IAVSur - BME

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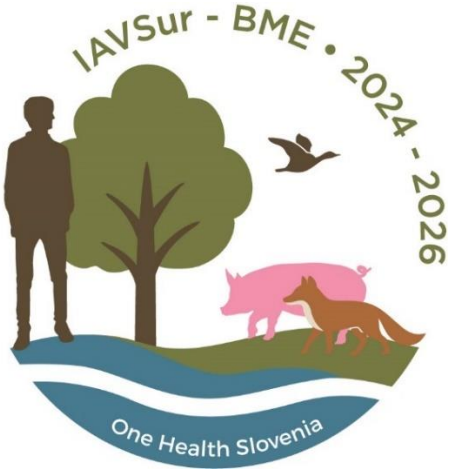

Project title: **Influenza A Viruses Surveillance in Birds, Mammals, and Environment**

Project number: **101132734**

Acronym: **IAVSur - BME**

EU4Health Programme

Deliverable 1.4

Project website

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Document overview

Deliverable number	1.4
Deliverable name	Project website
Work package number / name	1 / Project management, coordination, data analyses and reports
Task number / name	1.8 / Visibility and dissemination
Due date	26/06/2025
Dissemination level	Public
Authors	Aleksandra Hari, Damjana Grobelšek, Klavdija Štajner, Uroš Krapež
Lead Beneficiary	Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (AFSVSPP)
Project website	https://www.gov.si/en/registries/projects/influenza-a-viruses-surveillance-in-birds-mammals-and-environment/

Table of Contents

1 Introduction

The direct grant is awarded under the EU4Health Programme 2022 to implement IAVSur - BME project. IAVSur - BME is 3-year project which provides a sustainable solution to one of the biggest challenges in the field of IAV ecology. Through efficient collaboration among different sectors and professions the project contributes to the establishment of a coordinated surveillance system under One Health approach that will complement and upgrade the existing AIV surveillance to assess the epidemiology of IAV as well as the capability to deal with the virus. The IAVSur - BME will particularly focus on the zoonotic potential of circulating IAV to trace any adaptations of these viruses that may result in the pandemic potential. It aims to ensure that the outputs and outcomes of the IAVSur - BME will be useful for setting priorities at EU and global risk assessment of IAV, a zoonotic pathogen with a pandemic potential.

2 Summary

- The website is hosted by the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (AFSVSPP).
- The website was set up in line with the communication, dissemination and visibility requirements outlined in the Grant Agreement.
- The website gives an overview of the project, including partners, project summary, objectives activities and results.
- The website serves as a comprehensive and user-friendly platform.

3 Background

The website requirements are specified in Article 17 (Communication, Dissemination, and Visibility) of the project Grant Agreement. The website includes essential information such as a project summary, contact details of the coordinator, a list of participants, the European flag alongside the funding acknowledgment, and the project outcomes. To comply with these guidelines, the project website was developed and is maintained by the lead beneficiary, the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection. The websites of affiliated entities (University of Ljubljana (Veterinary Faculty, National Veterinary Institute), and National Institute of Biology) and associated partners (National Institute of Public Health, and National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food) have made links to the project website.

4 Website structure

The website highlights the main aspects of the project. It has clear and accurate content and user-friendly interface. The first page serves as an introductory interface, encompassing five principal sections, each leading to dedicated subpages. While certain sections maintain static content, others

are designed for dynamic updates to reflect ongoing developments. The website also provides detailed information on the project's duration, including its start and end dates, as well as logos of all participating entities (see Figure 1, first page of the project). The website features the European Union flag, accompanied by a funding statement that acknowledges EU cofinancing. Subpages of the project website are in the Appendix 1.

Figure 1: A screenshot of project first page.

The website provides information on the project, participating partners, reports and publication on the outcomes of the project, events in frame of the project, and contact information.

5 Conclusion

This website for the IAVSur - BME project was prepared in line with the communication, dissemination and visibility requirements outlined in the Grant Agreement. The website is hosted by the lead beneficiary, the Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection. This website contributes to the presentation of the project activities and results.

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About the project

CONTENT

The IAVSur – BME is a three-year project (2024-2026) which aims to contribute to the setting and scaling up of animal health and environmental surveillance system, including the systematic collection of data. It focuses on surveillance for Influenza A Viruses in Mammals, and Environment.

The project IAVSur - BMI is based on the following segments of IAV ecology:

1. Wild mammals
2. Domestic mammals
3. Environment

By bridging veterinary science, biology and environmental science it aims at providing the missing link to achieve a better understanding of the whole range of IAV ecology and better apprehend the risk and impact on the animal and human health.

Besides that, this project will lead to improved collaboration at multiple organization levels and harmonized approach to the complex ecology of IAVs and will enable prioritization of future surveillance and research agendas, under One Health approach. This will provide evidence and methods to support decision-making and prioritize actions at the national and EU level.

Five organisations are taking part in the project: Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection, University of Ljubljana (Veterinary Faculty, National Veterinary Institute), National Institute of Biology, National Institute of Public Health and National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food.

Specific objectives

The IAVSur – BME takes a multi-sectoral and transdisciplinary approach to the monitoring of IAV infections in wild mammals, pigs, and environment. It will enhance cross-sector cooperation at the interface of veterinary, biology, environmental activities, and public health to reach a better understanding of monitoring mechanisms of influenza viruses in animal populations and environment to provide baseline information for assessment of IAV epidemiological situation.

Specific objective 1: Determine the prevalence of IAV in the selected wild mammals and to predict possible mammal adaptations and zoonotic potential of detected viruses by WGS and data analysis. Perform molecular epidemiology to research possible co-circulation of IAV between birds, mammals, and humans.

Specific objective 2: Determine the concentration of IAV in selected environmental waters and try to find the correlations between the outbreaks of AIV and the contamination of the environment water areas by AIV. Use of IAV positive water samples as matrix for WGS and therefore enhance the detection of potential viral mutations and recombination.

Specific objective 3: Establish a system to raise awareness among owners and veterinarians about the necessity of identifying swIAV in pigs with a respiratory clinical picture. Identify possible viral 'adaptive mutations' and recombination of swIAV that may pose enhanced zoonotic potential by WGS and molecular epidemiology. Identify environmental samples from the farm as possible diagnostic samples and establish a system of non-invasive sampling for swIAV on farms with a respiratory clinical picture.

Specific objective 4: Enhance the preparedness to possible human health threat that animal IAV represent because of their recombination and mutations that may result in variants with zoonotic potential that may lead to higher rate of human infections or even pandemics. Existing algorithms for managing cases of suspected infection with animal IAV in humans will be reviewed and amended, if needed. Methods used for detection of IAV in humans will be checked for coverage of circulating animal IAV. That will be supported by a data sharing network between the veterinarian and human health authorities that will enable rapid sharing of results of detection of IAV with enhanced zoonotic potential in animals, higher rates of infections of mammals with AIV and detections of animal infections with human IAV as well as detection of any zoonotic events in humans.

Work packages (WP)

WP1

The overall objective is to ensure efficient and timely project implementation, support responsible implementation of activities and provide support to partners, as well as ensure that project tasks are completed on time and within budget, communicate with partners and with EFSA and HaDEA, and be aware of potential risks and conflicts and mitigate them promptly and appropriately.

Leader: Aleksandra Hari

WP2

Under WP2 surveillance of IAV in wild mammals, carnivorous and omnivorous species, especially red foxes, and wild boars, will be established. The combination of active and passive surveillance will address prevalence of infection as investigated by detection of antibodies against IAV as well as IAV detection and characterisation by molecular and virological methods. The goal is to use a representative sample for each selected species collected in regions with a history of AI outbreaks.

Leader: Brigita Slavec

WP3

Within this WP the monitoring of environmental samples for the presence of IAV will be established. Sampling will focus on water samples (and associated sediment samples) obtained from water bodies with high density of migrating and wintering water bird populations and with ongoing or otherwise with history of known outbreaks of IAV (based on present and past surveillance data). This kind of monitoring, also known as water-based epidemiology, represents an alternative to other approaches, which is not dependent on efforts linked with caught or dead animals and will provide independent insights into the appearance and epidemiology of the virus in an area linked with analysed samples.

Leader: Ion Gutierrez Aguirre

WP4

The WP focuses on determining the presence of IAV in domestic pigs. The epidemiology of swine influenza includes viruses of human, avian, and porcine origin. Pigs may play an important role as the intermediate host for other species, where reassortment and/or adaptation events occur. One of the goals is to determine which viral subtypes are circulating and are most prevalent in the pig population. Through targeted surveillance of pig farms, we will collect nasal and environmental samples for detection and subtype characterization by molecular and virological methods.

Leader: Marina Štukelj

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1. 1. 2024

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31. 12. 2026

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Participants

CONTENT

Institutions

The consortium is multi-disciplinary. It consists of following participants (project partners):

- Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (beneficiary and coordinator),
- University of Ljubljana, Veterinary Faculty/National Veterinary Institute (affiliated entity),
- National Institute of Biology (affiliated entity),
- National Institute of Public Health (associated partner), and
- National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food (associated partner).

Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection

Administration for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection (AFSVSPP) is the competent authority in the field of animal health. Among other duties and responsibilities, it is entrusted with administrative and expert tasks and official controls relating to the animal health, identification and registration of animals, the protection of the population against zoonoses, animal welfare, the use and associated traceability of veterinary medicinal products and preventive measures in animal reproduction.

The University of Ljubljana - Veterinary Faculty

The University of Ljubljana Veterinary Faculty (UL VF)↗ is an educational and research institution, which consists of 5 institutes and 2 clinics. Among our employees, there are 30 professors, 20 assistant professors and 35 assistants. Veterinary Faculty strives to meet the standards of the veterinary profession in Europe in the fields of animal health and welfare, as well as public health care, including care for food safety and the prevention of contagious diseases, and possesses all the necessary facilities in its institutes, clinics, and testing laboratories.

The National Veterinary Institute (NVI)

The National Veterinary Institute (NVI)↗ is organised as an internal organisational unit of UL VF that carries out the activities of a public veterinary service based on the concession agreement with AFSVSPP. In the frame of the concession agreement, in the field of animal health NVI performs the activities of official and national reference laboratories, veterinary hygiene service, risk assessments, preparation of expert bases for planning of disease prevention and control measures and programs, etc. Annual working programme of NVI is coordinated each year with AFSVSPP and approved by the director general of AFSVSPP.

National Institute of Biology (NIB)

National Institute of Biology (NIB)↗ is the one of the largest independent public research institutions in the field of life sciences in Slovenia. Its activities are related to the environment, agriculture, food, and human health. Two NIB departments will be included in the proposed project: Department of biotechnology and systems biology and Department of organisms and ecosystems research. At the Department of biotechnology and systems biology research spanning from biology, biodiversity, evolution, epidemiology, and diagnostics of microbes to development and validation of tools for their detection is conducted. They focus on plant pathogens and other organisms pathogenic to human and animals, environmental virology, and viral ecology (studies of viruses in environmental samples - mainly water) and development of non-chemical solution for virus elimination from water samples. They are part of the European reference laboratory for pests on plants (for viruses and phytoplasmas) and performed national monitoring for SARS-CoV-2 in wastewater (2020-2023). The Department of organisms and ecosystem research is top research group in the field of physiology, ethology, and ecology at the national and international level with focus on the studies of the structure and function of ecosystems and is one of the leading groups in Slovenia in the field of biodiversity monitoring at different levels and organism groups.

National Institute of Public Health

National Institute of Public Health (NPIH)↗ is mandated to maintain health statistics databases, regularly analyses health data to inform general public and decision makers. NIPH manages programs targeting to lower the burden of chronic non-communicable disease, explores the parameters of the health care system, supports health promotion and healthy environments. NIPH is appointed as a national contact point for communicable diseases in accordance with the International Health Regulations and the Early Warning and Response System. NIPH surveys the dynamics of communicable diseases, implements vaccination programs and prepares the response to environmental health threats or threat by communicable diseases.

National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food

National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food (NLHEF)↗ is the central and largest Slovenian public health laboratory that handles environmental protection, diagnostic and public health microbiological activities, chemical and microbiological analyses of different types of samples, and performs research activities. The laboratory provides services for the needs of the state, especially for the needs of monitoring public health factors, as well as official inspection and supervision under the competence of the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Food, the Ministry of the Environment and Spatial Planning, and the Ministry of Defence.

Project management bodies

Management body	Members	Responsibilities
Coordinator (COO)	Aleksandra HARI, AFSVSPP	Coordination and project management.
Technical team leader (TTL)	Uroš KRAPEŽ, VF/NVI	Coordination and management of technical issues at the WP level.
Technical team (TT)	Work package leaders	Coordination and technical decisions that have consequences at WPs level.
Work package leader (WPL)	Work package leaders	Coordination, management, and technical decisions at WP level.

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Steering committee

Member	Institution
Vida Znoj	Administration of the Republic of Slovenia for Food Safety, Veterinary Sector and Plant Protection
Dr. Matjaž Ocepek	Veterinary Faculty/National Veterinary Institute
Prof. Dr. Maja Ravnikar	National Institute of Biology

Member	Institution
Prof. Dr. Ivan Eržen	National Institute of Public Health
Dr. Andrej Steyer	National Laboratory of Health, Environment and Food

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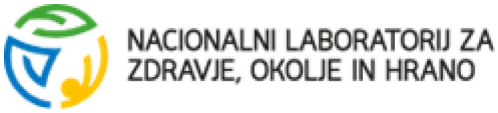

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Meetings and events

AV Kick off/Coordination meeting: 19 July 2024

The Kick-off and Coordination Meeting for the Influenza A Viruses Surveillance project in Birds, Mammals, and the Environment (Project No. 101132734 – IAVSur – BME) was held as on-line meeting to align efforts among partners. During the meeting, participants received key updates from HaDEA and were introduced to the main work packages (WP1 to WP4). All organizations, participating in the project, presented themselves (beneficiary, affiliated entities and associated partners). The meeting aimed to establish a clear path for collaboration and successful implementation of the surveillance activities.

Project presentation meeting: 16 April 2025

The project presentation meeting for Influenza A Viruses Surveillance in Birds, Mammals, and Environment (Project No. 101132734 – IAVSur – BME) took place at the Clinical Lecture Hall of the Veterinary Faculty in Ljubljana. The session began with opening remarks by the project coordinator, mag. Aleksandra Hari, followed by an overview of the project by Dr. Uroš Krapež. Subsequent presentations covered Work Packages 2, 3, and 4, delivered by Dr. Brigita Slavec, Dr. Ion Gutierrez, and Prof. Dr. Marina Štukelj, respectively. The meeting concluded with a question-and-answer session, engaging both project members and other interested collaborators.

The main goal of the meeting was to present the work completed over the past year.

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Contact

Coordinator email: one-health.uvhvvr@gov.si

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