

NEWSLETTER

FWD AMR-RefLabCap project

Overview of activities in autumn 2022/spring 2023

In this Newsletter, you can find an overview of the FWD AMR-RefLabCap project activities in the coming year.

Updated EU protocol for harmonized monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in human *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections

In consultation with ECDC, the FWD AMR-RefLabCap team has proposed amendments to the existing EU protocol with a focus on monitoring genetic determinants and integration of these to foodborne outbreak investigations in a One Health approach. A revised version will be prepared, taking into account the feedback we receive from the Network.

The document was sent for consultation among the members of the network on 19 August 2022.

Deadline for your comments: 5 September 2022.

EQA for genotypic testing of AMR

The FWD AMR-RefLabCap project has developed an EQA scheme (EQA1-WGS-AMR) for the network members that can be used to test the technical and analytical skills for WGS-based resistome profiling and identification of high-risk antimicrobial resistant *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* clones. Annual EQA exercises will be organised for the national reference laboratories in the years 2022-2024. The first EQA exercise in 2022 is coordinated with the ongoing ECDC EQA schemes for antimicrobial susceptibility testing in *Salmonella* and in *Campylobacter* (EQA-AST). After participation in the EQAs, the laboratories will be able to identify strengths and weaknesses in their technical and analytical set up and implement appropriate actions for improvement of their performance.

The EQA was launched in June 2022.

Deadline for submission of results: 31 August 2022.

Feedback is expected to be sent by the end of October 2022.

Ring-trials for WGS-based prediction of AMR

Throughout the project period FWD AMR-RefLabCap team will organise three *in silico* inter-laboratory ring trials of bioinformatics pipelines for prediction of AMR genes in accordance with the requirements stated in the ECDC strategic framework for European genomic surveillance and the ECDC EQA strategy.

First ring-trial will be launched in September 2022.

Mapping and evaluation of capacities in regional/local laboratories for the detection and characterisation of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* in humans

The FWD AMR-RefLabCap team will support NRLs within the Network in carrying out mapping and evaluation of regional and local laboratories capacities in each country for the detection and characterisation of *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*. The aim should be to identify strengths and weakness as a basis for further national capacity building activities in the country. The FWD AMR-RefLabCap team will advise and help the NRLs prepare the methodology for carrying out the mapping. Each NRL should make the results of the mapping and analysis available in their national language and prepare a summary report in English. The project team will prepare a consolidated overview report containing an analysis for all participating countries and comparison of similarities and differences between the countries.

The project team will organise three online workshops on this topic to assist the NRLs in performing the mapping in their country. Countries can apply for financial support for this activity.

First online workshop is scheduled for 3 October 2022.

Second and third online workshop will be in October 2022 and in January 2023, respectively.

Deadline for delivering the summary report (in English) is March 2023.

Support to establish national surveillance networks

The project team will support national public health reference laboratories for *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* to establish and coordinate a national (sentinel) network of regional and local laboratories to support AMR monitoring in human *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections.

A short survey among the network laboratories will be conducted in September 2022 to disclose to what extent the countries have a well-functioning network of regional/local laboratories.

Survey among NRLs will be circulated at the beginning of September 2022.

Discussion on setting up a national surveillance network will be included in the first online workshop on mapping the capacities in local/regional laboratories, mentioned above (3 October 2022).

Support to NRLs to carry out capacity building activities for regional and local laboratories

The capacity building training will be offered to minimum 16 countries, including the previously identified “priority countries”. Other countries will be offered to participate in the activities based on the needs identified in the mapping of local/regional capacity carried out as described above. Over the years 2022-2024, the project team will provide a range of support activities, including two one-day physical workshops, online meetings/workshops, learning materials, and consultancy services.

Webinar on business plan and stakeholder analysis: 12 September 2022.

First physical workshop is planned for late spring 2023 or for early autumn 2023.

Model protocol for national surveillance of AMR in human *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections

In consultation with ECDC, FWD AMR-RefLabCap team is preparing a draft model protocol for national surveillance of AMR in *Salmonella* spp. and *Campylobacter* spp. in humans, supporting the implementation of the updated EU protocol for harmonized monitoring of AMR in human *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections. The model protocol includes models for setting up representative national sampling schemes as indicated in the EU case definitions for human *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections.

The draft model protocol will be circulated for consultation in the FWD AMR-RefLabCap network in October 2022.

Multidisciplinary training

Throughout the project period, the FWD AMR-RefLabCap team will provide multidisciplinary training to the public health epidemiologists and microbiologists identified by the network members. The training will cover topics related to AMR surveillance of human *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter* infections, including technology transfer for integration of WGS to national surveillance and outbreak investigation. Three annual 2-day workshops are planned for 2022-2024.

First annual workshop is scheduled as an online event on 3-4 November 2022.

Network meeting

The mid-term network meeting will be a physical 2-day meeting at SSI, Copenhagen. The meeting is planned for April/June 2023.

Table 1. Overview of the upcoming activities in FWD AMR – ReflabCap in autumn 2022/spring 2023 and important dates

Title	Activity	Time/Duration
Updated EU protocol for harmonized monitoring of antimicrobial resistance in human <i>Salmonella</i> and <i>Campylobacter</i> infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Email sent for consultation with the members of the network • Feedback by email from the network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 19 August • 5 September 2022
1 st EQA for genotypic testing of AMR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch date • Deadline for result submission • Feedback to participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • June 2022 • 31 August 2022 • October 2022
Ring-trials for WGS-based prediction of AMR	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Launch date • Deadline for result submission • Feedback to participants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • September 2022 • October 2022 • November 2022
Mapping and evaluation of capacities in regional/local laboratories for the detection and characterisation of <i>Salmonella</i> and <i>Campylobacter</i> in humans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st workshop online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Invitation for registration + mini-survey ○ Deadline for registration + mini-survey • 2nd workshop online • 3rd workshop online <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Submission of country summary report 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 October 2022 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 9 September 2022 ○ 19 September 2022 • October 2022 • January 2023 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ March 2023
Support to establish national network of laboratories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Activities for the network support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2022-2024
Support to selected NRLs to carry out capacity building activities for regional and local laboratories	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical workshop (1st of 2) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late spring or early autumn 2023
Model protocol for national surveillance of AMR in human <i>Salmonella</i> and <i>Campylobacter</i> infections	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Draft protocol for consultation in network 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • October 2022
Multidisciplinary training for public health microbiologists and epidemiologists, related to AMR surveillance, incl. WGS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st annual workshop (online) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-4 November 2022
2 nd Network meeting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-day meeting, SSI, Copenhagen (physical) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planned for April 2023 (or June 2023)