

Advancing 3Rs in Switzerland

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The Swiss 3R Competence Centre (3RCC) was founded in March 2018 as a non-profit association that promotes the Replacement, Reduction and Refinement of animal experimentation (3Rs principle) in Switzerland and facilitates its implementation in life sciences, with a major focus on high quality research, education and communication.

The 3RCC is a scientific centre of national importance formed as a joint initiative of academia, the industry, regulators, the government and animal welfare association (www.swiss3rcc.org). During its first months, the structure of the centre has been established, including its Executive Board, Scientific Advisory Board and Directorate. Furthermore, a survey was sent to 183 research groups identified to work on the 3Rs in Switzerland, to enquire about current gaps and opportunities for implementing the 3Rs in Switzerland. The survey outcome helped identifying priority needs regarding funding, educational programmes and communication.

The 3RCC has been very active during this first year in establishing its **research funding programme**. A first open call for proposals was launched in November 2018 and closed in January 2019 with CHF 1'265'000 funds available for all of the 3Rs. The selection process resulted in 6 research projects selected out of the 47 complete applications received. The centre has also launched a call for nominations for a **3Rs award**, the winner of which will be announced during the 3Rs Day it is organizing in September 2019.

A mapping of existing **educational programmes** on 3Rs was conducted at the under-graduate, graduate, professional and continuing education levels. Based on the outcome of this mapping as well as on the outcome of the above-mentioned survey, recommendations were made for the implementation of a 3Rs educational program at bachelor level including a list of recommended topics to be addressed. Furthermore, the centre is working in developing an e-Learning module to promote the implementation of alternatives to animal testing, and is collecting information about the use of alternative methods for educational purposes in Switzerland. Finally, the centre has established a biostatistics task force to help fostering good experimental design and biostatistics practices and support.

The centre publishes since its creation, regular newsletters and has been active through its website and social media in providing **regular news on the 3Rs and on 3RCC activities**. The 3RCC also promotes the 3Rs principle by organizing and participating to scientific sessions and events within and outside Switzerland. Finally, the centre provides support to the Federal Office of Public Health regarding the development of guidance documents on alternatives to animal testing as well as supporting the international **regulatory implementation** of test guidelines based on alternative methods to animal experimentation.

Notes
