

Job Description for Professional Posts

Reference: NA2025/56

Position and Grade:	Associate Animal Health Diagnostician Officer, P2
Organizational Unit:	Animal Production and Health Section Joint FAO/IAEA Centre of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture
Duty Station:	Seibersdorf, Austria
Type/Duration of Appointment:	FT-JPO, 1 year

Organizational Setting

The Animal Production and Health Section (APH) of the Joint FAO/IAEA Division of Nuclear Techniques in Food and Agriculture is part of the Department of Nuclear Sciences and Applications of the IAEA. The APH supported by the Animal Production and Health Laboratory (APHL) in Seibersdorf conducts the Animal production and Health Sub-programme to supports Member States (MS) in their efforts to improve livestock production as a means to improve food security, reduce hunger, alleviate poverty and enhance national development. The focus is on adapting and transferring appropriate technologies in the fields of animal nutrition and husbandry, reproduction, breeding and disease prevention and control by providing training, equipment, expert services, and technical backstopping. The main modalities are Coordinated Research Projects (CRP) and Technical Cooperation (TC) projects.

The Section also maintains a broad network of contacts with FAO's technical divisions, International Organisations such as OIE, WHO and ILRI, and institutions in MS.

Main Purpose

The Associate Animal Health Diagnostician Officer will be co-responsible, under the supervision and guidance of the Laboratory Head and a technical officer, for developing and transferring laboratory techniques aimed at early and accurate detection and characterization of pathogens in the member states (MS) veterinary laboratories, through (i) conducting whole-genome sequencing of various pathogens responsible for transboundary and zoonotic animal diseases; (ii) identifying appropriate genomic targets for diagnostic molecular tests for pathogen detection in environmental and clinical samples; and (iii) transferring these assays to member states (MS) veterinary laboratories through training.

Role

As a member of the Animal Production and Health team s/he will be based at the Agriculture and Biotechnology Laboratory in Seibersdorf and will maintain regular contact with the technical staff at the Headquarters. He/She will (i) contribute to the generation and analysis of pathogens genetic information; (ii) design and conduct R&D activities to develop laboratory diagnostic assays and write scientific reports and SOPs related to these assays; (iii) transfer of these technologies by actively participating to the organisation of group training and visit to MS veterinary laboratories to implement these technologies and assist in the coordination of network effort to validate assays.

Partnerships

The Associate Animal Health Diagnostician Officer will work under the partnerships already established within the UN system as well as with other international organisations and the scientific and commercial communities.

Functions / Key Results Expected

The Associate Animal Health Diagnostician Officer will undertake the following activities:

- Generate and analyse genetic data for priority transboundary and zoonotic pathogens to support molecular epidemiology and assay design.
- Test and evaluate laboratory techniques for pathogen detection in environmental or clinical samples from domestic animals and wildlife.
- Validate molecular assays in collaboration with the VETLAB network and various CRP partners.
- Conduct group training sessions to update scientists from member states on laboratory diagnostics.
- Facilitate the transfer of pathogen detection techniques to laboratories in member states by producing scientific papers and Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) to disseminate information on the utilization of these techniques.
- Participate in the identification, development, and implementation of projects related to molecular diagnostics.
- Offer technical and scientific support to Coordinated Research Projects (CRPs), Technical Cooperation Projects (TCPs), and counterparts.

Core Competencies				
Competence	Occupational Role	Behavioural Indicator		
Communication	Individual Contributor	Communicates orally and in writing in a clear, concise and impartial manner. Takes time to listen and understand the perspective of others and proposes solutions.		
Achieving Results	Individual Contributor	Takes initiative in defining realistic outputs and clarifying roles, responsibilities and expected results in the context of the Department/Division's programme. Evaluates his/her results realistically, drawing conclusions from lessons learned.		
Teamwork	Individual Contributor	Actively contributes to achieving team results. Supports team decisions.		
Planning and Organizing	Individual Contributor	Plans and organizes his/her own work in support of achieving the team or Section's priorities. Takes into account potential changes and proposes contingency plans.		

Competencies and Expertise (do not revise or edit)

Functional Competencies			
Competence	Occupational Role	Behavioural Indicator	
Analytical thinking	Associate	Gathers and analyses information, identifying critical relationships and patterns among data and proposes workable solutions.	
Knowledge sharing and learning	Associate	Actively seeks opportunities to learn by formal and informal means; learns from others, adopting and sharing best practice.	
Technical/scientific credibility	Associate	Acquires and applies new skills to remain up to date in his/her area of expertise. Reliably applies knowledge of basic technical/ scientific methods and concepts	
Judgement/ decision making	Associate	Consults with supervisor/manager and makes decisions in full compliance with the Agency's regulations and rules	

Expertise		
Expertise	Description	
Natural Sciences	Comprehensive and current knowledge of multiplex assay formats and genome sequencing technologies including next-generation sequencing (NGS) techniques.	
Animal Diseases	Good understanding of livestock diseases and strategies employed in diagnosis.	
Cleanroom Laboratory	Working knowledge on Biosafety level 3 laboratory pathogens and good laboratory practices.	
Data Analysis	Good knowledge of applied bioinformatics for next generation sequencing data analysis and phylogenetic analysis. Competence in computer applications including word processing, spreadsheets, databases, presentation graphics and statistical packages.	

Education, Experience and Language Skills

- University degree in biological, agricultural, veterinary or animal sciences. Post-graduate training up to PhD level or equivalent in a subject related to laboratory disease diagnosis is an advantage.
- A minimum of two years of relevant professional experience in development/application of laboratory assays and gene sequencing technologies.
- Excellent oral and written command of English. Knowledge of other official IAEA languages (Arabic, Chinese, French, Russian and Spanish) is an asset.