



An ambitious vision of the future gives direction for today

The NCad has set a **society without animal experiments** as the ultimate goal. This is more than an aspirational image: it is a strategic reference point that shows where we want to go and already gives direction to the choices we make today. This transition cannot be realized overnight; it may take one or even several generations.

Defining a society without animal experiments

We define a society without animal experiments as a future in which the use of animals for research and education has become unnecessary. In every societal transition, setting a clear end goal is essential. It helps to stay on course, make choices, and mobilize stakeholders. Especially in a challenging and contentious area such as animal testing, it is important to articulate where we want to go, even if we do not yet know exactly how, or whether it will be fully achievable.

The end goal provides scope to explore new opportunities. It opens the door to innovative, human-focused research, strengthens the link between science and society, and can improve translation from laboratory to practice. It also contributes to the future-oriented training of researchers, research analysts, and other professionals.

A clear end goal provides a point of reference in a dynamic landscape. New technologies, shifting perspectives, or international developments can quickly change the field. This requires flexibility, but without losing commitment. This is exactly when a clear end goal is essential: it allows us to stay on course without becoming rigid.

Room for diversity, while holding to direction

The path towards a society without animal experiments differs across domains. Safety research, fundamental biomedical studies, and education each face their own challenges. Differences within these domains are also substantial. It is therefore essential to accommodate different approaches and timelines, anchored by clear intermediate goals within each domain. These goals make the process concrete, drive progress, and clarify which steps are feasible in the short term. They also ensure that the long term remains in focus, where research without animal experiments becomes the shared reference point.

Small steps are also valuable. Policy adjustments, pilot projects, collaborations, and awareness-raising in education all contribute to cultural change. They stimulate new ways of thinking about research questions, model choices, and approaches to evidence, and help broaden and reframe the societal–scientific perspective. This change requires attention to the full scope of the scientific system and to the position of scientists navigating it in their daily work. Steering a transition does not mean overseeing everything but daring to act with the ultimate goal as compass.

What this transition truly demands of us

The ambition for a society without animal experiments underlines that it is not only about replacing animal tests in laboratories. It is a collective ambition that encompasses science, policy, industry, and society. Technical solutions alone are not sufficient; public dialogue, ethics and values must be central.

The international context is part of this. Competition, regulation, and the pursuit of a level playing field create both challenges and opportunities. Through consistent policies and collaboration, the Netherlands can act as a catalyst.

The transition challenges deeply rooted assumptions and requires scope for ethics and societal values. Not as secondary, but as an essential part of policy and innovation. It also means reshaping systems such as legislation, education, and funding. These must be able to better support and strengthen the path forward, rather than unintentionally hold it back.

This transition is not simple, but it is essential for future-proof science. Choosing direction, harnessing diverse approaches, and jointly building new values and structures will bring a society without animal experiments closer step by step.