

Memorandum of Understanding

Between:

European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID)



European College of Veterinary Microbiology (ECVM)



European Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (EAVLD)



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Background

European Society of Clinical Microbiology and Infectious Diseases (ESCMID), European College of Veterinary Microbiology (ECVM) and European Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians (EAVLD) are three independent European organizations in the field of microbiology which have the following missions:

ESCMID

ESCMID is a human medicine-devoted scientific society active in the field of infection. In addition, as microorganisms migrate between sectors, ESCMID recognizes the importance of the “One Health” concept for the transmission/dissemination of pathogens and/or resistance mechanisms. The Society promotes research and education in the prevention, diagnosis and therapy of infections by bringing together persons who are active in all fields of clinical microbiology and infectious diseases. In pursuing its objectives, the Society organizes scientific meetings, educational events, exchange visits between specialists; it supports co-operation in research and professional matters, issues guidelines, liaises with professional societies, governments or governmental agencies.

Within ESCMID, the *“ESCMID Study Group for Veterinary Medicine (ESGVM)”*

- i) contributes to advancement and harmonization of methods for diagnosis and antimicrobial susceptibility testing (AST) of veterinary pathogens;
- ii) promotes evidence-based antimicrobial therapy, antimicrobial stewardship and best infection control practices in veterinary medicine;
- iii) fosters One Health by facilitating joint research and training collaborations between medical and veterinary microbiologists within areas of common interests (e.g. zoonoses and antimicrobial resistance).

ECVM

The European College of Veterinary Microbiology (ECVM) mission is to contribute significantly to the maintenance and enhancement of the quality of European Veterinary Specialists in Veterinary Microbiology in Europe and to provide training for specialisation and certification of veterinarians in the field of Veterinary Microbiology in Europe.

The main objectives of the College are to:

- Establish guidelines for post-graduate education and training as a prerequisite to becoming a specialist in veterinary microbiology;
- Establish a framework for examining and authenticating veterinarians as specialists in veterinary microbiology;
- Encourage research and other contributions to knowledge and knowledge exchange in all aspects of veterinary microbiology;
- Promote the development, supervision and assessment of continuing education programmes in veterinary microbiology;

- Guarantee and maintain the highest level of specialisation in veterinary microbiology, according to European Qualifications Framework (EQF) level 8.

EALVD

EALVD is a non-profit, independent association of individual members with the mission of improving veterinary and public health by providing a platform for communication, networking and congresses among veterinary laboratory diagnosticians and by that, to promote the dissemination of knowledge on highest standards for microbiological diagnostics in European veterinary laboratories.

The main objectives of the Association are to :

- Build a regularly platform for exchange of state-of-the-art developments in microbiological diagnostics including virology, bacteriology, mycology and parasitology
- Disseminate veterinary diagnostic knowledge through symposia
- Strengthen communication and networking of European diagnosticians in cooperation with the World Association of Veterinary Laboratory Diagnosticians
- Support early career investigators

Although the three organizations have distinct remits within veterinary microbiology, they share common educational and professional goals.

Representatives of ECVM, EALVD and the ESCMID Study Group for Veterinary Microbiology (ESGVM) met at the 1st International Conference of ECVM (ICEVM) that was held in Athens on the 28th of September 2019. The meeting generated the present Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) outlining six main areas for collaboration:

1. Standardisation of methods and procedures in veterinary diagnostic microbiology;
2. Antimicrobial stewardship and best infection control practices in veterinary medicine;
3. Training of ECVM-certified specialists in veterinary microbiology;
4. Communication and training on prevention and control of antimicrobial resistance (AMR) in animals;
5. Training and scientific collaboration with human medical colleagues using a One Health approach.
6. Joint organization of scientific congresses in the field of veterinary microbiology in Europe

Objectives

Six Mission-targeted objectives and several implementation measures applicable across Europe have been identified to cover the entire area of collaboration between the three participating organisations for the period 2021-2023

Objective 1:

Standardise methods and procedures used by veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

Objective 2:

Standardise evidence-based antimicrobial therapy, antimicrobial stewardship and best infection control practices in veterinary medicine.

Proposed measures (Objectives 1 and 2):

- i. Prepare instructions and guidelines officially approved by all the participating organisations
- ii. Promote the material referred to in the previous paragraph through joint scientific publications (opinion articles), the sites and the members of the participating organisations, press releases, scientific conferences, Google advertisements and ECVM Residency Programmes.
- iii. Organise common training activities including externships and workshops.

For objectives 1 and 2, ESCMID will mainly contribute as adviser and ESGVM will specifically provide recommendations to achieve the stated aims.

iv. promote and facilitate proficiency testing to ensure competence across the one health diagnostic sector.

Objective 3:

Contribute to the training of ECVM-certified specialists.

Proposed measures:

- i. Exploit funding or sponsor opportunities to support activities of training and education
- ii. Prepare and promote material underlying the significance and the merits of specialisation in veterinary microbiology
- iii. Promote the participation by the members of ESCMID and EAVLD in the respective Training Programmes (Observership Programme for ESCMID and Residency Programme for EAVLD)

Objective 4:

Raise awareness about the importance of controlling the emergence of drug-resistant microorganisms using a One Health intersectoral approach.

Proposed measures:

- i. Prepare joint material (site announcements, news updates, social media messages, Google adverts) suitable for communicating with the public.

- ii. Coordinating dissemination of such material via social media
- iii. Provision of reference material and data on new and emerging strains and genetic resistance determinants.

Objective 5:

Implement One Health research and training collaborations and proficiency testing between human and veterinary clinical microbiologists and infectious disease specialists within areas of common interests;

Proposed measure:

- i. Co-organise training and scientific events that bring together human and veterinary clinical microbiologists and infectious disease specialists (e.g. 3rd ICOHAR expected in 2022).

Objective 6:

Co-organization of conferences for veterinary microbiological diagnosticians in Europe as a platform for communication, networking and scientific update.

Strategies

The following strategies were outlined to pursue the six objectives stated above:

A. Cross-promotion of mutual membership

1. Use appropriate communication channels to inform members of each organization about the benefits of becoming members of the other two organizations.
2. Share advertising of scientific events, symposia, workshops, etc. as well as relevant PhD studentships, residency positions and jobs via newsletters and other communication channels available within each organization.

B. Collaborative activities

1. Joint scientific conferences, symposiums, trainings and workshops.
2. Mutual sponsoring for attendance grants.
3. Mutual invitations of speakers at the joint events.
4. Shared membership of the Scientific Committees of the next ECVM conference.
5. Two joint position papers on antimicrobial stewardship programmes in small animal veterinary clinics and standardization of veterinary clinical microbiology procedures, respectively.
6. Review and endorsement of the disease-specific guidelines for antimicrobial use that ESGVM has planned in collaboration with other working groups.

The Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for the production of the documents mentioned in B5 and B6 are outlined in Appendix I of this agreement. Moreover, these two activities will be enhanced by the participation of members of the three organizations in the [European Network for Optimization of Veterinary Antimicrobial Treatment \(ENOVAT\)](#). The network's objectives are to optimize veterinary antimicrobial use with special emphasis on the development of animal- and disease-specific antimicrobial treatment guidelines and standardization of microbiological diagnostic procedures.

Kick-off activities

- I. Designation of the three members (one per organization) composing the joint ESCMID-ECVM-EALVD Committee upon signature of the present MoU.
- II. First face-to-face meeting of the joint ESCMID-ECVM-EALVD Committee at either the 31st ECCMID (9-12 July 2021, Vienna, Austria), the 3rd ICECVM that (exact date to be defined in September 2021, Bari, Italy) or the 6th EALVD Congress (2022, Seville, Spain) depending on the developments of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- III. Participation of ESGVM Executive Committee members in the Scientific Committee and the Organizing Committee of the 3rd ICECVM (Bari, Italy, Sept 2021).
- IV. ESCMID postgraduate course on *"Emerging laboratory and point-of-care technologies for detection of AMR and bacterial infection in veterinary medicine"* hosted by the next ICECVM venue in Bari.
- V. A joint contribution of ESCMID-ECVM-EALVD to achieving the objectives of the ENOVAT network in relation to common objectives, such as the development of antimicrobial treatment guidelines and refinement of microbiological diagnostic procedures.

Monitoring

All partners commit to ongoing monitoring, with the aim of ensuring accountability and performance against planned activities. Partner leads will follow implementation of action and will report to each group.

Disclaimer

It should be noted that by signing this document or by participating in this Memorandum of Understanding, the partners are not committing to legally binding obligations. It is intended that the partners remain independent of each other and that their collaboration and use of the term 'partner' does not constitute the creation of a legal entity, nor authorise the entry into a commitment for or on behalf of each other.

Signatures

Signed on behalf of ECVM

John Ikonomopoulos

Date 22/03/2021

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[NAME, POSITION]

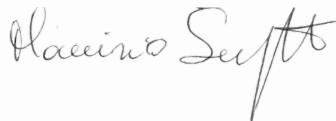


Signed on behalf of ESCMID

Maurizio Sanguinetti

Date 24/03/2021

.....
[NAME, POSITION]



Signed on behalf of EAVLD

E. Weesendorp, president

Date 21 march 21

.....
[NAME, POSITION]



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APPENDIX I

According to the *ESCMID manual for clinical practice guidelines and other guidance documents*, in case of jointly developed position papers, the development process should be defined and agreed with a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) from the onset, to be signed by the ESCMID Guidelines Officer and President. This form of collaboration requires co-chairs from each organization and an equal representation on the panel.

The main points to be addressed in the MoU related to the guidance document to be jointly developed are the following:

Panel composition and Conflict of Interests

Each organization must have representation on the panel and share costs associated with the development of the guidance document, generally in proportion to the number of members.

The co-chairs of the panel will be free of conflict of interest, and fewer than half of the panel members shall have related conflicts of interest. Panel membership officially starts only after review and approval of the declaration of Col by the ESCMID Guidelines Director. The panel members shall agree to update their Col declaration to ESCMID at any time during the guidelines preparation, in case of intervening Col, and at the time of final submission for approval.

Methodology

The methodology followed for the guidance document development should be agreed in advance. As far as guidelines documents are concerned ESCMID is issuing evidence-based recommendations via the GRADE approach. For position papers, no specific methodology is required.

Timeline

The time from appointment of the chairs to submission of the finalized guidance document to the ESCMID Guidelines Director/Executive Committee should be approximately 12–18 months. The project duration should not exceed 24 months.

The final manuscript must be simultaneously submitted to the Executive Committee of each respective society by to start the final endorsement process.

Public Consultation Phase (PCP)

To obtain ESCMID endorsement, before submitting for publication, the manuscript will enter a four-week PCP, organized by ESCMID, during which the draft is made available to all ESCMID members for comments. Following this phase, received comments will be addressed by the authors, and, if necessary, incorporated into the manuscript. The comments as well as the authors' responses to the comments will be published on the ESCMID's website. Reviewer comments will be anonymized before sharing. The societies decide together if the manuscript is acceptable for endorsement or if amendments are required. Once the manuscript is revised by panel members, it will be sent to the Executive Committees of each respective society for approval.

Publication

Proposals for publication should also be agreed during the MoU preparation. Consideration should be given to submission of the final document to Clinical Microbiology and Infection (CMI).

When it is agreed that the full report is to be published in a journal other than CMI, consideration should be given to publishing a Short Report or a Summary Document (as a co-publication) in CMI subject to the permission of the publishing journal and agreement by the Editor-in-Chief of CMI.

It is a prerequisite of a collaborative guidance document that the final published document is posted on the ESCMID website and be freely available.

