



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

Biosecurity *Office*

The Netherlands Biosecurity Office is the information centre and advisory body for both the government and national institutions that work with high-risk biological agents, knowledge, information and technologies.



Biosecurity Office

The Netherlands Biosecurity Office has been the national knowledge and information centre for biosecurity since 2013. The office raises awareness about biosecurity and thereby minimizes the risk of misuse of high-risk pathogens, knowledge and technologies.

The Biosecurity Office:

- Acts as a knowledge and information point and answers questions on biosecurity;
- Gathers biosecurity knowledge and develops tools and web applications;
- Gives (inter)national presentations, lectures and workshops on biosecurity;
- Provides knowledge support to the government;
- Participates in international biosecurity initiatives and meetings.



For whom?

Organisations that work with high-risk pathogens, including universities, (university) hospitals, (bio-tech) companies, research institutes and (professional) associations. These pathogens include human, animal and plant pathogens.

Biosafety: *'Keeping bad bugs away from people'*

Biosecurity: *'Keeping bad people away from bugs'*

What is biosecurity?

Biosecurity, including 'Laboratory Biosecurity', refers to the legislative and institutional framework, the principles, technologies and practices that are implemented to secure pathogens, toxins and sensitive technologies and related equipment from unauthorized access, loss, theft, misuse, diversion or intentional release.



Biosecurity and dual-use research

Scientific research on high-risk pathogens is essential for the development of diagnostics, detection methods, vaccines and therapies. Well-intended research and associated knowledge and technologies could however be misused. This is called 'dual-use' and can occur in research within the life sciences. Biosecurity is important to secure high-risk pathogens and knowledge and to prevent misuse.

Biosecurity within your organisation

Biosecurity includes measures in the field of physical security, material security, knowledge and information security, staff screening and transport security. In addition, for biosecurity awareness it is important that employees at all levels of the organisation are involved. These and other key areas are summarized in eight biosecurity pillars (see: www.bureaubiosecurity.nl/en/pillars-of-good-practice).

Policies and best-practices on biosecurity, including on dual-use, should be firmly embedded within an organisation. One way of doing this, is to assign biosecurity duties to a Biorisk Management Advisor (BMA). The BMA is the organisation's point of contact and has the responsibility to ensure the implementation of biosafety and biosecurity measures. The tasks of a BMA can be carried out by quality assurance officers, such as Biological Safety Officers (BSO), clinical microbiologists, occupational hygienists and safety or security professionals.

International

The Biosecurity Office is connected to international networks and organisations and regularly participates in international expert meetings. The office exchanges expertise, generates new knowledge and expands the network. For instance, by active participating in the Global Biosecurity Dialogue, the Global Health Security Agenda (GHS) - action package 3 on biosafety and biosecurity, and the International Working Group on Strengthening the Culture of Biosafety and Biosecurity. In addition, the Biosecurity office is a member of the steering committee of the European Biosecurity Regulators Forum (EBRF) and the International Experts Groups of Biosafety and Biosecurity Regulators (IEGBBR). Both expert groups are focused on strengthening biosecurity in

Biosecurity in quality systems

Biosecurity is inextricably linked to biosafety. Like biosafety, biosecurity can be integrated in the quality assurance system of a laboratory. Management, Biological Safety Officers or other quality or safety officials, and laboratory employees jointly share the responsibility for biosecurity.

the European Union and worldwide. Furthermore, the office supports the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Netherlands during discussions and meetings of the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention (BTWC) and is involved in several other biosecurity projects and initiatives.



Tools

The Biosecurity Office has developed various tools that can help to increase biosecurity and dual-use awareness. These tools can be found on the Toolkit section of the website (www.biosecuritytoolkit.com). In addition, the website provides access to web applications, information about biosecurity information days and webinars, news items, information sources and relevant links for both researchers and BMAs.

Self-scan Toolkit

The Self-scan toolkit can be used to gain insight in the stronger and weaker aspects of biosecurity within your organisation by means of a number of questions. The Self-scan Toolkit is available via www.biosecurityselfscan.nl

Dual-Use Quickscan

The Dual-Use Quickscan aims to identify potential dual-use aspects in research. In addition, this tool contributes to heightening dual-use awareness among researchers. The Dual-Use Quickscan is available via www.dualusequickscan.com

Vulnerability Scan

The Vulnerability scan is a more extensive scan than the self-scan. It consists of questions, scenarios, best practices, risks and risk mitigation measures and is built around the eight pillars of biosecurity. The Vulnerability Scan is available via www.biosecurityvulnerabilityscan.nl



More information?

www.bureaubiosecurity.nl/en



Biosecurity for you?

The 'Biosecurity Self-scan Toolkit', the 'Biosecurity Vulnerability Scan' and the 'Dual-Use Quicksan' are available via: www.biosecuritytoolkit.com

Questions?

Please contact the Biosecurity Office
via email: biosecurity@rivm.nl

Published by:

**National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment**

Postbus 1 | 3720 BA Bilthoven
The Netherlands
www.rivm.nl

May 2022

Committed to *health and sustainability*