

**The OIE kicks off the Sustainable Laboratories Initiative to improve
laboratory biosafety and biosecurity**

With the generous support of Global Affairs Canada, the OIE has launched the Sustainable Laboratories Initiative to assist Members to improve sustainable laboratory biosafety and biosecurity and to reduce the risk of accidental or intentional release of dangerous pathogens in OIE Member Countries. The OIE signed the grant arrangement on 27 September 2018 for a three-year collaboration on this important topic. The OIE will be implementing this project in close collaboration with Chatham House and the World Health Organization.

Through this project, the OIE will further develop its portfolio on laboratory sustainability with the objectives of promoting evidence-based laboratory biosafety and biosecurity, fostering strategic decision making for national laboratories' resources, and promoting the sustainable implementation of OIE International Standards in the veterinary laboratory setting.

A functional and sustainable diagnostic laboratory requires a high level of technical competence; a robust management framework (particularly for quality assurance, safety, and security); links to national, regional and international networks; appropriate equipment and reagents; support from a functional health system, including strong surveillance systems and disease control programmes; and economic sustainability. Chapter 1.1.1. "Management of veterinary diagnostic laboratories" of the OIE *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals* states that "the governance and management of these aspects are as important as the delivery of the actual diagnostic service".

To varying degrees, veterinary laboratories across the world face challenges in meeting these critical requirements. Out of proportion infrastructure, poorly adapted-investment in and over-reliance on dysfunctional structures, unsustainable fixed costs, poorly trained staff, inaccurate or untimely results, insufficient sample flow, and systemic and chronic management deficiencies only augment the risk of accidental or intentional release once external resources are depleted.



Through the implementation of this project, OIE Members' Veterinary Services will have tools to more effectively advocate for sufficient resources to support sustainable, accurate and timely diagnosis of priority animal diseases and veterinary public health issues and will be able to better ensure that investments in national laboratories, based on evidence and data, promote sustainable laboratory biosafety and biosecurity from the outset to reduce biological threats from accidental or intentional release.

OIE Members and OIE Reference Centres will be invited to propose projects to advance evidence-based sustainable laboratory biosafety and biosecurity, as well as participate in an open innovation consortium, participate in Laboratory Twinning Projects, and inform the advancements of the PVS Sustainable Laboratories Tool. Analysis of existing PVS data related to laboratories will inform the development of a position paper on the investment needs for sustainable veterinary laboratories.

Any inquiries and interest should be directed to the Sustainable Laboratories Team Leader, Jennifer Lasley, at j.lasley@oie.int.

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