



## EVD-LabNet Newsletter, January 2025

### About EVD-LabNet

EVD-LabNet is a multi-disciplinary network of expert laboratories. The aim of EVD-LabNet is to strengthen Europe's laboratory capacity and capability to respond to emerging, re-emerging and vector-borne viral disease threats. The network laboratories are located in the EU/EEA, EU candidate countries, and will be expanding to the EU neighborhood countries. These laboratories have a strong basic and/or translation research competence in virology and human (reference) diagnostics and/or experience in diagnostic test development for viral pathogens. The network is a continuation of ENIVD that was founded about 30 years ago and has been known as EVD-LabNet since 2016.

### EVD-LabNet 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Meeting

The 7th Annual Meeting of EVD-LabNet was held at the ECDC in Solna, Sweden from 13-15 November 2024. The first day of the meeting was a joined meeting with EVD-Net with presentations on *Aedes*-borne diseases, tick-borne diseases with a focus on Crimean Congo Haemorrhagic fever, Oropouche virus disease, the emergence of local cases of dengue in 2024 and the three new European union Reference laboratories for Public Health that are part of the ECDC EVD-program. The EVD-LabNet specific part consisted of seven sessions (themes: mosquito-borne viruses, tick-borne viruses, surveillance and systems, miscellaneous) and had a total of 31 presentations. The meeting was attended in person by 72 persons, representing 54 member laboratories from 36 countries.

### Scientific Support

Five disease factsheets for health professionals are in the process of being written, re-written, or reviewed. These factsheets include:

- Lassa fever
- Enterovirus infection
- Dengue
- Chikungunya
- Orthohantavirus infection

## 2022 External Quality Assessment (EQA) of alphaviruses

In 2022 an EQA for molecular detection of emerging alphaviruses (including SINV, ONNV, MAYV, BFV, RRV, EEEV, WEEV, and VEEV) was initiated. Alphaviruses, both zoonotic and those adapted to a human-mosquito-human transmission cycle, represent an emerging threat to the EU both through returning travellers from alphavirus endemic regions and periodical increases in circulation of endemic alphaviruses. The need for periodical assessment of the capability of laboratories for detection of a wide range of emerging alphaviruses that represent a threat for human health was addressed with this EQA. The EQA recruited 23 participants. Individual results were reported back to the participants to support timely corrective actions if needed. Overall, the EQA showed a low capacity for detection of alphaviruses except CHIKV in the 24 laboratories from 15 EU/EEA countries and one EU pre-accession country that participated. An ECDC technical report was written (not published) and a manuscript was submitted for peer-review to PLOS ONE. The EQA was a collaboration between Aix Marseille University, ANSES-Maison-Alfort and RIVM with support of the European Virus Archive.

## 2023 External Quality Assessment of mosquito-borne viruses

In 2023 an EQA for molecular detection of DENV, CHIKV, ZIKV, JEV, and YFV was initiated. The included viruses are not endemic to Europe but are imported by travellers to endemic regions either at a regular basis with occasional local and limited ongoing autochthonous transmission (DENV, ZIKV, CHIKV), or rarely (mostly when there is epidemic circulation at travel destination; yellow fever virus, Japanese encephalitis virus). Thirty-six laboratories participated and the results were recently published in the Journal of Clinical Microbiology: [“Excellent capability for molecular detection of Aedes-borne dengue, Zika, and chikungunya viruses but with a need for increased capacity for yellow fever and Japanese encephalitis viruses: an external quality assessment in 36 European laboratories”](#).

## 2025 External Quality Assessment of Oropouche virus (OROV)

Since late November 2023, there has been an increase in the number of reported infections with Oropouche virus (OROV) in its known area of distribution in South America and the Caribbean. Moreover, OROV infections were reported from new areas in the region (e.g. Cuba) and infections were reported in travellers returning from areas with active transmission to North America and Europe. In 2024, imported OROV virus disease cases were reported for the first time in the EU/EEA by Spain, Italy, France, Germany, the Netherlands, Austria and Sweden. To support capacity building activities, EVD-LabNet has provided to its members information on protocols to be used to implement OROV molecular diagnostics and, in collaboration with the European Virus Archive, access to OROV reference materials. For EU/EEA reference laboratories to assess and improve their actual capabilities for molecular detection of OROV, EVD-LabNet is organising its first EQA by proficiency testing. The EQA is planned for Q1 of 2025. More information on the exact timeline and registration will follow in the near future.

## Designated EURLs for Public Health (EURL-PH)

To date, nine EURLs for public health have been designated by the European Commission. Six EURLs were designated in March 2024 through the adoption of Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/892. This designation was based on a Calls for Application, which ran from October to December 2023. A further three EURLs were designated in November 2024 by Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2024/2959, following a Calls for Application that ran from April to August 2024. The EURLs for public health are designated for seven years and their activities will be funded under the EU4Health programme.

The EVD-LabNet related EURLs start officially on 1 January 2025 and are composed of the following institutions:

EURL-PH	Consortium led by	Also composed of
Emerging, rodent-borne and zoonotic viral pathogens	Folkhälsomyndigheten, Sweden  Contact: <a href="mailto:EURL-PH-ERZV@folkhalsomyndigheten.se">EURL-PH-ERZV@folkhalsomyndigheten.se</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Istituto Nazionale per le Malattie Infettive "Lazzaro Spallanzani", Italy</li><li>• Institut Pasteur, France</li><li>• Nemzeti Népegészségügyi és Gyógyszerészeti Központ, Hungary</li></ul>
Vector-borne viral pathogens	Rijksinstituut voor Volksgezondheid en Milieu (RIVM), the Netherlands  Contact: <a href="mailto:EURL-PH-VBV@RIVM.NL">EURL-PH-VBV@RIVM.NL</a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Institut national de la santé et de la recherche médicale (INSERM), France</li><li>• Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece</li><li>• Azienda Ospedale - Università Padova, Italy</li><li>• Univerza v Ljubljani, Slovenia</li></ul>

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