

**OFFLU Steering and Executive Committee meeting (by zoom)
12 and 23 November 2020**

Participants:

Ian Brown, David Swayne, Nicola Lewis, Les Sims, Frank Wong, Caryll Waugh, Mia Torchetti, Jiming Chen

Gounalan Pavade, Patricia Pozzetti, Cristian DeBattisti

1. Opening and update on OFFLU committee changes (Ian)

Ian Brown, the Chairman of the Steering Committee opened the meeting. The current Steering Committee members are Ian Brown (Chair), David Swayne (Member) and Les Sims (Member). For the vacant member in Steering Committee, Jiming Chen has been invited to join after his term completion in Executive Committee.

The Executive Committee consists of Mia Torchetti (Chair), Nicola Lewis, Frank Wong, Jiming Chen and OIE/FAO focal points. The Committee was asked to suggest suitable name from Asia Pacific and Africa regions within the next two weeks to replace Jiming Chen in the Executive Committee after his term completion.

2. Update from the OFFLU Executive Committee Chairman on technical activities work plans (Mia)

Mia Torchetti, the Chairman of the Executive committee referred to the several separate Executive Committee zoom calls in September with experts to draft the work plans for various technical activities. The work plan was drafted keeping in mind which are achievable, doable, concrete and priority for this year. Brief summary of the work plans of all technical activities was updated to the Committee.

[OFFLU EC Sept2020 final.pdf](#)

Follow up: Les Sims to discuss with Jonathan Rushton on Global Burden of Animal Diseases (GBADs) and impact of H9N2 to animal and public health.

3. Timelines and monitoring mechanism for technical activities (all)

The Committee recommended the leaders of each technical activities to steer the agreed work plan with involvement of the various experts for commitments to deliver. The Secretariat will contact the leaders of technical activities time to time to give reminder and assist in holding calls as needed.

4. Feedback on the OFFLU VCM contribution Sept 2020 meeting and follow up needed (Nicola)

Nicola Lewis, the lead of the OFFLU VCM technical activity provided an update on the data contribution to the September 2020 virtual meeting. OFFLU leads the animal health data contribution with more than 80 pages report. Both avian and swine influenza data package submitted.

[OFFLU-avian-25092020 removed.pdf](#)

[OFFLU-Swine-VCM-092020-final removed.pdf](#)

Follow up:

- Revisit the invitation letters to modify it regarding sharing policy of full reports including the phylogenetic trees
- OFFLU Scientist to be filled in by FAO as soon as possible to provide crucial support to this activity to deliver.

5. Way forward for OFFLU proficiency testing (Caryll/Frank)

Caryll Waugh who manages the proficiency testing at ACDP, Australia and organized the OFFLU proficiency testing provided an update how this exercise operates in the region and asked the Committee for direction and way forward for organizing the future OFFLU proficiency testing.

The OFFLU proficiency testing is being organized as part of ToR of the OIE/FAO Reference Centres for harmonized diagnostic results and detection of global AI subtypes. In the last two years, some of the Reference Centres showed not satisfactory results and the Committee discussed how the outcomes can be followed up, analysed and improved.

Conclusion: For future PT results analysis, it was proposed to constitute a small group of experts with external quality assessment experience to suggest relevant strains for consideration every 12 months and to review outcomes of PT performance by ref labs. This group will factor relevance and decide on minimum requirements at a global scale for what panel of samples members should have acceptable result. This expert interpretation summary of the PT results from each round could be included as an Annex in the ACDP PT report, or as a separate OFFLU summary.

Follow up: Based on the above comments received, the ToR of the OFFLU PT to be revised by the PT provider.

6. OFFLU cleavage site document update for 2020 (David)

David Swayne provided an update on the process of updating the Cleavage site document. The last update was done in July 2020 by SEPRL, USA and quality checked by APHA, UK before circulating to other reference labs for agreement and publishing.

https://www.offlu.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/01/Influenza_A_Cleavage_Sites-1.pdf

Follow up: Only minor update may be needed for 2021 and OFFLU Scientist can take up this task with the assistance of key Reference labs following the data compiled after every VCM.

7. OFFLU scientist update (Cristian)

Cristian, FAO focal point provided an update on the status of recruiting the OFFLU Scientist. After some delays, the vacancy announcement has been released by FAO for this post. He informed that for the next VCM in February 2021, it would not be possible and alternate arrangement have to be made.

Follow up: The Committee reflected that FAO select suitable candidate who can match the skill sets needed for the OFFLU VCM and other technical specialties. Until then, for the next VCM in February 2021, the Committee asked to select a expert who can temporarily assist Nicola Lewis.

8. Update on training modules (Cristian)

Cristian will evaluate the documents on training materials posted on the OFFLU website for necessary updates with new information.

9. OFFLU website and annual report 2020 (Gounalan)

The OFFLU Secretariat will draft and circulate the OFFLU annual report 2020 widely.

A new OFFLU website and Secretariat email will be launched in 2021.

10. AOB: Reactive work on HPAI spread and threat (Ian Brown)

OFFLU has been providing news updates on certain HPAI occasions where there is technical clarity needed. The Committee discussed the ways of how to improve this reactive work on HPAI spread and threat particularly the utility of data from VCM for veterinary purpose and public health.