

## **GENERAL GUIDELINES - INCREASING TRANSPARENCY ON ANIMAL USE IN SCIENCE**

**Developed by: The Animal Transparency Working Group of the TAHSN Research (TAHSNr) Committee**

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### **PURPOSE**

To provide guidance for TAHSN institutions to increase transparency related to the use of animal use in science.

Each institution is encouraged to consider the information below and incorporate the principles and suggested actions into their processes and governance. These are intended to be applied by each institution according to their own capacity, priorities and risk tolerances.

### **BACKGROUND**

According to the Canadian Council on Animal Care (CCAC), there are growing calls for the scientific community to be more transparent about their use of animals in science, both to the public and within their institutions. Many countries are committing to openness and transparency through transparency agreements.

The CCAC is encouraging certified institutions to make efforts to increase their transparency, and to engage the public about their animal-based scientific activities. Information sharing about animal use in science with other institutions can also enable informed choices and strategies that can enable better animal welfare.

Some universities in Canada have developed publicly available resources outlining the use of animals in science, including the University of Toronto (U of T). This information has made it easier for U of T to reply to media and information requests, including through FIPPA. The use of animals in science plays an important role within the research institutes of many TAHSN organizations. Providing clear information, both within organizations and to the public, about the humane use of animals in science is important to build trust, improve public understanding, and improve animal welfare. By providing accurate, evidence-based information about how animals are used in science, and clearly communicating the benefits of their use, the public will have a better understanding of the continued need for animal research.

### **CONSIDERATIONS**

TAHSN is committed to the highest standards related to animal use in science by following provincial regulations, federal policies and guidelines, institutional policies and the principles of the 3Rs (replacement, reduction and refinement) to ensure the humane treatment of animals. Each institution should assess the risks and benefits of transparency initiatives. The safety of personnel and animals and the security of the facilities should be considered in all public communications including social media and owned, earned and paid media about research using animals.

## RESOURCES

*The following resources are examples of established websites that can provide support for implementing transparency initiatives.*

- Canadian Council on Animal Care Transparency Plan <https://ccac.ca/en/animals-used-in-science/transparency/institutional-transparency.html>
- The U.S. Animal Research Openness Initiative webpage: <https://www.usaro.org/>
- The European Animal Research Association's webpage: <https://www.eara.eu/transparency-agreements>

## PRINCIPLES

For the purpose of this document, we establish the following principles with regards to TAHSN organizations' use of animals in science:

- 1: Provide general information to the public about the use of animals in science and the oversight mechanisms in place at the institution.
- 2: Identify opportunities to detail when, how and why we use animals in science.
- 3: Proactively monitor and advance progress towards greater transparency on the use of animals in science, and to share progress with counterparts across TAHSN.

All TAHSN institutions agree that they will:

- be guided by these principles and will work to fulfil them;
- initiate projects and strategies that are relevant and appropriate to their organizations;
- work towards greater transparency about their use of animals in science;
- commit to collaborate across TAHSN institutions on communications strategies when appropriate.

## CHECKLIST FOR INSTITUTIONAL CONSIDERATION:

- Level of transparency:
  - Consider establishing a common baseline across TAHSN (i.e., essential transparency measures to be taken such as a position statement)
  - Oversight information on use of animals in science should be included in publicly available information
  - Appropriate cautions should continue to protect animals, facilities and staff
- Institutional support to include the following stakeholders:
  - Animal Care Committee, community representatives, in particular
  - Public Relations/Communications – through TAHSN & where applicable at own institution; affirmation with research foundations, if applicable
  - Legal
  - Operator/Senior Administrator- e.g., VP/EVP/CEO/Board - official sign-off on any initiatives



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- Website locations to place information:
  - TAHSN landing page on Animal Use in Science that includes a general statement on transparency
  - Links to each institution's webpage on Animal Use in Science when they are available from ***all TAHSN institutions***. We would identify them as 'these are the TAHSN institutions that use animals in science.'

## **FUTURE DIRECTIONS**

*Review every two years or if there are regulatory changes*