoy, promoted PREZODE at the highest levels extensively during the past year at international and regional events. The SC, led by Chair **Dr. Gerardo Suzán** and Vice-Chair **Dr. Ricardo S. Magalhães**, met seven times in 2024. These meetings focused on adopting Terms of Reference for the Working Groups, approving working procedures, and formalizing collaboration agreements. The SC was also active in global and regional events and worked on grant application proposals. Additionally, SC members, with the facilitation of the GA President, engaged with representatives of member countries to discuss future directions for the initiative.

The **International Secretariat**, led by Dr Zeev Noga, plays a vital role in coordinating the initiative's work. It includes **officers responsible for policy, global science, partnerships, events, communication, and data management, as well as science and regional focal points**. The Secretariat supports PREZODE's governance and ensures the implementation of the strategic agenda.

The work plan for 2024-2025 focuses on long-term sustainability, scientific programs, reorganizing governance, enhancing visibility, and strengthening partnerships and memberships. Significant achievements in 2024 include the launch of the Pillar Working Groups and the International Data Working Group, advances made on both PREACTS and PEPR projects, and the development of the PREZODE endorsement scheme.

PREZODE is also developing a global mapping portal documenting over 400 One Health activities worldwide. Communication efforts, including monthly newsletters, webinars, and high-level panel discussions, will soon be enhanced with a new website. Collaborations with WHO and FAO will be continued, focusing on preventing future pandemics and evaluating the return on investment in One Health prevention strategies. Further collaborations are expected in 2025 with the quadripartite organisations. While in-kind support from INRAE, IRD, and CIRAD has sustained Secretariat activities, a fundraising strategy is being developed to ensure long-term financial sustainability.



PREZODE projects, programs and collaboration progress

Projects progress: PEPR and PREACTS

Dr. Manon Lounnas, Global science officer for PREZODE and Global coordinator PEPR PREZODE, and **Dr. Marie-Marie Olive**, Science focal point for PREZODE, provided an in-depth overview of its two major research programs, PREACTS and PEPR PREZODE.

PREACTS, is the first operational project under the PREZODE initiative, targeting zoonotic risk reduction in the Global South. Its objective is to contribute to reducing the risk of the emergence of zoonotic pathogens, by strengthening the implementation of sustainable prevention solutions adapted to local contexts and environmental, climatic and social changes through a One Health approach. It is structured around three work packages: the first two, **AFRICAM** and **ASAMCO**, have already been launched. The third project is to start in 2025. AFRICAM operates in Senegal, Guinea, Cameroon, Madagascar, and Cambodia, collaborating with over 30 partners. ASAMCO follows a regional approach, working in multiple countries in the African region, American and Caribbean region, and Southeast Asia region, with multiple partners. These programs apply the foundational pillars of PREZODE's strategic agenda, emphasizing support for signatory countries in the South, public policy reinforcement, dialogue between public authorities, science, and society, and the integration of gender and climate dimensions.

The **PEPR PREZODE** program complements these efforts by supporting One Health's interdisciplinary research into emerging and re-emerging zoonotic pathogens within the "List of priority pathogens" and of concern for France and Europe. It is also structured in five work packages on different topics, including understanding zoonotic risk and strengthening early warning systems.



Through the first work packages, the program has already funded projects such as AMAZED, focused on mosquito-borne diseases, and ZOOCAM, addressing potentially zoonotic pathogens in the Camargue region. The next steps will be to announce the projects that have been selected for the next two work packages and organise an international event, in synergy with PREACTS.

Pillar Working Groups Activities



Dr. Elsa Léger, Global Science officer for PREZODE

Dr. Elsa Léger, Global Science officer for PREZODE provided updates on the progress of the Pillar Working Groups (PWGs), which were formed to advance the five strategic pillars of the PREZODE initiative, operating under the Steering Committee (SC). The primary goal of the PWGs is to identify and implement concrete actions that contribute to the achievement of medium- and long-term outcomes outlined in the [PREZODE Strategic Agenda](#) (SA). Since the end of 2023, the PWGs have been created and launched, composed of SC representatives, science focal points, and other experts who applied to join, bringing together 87 members from 36 countries.

The PWGs have established short-term objectives for the next year, **which include revising the Strategic Agenda, identifying funding opportunities, and proposing data and information exchange mechanisms** concerning the International Data Working Group (IDWG). Over the next three to five years, the groups aim to prioritize international studies, develop high-level papers, reinforce network activities and global collaborations, and contribute to the development of a PREZODE sharing platform in coordination with the IDWG.

Dr. Léger emphasized that the PWGs entered the second phase of their development, focusing on **collaborative activities across the working groups** to identify **synergies** and ensure coordinated efforts. Upcoming work encompasses developing specific action points, producing papers, and further refining strategies to reach the Strategic Agenda's goals. Phase three will follow after one year of these efforts.

Concrete examples of ongoing activities include:

- Creating a zoonotic pathogen map by region (PWG 1);
- Developing metrics to evaluate One Health solutions (PWG 2);
- Reviewing intersectoral surveillance systems (PWG 3);
- Mapping data collection processes for collaborative surveillance (PWG 4);
- Mapping stakeholder to promote networking across One Health actors (PWG 5).

Monthly follow-up meetings will continue to monitor progress and ensure that these activities align with PREZODE's missions.

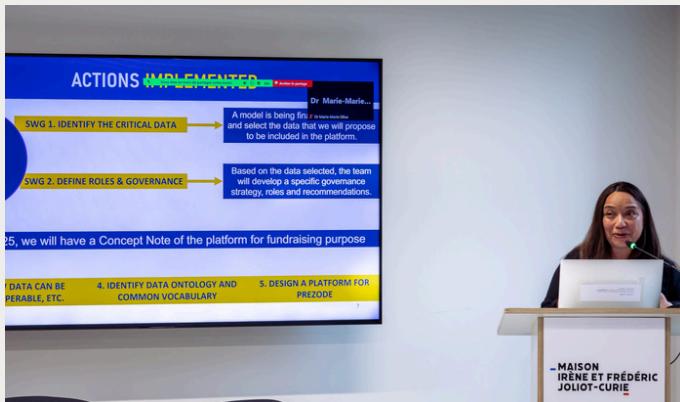


Delegates of PREZODE Members attending the GA meeting, on 21st November 2024.

International Data Working group

Dr Paula Caceres, PREZODE's Chief Data Officer, presented the International Data Working Group (IDWG), comprising **25 experts**, which was established by the Steering Committee (SC) in September 2024 to develop a comprehensive data platform concept for PREZODE. The IDWG is structured around **five key objectives**: identifying the **critical data needed** for the platform, defining data governance roles and accessibility guidelines for PREZODE members, ensuring interoperability and ethical sharing of scientific data, standardising data ontology and vocabulary, and designing and implementing a global data platform. Under the leadership of Dr. Paula Caceres, the IDWG has been divided into five sub-working groups (SWGs), each responsible for one of these objectives.

The IDWG **builds upon three years of foundational work conducted by PREZODE teams**, ensuring the new platform addresses identified needs. SWG 1 and 2 are working on identifying critical data and defining roles and governance and using simulated platforms to address identified needs. By January 2025 a Concept note of the platforms will be created for fundraising purposes.



During the presentation, a question was raised about potential collaborations with existing projects. Dr. Caceres emphasized the importance of avoiding duplication and working in synergy with similar initiatives, **encouraging reaching out to help coordinate efforts**.

*Dr Paula Caceres,
PREZODE's Chief Data Officer*

PREZODE Endorsement scheme

Dr. Marisa Peyre, PREZODE Co-Founder and Executive Committee Member, presented the Endorsement scheme, a **formal process to recognize projects, programs, and initiatives that align with PREZODE's values and goals**. It is open to any relevant activity, including those not directly funded by PREZODE, to promote the implementation of PREZODE's scientific reference framework.

The scheme encourages synergies between existing and upcoming activities, ensuring coordination and enhancing the sustainability of the paradigm shift PREZODE advocates. Additionally, it seeks to increase the visibility of science-based solutions to inform policy and decision-makers. The scheme offers several **benefits, including recognition for embracing principles that foster collaboration and synergy, as well as the opportunity to join a community of practice that shares valuable knowledge and experience**. Participants will also gain visibility through PREZODE's communication channels and interact and network with international organizations and political institutions. Ultimately, the scheme ensures that endorsed activities complement, rather than duplicate, one another, maximizing their impact.

The **application process is straightforward**, involving the creation of an account and the submission of an online form and a self-assessment questionnaire, where applicants present concrete evidence of how their project aligns with PREZODE's criteria. The Scientific Focal Points review applications for eligibility and make recommendations to the Steering Committee, which gives final validation. The online application platform will be opened in early 2025. Answering a question on promotion by endorsed projects, Dr Peyre explained that a communication kit will be produced for this purpose.

Round table discussion: How to Move From a Pathogen-Centric Approach to a Risk-Centric Approach



Dr. Soawapak Hinjoy,
Vice-President of PREZODE GA

Dr. Soawapak Hinjoy, Vice-President of the General Assembly, moderated the panel discussion on the topic of « How to Move From a Pathogen-Centric Approach to a Risk-Centric Approach » in addressing disease prevention. The panel hosted four experts who offered valuable insights into this paradigm shift.



Professor Jeroen Dewulf,
Ghent University, Belgium

Professor Jeroen Dewulf (Ghent University, Belgium) emphasized biosecurity measures as the cornerstone of effective disease prevention and control. He highlighted that **robust biosecurity measures not only tackle immediate health challenges but also deliver broader, unexpected benefits**, such as improving the sustainability of animal production. Disease-oriented measures are reactive, fragmented, and often abandoned once threats subside. In contrast, health-oriented measures are proactive, universally applicable, and essential for preparing systems to handle unexpected epidemics. **He stressed the importance of addressing the "prevention paradox," where the success of prevention can lead to complacency.**



Dr. Teerasak Chuxnum
(Ministry of Public Health,
Thailand)

Dr. Teerasak Chuxnum (Ministry of Public Health, Thailand) shared Thailand's model of transition from pathogen-specific surveillance to risk-based systems. He outlined high-risk populations, such as rice and pig farmers and wildlife rangers, who face diseases like leptospirosis, Nipah virus, and tuberculosis. **Thailand is transitioning to risk-based surveillance by strengthening frameworks.** Measures include enhancing hospital influenza units, coordinating One Health risk assessments, and hosting joint risk assessment workshops. **Community engagement is central to this approach, through culturally sensitive education and local participation,** Thailand aims to build resilience and effectively address zoonotic threats.



Dr Lucy Keatts,
Wildlife Conservation Society,

Dr Lucy Keatts (Wildlife Conservation Society) highlighted the critical role of intact ecosystems in supporting global health. WCS applies a socioecological systems-based approach to addressing emerging health risks, focused on reducing human-domestic animal-wildlife interfaces and interactions that drive zoonotic spillovers, often exacerbated by deforestation and degradation of biodiverse landscapes and wildlife trade. She emphasized the **economic efficiency of risk-based, preventive actions**, which cost a fraction of pandemic-related losses while also bringing **co-benefits for biodiversity and climate resilience** and meeting development goals. WCS collaborates with government partners, local communities, hunters, and rangers to develop wildlife surveillance networks via the WildHealthNet approach, providing tools for monitoring and reporting data into national and international platforms, such as the Wildlife Health Data Base (WHe-DB).



Pablo Sagredo,
United Nations Environment
Programme

Pablo Sagredo, United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) explained how **shifting to a risk-centric approach emphasizes identifying and managing the underlying risk factors that drive zoonotic disease emergence**. This upstream prevention strategy focuses on human-animal-environment interfaces, addressing drivers such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and environmental degradation that increase spillover risks. A One Health systems approach broadens surveillance to monitor not just pathogens but also animal health, environmental changes, and human behaviours in high-risk areas. Initiatives like Nature for Health (N4H) promote these risk-based approaches, integrating biodiversity and climate considerations into zoonotic spillover prevention.

Questions & Answers



The panel **discussed the challenges** of shifting to a risk-based approach. Dr Jeroen Dewulf highlighted that **while diagnostic tools have advanced, prevention is newer and requires more motivation to engage stakeholders, with progress taking time**. Dr. Teerasak Chuxnum noted that disease control is visible, but **prevention** is harder to implement and **requires a larger focus**. Dr. Lucy Keats emphasized the **socioeconomic benefits of investing in prevention**.

She called for more research to strengthen the economic case. She stressed the need for continued support from developed nations to LMICs. Pablo Sagredo emphasized the critical role of **community engagement** and the importance of **actively involving the private sector and policymakers**. He reinforced that the economic case for prevention is vital.

The **public** raised important questions on shifting to a risk-based approach. One question mentioned the **lack of biosecurity reporting**, suggesting a shift in how biosecurity is monitored and notified. The panel agreed, noting that **in the agricultural sector, some European countries now require biosecurity measures to be reported**, though more work is needed.

Another question addressed the challenge of **involving small-scale farmers in LMICs**. The panel emphasized the need to encourage farmers, improve sample collection systems, and raise awareness of disease risks. Incentives for farmers to report are crucial for better disease management and prevention.



Dr Casimiro Vizzini, OSH,
Member of PREZODE Steering
Committee, exchanging with the
panelists.



Brainstorming session on Members' involvement in PREZODE Proposal for the Pandemic Fund

Dr. Marisa Peyre, attending the meeting online, presented the PREZODE proposal for the Pandemic Fund. This proposal seeks to increase PREZODE's visibility and strengthen connections with major partners, including the World Bank (WB), the Global Fund, and the Quadripartite. It will help ensure PREZODE's long-term sustainability by funding its Secretariat, working group activities, and providing financial support to members, particularly for operational activities in member countries.



Dr. Marisa Peyre, PREZODE Co-Founder and Executive Committee Member,

The Pandemic Fund requirements align with PREZODE's objectives. The primary goal of the PREZODE proposal is to **strengthen One Health systems, including early warning and rapid response mechanisms from local to global levels**. Specific objectives include: Enhancing community-based surveillance at the human-animal interfaces; Capacity building and stakeholder engagements; Implementation of specific tasks; and deployment.

The expected outcomes are to strengthen One Health systems in PREZODE members and pilot countries through training, South-South collaboration, and enhanced governance.

The proposal includes developing pilot community-based surveillance systems and boosting the co-design and evaluation capacities of countries in preparing proposals for Pandemic Fund calls. Even if the funding is not provided, it will improve member engagement and increase PREZODE's visibility with key partners.

The proposal development process, coordinated by the PREZODE Secretariat, will involve bilateral discussions with implementing entities, co-design workshops, and extensive member engagement. The final proposal is expected to be validated and submitted by May 2025.

The output of the brainstorming with the PWG regarding the Pandemic Fund proposal can be found on a collaborative board ([link here](#)), open for comments by members until the end of December.



Closure of the General Assembly

PREZODE GA President, Dr. Papa Seck concluded this third General Assembly by expressing his sincere gratitude to all members for their active participation and productive discussions throughout the meeting. He extended a special thanks to the speakers and panellists for their valuable contributions, which enriched the event and advanced PREZODE's mission. Dr. Seck reiterated his thanks to the Kingdom of Belgium for hosting the meeting, as well as to the Government of France for supporting the Initiative. He also called on members to actively and financially contribute to the Secretariat and Initiative activities, reinforcing the shared commitment to PREZODE's objectives and the collective goal of advancing global health and environmental security.



From left to right, Members of the PREZODE Steering Committee: Ricardo Soares Magalhães, Lucy Keats, Casimiro Vizzini, Sarah Olson, Gerardo Susan, Prisca Mugabe, Neil Vora, with Vice-President of PREZODE GA Soawapak Hinjjoy and President Papa Seck.

