

Opportunities to accelerate the transition to non-animal research

Henk Smid, Chair of NCad (Netherlands National Committee for protection of animals used for scientific purposes), the Hague, the Netherlands


Netherlands National Committee for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes

An outlook on animal-free research by outlining a desired situation


An animal-free research method that does not decrease the research quality?

How?


Join forces within your research domain and draw up a target situation.



... connects parties;




sets the course for an animal-free research strategy;



guarantees the quality of research;



generates enthusiasm, is ambitious, and



... requires confidence and decisiveness in the power of innovation.

We have to do it together!

Step-by-step plan

Define the challenges

Which urgent biomedical issues could benefit from an out-of-the-box approach? Which animal-free innovations can be used or should you develop? What challenges do you face?

Make a list of animal-free innovations and their developers

Find interesting animal-free innovations that may replace animal studies now or at a later stage. Look for interesting animal-free innovations that are currently being developed. Use a multidisciplinary approach to investigate this on a national and international level. Use the network of Transition Programme for Innovation without the use of animals.

www.transitionprogrammeforinnovation.nl/english

Make a timeline

Give a realistic, measurable description of your ambitious goals. Describe the results to be achieved in terms of animal-free innovation, reduction of animal use and the 3Rs: Replacement, Reduction and Refinement. Make your targets measurable and formulate them smartly. For example: in-between five to ten years. The transition target should generate enthusiasm among researchers.

Make an overview of the force field

Map out the spheres of influence of the key stakeholders concerning developments in the research domain. What are the opportunities for this domain? What bottlenecks can you expect? Who are the frontrunners? Who can increase opportunities?

Analyse the viability of animal-free innovation

Which expected research questions can we answer with animal-free innovations? Which questions cannot yet be answered with animal-free innovations? What is the current situation of xR research and its applications?

Think of an innovation strategy

How do you plan to speed up developments and their implementations to meet the transition target? What will be the roles of the various parties in the research domain? What do you need to get these parties involved? How do you keep these parties committed? What else is required to speed up animal-free innovation? How do you incorporate the ambition to work animal-free in your education programmes? Which investments do you need?

Prepare to communicate the desired situation clearly and prepare for project launch!

Follow this checklist:

- ✓ Set **clear transition goals** based on the challenges of the domain
- ✓ Gain **insight into the chances** that animal-free research may succeed for each research question
- ✓ Make an **overview of the current situation** of animal-free innovation inside and outside the domain
- ✓ Make an **overview of possibilities** of animal-free innovations in education programs
- ✓ Set a **time frame** with manageable deadlines
- ✓ Remember: **desired situations** indicate a preferred outcome. **Innovation networks** of the "Transition Programme for Innovation" show you the way to a desired outcome: animal-free research

Advice and support

Drawing up a target situation is recommended by both the Netherlands National Committee for the protection of animals used for scientific purposes (NCad) and the Transition Programme for Innovation without the use of animals (TPI) network organisation. You are not on your own. NCad and TPI are happy to advise you on how to proceed.

www.english.ncadierproevenbelfeld.nl
ncad@minnu.nl

Target images on animal-free research describe clear transition objectives for each research domain aimed at reducing the use of laboratory animals with equal or better research quality. This requires a different way of thinking and working and releasing animal testing as a "golden standard". By creating and realizing an ambitious target, each research domain takes its responsibility to accelerate the transition to animal-free research. The approach with target images is part of the NCad recommendation "Transition to animal-free research", and is also included in the objectives of the Transition Programme for Innovation without the use of animals. How does the target images work?