



EVD-LabNet Newsletter 1, October 2021

About EVD-LabNet

EVD-LabNet is a multi-disciplinary network of expert laboratories. Its aim 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 and EU candidate 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 that is known since 2016 as EVD-LabNet.

EVD-LabNet supports clinical diagnostics, surveillance, threat assessments and outbreak preparedness and response by providing essential background information on target viruses, with a focus on:

- scientific expertise concerning the viruses, their make-up, pathogenesis, physicochemical properties, and patient- and population-oriented detection/ruling out of infection;
- (reference) diagnostics;
- state-of-the-art European diagnostic portfolio, diagnostic capacity and capability;
- molecular detection and characterisation support for response and surveillance activities;
- training courses, workshops and webinars for virologists (selected training/webinars will be open to public health epidemiologists);
- twinning activities (transnational education);
- annual meetings to strengthen the coherence of the network and provide a platform to exchange knowledge

Kick-Off

EVD-LabNet has continued with a new framework contract for the period 2021-2024 and the kick-off meeting of the network coordination and management team took place in May 2021. The network is coordinated by Dr. Chantal Reusken of the Dutch National Institute for Public Health and the Environment (RIVM), the Netherlands with Prof. Rémi Charrèl of the University of Aix-Marseille, France as deputy coordinator. Additional members of the management team are Prof. Olli Vapalathi, University of Helsinki Finland; Prof. Anna Papa, Aristotle University of Thessaloniki, Greece; Prof. Marion Koopmans, Erasmus MC, the Netherlands; Dr. Luisa Barzon, University of Padua, Italy. On ECDC side the network is managed by Dr. Céline Gossner and Dr. Katrin Leitmeyer. At the kick-off the shaping of the network and the activities for the coming year were discussed.

Website

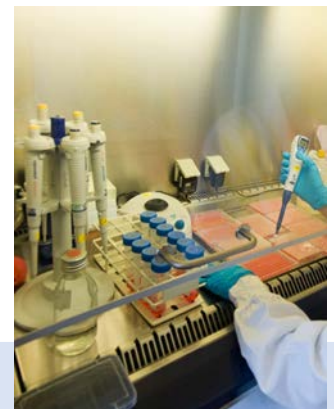
A new [EVD-LabNet webpage](#) has been created on the ECDC website and was launched in September 2021. The website provides essential background information on the network, its governance, network news and announcements of upcoming activities and the network directory. The network directory provides information on the virology expertise and laboratory capacity for the specific target viruses of the network as available at the member laboratories. The directory also provide contact details of the focal point in the network laboratories. The directory has an easy to use search engine that enables easy access to necessary information for diagnostic and/or virology support. The directory can be accessed from the EVD-LabNet webpage.

Fifth Annual meeting

On June 23 and 24, the fifth annual EVD-LabNet meeting took place. The meeting was in virtual format due to the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic and was the first annual gathering since October 2019. The meeting was attended by 98 persons, representing 40 member laboratories from 24 countries as well as by representatives of ECDC and WHO. The meeting balanced presentations on laboratory preparedness and response with technical presentations as well as presentations with an epidemiological focus. The topics were a mixture of viruses within the scope of the network and SARS-CoV-2. The latter reflected the fact that most EVD-LabNet member laboratories have moved capacity towards the pandemic response. The most recent emerging topics for Europe were presented, with new, unpublished insights and data on very recent events, e.g. first cases of 2021 of Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever in Spain, the emergence of West Nile virus in the Netherlands and of tick-borne encephalitis virus in Greece.

Regular exchange of information.

EVD-LabNet wishes to stimulate and facilitate information and knowledge exchange. To this goal a mailing system has been set up. In the past months information has been exchanged on network activities, webinars, ECDC products like rapid risk assessments and technical reports, and specific requests for information by members. The network coordination has assisted in specific technical requests by individual members.



Upcoming activities.

- 7 October 2021, online webinar on Emerging Alphaviruses. Registration has closed.
- October 2021, External Quality Assessment on molecular detection and serology of rodent-borne viruses. Registration has closed
- Winter 2021-2022, External Quality Assessment on molecular detection of emerging Alphaviruses. Registration has not opened yet.
- January 2022, in-depth, interactive course on emerging alphaviruses. Limited number of participation. Priority will be given to EVD-LabNet network members. Registration has not opened yet.
- Factsheets on Crimean-Congo haemorrhagic fever virus and Toscana virus to be published on ECDC website in spring 2022.
- Spring 2022, systematic review on value of urine as sample for flavivirus diagnostics.
- Fall 2022, 6th Annual EVD-LabNet meeting. Dates, location and registration to be announced.

For more information please contact at: EVD-LabNet@RIVM.nl

