



WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH

Protecting animals, preserving our future

STATEMENT BY THE WORLD ORGANIZATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH ON THE NEW OIE GUIDELINES FOR RESPONSIBLE CONDUCT IN VETERINARY RESEARCH

Delivered by Christine Uhlenhaut,

Geneva, 31 July 2019

The World Organisation for Animal Health, the OIE, is an intergovernmental organization founded in 1924 to respond to animal disease at an international level. OIE's mandate is to improve animal health and animal welfare worldwide. One cornerstone for ensuring and improving animal health and food security is of course research.

The OIE has an extensive network of expertise, comprised of 254 Reference Laboratories and 58 Collaborating Centers. Many of which work with pathogens, materials and technologies or knowledge with significant dual-use potential. In addition, numerous other stakeholders similarly engage in activities that could potentially, by accident or malicious intent, result in significant negative effects on animal health or human health. At the same time, their work is instrumental for keeping us safe and improving human and animal health.

The dual-use potential has been addressed in many guidance documents on management or mitigation of research risks. However, these guidance documents focus mostly on research related to human health or are extremely broad, providing aspirational principles and not clear guidance. Following this observation, the OIE noted a lack of practical guidance in relation to veterinary research.

To address this gap, the OIE convened an *ad hoc* group to develop guidelines for responsible conduct in veterinary research. These guidelines aim at raising awareness specifically about the dual-use potential of research in veterinary settings, supporting veterinary professionals, researchers and other stakeholders to effectively identify, assess and manage dual-use implications. Because these guidelines are meant to be used in 182 Member Countries and in many different settings, they are not prescriptive, they cannot and do not provide detailed information on what to do but rather aim at providing thought-provoking impulses and encouraging reflection as countries and institutions work towards implementation of their own dual-use guidelines.

The guidelines provide basic input on the risk review process, including risk identification, risk assessment and risk management. They also list various stakeholders, who, in addition to the laboratory scientists have some responsibility and should consider dual-use implications as well. These include research institutions, funders, companies, educators, publishers and regulatory authorities.

These guidelines have been developed to raise awareness about dual-use implications, while strongly encouraging the continued advancement of life science and innovation, which has greatly benefited global safe trade of animals and animal products, food security, public health, and animal welfare. By no means are they intended to curb scientific progress, on the contrary, the intent is to provide a framework for safe, secure and responsible conduct.

The Guidelines are available in [English](#), [French](#) and [Spanish](#) on the OIE website.