Application Process for Designation as a WHO Collaborating Centre for Reference and Research on Influenza

Step 1. Designation criteria:

The following criteria should be met before a centre of excellence on influenza initiates an application process:

1. Internationally recognized expertise in influenza. This includes demonstrated leadership and/or participation in influenza outbreak investigation and response; influenza virological surveillance; relevant publications on influenza and relevant presentations at international meetings or conferences;
2. Full and unrestricted access to Biosafety Level 2 and Biosafety Level 3 laboratory facilities that meet recognized international standards and have the expertise and capacity for influenza virus isolation in embryonated eggs and cell culture, antigenic and genetic analysis of isolates, production of specific antisera, and development of influenza diagnostic reagents;
3. Willingness to provide technical support and assist in capacity building of laboratories within and outside of the WHO Global Influenza Surveillance Network (GISN)1; and
4. Adequate long-term governmental and/or other non-commercial financial support to fulfill the core Terms of Reference (TOR) for WHO Collaborating Centres for Reference and Research on Influenza (CCRRI).

Step 2. National assessment:

The Ministry of Health (MoH) should contact in writing the WHO Global Influenza Programme (GIP)2 in headquarters, through the country’s relevant WHO Regional Office (RO)3 to:

1. Notify WHO of the application for designation as a CCRRI;
2. Confirm that the applicant meets all designation criteria and has the capability to fulfill the core TOR of WHO CCRRI; and
3. Provide adequate supporting information.

Step 3. Assessment upon receipt of the application:

Following receipt of the notification, WHO GIP and RO will assess the submitted application.

1. If the assessment supports the application, WHO GIP and RO, jointly with consultants who fully understand the roles and responsibilities of the GISN and CCRRI, will conduct an on-site assessment. Proficiency panel testing may be arranged in certain instances. Regional and global public health needs, relevant WHO policies, and, in particular, the added value obtained from including the applicant as a CCRRI in the GISN will be considered in the assessment.
2. The overall assessment report will be submitted to a WHO advisory group for review.
   • If the recommendation from the advisory group is favorable, the applicant will be invited to enter a collaborative programme of work with WHO GIP for a minimum of two years;
   • Otherwise, the application process will be terminated and the applicant and MoH will be informed in writing by WHO.

Step 4. Assessment on the completion of the initial collaborative programme:

At the completion of the initial collaborative programme, as evaluated by WHO GIP and RO, and reviewed and recommended by a WHO advisory group:

• If the applicant demonstrates and documents its ability to fulfill the core TOR, WHO GIP jointly with RO will recommend that the applicant be designated as a CCRRI in accordance with the WHO Constitution Article 2(n) [Resolutions WHA2.19 and WHA2.32 (1949)]4;
• If the applicant fails to fully prove its ability to fulfill the core TOR, the application process will be terminated and the applicant and the MoH will be informed in writing by WHO.

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2 http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/
4 http://www.who.int/kms/initiatives/whoconfomation/en/index5.html