

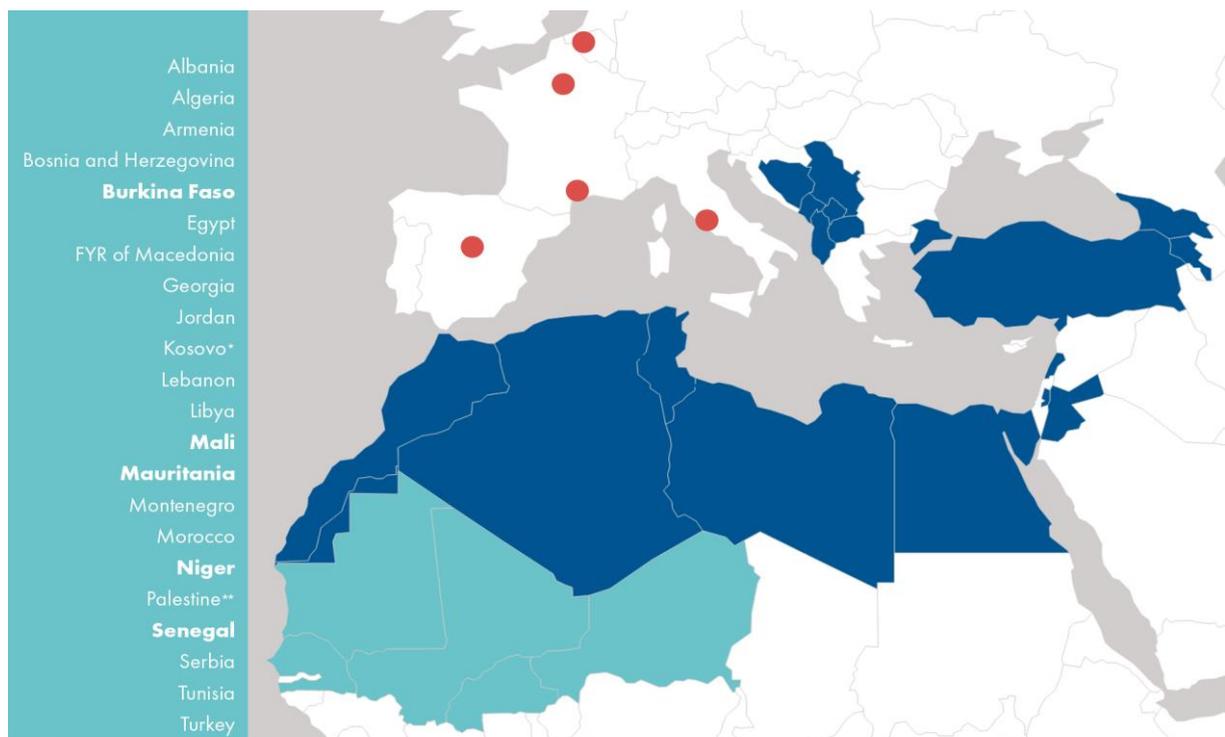


MedilabSecure (WP1) – Newsletter n°5 – June 2020

HUMAN VIROLOGY NETWORK of MEDILABSECURE

Newsletter #5

The newsletter from the human virology group of MediLabSecure



* This designation is without prejudice to positions on status, and is in line with UNSCR 1244 and ICI Advisory opinion on the Kosovo declaration of independence
 **This designation shall not be construed as recognition of a State of Palestine and is without prejudice to the individual positions of EU Member States on the issue

- Participating countries during the first phase of the project (2014-2018)
- 5 implementing institutes
- New targeted countries

- **COVID-19 situation and activities**

- **Current situation**

As you know, SARS-CoV-2 completely shuffled our plans for 2020 and consequently 2021. The workshop planned in March 2020 was postponed twice to a later date along with a training on Rabies planned in Beirut and an EQA we were trying to organize.

However, this period has also been the opportunity for our network to show its strength and flexibility. We were able to reorient all our resources towards the response to SARS-CoV-2, supporting the implementation of the diagnostic in the laboratories involved and organizing an EQA with the QCMD Company to assess the efficiency of the diagnostic.

The European Commission was very supportive during this period. They supported our extra activities on COVID-19 and they granted us with an extension of the project for 6 additional months to compensate for the time lost during the crisis (the project should now end by June 2022).

In order to fully understand the situation for our network and to better organize the following activities, **we would like to evaluate the involvement of the laboratories from our group** in the current crisis.

Could you please take 2 minutes to fill in the following Google Form:

<https://forms.gle/iEu9t6ZKksQpxEFt6>

- **EQA SARS-CoV-2**

The QCMD Company was able to offer very early during the crisis an **EQA on SARS-CoV-2**. A call for participation was sent and 23 laboratories from the Human Virology and Animal Virology working groups responded. This EQA has been launched a few weeks ago and the **deadline to submit answers has been fixed by the end of June 2020**.

We hope that all laboratories that wanted to participate were able to receive the EQA samples and to respond in time.

- **SARS-CoV-2 Sequencing and MinION training**

Our laboratory, Environment and Infectious Risks Research and Expertise (ERI) - Laboratory for Urgent Response to Biological Threats (CIBU), at the Institut Pasteur in Paris has been assisting some of our colleagues in the full-genome sequencing of SARS-CoV-2 samples.

If you would like some assistance to sequence your own samples, please contact us (guillain.mikaty@pasteur.fr).

We are also in capacity to organize **short on-site training for the Nanopore MinION technology for SARS-CoV-2 sequencing**. If you are interested, contact us (guillain.mikaty@pasteur.fr). Please note that due to the current sanitary situation, this training cannot happen in the next weeks/months

- **Other activities in our network**

- **MediLabSecure Hotline on WhatsApp**

Following the discussions we had last June in Paris during the Kick-Off Meeting, we created a **Hotline for diagnostic-related questions** within the network. This hotline use the WhatsApp platform, and has been working since April 2020. It has proved quite useful to quickly answer questions during the current crisis.

We limit the hotline to one person per laboratory (two maximum) in order to keep the discussion simple and efficient. If your laboratory is not represented in the current group, do not hesitate to ask Guillain (guillain.mikaty@pasteur.fr) to add you to it.

- **Online Diagnostic Inventory**

Alike the Hotline, discussions during the Kick-Off meeting converged towards the idea to have an **online inventory for diagnostic capabilities** for the laboratories of the network. The idea would be for you to be able to have a quick look at the capabilities of the laboratories in your region to ask for help or advice more efficiently when necessary.

This inventory will be on a voluntary basis!

It will be launched shortly in an independent message.

- **Workshop “Outbreak Investigation: New molecular tools for the identification of viral pathogens”**

This workshop dedicated to the new generation of laboratory tools for the identification of viral pathogens **was postponed** due to the actual outbreak... The initial date (March 16th to 20th) were canceled quite early and the workshop postponed to June 2020. Unfortunately, the situation worsened and the workshop was delayed a second time.

However, we plan to maintain the workshop and we will adapt it to the new situation. The current date for this workshop is **May 17-21st 2021**. Mark the date on your calendar and **let us know if the date doesn't work for you**. Fortunately, we have a bit of time to organize it now.

- **Workshop “Introduction to Molecular Phylogenetics: Concepts, Methods and Interpretation”**

The Institut Pasteur in Paris organizes a workshop on “Introduction to Molecular Phylogenetics: Concepts, Methods and Interpretation” **in Paris on December 14th to 18th, 2020**.

MediLabSecure will sponsor the participation of a few members of the network who would be interested.

Objectives: This course aims to provide an in-depth understanding of the methods used in phylogenetics, and good practices of the main programs used in the field. It will allow students to analyze their own data, to interpret the resulting phylogenies, and to measure the limits and potential drawbacks of phylogenetic approaches.

Prerequisites:

- Familiar with sequence databases
- Basic bioinformatics software (BLAST, multiple alignment...)
- Basic concepts in probability (independent events, conditional probability, usual distributions)
- Basic concepts in statistics (tests, correlation, regression, parameter estimation)
- Good computer practice

To register:

Please send your resume and a letter of motivation to Inception-phylogeny-training@pasteur.fr cc to guillain.mikaty@pasteur.fr

➤ **Permanent activities:**

- ❖ **Support for diagnostics** whenever needed. If you ever find yourself in need of help in a diagnostic, do not hesitate to send us a message. One of our mission as a network is to support each other! We can give a hand with technics you do not master or to attempt to identify an unknown disease.
- ❖ **Support for reagents and protocols** of relevant pathogens. In case of emergency, we are here to help!
- ❖ **Experts'exchange:** we can support the cost for an exchange of experts between two laboratories of the network (including with other specialties).
- ❖ **Support for scientific publications** (for partners publishing a scientific paper related to the MediLabSecure project).

- **Also in MediLabSecure :**

➤ **General Newsletter #10 :**

If you missed it, the last MediLabSecure Newsletter was published in April and is available on the website of MediLabSecure.

(<https://us10.campaign-archive.com/?u=8b939888cde0b1e7e49a16de6&id=b0c47c04eb>)

All the Newsletters here: https://www.medilabsecure.com/resources_newsletters.html

➤ **Medical Entomology Newsletter #17 :**

If you did not get it, the last Newsletter from the Medical Entomology working group of MediLabSecure was also published in March and is available on the website of MediLabSecure. (https://www.medilabsecure.com/documents/site/wp3_newsletter21_march2020.pdf)

If you recently published a scientific article, please let us know (guillain.mikaty@pasteur.fr) so I advertise it to the network in our next Newsletter.

Kindest regards,

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Guillain Mikaty,
Microbiologist, project manager for the human virology group of MediLabSecure.

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If you have any suggestions or information you wish to share, please let us know.

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