

WHO and ICCBBA Collaborative Program

Globally Consistent Coding Systems for Human Cell, Tissue and Organs

In May 2010 the 63rd World Health Assembly adopted resolution WHA63.22 (Human Tissue and Organ Transplantation) endorsing the WHO Guiding Principles on Human Cell, Tissue and Organ Transplantation.

Recognizing that internationally agreed means of coding to identify tissues, cells, and organs used in transplantation are essential for full traceability, the resolution calls on Member States to “encourage the implementation of globally consistent coding systems for human cells, tissues and organs as such in order to facilitate national and international traceability of materials of human origin for transplantation”.

It further requests the Director General of WHO to “provide, in response to requests from Member States, technical support for developing national legislation and regulation on, and suitable and traceable coding systems for, donation and transplantation of human cells, tissues or organs, in particular by facilitating international cooperation”.

The international not-for-profit information standards organization, ICCBBA, has developed a unique and unparalleled experience in the field of nomenclature and coding for substances of human origin. Its standards are now being used by more than 3,700 facilities in 67 countries. ICCBBA was established more than 15 years ago by actors in the field to facilitate traceability and the international circulation of substances of human origin.

WHO recognised this unique position of ICCBBA and has engaged in working relations with it through a structured collaboration in order to take forward a number of activities that are necessary to form the basis for internationally consistent coding systems.

The work program will initially focus on the following three activities:

1. To build, through a consensus process and in collaboration with national health authorities from all regions and scientific and professional societies, a WHO nomenclature for organ transplants,
2. To develop an internationally agreed core nomenclature of cell, tissue and organ transplant suitable for activity reporting at Member State level and to the WHO/ONT Global Observatory in order to facilitate globally consistent and comparable reporting of activities,
3. To improve global awareness of the need for traceability and vigilance, and of the benefits of global standards for the unique identification of cell, tissue and organ for transplantation.