



World Health
Organization



OFFLU collaboration in the WHO process of vaccine virus selection from zoonotic and animal influenza viruses for public health purposes

Roles and contributions of OFFLU and WHO

December, 2023

The regular technical contributions of OFFLU (WOAH and FAO network of expertise on animal influenza) to the WHO influenza vaccine virus selection process continues to be beneficial to all partners. This document defines the roles of OFFLU and WHO in this continuing activity. The proposed duration is up to 5 years (1 January 2024 – 31 December 2028), after which time the collaboration should be reassessed. During the 5 year period, the activity and agreement can be reassessed by both OFFLU and WHO at any time.

Role of WHO

1. The WHO Global Influenza Programme (GIP) shall remain in regular contact with OFFLU secretariat.
 - a. Issue up to three invitations for OFFLU representatives, names of which will be provided by the OFFLU secretariat to attend the biannual WHO Influenza Vaccine Composition Meeting (VCM) as soon as possible once the meeting dates are confirmed.
 - b. Coordinate with OFFLU secretariat where other expertise may be needed.
2. WHO will cover the travel cost and per diem for one OFFLU representative, OFFLU will cover the travel cost and per diem for one OFFLU representative and on need basis, a third participant will be identified, and the funding will be discussed on ad hoc basis with OFFLU.
3. Communicate needs and/or existing gaps in animal influenza virus data where the OFFLU network may help the OFFLU representatives.
4. Work with OFFLU representatives to (a) provide appropriate ferret-derived reference reagents for antigenic testing, (b) select viruses for testing and reagent development.
5. Organize the pre-VCM teleconference on zoonotic influenza viruses and the VCM for all participants including the OFFLU representatives.
6. Provide guidance and/or expertise for further evaluation or characterization of virus strains of interest, as appropriate.

Role of OFFLU

1. The OFFLU secretariat shall remain in regular contact with WHO GIP.
 - a. Identify up to three OFFLU representatives to attend each WHO VCM and forward the name(s) to the meeting secretariat as soon as possible after identification.
 - b. Coordinate with WHO GIP where other experts may be needed.
2. OFFLU will cover the travel cost and per diem for one OFFLU representative, WHO will cover the travel cost and per diem for one OFFLU representative and on need basis, a third participant will be identified, and the funding will be discussed on ad hoc basis with WHO
3. Work bilaterally with national laboratories and/or governments and research programs to encourage the publication of data related to animal influenza strains on publicly accessible databases.
4. Select and test viruses to generate genetic and antigenic data (using ferret-derived reference antisera produced according to agreed-upon protocols and/or provided by the WHO Collaborating Centres of GISRS).
5. Coordinate and prepare preliminary data analysis packages on contemporary avian and swine influenza viruses and participate in the pre-VCM teleconference on zoonotic influenza viruses.
6. Coordinate and prepare data packages (Epidemiologic and virologic analysis) for the relevant period on animal influenza viruses of public health concern from contributions within the OFFLU network and present the information during the VCM to include:
 - a. Overview of the epidemiologic situation with focus on countries where virologic data (1) are missing despite evidence of disease or infection in animals, and (2) represent new or emergent events.
 - b. Table summarizing available genetic data by country, host, and clade/lineage/subtype.
 - c. Phylogenetic and antigenic analysis of contributed data with relevant WHO Candidate Vaccine Viruses (CVVs) by subtype.
 - d. Acknowledgement of laboratories and/or countries contributing data.
 - e. Other data collection and/or analysis, determined by OFFLU in agreement with WHO as appropriate.
7. Participate in drafting the output summary document on zoonotic influenza virus candidates during the VCM.
8. On an ad hoc basis facilitate the generation of reagents where necessary to enhance the geographical representation of data available for analysis at the VCM.