



ODIN & ODIN-Mpox Annual General Meeting 2025 Report SAB/PAB Report

Date: May 26-28, 2025

Venue: Forum Medicum, Lund University, Lund, Sweden

Participants on site:

Rolf Lood (LU)
Maria Joao (LU)
Sara Karlsson (LU)
Tim Bacanovic (LU)
Philip Chen (LU)
Bart Mesuere (UGent)
Sakina Bombaywala (VIB)
Tim Van Den Bossche (VIB)
Lennart Martens (VIB)
Marc Tahita (IRSS)
Kabore Berenger (IRSS)
Lompo Palpouguini (IRSS)
Yaya Fadima (IRSS)
Andrea Bagi (NORCE)
Adriana Krolicka (NORCE)
Dylan Shea (NORCE)
Jeremy Cook (NORCE)
Tarja Pitkänen (THL/UH)
Outi Nyholm (THL)
Emma Mähönen (UH)
Vivi Maketa (UNIKIN)
Hypolite Muhindo (UNIKIN)
Paul Kingpriest (UOXF)
Vito Baraka (NIMR)
Eric Lyimo (NIMR)
Hillary Sebukoto (NIMR)
Nyambura Moremi (NIMR/NPHL)
Jackson Claver (NIMR/NPHL)

Participants online:

Belinda Ngongo (SAB/PAB)
Kristiina Valkama (THL)
Taru Miller (THL)
Sallamaari Siponen (UH)
Stefanie Hatchell (Gates Foundation)
Eunice Ubomba-Jaswa (SAB/PAB)
Andreas Berglöf (SAB/PAB)
Lydia Boudarene (EDCTP3)
Jean-Marie Habarugira (EDCTP3)
Beth Tippet (NHRI, Malawi)
José Lomba (SAB/PAB)
Evodie Ngelesi (UNIKIN)
Christine Kirima (UOXF)



Trudie Lang (UOXF)

May 26th

The 3rd Annual General Meeting (AGM) of the ODIN & ODIN-Mpox Consortium was held from the 26th to the 28th of May 2025 at Forum Medicum, Lund University, Sweden. This in-person meeting brought together representatives from all partner institutions, as well as key stakeholders, members of the Scientific and Policy Advisory Boards, and representatives from the European & Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP3). The gathering marked a critical moment to reflect on the progress of the project and align on strategies for maximizing its impact. The overarching theme of the AGM was "Strengthening Environmental Surveillance to Advance Public Health Action," which underscored the collective ambition to transform environmental data into actionable public health interventions.

The meeting commenced with a welcome address by Professor Rolf Lood of Lund University, the Project Coordinator. This was followed by progress updates from each consortium partner, including LU, THL, UH, NORCE, VIB/UGENT, IRSS-DRCO, UNIKIN, NIMR, and TGHN. These institutional presentations showcased the milestones reached, ongoing work, and anticipated deliverables across the various work packages. Significant attention was given to aligning institutional efforts with the consortium's overall objectives, particularly regarding the timeline for implementation, sustainability of interventions, and opportunities for future funding.

Subsequent discussions centered on the broader goals of the project, including the rationale and timing for seeking additional funding to extend and deepen the project's scope. Partners explored the expectations for the remainder of the project period and articulated specific outputs that must be achieved. There was a consensus on the need to develop a roadmap that clearly defines the project's long-term vision beyond the grant period. Discussions around data sharing and publication planning emphasized transparency, accessibility, and the importance of preserving and reusing data beyond the project's lifecycle.

Institution-specific working groups met to address technical and strategic components of the project. These included a cost-effectiveness study, protocols for environmental pathogen surveillance, sample pre-treatment SOPs, and post-project data storage frameworks. Partners also discussed mechanisms for supporting the continued operation of surveillance systems beyond the current funding, engaging stakeholders, and improving the project's visibility through dissemination efforts such as symposiums and scientific conferences. Emphasis was placed on ensuring the uptake of ODIN's and ODIN-Mpox's outputs by multidisciplinary stakeholders, including public health authorities, policy-makers, and academic partners across Africa.

Later sessions addressed the integration of translational pathogen genomics into public health systems and the development of a dissemination and exploitation strategy. Specific attention was given to Mpox surveillance, including updates on phylogenetic analyses, data management plans, and methodological assessments. These sessions were marked by a spirit of collaboration, with institutions sharing learnings and consolidating processes that could be scaled across different geographical and epidemiological contexts.

May 27th

On the second day, participants revisited key conclusions from the previous discussions and ensured that any outstanding matters were addressed. A presentation on health economics, delivered by Yaya Fadima from IRSS, stimulated reflection on the cost-benefit implications of environmental surveillance



interventions. The agenda also featured a deep dive into dissemination strategies, including improvements to the ODIN Knowledge Hub, stakeholder workshops, and the development of educational platforms. These were led primarily by UNIKIN and NIMR, with contributions from other institutions.

Further discussions focused on periodic reporting to EDCTP3 project officers, ensuring alignment between project implementation and donor expectations. In the afternoon, spontaneous meetings were allowed between WPs, and a workshop / training on bioinformatics was delivered in person by Sakina Bombaywala from VIB.

May 28th

The third and final day began with a presentation from the coordinator, Professor Rolf Lood, offering a comprehensive overview of the project's vision, achievements, and future impact. This was followed by a series of presentations and discussions with stakeholders from a wide range of organizations, including the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, Illumina, the Water Research Commission, the Nyanja Health Research Institute (Malawi), WaterAid, the Gates Foundation, and EDCTP3. All stakeholders had been given the opportunity to share their insights into the relevance of ODIN and ODIN-Mpox, and offer reflections on the most critical factors for the projects' success. This session provided an invaluable opportunity for direct interaction between project implementers and strategic partners, enriching the dialogue around sustainability and scalability. These stakeholders echoed strong support for the ODIN project, underscoring its unique value in advancing environmental surveillance in under-resourced settings. They emphasized the importance of strategic communication, partnership development, and data-driven advocacy in ensuring long-term impact.

The meeting concluded with a summary of key decisions, feedback from stakeholders, and reflections on next steps. These included plans to strengthen capacity building initiatives, expand dissemination activities, enhance stakeholder engagement beyond current countries of implementation, and further explore mechanisms for resource mobilization. The partners acknowledged the need for a robust framework to ensure that surveillance data is translated into timely public health actions, particularly in low- and middle-income countries where such systems are often weak or underdeveloped.

As a final remarks, the coordinator thanked all participants for their active engagement and reaffirmed the consortium's shared commitment to harnessing environmental data for the promotion of public health and sustainable development.

In sum, the 3rd ODIN AGM demonstrated the strength of the consortium's collaborative spirit and its readiness to take forward a bold and innovative vision for environmental surveillance. The engagement with stakeholders, the consolidation of technical progress, and the strategic discussions on sustainability have collectively positioned the ODIN project to achieve meaningful and lasting impact in public health, particularly across sub-Saharan Africa.

SAB / PAB Report

Most of the ODIN & ODIN-Mpox Scientific and Policy Advisory Board, as well as key stakeholders including consultants for the Gates Foundation, EDCTP3 program and strategy officers, and private sector representants from other SSA countries attended our 3rd AGM meeting, and presented their input to the programs both related to their perceived relevance as well as our most significant challenges moving forward.

Mr. Andreas Berglöff, a policy advisor within health and affiliated with the global organization WaterAid, working for a world where everyone, everywhere has access to clean water, sanitation and hygiene stressed that the ODIN & ODIN-Mpox mission of making the world more equitable and safer from future pandemics ***fit perfectly into the just approved World Health Assembly Pandemic Agreement***. Mr. Berglöff



also indicated, based on their own experiences, that *having strong local presence and involvement on all levels – public, research, stakeholders, and government – is crucial to be successful*. Mr. Berglöf concluded that these projects *can really support societies to be healthier*.

Ms. Belinda Ngongo, director of global health at Illumina discussed the aspects of bringing in the private sector for increased sustainability, and highlighted that not only could the private sector contribute with direct financial means, but often they had other values as well, including scalability, reach to stakeholders, and possibilities to support projects like ODIN and ODIN-Mpox even after project endpoint through lowered reagent costs etc to governments in LMICs given that it is negotiated. Ms. Ngongo therefore urged the project to further explore such avenues, to **gain a sustainable solution of the project** after the project end and facilitate the sustained operations of the platform.

Dr. Eunice Ubomba-Jaswa, a research manager within Water Resources Quality and Health at the Water Research Commission in South-Africa briefly went over the work of WRC, and their importance and responses during earlier pandemics and surveillance programs. Dr. Ubomba-Jaswa stressed the overall importance of WES in a One Health setting to facilitate e surveillance of pathogens present in the environment and ensure timely responses. Further, the **ability of ODIN and ODIN-Mpox to participate in building up and contributing to a harmonized and integrated surveillance framework within the African continent** was raised. Dr. Ubomba-Jaswa raised several important challenges, most of them focusing on ensuring national ownership of the platform through identification of key stakeholders, local financing mechanisms, potential conflicts around data sharing, ownership and utilization, making sure that monitoring and evaluation mechanisms are put in place to ensure outputs.

Dr. José Lomba, a researcher at the Norwegian Institute of Public Health, with strong focus and experience within wastewater surveillance and part of the EU-WISH project. Dr. Lomba demonstrated the need for WBS, since although it is gaining momentum globally, development levels vary, with different settings and different needs. ODIN and ODIN-Mpox **fill a key gap through generating context-specific evidence for SSA, developing portable, flexible solutions suited to both urban and rural conditions, and creates proof-of-concept for SSA-led WBS governance**. As such, WBS must evolve with the regions it serves. *ODIN helps lead that evolution*. Dr. Lomba continued to stress that several challenges on a continental level exist, including capacity constraints and logistical challenges, with a need to have a more harmonized approach with better integration and reduce siloed data (e.g. data sharing). Dr Lomba continued to expand on how **ODIN moves WBS and genomics from research to routine use in SSA, and ODIN-Mpox leverages this infrastructure for timely Mpox detection and response**. With this, Dr. Lomba urged the consortium to continue working on rapid deployment through mobile labs, public health integrations, and cross-border data and policy coordination, stressing that **more than a surveillance project, ODIN is a tool for health systems strengthening, equity, and preparedness, with ODIN not just being technology it is public health infrastructure**.

Dr. Beth Tippet Barr, head of the Malawi-based Nyanja Health Research Institute, a locally-owned health institute focusing on conducting relevant epidemiological research that can be translated to health policies, as well as focusing on capacity building and dissemination of high-quality results. Malawi, being the 4th most poor country globally, is facing significant health-related challenges, with infectious diseases being one, and several current cases of Mpox. The country has most recently set up a WBS for cholera and polio together with Malawi Liverpool Wellcome project, and has initiated wastewater collection. There are limited reagents supply, research capacity and diagnostic capacity combined with limited funding. ODIN has signed an agreement with NHRI, **to facilitate the implementation and development of WBS in Malawi, assist with capacity building and training, and share general knowledge and use cases on WBS implementation in SSA, including upcoming cost studies**.



Dr. Stefanie Sowinski, a global health consultant for the Gates Foundation, described how the GenEpi Network was set up, and highlighted the vast importance of ODIN & ODIN-Mpox within this network. Dr. Sowinski **stressed the willingness of ODIN & ODIN-Mpox to lead a WP** within this collaborative consortium on WES through Tarja Pitkänen (THL), and overall **a willingness to engage and participate in building this broader consortium**. This is also highlighted in the ongoing discussions between ODIN and EpiGen regarding implementation of WES at airports. Dr. Sowinski finalized her discussion by mentioning that funders in general currently are highly interested in WWS as a tool to improve global pandemic preparedness and disease surveillance, as well as how **ODIN & ODIN-Mpox are important use cases for WWS in LMICs**. Dr. Sowinski finally encouraged the consortium to continue to ensure that the work is of the highest quality, in order to *convincingly demonstrate feasibility of WWS in LMICs, and provide a solid basis for cost calculations*. There was an expressed wish that not only should ODIN & ODIN-Mpox develop high-quality evidence, but also a pathway for that evidence to be used.

Dr. Lydia Boudarene and Dr. Jean-Marie Habarugira both stressed the importance of the project, as an example of WBS in an SSA-setting. Dr. Habarugira also stressed the importance of being **able to create a path forward, demonstrating the implementation of the ODIN and ODIN-Mpox platform** and a sustainable integration upon project finalization.





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