



EU3Rnet – The European network of 3Rs centers and institutions is online – www.eu3Rnet.org

Following several meetings after the EUSAAT 2018 congress and the two recent workshops on 3Rs centers in Linz (September 2024, <https://cost-improve.eu/outcome/open-workshop-3rs-centres/>) and Genova (September 2025, <https://cost-improve.eu/outcome/improve-3rs-centres-workshop-brought-together-european-experts-in-genova/>) under patronage of the COST Action IMPROVE, major outcomes were the development of a common Memorandum of Understanding and the establishment of working groups addressing key challenges in the field and on the organization, communication, funding, and sustainability of EU3Rnet.

A website as official communication and contact platform was generated and went online in November 2025. It informs about activities of the members of EU3Rnet and can be reached at: <https://eu3Rnet.org/>

COST Action IMPROVE – update

As a common outcome of the *COST Action CA21139 – 3Rs concepts to improve the quality of biomedical science (IMPROVE)* a paper entitled “Building Bridges: Involvement of Animal Care Staff and Laboratory Technicians in Experimental Planning and Conduct of Animal Studies for Better Job Satisfaction and Science” has recently been accepted by *Laboratory Animals*, and several others are in the submission and revision process.

A training school in Porto, Portugal on October 8-10, 2025, gave 3Rs trainers opportunity to learn about concepts in educa-

tion science applied to higher education and professional training and to discuss how to train researchers best for high-quality research with respect to the 3Rs. A detailed report can be found at: <https://cost-improve.eu/outcome/training-school-teaching-the-3rs-train-the-trainers/>

A series of webinars co-organized by the COST Actions IMPROVE, AFFECTEVO, and LIFT was dedicated to improving animal welfare in research and promoting the 3R principles. The sessions featured leading experts discussing best practices, innovative approaches, and ethical considerations in laboratory animal science. The recordings are now available:

- Dr Tom Smulders, Reader in Evolutionary Neuroscience, University of Newcastle: “Adult hippocampal neurogenesis as a valence marker”, 28.5.2025, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TuzKz0jZob4>
- Prof. Georgia Mason, Department of Integrative Biology, University of Guelph: “Proxy measures for animal feelings: How to validate indicators of affective state or cumulative affective experience”, 15.7.2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qK_1GIQG9kk
- Assoc. Prof. Laura Webb, Animal Production Systems Group, University of Wageningen: “Animal Happiness: Understanding and Assessment through Behaviour, Cognition and Physiology”, 15.10.2025, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p_1vveS7UHs

Events in 2026

- 13-15 May 2026: Workshops in Split, Croatia on “Practices of Care: A Path to Enable Integrity and Open Communication” and “Balkan 3Rs centre”
- 16-17 June 2026: Workshop in Porto, Portugal on “Improving the quality and reproducibility of both NAMs and animal studies”
- 28 September - 1 October 2026: Workshop on “A multi-disciplinary approach to human-relevant modelling” and a final conference in Pisa, Italy

Website: <https://www.cost-improve.eu>

LinkedIn: <https://www.linkedin.com/company/improve-3rs-concepts-to-improve-the-quality-of-biomedical-science-ca21139/>
X: <https://X.com/caimprove>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100094711647507>

COST Action Members can apply for Short Term Scientific Missions (STSMs) of up to 3 months in a host lab (<https://cost-improve.eu/calls-grants/#section-3>).

ITC nationals can apply for an ITC grant to visit a conference (<https://cost-improve.eu/calls-grants/#section-1>).

EUSAAT Board election in early 2026

The next EUSAAT Board will be elected early in 2026. The election procedure was agreed upon at the EUSAAT AGM on December 17, 2025 and sent to the EUSAAT members by e-mail. We are looking forward to a large number of candidates and good voter turnout for the 2026 EUSAAT Board election. The next EUSAAT congress is planned for February 2027 in Linz, Austria.

IPAM, the Italian Platform on Alternative Methods

The Italian Platform on Alternative Methods (IPAM), established in 2003, is committed to promoting research and disseminating information on alternatives to animal experimentation in accordance

with the 3Rs principle (replacement, reduction, refinement). IPAM seeks to foster synergies among all relevant stakeholders to accelerate the development, validation, and regulatory acceptance of alternative

methods in basic, applied, and regulatory research. The concept of a national platform – as outlined in the Final Declaration of the Third World Congress on Alternatives and Animal Use in the Life



Sciences (Bologna, 1999) – is based on the recognition that the implementation of the 3Rs requires a multidisciplinary approach to combine different interests and areas of expertise. The representation of the four stakeholder groups academic research, industry, government institutions, and organizations for animal welfare ensures a balanced and comprehensive perspective on issues related to animal experimentation, the application of the 3Rs principle, and the development of new approach methodologies (NAMs). This comprehensive approach extends beyond academic and technical considerations to include ethical aspects, legislative frameworks, and societal concerns. At present, the elected stakeholder representatives are Francesca Caloni and Cristina Maria Failla (academic research), Maurilio Calleri and Michela Kuan (organizations for animal welfare), Giancarlo Melato and Francesco Nevelli (industry), Isabella De Angelis, Augusto Vitale, and Stefano Lorenzetti (government institutions). Stefano Lorenzetti is the current president. IPAM's website (www.ipamitalia.org) and Facebook page (www.facebook.com/IPfAMITALIA) provide updates on IPAM's activities and are points of contact for interested parties.

Through a fruitful collaboration with ecopa (European consensus-platform for alternatives; <https://ecopa.eu/>), IPAM has contributed to promoting a shared European vision of the application and governance of the 3Rs principle (Lorenzetti et al., 2020) developed in close collaboration with other ecopa-associated national platforms, namely Fincopa (Finland), 3RCC (Switzerland), Francopa (France), Norecopa (Norway), REMA (Spain), and SET foundation (Germany). This collaboration represents a unique framework that brings together various cross-sector entities, each contributing distinct perspectives on scientific debate and progress at regulatory, political, and social levels to discuss strategies to reduce, and ultimately replace, animal testing. These activities are reinforced by the presence of other 3Rs institutes and

centers established across many European countries, which constitute a further significant network for the dissemination and implementation of the 3Rs principle (Neuhaus et al., 2022).

IPAM regularly organizes national and international events and meetings targeting different stakeholder groups, such as students, researchers, and citizens (Caloni et al., 2018, 2022; Lorenzetti et al., 2020, 2021, 2025; Nagy et al., 2016; Rovida et al., 2013; Vitale et al., 2024). Two online *in silico* schools addressing innovative theoretical and practical aspects of computational methods in pharmaco-toxicology were held in 2020 (Lorenzetti et al., 2021) and 2022. Since 2022, IPAM has organized an online event in English titled 3Days for 3Rs (Caloni et al., 2022; Vitale et al., 2024), which aims to present different applications and theoretical perspectives for each of the three Rs. Each day includes talks by three invited national or international speakers. The IPAM Annual Meeting focuses on emerging topics related to alternative methods and animal experimentation. IPAM also maintains continuous communication with national and international regulatory bodies, and IPAM's members frequently share their expertise in training initiatives organized by universities, industry, and public institutions.

The IPAM-Farindustria award, a biennial event established in 2007, which recognizes young researchers who have authored a scientific article and/or a thesis relevant to the application of 3Rs in pharmacological research, alternates with the IPAM thesis award, established in the early 2000s, which rewards doctoral and master's theses inspired by the 3Rs principle. The latter also considers humanistic disciplines.

In conclusion, the uniqueness of the national platform lies in its commitment to achieving consensus and collaboration of four different stakeholder groups, all actively involved in promoting the responsible use of animals in scientific and regulatory research, yet often with divergent perspectives and priorities.

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IPAM (Italian Platform on Alternative Methods) Board of Directors, Bologna, Italy