



## OFFLU STEERING AND EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE MEETING

**16 June 2023 (13h – 15h Paris/Rome time)**

### Participants:

Ian Brown, David Swayne, Les Sims, Mia Torchetti, Frank Wong, Yanbing Li, Timm Harder, Gounalan Pavade, Amelia Coggon, Lidewij Wiersma, Madhur Dhingra, Gregorio Torres, Mariana Delgado

### 1. Update on OFFLU committees (status of term):

The Commission was presented with the status of term for the Steering and Executive Committee for information.

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

### 2. FAO update on OFFLU Scientist

Ms Amelia Coggon, the current OFFLU Scientist informed that she joined recently to pursue Ph.D and so will move down from full time OFFLU scientist to contribute on specific activities of OFFLU until a new recruitment is done to fill the OFFLU scientist. Dr Lidewij informed the Committee that FAO will initiate the recruitment process to find a suitable OFFLU scientist and in the meantime offered to fill in the gap by involving PhD students who are currently doing internship at FAO Headquarters in various OFFLU technical activities. The PhD students may be Rome based or registered elsewhere in any other country and they could be contracted on a one-day-per-week basis for involvement in the technical activities. The Commission supported the idea of involving PhD students for OFFLU technical activities but asked to make a trial with six months or one year basis.



Action: FAO to write a bunch of terms of reference for each one of the PhD student's roles in the technical activities with a particular skill set needed and talk with the chair of the technical activities for agreement and involvement as needed.

### **3. AIM project current status, report structure, timeline, collaboration with EFSA and way forward** (Dr Nicola Lewis joined the discussion)

Ms Amelia Coggon provided an update and shared the draft report of the OFFLU avian influenza matching (AIM) pilot report for the Committee comments to check if it meets the project objectives, stakeholders and sponsor needs. The Committee went through the document, discussed various issues and asked for another round of review and updates by the AIM project experts to consider and improve the document. The Committee members emphasized the need for an executive summary to be included in the report. Once the document is updated with a deadline of the end of June, the OFFLU secretariat will share it again with the Steering/Executiver Committee for final comments and suggestions.

With regard to sharing the OFFLU AIM project report with EFSA, the Committee felt that as the document is being reviewed and updated at this stage with fundamental and structural changes, recommended to wait until the report is finalized and preferred not to release an early version.

### **4. OFFLU collaboration with ESFLU**

(Dr Gwen Dauphin, Dr Gaelle Simon, Dr Richard Gautier, Dr Amy Baker, Dr Janice Zanella joined the discussion)

Dr. Gwen Dauphin provided an overview on ESFLU (A swine flu EU funded network) to seek collaboration with OFFLU. The ESFLU is a four-year project launched in November 2022 and operates as an open network for innovation, career development and research, with a multidisciplinary approach. The primary goal of ESFLU is to establish an interdisciplinary European network for swine influenza A virus to enhance information exchange, raise awareness, and improve pandemic preparedness.

ESFLU seeks to contribute to the compilation of information and data by OFFLU, participate in OFFLU swine influenza meetings, and collaborate with the network. They aspire to be recognized by OFFLU as the European branch and being acknowledged as authors and mentioned in OFFLU reports.

The Chairman invited comments from the Committee including the two co-chairs of the OFFLU swine influenza technical activity. The Co-chairs Dr Amy Baker and Dr Janice Zanella supported the collaboration with ESFLU and look forward to seeing lot more data come through this project and generated for sharing.

The Steering committee endorsed the collaboration with ESFLU, as European working partner in the OFFLU activities, for the area of swine influenza, fostering a partnership between the two networks and asked to work out the details of technical collaboration with the swine influenza technical activity. All groups and individuals in the collaboration will be acknowledged in the outputs.



## **5. New modus operandi for OFFLU wildlife technical activity**

The OFFLU committees discussed a suggestion received to refresh the OFFLU wildlife technical activity with a new modus operandi that needed funds for some operations which is slightly different from other ongoing technical activities.

The OFFLU Steering and Executive Committee found the proposal very good and suggested considering submitting it as a 'project proposal' from OFFLU wildlife technical activity for OFFLU endorsement and then could be shared with FAO/WOAH/other stakeholders for seeking donor funding.

OFFLU committees supported the idea to refresh/readjust the wildlife group with a core group (as below) and keep informing the previous large group of experts about this new change. In addition to epidemiological and molecular aspects, the Committee suggested having ecological and ornithological expertise included in the wildlife technical activity.

- Michelle Wille (Australia), Laura Roberts (South Africa), Jonas Waldenström (Sweden), Marcela Uhart (Argentina), Julianna Lenocho (USA), Dave Stallknecht (USA), Ruth Cromie (UK)

## **6. Other updates – Sept VCM arrangements, H9 nomenclature activity, proficiency testing**

The OFFLU committees was updated on the September 2023 VCM meeting arrangements.

The H9 nomenclature activity led by IZSve, Italy informed the Committee that the experts involved are finalizing a manuscript as an output of this activity to be submitted for publication.

Dr Frank Wong informed the Committees that the final report for the 2023 OFFLU proficiency testing program has been completed and will be sent to the participating laboratories soon.

## **7. AOB– OFFLU inputs to GFTAD AI outline of strategy; OFFLU impact and follow ups from WOA General Session and FAO global consultation meeting**

The committees were updated on the progress of the GFTAD avian influenza strategy revision, and OFFLU impact and contribution to the WOA General session 'Animal Health Forum on avian influenza' and the FAO global consultation meeting on avian influenza.

Next meeting: December 2023