

# Public Communication about Science - Europe

NASEM BAHSCR Webinar  
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Executive Director, Ethics

# International Communication

NOVARTIS

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## Animal Research

Animal research is key to many of the great medical advances of today, including cancer treatments, medicines to treat neurological diseases such as multiple sclerosis, medicines for diseases that have high morbidity and mortality rates around the world like high blood pressure, diabetes, malaria and much more.



In addition, animal research is important for the development of new treatments such as radioligand, and cell and gene therapies.

Novartis fully supports the replacement of animals with non-animal alternatives wherever feasible, while meeting our obligations to patients and the expectations of regulatory agencies. More information about the Novartis position on animal research is provided in our position statement.

NOVARTIS

### Replacement of animals with non-animal alternatives

Novartis fully supports the replacement of animals with non-animal alternatives wherever feasible, while meeting our obligations to patients and the expectations of regulatory agencies. In fact, Novartis has made great strides in adopting and even creating advancements from computer and cell-based culture to organ-on-a-chip technology. For example, our scientific team can replace animals when screening new therapeutic compounds for potential negative neurological side effects.



Tissue cell culture is one of many non-animal alternatives utilized at Novartis.

NOVARTIS



The welfare of animals in Novartis studies is a primary concern to us for reasons of ethics, accuracy, reliability and applicability of scientific studies. Good animal welfare is a prerequisite for good science.



We have a Global [Animal Welfare Policy](#) and a set of Animal Welfare Standards that define key principles, responsibilities and explicit requirements governing animal research. All Novartis sponsored studies, whether conducted internally or externally, must adhere to this policy and set of standards.



We transparently report the numbers of animals needed for research and development at Novartis each year. Data on the internal animal numbers is reported in our [Novartis in Society Integrated Report](#).

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Main Camera

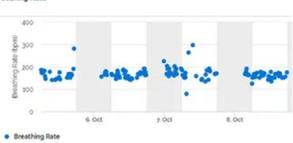


Charts

Motion

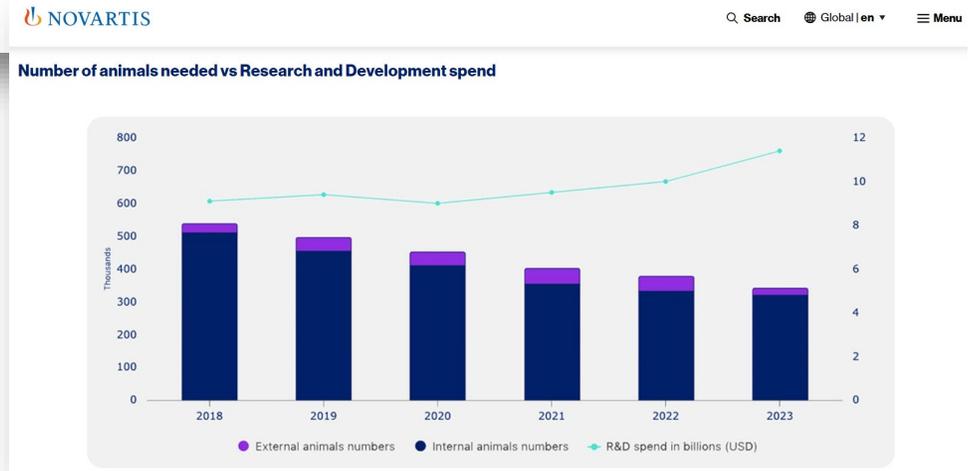


Breathing Rate



### Digital Biomarkers

Digital housing allows mice to engage in normal behaviors such as nest building and wheel running, undisturbed, and in their natural circadian rhythm, while simultaneously measuring important clinical metrics such as motion and respiratory rate.



# International Communication



**Novartis Position on Animal Research**

At Novartis our mission is to reimagine medicine, to improve and extend patients' lives. Using science-based innovation, we strive to deliver better outcomes for patients and address the evolving healthcare needs of society.

Many encouraging alternative methods to research with animals, such as computer modeling and cell-based research assays, have been introduced into the process of drug development. Novartis fully supports the replacement of animals with non-animal alternatives wherever feasible, while meeting our obligations to patients and the expectations of regulatory agencies. In fact, Novartis has made great strides in adopting and even creating advancements in non-animal methods.

Novartis has continuously reduced the number of animals needed for pre-clinical research. Nevertheless, animal research continues to be an essential part of our work to deliver safe, efficacious, and transformative medicines to millions of patients. Today, there are still several areas where an understanding of disease mechanisms cannot be achieved without animals and thus the knowledge acquired through animal research is critical for the development of innovative treatments for unmet medical needs in humans. In addition, regulatory authorities often require new drugs first be evaluated in animals to ensure their safety and efficacy before being introduced into humans.

**Novartis Position**

- Novartis only supports research with animals when scientifically justified to understand why a disease occurs and to identify new therapies that are safe and effective in a living system, as required by many health authorities around the world.
- Novartis fully supports the replacement of animals with non-animal alternatives wherever feasible, while meeting our obligations to patients and the expectations of regulatory agencies.
- Novartis has a robust and transparently shared Animal Welfare Policy as well as a detailed set of Animal Welfare Standards that define key principles, responsibilities and explicit requirements governing Novartis sponsored animal research.
- All Novartis sponsored studies, whether conducted internally or externally, must adhere to this Policy and set of Standards.
- All Novartis animal facilities and research programs meet or exceed applicable national laws, regulations and accreditation guidelines for the care and use of animals in research.
- Novartis has a Global Animal Welfare Organization that ensures ethical oversight and compliance of Novartis sponsored animal studies and is empowered to steer and influence the company's adherence to the Policy and Standards.

- As strong adherents to the 3Rs concept (i.e., Reduction, Refinement and Replacement of animal research), we acknowledge the importance of animal welfare and support the development of alternative research methods. The Global Animal Welfare Organization sponsors and recognizes significant 3Rs advancements by our Novartis scientists. In addition, Novartis sponsors annual 3Rs Innovation Grants to prospectively support creation and validation of new 3Rs advancements by our Novartis scientists.
- Novartis recognizes that people have the right to express their opinions freely and openly about medical research involving animals. However, we condemn the use of violence, harassment, and intimidation.

*Last updated November 2022*



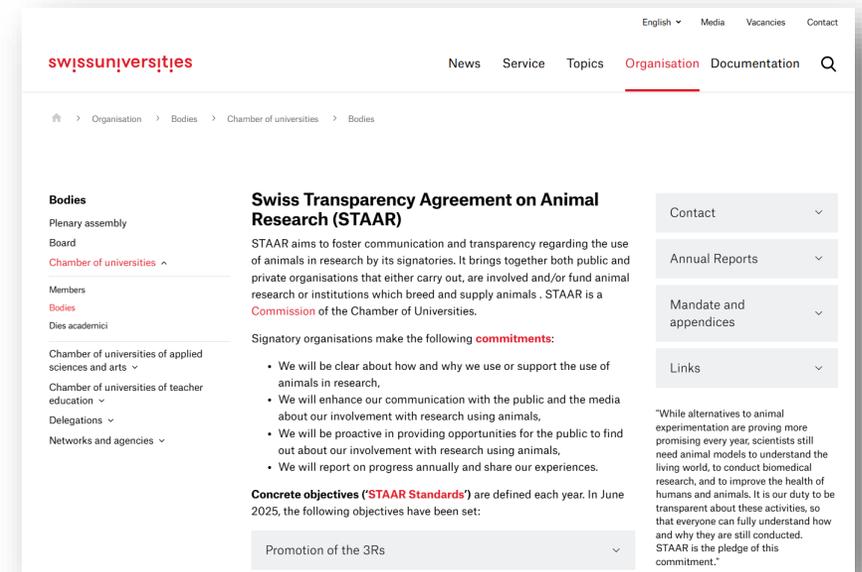
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# STARR Agreement

## Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research (STARR)

“STARR aims to foster communication and transparency regarding the use of animal in research by its signatories. It brings together both public and private organizations that either carry out, are involved and/or fund animal research or institutions which breed and supply animals. STARR is a commission of the Chamber of Universities.”

<https://www.swissuniversities.ch/en/organisation/bodies/chamber-of-universities/bodies/swiss-transparency-agreement-on-animal-research-staar>



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Organisation Bodies Chamber of universities Bodies

**Bodies**

- Plenary assembly
- Board
- Chamber of universities

Members

Bodies

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- Chamber of universities of applied sciences and arts
- Chamber of universities of teacher education
- Delegations
- Networks and agencies

### Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research (STAAR)

STAAR aims to foster communication and transparency regarding the use of animals in research by its signatories. It brings together both public and private organisations that either carry out, are involved and/or fund animal research or institutions which breed and supply animals. STAAR is a Commission of the Chamber of Universities.

Signatory organisations make the following commitments:

- We will be clear about how and why we use or support the use of animals in research,
- We will enhance our communication with the public and the media about our involvement with research using animals,
- We will be proactive in providing opportunities for the public to find out about our involvement with research using animals,
- We will report on progress annually and share our experiences.

Concrete objectives ('STAAR Standards') are defined each year. In June 2025, the following objectives have been set:

Promotion of the 3Rs

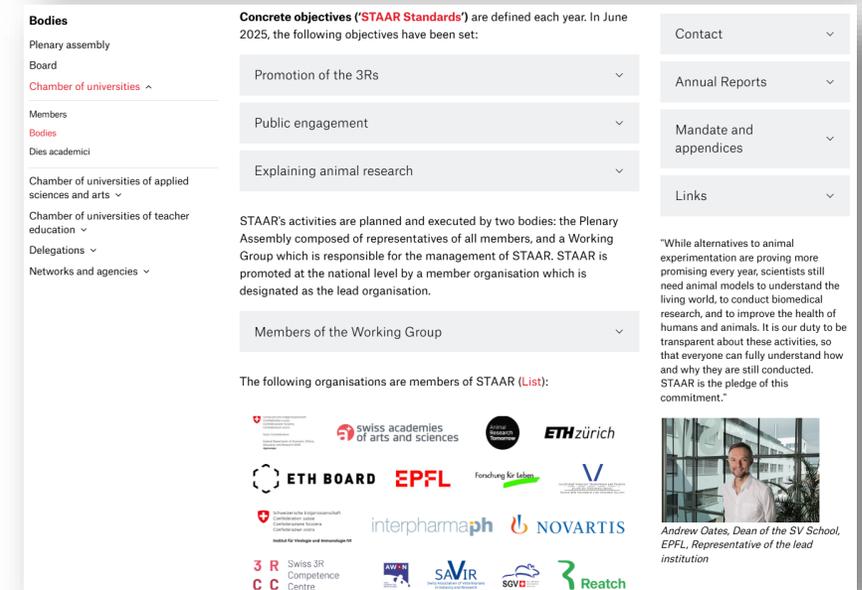
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Mandate and appendices

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"While alternatives to animal experimentation are proving more promising every year, scientists still need animal models to understand the living world, to conduct biomedical research, and to improve the health of humans and animals. It is our duty to be transparent about these activities, so that everyone can fully understand how and why they are still conducted. STAAR is the pledge of this commitment."



**Bodies**

- Plenary assembly
- Board
- Chamber of universities

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Dies academici

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### Concrete objectives ('STAAR Standards') are defined each year. In June 2025, the following objectives have been set:

Promotion of the 3Rs

Public engagement

Explaining animal research

Members of the Working Group

Contact

Annual Reports

Mandate and appendices

Links

STAAR's activities are planned and executed by two bodies: the Plenary Assembly composed of representatives of all members, and a Working Group which is responsible for the management of STAAR. STAAR is promoted at the national level by a member organisation which is designated as the lead organisation.

The following organisations are members of STAAR (List):

-  ETH BOARD
-  EPFL
-  Forschung für Leben
-  V
-  interpharmaph
-  NOVARTIS
-  3R Swiss 3R Competence Centre
-  SAVIR
-  SGV
-  Reatch



Andrew Oates, Dean of the SV School, EPFL, Representative of the lead institution

# STARR Agreement Standards

## swissuniversities

swissuniversities  
Effingerstrasse 15, PO Box  
3001 Bern  
www.swissuniversities.ch

### Appendix 2: STAAR Standards 2023-2024<sup>1</sup>

Adopted by the STAAR Plenary Assembly on 13 June 2023.

#### 1. Figures

Signatories performing research work towards making publicly available

- number of animals and species used;
- number of animals used in each severity degree.

#### 2. Communication

When publishing information on a research project that used animals, signatories work towards providing comprehensive explanations of the importance of using animals in this specific case and how experiments on animals contribute to achieving the project. All signatories encourage the use of channels targeting the general public.

#### 3. Public engagement

Signatories work towards supporting the organization of public events such as debates, open days, etc.

#### 4. Explaining animal research

Signatories work towards providing information on the main fields of research at their institution and examples of research projects using animals. In the description of these projects, they pay attention to explaining procedures (including euthanasia) and their severity degree.

## swissuniversities

swissuniversities  
Effingerstrasse 15, PO Box  
3001 Bern  
www.swissuniversities.ch

### Appendix 2: STAAR Standards 2024-2025<sup>1</sup>

Adopted by the STAAR Plenary Assembly on 12 June 2024.

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### Appendix 2: STAAR Standards 2025-2026<sup>1</sup>

Adopted by the STAAR Plenary Assembly on 12 June 2025.

#### 1. Promotion of the 3Rs

When publishing information on research results, the signatories aim to increase the visibility of researchers who develop or apply 3R methods.

#### 2. Public engagement

Signatories are committed to organising and participating in public engagements to answer questions from the public.

#### 3. Explaining animal research

Signatories work to provide information on the use of severe procedures.

# STARR Agreement Annual Report

1. Commitment across institutions
2. Implementation of STARR transparency standards
3. Communication of 3Rs principles
4. Open facilities & targeted outreach
5. Education integrated across institutional levels
6. Innovative public engagement
7. Transparency about sensitive issues
8. Multi-channel digital communications
9. Cultural change towards empowered dialogue

## Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research (STAAR) - 2024 Annual Report

*This version constitutes the reference version.*

### Executive summary

The Swiss Transparency Agreement on Animal Research (STAAR) was launched in 2022 with the aim of providing a framework for the signatory organisations to foster communication and transparency surrounding their use of animals in research. The 26 signatory organisations agree to communicate openly about their use of animals in research or their support of such research. Moreover, they undertake to engage with the public and the media, to create opportunities for the public to learn more about animal research, and to report on their progress in improving transparency. To guide these efforts, four clear goals, the STAAR standards, were set for the 2022-2024 period.

This annual report provides information on the transparency-enhancing activities pursued in 2024 by the 26 STAAR signatories, which include 14 institutions that perform animal research (PARs) and 12 that support animal research (SARs). The report is based on responses to a survey developed by a STAAR working group; the individual responses are illustrated with real-life examples to encourage even greater openness throughout the scientific community.

#### Highlights from 2024:

**1. Strong Commitment across Institutions:** All 14 PAR and 12 SAR organisations contributed to STAAR in 2024, with more than 90% of PARs and the majority of SARs engaging in transparency activities such as facility tours, internal newsletters, public lectures, and digital communication campaigns. These efforts are evidence of a widespread and structural commitment.

**2. Implementation of STAAR Transparency Standards:** In 2024, 12 of 14 PARs published detailed figures on the number and species of animals used in experiments. 5 of these also shared data on the severity of procedures, which further enhances transparency. Additionally, 3 SARs provided data or summaries about animal use in supported projects, marking a significant increase over previous years.

**3. Communication on the 3Rs Principle:** The report documents how 14 PARs and 9 SARs actively communicated on the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement) via their websites, newsletters, and social media posts. The institutions reported organising or participating in 3R-focused events, including public conferences and internal awards to recognise progress in refining animal procedures. This broad promotion reflects a strong institutional commitment to the 3Rs principle.

**4. Open Facilities and Targeted Outreach:** 12 PARs opened their facilities to external groups, including school classes, journalists, politicians, and other professionals. These visits were conducted in the form of structured programmes such as scheduled tours or educational collaborations, providing visitors with a first-hand experience of animal welfare and technical standards in research environments.

**5. Education Integrated across Institutional Levels:** As part of formal training programmes for students and staff, 11 institutions offered courses on animal ethics, legislation, and the 3Rs, including more than 20 unique course offerings across Switzerland.

**6. Innovative Public Engagement Activities:** In 2024, at least 16 STAAR members participated in external events such as local presentations, science fairs, and university open days. Another 11 reported collaborations with schools, including science sessions and facility tours with the aim of making animal research more tangible and accessible to the public.

**7. Transparency about Sensitive Issues:** A growing number of institutions, twice as many as in 2023, provided information about euthanasia methods, necropsy rooms, and statistics on animals not used in experiments. The publication of this information goes beyond the simple reporting of standards and demonstrates a strong commitment to transparency on the part of STAAR members.

**8. Multi-Channel Digital Communications:** Institutions actively used LinkedIn, X, Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube to publish news, videos, and explainer content related to animal testing. Several institutions also explored new platforms such as Threads, signalling a willingness to meet audiences where they are and make science more accessible.

**9. Cultural Change towards Empowered Dialogue:** The report documents that PARs increasingly offer a wide range of supportive measures to encourage researchers to communicate more effectively with the public about their research and their rationale for using animal models.

# STARR Agreement



[https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Forschung/Tierversuche/STAAR\\_Executive\\_Summary\\_EN\\_FINAL.pdf](https://www.swissuniversities.ch/fileadmin/swissuniversities/Dokumente/Forschung/Tierversuche/STAAR_Executive_Summary_EN_FINAL.pdf)

## Simplified summary accessible to the public

### - 4 Slides:

- Anchor Communication on Animal Experimentation
- Structure of STARR & Signatories
- Highlights [of STARR]
- Research with Animals in Switzerland; includes:
  - “animal uses by disease” graphic
  - QR codes for more information
  - Examples from signatories with photos/graphics

# Marseille Declaration - Sept. 2022

## First joint pharmaceutical industry declaration on animal housing and use

“The company-signatories of this declaration share common values and believe that the welfare of animals used in the research and production of medicines and vaccines requires the greatest consideration. This work demands application of high and most consistent standards of animal welfare and laboratory animal science regardless of where it is performed.”



# Marseille Declaration



## Culture of Care

*The company commitment and dedication to and engagement of individual employees towards animal welfare is promoted via support of a strong and clearly defined and documented Culture of Care program. Such program is a key asset for a continuously evolving high quality animal care and use program.*



## Oversight Bodies

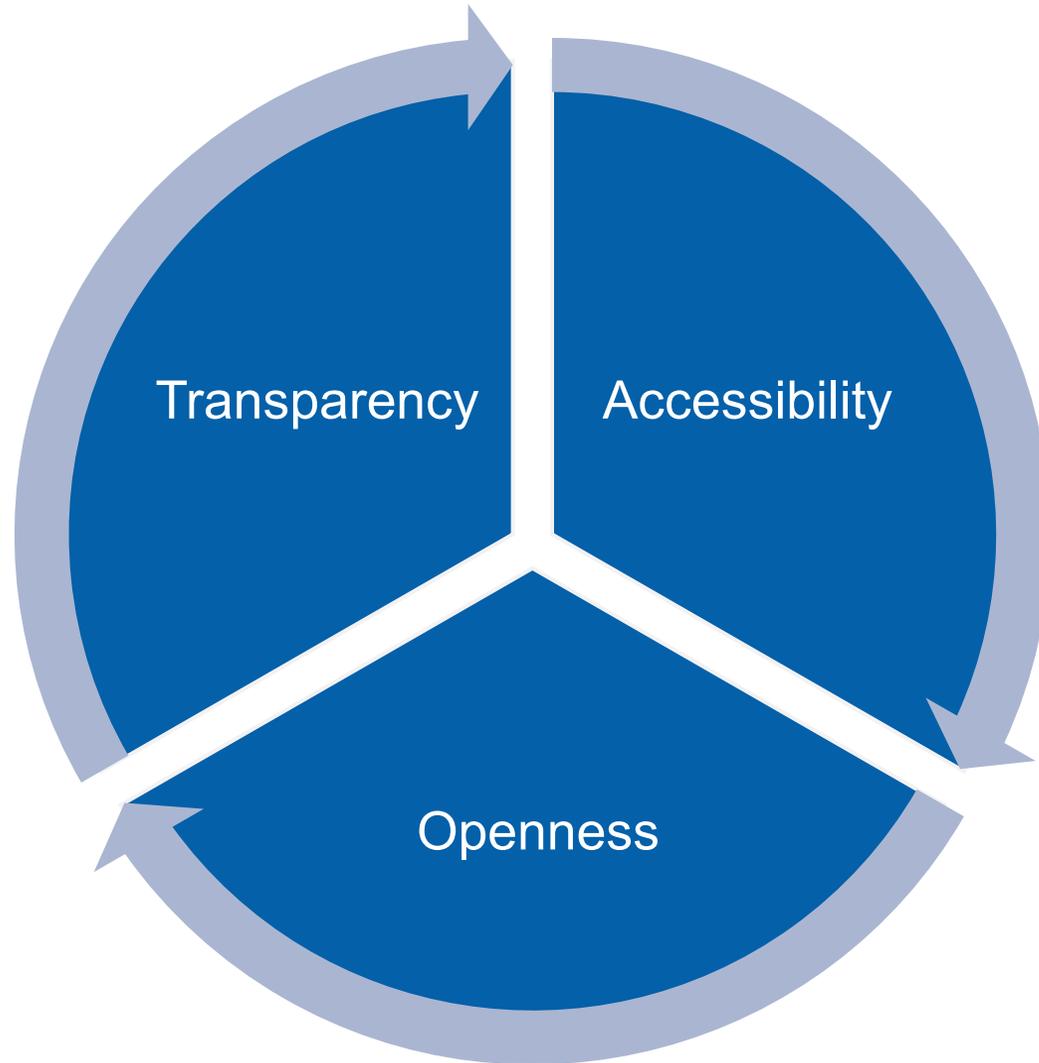
*Institutional independent multidisciplinary expert governance or oversight bodies<sup>1</sup> approve all animal use by ensuring the scientific merit and regulatory requirements of in vivo protocols are met. The considerations of the 6 Principles of Animal Research Ethics<sup>2</sup> are applied to ensure that the value and quality of life is considered for each individual animal and the 3Rs and that the quality of the animal care and use program is assessed.*



## Caging and Enrichment Program

*Caging systems must be designed to meet the fundamental behavioral characteristics of each species, and the environmental enrichment program should be designed around the specific social, behavioral, and nutritional needs of every animal.*

# Summary



## Communication can break walls

- *Internal and external*
- *Remove silos*
- *Engage and learn*
- *Demonstrate benefit*
- *Demonstrate use of alternatives*

**Reimagining  
medicine,  
together.**