



# WHO Global Influenza Programme



## Terms of Reference for National Influenza Centres

National Influenza Centres (NICs) are national institutions designated by national Ministries of Health and recognized by the World Health Organization (WHO) for the purpose of participating in the work of the WHO Global Influenza Programme. Upon such recognition by WHO, NICs become members of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network.

### In this capacity NICs will:

#### General

- Serve as the key point of contact between the World Health Organization and the country of origin in all questions relating to virological and epidemiological surveillance of influenza and provision of influenza virus isolates to the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network.
- Maintain active communication with the members of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network through e.g. the timely submission of viruses, immediate information on isolation of unusual viruses or disease outbreaks, weekly reports on influenza activity during the influenza season and the provision of any other relevant information on influenza surveillance and control.

#### Virus Isolation and Shipment

- Collect appropriate clinical specimens from patients throughout each year and especially during the influenza season and outbreaks for the isolation of influenza virus.
- Act as a collection point for virus isolates where available from laboratories within the country.
- Undertake initial identification of virus type and subtype.
- Forward representative virus isolates and any low reacting viruses using the WHO reagents kit provided through the WHO network to a WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza within a defined period.
- Alert the WHO Global Influenza Programme on any influenza isolate that cannot be readily identified using reagents provided through the WHO network and immediately forward the isolate to a WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza.

#### Communication and Information-sharing

- Alert WHO and/or any of the WHO Collaborating Centers immediately on the emergence of unusual outbreaks of influenza or influenza-like illness, and/or influenza viruses that cannot be readily identified with the reagents in the WHO kit, or other indications of the emergence of influenza viruses with pandemic potential.
- Report regularly during the influenza season preferably weekly by electronic means on the extent of national influenza activity and intensity of virological surveillance and ensure timely distribution of this information at relevant national and international levels through for example WHO FluNet.
- Provide to the WHO Global Influenza Programme an annual national summary on influenza activity, virological surveillance and other relevant information on the influenza epidemiological situation



## **NICs are further encouraged:**

- To serve as a resource for training on influenza surveillance in the region

In countries, where an influenza surveillance network exists:

- To serve as the focal point for the network and provide technical advice and support to the network members responsible for either collection of specimens and epidemiological information, and/or isolation and preliminary characterization of influenza virus.

In countries where an influenza surveillance network does not exist:

- Wherein possible and practical, establish a national network of laboratories and/or physicians which will be responsible for either collection of specimens and epidemiological information, and/or isolation and preliminary characterization of influenza virus, and be responsible for sending this information, specimens and/or isolates to the NICs.

## **NICs will receive through the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network:**

- At least once per year a reagents' kit for standardized identification of influenza viruses
- Reports of results of antigenic and genetic analyses of isolates submitted to the WHO Collaborating Centres for Influenza
- WHO publications on regional and global influenza activity based on data received through the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network and from other sources

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## Mission of the WHO Global Influenza Programme

Contribute to reducing death and disease due to annual influenza epidemics  
and prepare for the next influenza pandemic

### **Vision on Influenza Surveillance and Control**

- Effective and timely influenza surveillance in all regions of the world
- Antigenic and genetic match of influenza vaccine and current circulating influenza viruses
  - Efficient national influenza control strategies and campaigns
- Sufficient influenza vaccines timely available before and during pandemics and epidemics

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