Life sciences and technologies can offer endless opportunities to improve our health, our societies and our environment.

However, developments and advances in the life sciences and associated technologies may pose risks that include safety and security risks.

WHO plays a critical role in harnessing the power of science and innovation and provides global leadership to support Member States in translating the latest in science, evidence, innovation and digital solutions to improve health and health equity for all.
WHO Global guidance framework

- The result of two years of concerted collaborative effort involving hundreds of international experts in the fields of life science research, biosafety, biosecurity and ethics.
- A first-of-its-kind comprehensive global guidance document.
- Adopts an integrated approach of biorisk management, based on three core pillars: biosafety, laboratory biosecurity and the oversight of dual-use research.
- Stresses the importance of biorisks management in the context of the One Health approach.
- Provides a set of values and principles to guide decision-making; identifies tools and mechanisms for biorisk management; sets out a practical five-step approach with checklists for various stakeholders and develops scenarios and case studies to support implementation.
- Intended for those who have responsibilities in the governance of biorisks.

From guidance to action

- The Framework is a go-to starting point for the development of regional, national and local frameworks and measures to strengthen biorisk management in the context of the One Health approach.
- The Framework will need to be adapted and contextualized to reflect Member States and stakeholders’ needs and perspectives.
- WHO, in collaboration with partners and relevant stakeholders, will support the implementation of the Framework in Member States through several activities including pilot activities, the development of toolkits, training materials, mapping, monitoring and evaluation tools, the sharing of information and expertise and support to regional, national champions and key stakeholders.

What are biorisk and dual-use research?

- Biorisk is the probability or chance that an event caused by accidents, inadvertent or deliberate misuse of the life sciences can adversely affect the health of humans, nonhuman animals, plants and agriculture, and the environment.
- Dual-use research is research conducted for peaceful and beneficial purposes that has the potential to produce knowledge, information, methods, products or technologies that could also be intentionally misused to endanger the health of humans, nonhuman animals, plants and agriculture, and the environment.
- In the context of this project, it refers to work in the life sciences, but the principles are also applicable to other scientific fields.

Mitigating biorisks and governing dual-use research is a global issue—a shared responsibility with no one-size-fits-all approach.