

# WOAH Collaborative Centre Reports Activities 2025

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## CENTRE INFORMATION

*Title of WOA Collaborating Centre	Veterinary Biologicals Biobank
*Address of WOA Collaborating Centre	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e dell'Emilia Romagna "Bruno Ubertini"
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*Name Director of Institute (Responsible Official):	Giorgio Varisco, General Director
*Name (including Title and Position) of Head of the Collaborating Centre (WOAH Contact Point):	Maria Beatrice Boniotti; Biologist, Head of Reparto Tecnologie Biologiche Applicate; WOA Contact Point for the Veterinary Biologicals Biobank Collaborating Centre
*Name of the writer:	Maria Beatrice Boniotti

## TOR 1 AND 2: SERVICES PROVIDED

1. Activities as a centre of research, expertise, standardisation and dissemination of techniques within the remit of the mandate given by WOA

Category	Title of activity	Scope
Training, capacity building (true)	Virtual Biobank Project	1) Development of a web-based portal where users can search and request biobank materials and 2) Development of a material management system, a software solution for the local
Diagnosis, biotechnology and laboratory (true)	Biobanking	Our biobank serves as a repository for a wide range of biological resources relevant to the veterinary field. We systematically collect, characterize, and preserve cell lines, viruses, and bacterial strains, ensuring that all materials meet stringent quality standards for use in diagnostics, research, and production activities. In the reference period, the biobank distributed a total of 61 cell lines, 17 viral strains, and 4 bacterial strains to national and international recipients. Within Italy, biological materials were supplied to 31 clients, while international distribution involved laboratories and institutions across Europe, North America, Asia, and South America. Recipient countries included Northern Ireland, Belgium, Spain, France, the United Kingdom, Germany, Hungary, Cyprus, and Uruguay, as well as the United States, India, Japan, Saudi Arabia, and South Korea. This broad geographical distribution highlights the biobank's role as a key reference center supporting veterinary research, diagnostic development, and scientific collaboration at both national and global levels.

## TOR 3: HARMONISATION OF STANDARDS

2. Proposal or development of any procedure that will facilitate harmonisation of international regulations applicable to the main focus area for which you were designated

Proposal title	Scope/Content	Applicable Area
		Laboratory Expertise

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Development of a WOA Virtual Biobank	To provide the WOA Member Countries with a web-based system collecting information on reference standards or important biological materials	Training and Education Veterinary Products
Definition of minimum requirements of data associated to biobank	To harmonize information associated to reference standard and, in general, to biological materials	Laboratory Expertise Training and Education Health Management Veterinary Products
Implementation of ISO 20387	To create tools to facilitate the implementation of ISO 20387- General Requirements for Biobanking	Laboratory Expertise Training and Education Health Management Veterinary Products
Development of a Biobank Management system	To provide WOA Member countries with software to register all the important information related to biological materials collected by Reference Centers	Laboratory Expertise Training and Education Health Management

3. In exercising your activities, have you identified any regulatory research needs\* relevant for WOA?

Yes

#### Research need 1

**Please type the Research need:** GMO, DURC, Cybersecurity

**Relevance for WOA:** Facilitation of international collaboration,

**Relevance for the Code or Manual:** Manual,

**Field:** Epidemiology and Surveillance,

**Animal Category:** Terrestrial, Aquatic,

**Disease:**

**Kind of disease (Zoonosis, Transboundary diseases):** Zoonosis, Transboundary diseases,

**If any, please specify relevance for Codes or Manual, chapter and title**

(e.g. Terrestrial Manual Chapter 2.3.5 - Minimum requirements for aseptic production in vaccine manufacture)

**Answer:**

**Notes:**

**Answer:**

4. Did your Collaborating Centre maintain a network with other WOA Collaborating Centres (CC), Reference Laboratories (RL), or organisations designated for the same speciality, to coordinate scientific and technical studies?

Yes

Name of WOA CC/RL/other organisation(s)	Location	Region of networking Centre	Purpose
European Virus Archive Global	Europe	Europa	Collection of viruses and derived products to facilitate the research and the retrieval of important viruses worldwide, and to enable a rapid response in the event of epidemiological emergencies.
Joint Research Project MIRRI-it	Italy-Europe	Europa	To overcome fragmentation in the availability of microbial resources and related services, to enhance the quality management system of microbial collections, and to address the needs and challenges of stakeholders interested in the biotechnological transfer of these resources.

BBMRI	Europe	Europa	BBMRI-IT is a network of more than 80 biobanks. The Italian Node of BBMRI collaborates with the entire scientific community that operates in activities directly or indirectly connected with research based on biological resources. Among the goals, the increase of the quality management level of biobanks to make samples comparable across different countries and different biobanking systems.
BY-COVID	Europe	Europa	To develop and share community resources, data standards and guidelines that will enable a rapid and effective response to COVID-19 and novel epidemics

## TOR 4 AND 5: NETWORKING AND COLLABORATION

5. Did your Collaborating Centre maintain a network with other WOAHC Collaborating Centres, Reference laboratories, or organisations in other disciplines, to coordinate scientific and technical studies?

Yes

Name of WOAHC CC/RL/other organisation(s)	Location	Region of networking Centre	Purpose
WOAH Reference Laboratory for avian influenza and Newcastle disease	IZS delle Venezie (Padova, IT)	Europe	Italian network of biobanks or biorepository
WOAH Reference Laboratory for Bovine spongiform encephalopathy	IZS del Piemonte Liguria e Valle d'Aosta (Torino, IT)	Europe	Italian network of biobanks or biorepository
WOAH Reference Laboratory for Bluetongue	IZS dell'Abruzzo e del Molise (Teramo, IT)	Europe	Italian network of biobanks or biorepository
WOAH Reference Laboratory for Babesiosis, Theileriosis and Leishmaniosis	IZS della Sicilia (Palermo, IT)	Europe	Italian network of biobanks or biorepository
WOAH Reference Laboratory for Foot and Mouth Disease, WOAHC Reference Laboratory for Swine Vesicular Disease, WOAHC Reference Laboratory for Rabbit Haemorrhagic Disease, WOAHC Reference Laboratory for Rabbit Myxomatosis, WOAHC Reference Laboratory for Swine Influenza, WOAHC Reference Laboratory for Paratuberculosis	IZS della Lombardia e e dell'Emilia Romagna (Brescia, IT)	Europe	Italian network of biobanks or biorepository
WOAH Reference Laboratory for Equine Infection Anaemia	IZS del Lazio e Toscana (Roma, IT)	Europe	Italian network of biobanks or biorepository

## TOR 6: EXPERT CONSULTANTS

6. Did your Collaborating Centre place expert consultants at the disposal of WOA?H?

No

## TOR 7: SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNICAL TRAINING

7. Did your Collaborating Centre provide advice/services to requests from Members in your main focus area?

No

8. Did your Collaborating Centre provide scientific and technical training, within the remit of the mandate given by WOA?H, to personnel from WOA?H Members?

Yes

a) Technical visit : 2

b) Seminars : 0

c) Hands-on training courses: 0

d) Internships (>1 month) : 0

Type of technical training provided (a, b, c or d)	Content	Country of origin of the expert(s) provided with training	No. participants from the corresponding country
A	Visit by local authorities	Italy	10
A	Visit to the IZSLER Biobank infrastructure and Laboratories	Italy	6

## TOR 8: SCIENTIFIC MEETINGS

9. Did your Collaborating Centre organise or participate in the organisation of scientific meetings related to your main focus area on behalf of WOA?H?

Yes

National/International	Title of event	Co-organiser	Date	Location	No. Participants
Nationally	Progetto WOA?H Virtual Biobank-IIZZSS Meeting	Istituto Zooprofilattico Sperimentale della Lombardia e Emilia Romagna	2025-02-12	Brescia, Italy	22

## TOR 9: DATA AND INFORMATION DISSEMINATION

10. Publication and dissemination of any information within the remit of the mandate given by WOA?H that may be useful to Members of WOA?H

a) Articles published in peer-reviewed journals:

1

*D Colombo, A Nabor Lozada-Chávez, A Matucci, M Di Luca, A Magliano, C De Martinis, S G D'Alessio, M B Boniotti, L Capozzi, F Gobbo, M P Maurelli, A Mistral De Pascali, C Damiani, P Gabrieli, C Salata, Davide Badano, F Forneris, V Pichler, B Caputo, A Della Torre & M Bonizzoni (19 Nov 2025): A digital repository of samples from arthropod vectors, Pathogens and Global Health, DOI: 10.1080/20477724.2025.2587090*

b) International conferences:

1

*B Iulini, S Frizziero, C L. Florio, P Gazzuola, L Pirisinu, B Chiappini, M B Boniotti, G Ru, E Bozzetta, M Mazza, C Casalone. Biological Treasures: Biobanks in Service of Prion Science. 13th Iberian Congress on Prions. ICBAS, Oporto, Portugal, 22-23 May 2025.*

c) National conferences:

2

*1) Danilo Mazza. WOA?H Virtual Biobank. Conferenza GARR. 13-15 May 2025, University of Bari, Italy*

*2) Beatrice Boniotti. Preparazione e risposta alle emergenze virali: il contributo delle biobanche. 23 September 2025, IZSLER, Brescia, Italy*

d) Other (Provide website address or link to appropriate information):

11. What have you done in the past year to advance your area of focus, e.g. updated technology?

*In 2025, in addition to the continued commitment to the WOA Virtual Biobank Project, significant progress was made toward strengthening the quality and governance framework of the biobank. In particular, the procedure for applying for ISO 20387 accreditation (Biotechnology — Biobanking) was completed. The achievement of this accreditation in 2026 would position our biobank among the very few veterinary biobanks to reach this milestone, further enhancing its international recognition, credibility, and compliance with the highest standards for biobanking activities.*

12. Additional comments regarding your report: