



What is the purpose of 'Be Open About Animal Research Day'? (#BOARD24)

#BOARD24, taking place on **3 May 2024**, is an opportunity for the global biomedical community to come together to demonstrate the different ways that it is openly discussing animal research with the public. As a 24-hour social media campaign, it is an ideal platform for institutions that are experienced in openness to showcase their communications and helps those that are taking early steps, in their communication efforts, to come forward.

What happened previously on 'Be Open About Animal Research Day'?

This will be the fourth edition of BOARD. All previous editions of BOARD have received support from more than 1,000 biomedical institutions across the world, with participants sharing their stories and experiences of being open with the public through diverse examples, including case studies, videos and events.

What is the role of the European Animal Research Association (EARA)?

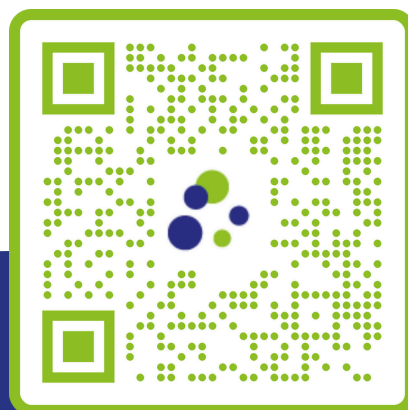
As the voice of the European biomedical community on the importance of animal research, EARA is the co-ordinator of #BOARD24. As a communications and advocacy association it advises its member organisations (now over 150 in total) on how to be more open and transparent about their use of animals, and encourages them to get involved with the BOARD campaign and give examples of openness and dialogue with the public.

Does being open about research with animals make a difference?

Taking a proactive role in communications will put your institution in a stronger position to deal with any potential comment or criticism, and challenge misinformation. The experience of EARA members is that being open about its animal research has not caused problems, or difficulties, and has in fact been of positive benefit to their institution. Publicly available information on your website or social media can also help answer many of the questions that the media or other influencers might have about your research.

While activist groups still challenge institutions and scientists, they are much less likely to focus on institutions that are open about their research activities. For all previous editions of BOARD, there has been very minimal negative comment, activist engagement or criticism.

**3 MAY
2024**
4th edition



For more information on how you or your institution can take part in #BOARD24, scan the QR code or contact BOARD co-ordinator Gege Li, gli@eara.eu

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Moving forward on National Transparency Agreements (TA)

EARA encourages the biomedical sector to make a commitment to openness and transparency in its use of animals in scientific research. There are now eight European countries with active Transparency Agreements - Belgium, France, Germany, Portugal, Netherlands, Spain, Switzerland and UK, and one outside Europe - New Zealand. By demonstrating openness and engaging in a dialogue with the public, institutions can bring about a greater understanding of why animals are used in research. TA signatory institutions agree to four Commitments:

- 1 Speak with clarity about when, how and why animals are used in investigation.
- 2 Provide adequate information to the media and the general public about the conditions under which research using animals is carried out and the results obtained from them.
- 3 Develop initiatives that generate greater knowledge and understanding in society about the use of animals in scientific research
- 4 Report annually on progress and share experiences.

Five steps in the creation of National Transparency Agreements

Step 1

Invite representatives from public and private institutions that conduct animal research, membership bodies, advocacy organisations and research funders to a meeting to discuss why greater openness and transparency on the use of animals is important.

The history and evolution of all TAs has been different, but what is common is a recognition of the need to develop an agreement that sets out how institutions will be more open.

Step 2

Create a working group of key stakeholders, the job of the working group will be to draft an agreement and formulate a process to obtain feedback from potential signatories as the draft agreement evolves.

The draft agreement will affirm that the institutional signatories will work towards meaningful public dialogue concerning animal research through the four commitments. Our advice is that the only compulsory element of any agreement is that each signatory organisation must have a clear statement on its website explaining why it funds, uses, or has members that use animals in research and also that it shares its experiences of communication for the annual report.

Step 3

How each institution meets the commitments will differ depending on its size, purpose, capacity and legal obligations. It is also important to identify someone who can act as the co-ordinator for the TA and arrange regular catch-up meetings.

Once you have agreement from your stakeholders, and the signatory institutions have given you formal support, you can plan to publicise the agreement.

Step 4

While some signatories will have systems in place to help them fulfil the commitments, others may require time and advice to develop these processes.

We would suggest having someone from the working group whose job it is to help institutions prepare for and continue to meet the agreed commitments.

Step 5

Contact EARA at any point for advice and support, or email Kirk Leech kleeche@eara.eu to discuss creating an agreement.