



OFFLU STEERING AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

22 June 2022 (14h – 15.30h Paris/Rome time)

Participants:

Ian Brown, David Swayne, Les Sims, Jiming Chen, Mia Torchetti, Nicola Lewis, Frank Wong, Yanbing Li, Gounalan Pavade, Roberta Morales, Lidewij Wiersma

OFFLU committee term updates :

	Start date	First term end	Second term end
SC members :			
Ian Brown	8 October 2018	7 October 2021	7 October 2024
David Swayne	2 October 2019	1 October 2022	
Les Sims	9 November 2020	8 November 2023	
Jiming Chen	20 January 2021	19 January 2024	
EC members :			
Mia Torchetti	18 October 2019	17 October 2022	
Timm Harder	17 February 2022	16 February 2025	
Frank Wong	13 October 2019	12 October 2022	
Yanbing Li	18 June 2021	17 June 2024	

Dr Ian Brown welcomed the new Executive Committee member Dr Timm Harder. The Committee noted the first terms for Dr David Swayne, Dr Mia Torchetti and Dr Frank Wong is due for completion in the month of October 2022. Dr Ian Brown asked the experts their willingness to continue for the second term. All the three experts expressed their willingness to continue.

Action: The OFFLU Secretariat to follow up in October 2022 to confirm the consent with each of the experts and issue confirmation letters.

OIE rebranding/updates OFFLU logo:

Dr Gounalan Pavade informed committee about rebranding of the OIE with the new acronym WOAHA and subsequently changed the mention of WOAHA in the OFFLU logo. Confirmed that the network will continue to be called OFFLU. The committee unanimously supported retaining to be called as OFFLU.

OFFLU Scientist update:

Dr Lidewij Wiersma informed the Committee that the recruiting process to identify the OFFLU Scientist completed with interviews conducted for short listed candidates. After the administrative procedures, the selected candidate will be contacted for confirmation.

H9N2 nomenclature activity update:

Dr Frank Wong gave an update on behalf of the IZSve lab which is leading this activity. A core group of experts from different geographical representation who are routinely involved in H9 activities reviewed the first draft report prepared by IZSve lab to check the inclusivity of existing naming systems and linkage. Overall, the comments on the report were positive and easy to address. However, the remark that deserves most attention and is difficult to address is the request of finding a way to subdivide Y280 lineage into further clades. Unfortunately, the lack of statistical support for making such a subdivision prevents IZSve from comfortably unfolding this issue. Timeline of the activity completion depend on the possibility to find a solution to this issue, and it can take a couple of months of intensive work in case an external expert will be needed.

Poultry AI vaccine antigen project update:

Dr Ian Brown provided an update on the status of this project. The APHA, UK lab is collaborating with IZSve, Italy lab to produce sera with selected H5 antigens to fill predicted gaps. The contract of the project is in process to be finalized by FAO.

Dr David Swayne informed that Dr Erica Spackman, USDA, USA lab also does serum production and would be useful to have the protocol and can be involved in this activity. The APHA lab will share the protocol.

Action: The Secretariat will share with the Committee the protocol used and the antigens selected.

OFFLU wild bird group and dimensions for other wildlife species:

The Committee discussed the recent spillover events of avian influenza in various wildlife species with impacts on high value and endangered wild bird populations. In Europe and Americas regions, there were different wildlife avian species affected including mortality in new species. There are 62 species now affected and the list continues to grow. Committee asked the OFFLU wildlife group to discuss these events in detail and produce a position statement for publication on the website about how to treat it or manage the virus in wild birds.

Action: The Secretariat to discuss with the Chair of the OFFLU wild bird group the need for an overarching situation reports in wild birds and recommendations for sample testing and analyses, including genetic mapping.

GF-TADs and Avian influenza – OFFLU support:

The Committee was updated on GF-TADs efforts to revise the global strategy on avian influenza which was last updated in 2008. A taskforce has been created under GF-TADs with WOAHA (Gounalan and Alexandre) and FAO (Sophie and Ihab) representatives who will work on this. The Committee was described with the tasks and work plan. It was noted that OFFLU was heavily mentioned in GF-TADs avian influenza activities and so OFFLU support for this activity was requested.

The Committee felt that the strategy needs updating and agreed for the expertise of OFFLU network could be utilized as needed. The target audience for this revised strategy needs to be identified as a first step.

Action: The Committee suggested that GF-TAD should clarify the scope and target audience for this revision.

Modus operandi for OFFLU perspectives presentations for OIE/FAO/OFFLU use:

The Committee discussed how to deal with the requests that come from the parent organisations of OFFLU (FAO/WOAH) for giving an OFFLU perspective for presentations in regional and global meetings. The Committee suggested that this responsibility should be part of the OFFLU scientist who can develop first draft document/slides for consulting with the network for further inputs.

Validation procedures for commenting/posting OFFLU outputs technical statements/docs:

The Committee noticed that in some instances with a short deadline, the OFFLU was requested to draft and post technical statements on emerging animal influenza and public health related situations.

The Committee agreed that posting documents needs to be timely but need to provide enough time for comments from the Committee since it goes out in the name of OFFLU.

Next meeting:

The Committee suggested to hold the next meeting in October.

Action: The Secretariat to send a doodle to find a suitable date in October.