

Global Influenza Data Initiative (GISAID)

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In News: GISAID is a global science initiative and primary source for genomic data of influenza viruses and the novel coronavirus responsible for COVID-19.

History GISAID

- The GISAID platform was launched on the occasion of the Sixty-first World Health Assembly in May 2008.
 - Created as an alternative to the public domain sharing model, GISAID's sharing mechanism took into account the concerns of Member States by providing a publicly accessible database designed by scientists for scientists, to improve the sharing of influenza data.
 - Since its launch GISAID plays an essential role in the sharing of data among the WHO Collaborating Centers and National Influenza Centers for the bi-annual influenza vaccine virus recommendations by the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance and Response System (GISRS).
- In 2010 the Federal Republic of Germany became the official host of the GISAID platform and EpiFlu database providing sustainability of the platform and stability through its public-private-partnership with the GISAID Initiative to this day.
- In 2013 the European Commission recognized GISAID as a research organization and partner in the PREDEMICS consortium, a project on the Preparedness, Prediction and the Prevention of Emerging Zoonotic Viruses with Pandemic Potential using multidisciplinary approaches.

About GISAID

- It is a public platform started by the WHO in 2008 for countries to share genome sequences.
- It is headquartered in Munich, Germany.
- It is a not for profit organisation.
- Since its establishment in 2008, as an alternative to sharing avian influenza data via conventional public-domain archives.
- GISAID differs from other genetic sequence databases like GenBank and EMBL primarily in that users of GISAID must have their identity confirmed and agree to a Database Access Agreement that restricts the way GISAID data can be used.
- GISAID was recognized for its importance to global health by G20 health ministers in 2017.
- In 2020, GISAID entered into the global research effort to understand SARS-CoV-2, the virus responsible for the COVID-19 pandemic, by making available genomic sequences that are modeled in real time, thereby helping to detect viral mutations and track movement of the virus across the planet.