



Rules of procedure for SeqNet.org

These rules of procedure are laid down by the Founders of the SeqNet.org. The rules becomes effective on [date], (hereinafter called the "Effective Date").

SeqNet.org

The SeqNet.org initiative is a European-wide network of laboratories on sequence based typing of microbial pathogens. SeqNet.org creates unambiguous, electronic, portable, easily comparable typing data of excellent quality for local infection control, national and European surveillance of sentinel micro-organisms, starting with *S. aureus*. The goal of SeqNet.org is to create a network of laboratories generating high quality typing data that are available online to all participants and the public through a web-portal.

This goals will be achieved (1) by harmonization of sequencing methods for sequence based typing and building capacity for DNA sequencing in diagnostic microbiology, (2) by establishing quality control/quality assessment (QC/QA) for DNA sequencing in diagnostic microbiology, (3) by improving the general access to sequence based microbial typing results and the transfer of data at international level, (4) by dissemination of the projects results and (5) by requiring all participants to pass certification and annual proficiency testing.

Head office

Article 1 SeqNet.org's head office is in Münster, Germany.

The Management Board

Article 2 The Management Board is the head of SeqNet.org. It consists of the Advisory Board and the Co-ordinators. The Management Board appoints its chairman.

Article 3 The members of the Management Board must represent expert knowledge within the field of sequence based typing of microbial pathogens.

Article 4 Membership of the Management Board is voluntarily. A member may leave the board by announcement to the Participants via the mailing list.

- Article 5 The Management Board may decide to establish subcommittees regarding certain SeqNet.org tasks.
- Article 6 The Management Board may suggest amendments to the terms of participation. Amendments are passed by using the voting procedure in Article 7.
- Article 7 Consensus is desirable for all decisions. If consensus is not achieved, decisions pass by the majority of the members of the Management Board and the relative majority of Participants. Voting can be done at announced meetings or via email.
- Article 8 Dissolution of the SeqNet.org initiative requires two-third of the voting Participants.

The Advisory Board

- Article 9 As of the Effective Date the Founders are the members of the Advisory Board.
- Article 10 The Advisory Board is appointed every 5 years by a vote of all SeqNet.org Participants from date of signature.
- Article 11 Election procedure: 5 participating countries recommend a new Advisory Board member. The recommended candidate is elected, if the majority of the Advisory Board and the relative majority of all Participants in an email vote in favour of the candidate.

The Co-ordinators

- Article 12 As of the Effective Date the SeqNet.org co-ordinators are

Alex W. Friedrich
Dept. for Infection Control
Institute of Hygiene
University Hospital Münster
Germany

Wolfgang Witte
National Reference Laboratory for Staphylococci and Enterococci
Robert Koch Institute

Wernigerode
Germany

- Article 13 The co-ordinators can independently take action on behalf of SeqNet.org for technical and others reasons regarding the further development of the network without asking before for permission. This includes also the contact with national and international institutions and with other international networks. (see Article 15)
- Article 14 If a Co-ordinator resigns or is discharged by the majority of the members of the Management Board, the Management Board nominates a substitute.
- Article 15 The Co-ordinators inform the Advisory Board and potential partners about important SeqNet.org plans and actions.

The Participants

- Article 16 Participants that have agreed to collaborate within the SeqNet.org are listed on the SeqNet.org homepage. Countries from all over the World are welcome and encouraged to participate.
- Article 17 Participants should be either microbiologist responsible for national or regional typing of *Staphylococcus aureus*/MRSA and other micro-organisms for future widening of the objectives or reference services or epidemiologists responsible for the relevant national or regional surveillance activities.
- Article 18 National typing laboratories are responsible for their national typing procedure. National typing laboratories are invited to encourage regional, local and private laboratories in their country to participate and achieve the SeqNet.org main objectives as indicated in <http://www.seqnet.org>
- Article 19 All participants agree to fulfill the criteria for a common nomenclature and excellence of quality for sequence based typing as indicated on the SeqNet-homepage
- Article 20 All Participants - single or in smaller networks - are free to publish their own data and also to use the data published on the SeqNet.org server.

- Article 21 Joint international authorship of reports involving multi-lateral analysis of the database is preferable. This can be organised by the Management Board.
- Article 22 Participants shall comply with their national data protection requirements. National data ownership and dataflow has to be organised by every country and is neither to be influenced nor restricted actively by SeqNet.org

SeqNet.org data

- Article 23 The current rules and procedures for processing and exploitation of data at SeqNet.org appear from www.seqnet.org
- Article 24 The intellectual property rights to the data on the SeqNet.org belong to the Participant who provided the SeqNet.org with the data.
- Article 25 The international database that has been developed by Ridom company and is curated by SeqNet.org. Collaboration between SeqNet.org and Ridom is part of an further agreement. SeqNet.org participants accept this agreement.
- Article 26 The national reference laboratories may decide on the visibility of epidemiological information synchronised by the laboratories of their country. This is only possible on mutual agreement with the laboratories. The national reference laboratories agree that they use this restriction for national public health action only and that they synchronise the data for international visibility as soon as possible and in case of international importance.
- Article 27 Events of international and cross-border importance (e.g. the spread of a highly virulent clone) will be made visible immediately on the central server.

SeqNet.org membership

- Article 28 Requests for participation are addressed to one of the co-ordinators by email and the participant's name and institution will be put on the homepage.
- Article 29 For all participants and aspirants for participation in SeqNet.org the following criteria must be fulfilled:
- a.) Acceptance of all rules for procedure of SeqNet.org
 - b.) Acceptance of all quality requirements according to the actual SeqNet.org

instructions:

- agreement that the reliability of sequences synchronised are measured, downloaded and analysed by SeqNet.org

c.) Performance and passing of certification and annual proficiency testing according to the actual requirements set by SeqNet.org and published on the web site.

- Perform a SeqNet.org certification: i.e. sequence typing of 5 DNAs and 5 chromatograms provided by the co-ordinators.
- Annual proficiency testing: i.e. 1 DNA or isolate and 1 chromatogram provided by the co-ordinators.

d.) Anonymised visibility of the quality criteria set by SeqNet.org on the server (in form of SeqNet.org markers/logos for each isolate synchronised

Article 30 Participants, that wish to cease their participation, must inform SeqNet.org by email or signed letter addressed to the co-ordinators.

Meetings

Article 31 Meetings are held when needed.

Fees

Article 32 The participation in SeqNet.org is free of charge for all founding members (present at the kick-off workshop in November 2004 in Münster).
The SeqNet.org management board may decide that future services (new aspirant for participation, certification process, annual proficiency etc.) provided by the co-ordinators/head office may be charged.

Signatures of participants

Please send this page via facsimile to the SeqNet.org co-ordinators:

Fax: ++49-251-83-55344

I hereby declare, that I am a participant of the SeqNet.org initiative and that I accept the rules for procedure as established by the SeqNet.org initiative on the Effective date (24.3.2006) and published on the SeqNet.org homepage.

Country: _____

Institution: _____

Date _____

Name _____

Signature

Stamp/Seal