One Health

The Copenhagen Recommendations

One Health Organization, Collaboration, Implementation and Communication

Developed by representatives of European human health, animal health, and environmental health authorities in Copenhagen, Denmark, 5 – 6 November 2025, under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union

Copenhagen Recommendations at a Glance

- **Start now.** Use current networks, arrange informal talks, and identify people who can move things forward.

- **Start small and simple.** Focus on achievable goals and scale up gradually. Send an e-mail, setup a meeting, start talking.

- **Build bridges between sectors.** Personal contact often achieves more than formal letters.

- **Be inclusive.** Involve relevant stakeholders across sectors, including human, animal and plant health, environment, and food safety.

- **Create structures and continuity.** Regular meetings and agreed milestones keep progress on track.

- **Use clear language.**

- **Do more with existing data.** We have enough to act.

- **Tell more stories.** Share examples of cooperation that made a difference.

- **Explain the benefits.** Show policymakers, including by using the economic argument, how collaboration (1) saves time and resources, and (2) provides a better basis for decision-making.

- **Avoid blame.** Understand and collaborate instead.

- **Educate the next generations.** Involve actors to include One Health ideas in schools and professional training.

The Copenhagen Recommendations Solutions and Practical Steps

Executive Summary

The Copenhagen Recommendations set out practical steps to strengthen One Health organisation, collaboration, implementation, and communication between human, animal, and plant health, food safety, and environmental authorities in the European Union.

They are organised around five main areas for action and offer clear guidance to improve multi-sectoral coordination, governance structures, data systems, communication, and education.

These recommendations are written by civil servants for civil servants. They are based on the conclusions of the 2025 One Health Conference held under the Danish Presidency of the Council of the European Union in collaboration with the WHO Regional Office for Europe in Copenhagen, Denmark on 5-6 November 2025.

Introduction and Purpose

The One Health approach recognises that the health of people, animals, plants, food systems, and the environment are interconnected. These recommendations respond to the growing need for stronger cooperation between competent authorities across sectors, disciplines, and countries.

The aim is to translate the One Health approach into practical ways of working within and across Member States, with special attention to:

- Encouraging intra- and inter-agency as well as cross border cooperation.

- Emphasizing the importance of integrating environmental perspectives into improving the health of people, animals, plants and ecosystems, and vice versa.

- Utilizing the economic argument to better communicate benefits to policymakers.

Limited collaborations can slow progress toward the European Union's ambitions for a more inclusive, competitive, and resilient Europe. The European Union and its Member States have made the One Health approach a core part of their health security, sustainable development, and pandemic preparedness policies.

Key Challenges to One Health Collaboration

The Conference focused on barriers to effectively operationalising the One Health approach: fragmented legal frameworks, limited interministerial coordination, insufficient data integration, lack of well-communicated successful examples, limited economic evidence, and cultural divides as well as limited communication within and between authorities.

The following solutions address these challenges with actionable interventions

KEY TAKEAWAY
Start small or informal with stakeholders who are interested in being engaged.

Solution One: Building Collaborative Culture

Description

Building collaborative cultures requires mutual trust, openness, and regular interaction across sectors. By fostering dialogue, shared experiences, and inclusive participation — starting with small, practical initiatives authorities can create a lasting foundation for cooperation nationally as well as within and beyond the EU.

Practical Steps

Within institutions

- Arrange staff exchange programmes to build understanding within institutions.
- Include relevant units in joint problem-solving.
- Identify champions/ambassadors within institutions.
- Develop joint One Health training for staff working with specific tasks related to cross-sectoral coordination in all units within the institution.
- Share stories of successful collaborations internally and publicly.

At national level

- Start inter-agency (and inter-ministerial if possible) coordination meetings, even informally at first, to build common culture and understanding.
- Map and engage relevant stakeholders (industry, associations, research institutions/communities, civil society etc.).
- Conduct joint contingency exercises and scenario planning.
- Ensure cooperation across sectors both on technical and strategic/policy level.
- Communicate in a clear language and avoid sector-specific terminology.

At EU and regional level

- Engage in learning and knowledge exchange between Member States.
- Contribute to EU-level forums for sharing knowledge and good practice.
- Strengthen EU-wide collaboration networks and structured dialogue, including engagement with the Regional One Health Coordination Mechanism (ROHCM).
- Promote EU's role as a One Health champion internationally, including global partnerships.
- Integrate educational perspectives into EU One Health initiatives.

KEY TAKEAWAY
High-level political commitment.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Better onboarding of environmental authorities into the One Health collaboration.

Solution Two: Strengthening Policy and Governance Alignment

Description

Coordinated decision-making and shared accountability between ministries, agencies, and sectors are vital. Consistency across national policies and alignment with EU and UN frameworks will enhance both effectiveness and trust.

Practical Steps

Within institutions

- Establish clear roles and responsibilities within institutions for joint responsibility.
- Appoint One Health coordinators as focal points for coordination with other institutions.
- Sign formal agreements between ministries or agencies defining areas of cooperation especially on specific tasks where there is a One Health interface.

At national level

- Clarify roles and responsibilities, and create legal frameworks between institutions to mitigate conflicts.
- Review national policies to ensure consistency across sectors.
- Include One Health objectives and results in a joint report across ministries.
- Include One Health objectives and coordinated budgeting in national strategic plans.
- Present cost-effective, evidence-based examples and solutions to decision-makers.
- Advocate for sustainable funding for research to inform policy.
- Establish national One Health coordination mechanisms and adopt formal inter-ministerial agreements (MoUs) in areas of cooperation – align if possible/desirable with EU and or UN recommendations (Quadripartite).

At EU and regional level

- Support exchange of good practice and peer learning across human, animal, and environmental health sectors, including governments, international organizations, academia, and the private sector.
- Develop common indicators and joint monitoring systems.
- Facilitate EU-level inter-Directorates-General and inter-agency coordination to support Member State initiatives.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Building structures for standardised data sharing and communication within and across sectors.

KEY TAKEAWAY
The key to communication is a well-coordinated, inclusive, and transparently governed One Health system built on shared data, clear roles, regular dialogue, and trust.

Solution Three: Strengthening Organisational and Technical Systems

Description

Better integration of technical and organisational systems ensures faster, more coordinated responses to emerging threats, improves data reliability, and supports evidence-based policy.

Practical Steps

Within institutions

- Carry out joint exercises to test coordination.
- Set up cross-unit task forces for emerging health threats.
- Appoint responsibility for data collection.
- Maintain cross-unit operational units for crisis response.
- Use lessons from exercises to improve procedures.

At national level

- Map existing One Health related surveillance and information systems to identify gaps and overlaps.
- Clarify access rights and legal frameworks.
- Develop shared platforms linking human, animal, environmental, food, and plant health data.
- Establish data governance rules and reporting standards.
- Conduct joint analyses and share findings publicly.
- Promote digital innovation for real-time data exchange and risk assessment.
- Conduct joint simulation exercises to strengthen inter-agency preparedness.

At EU and regional level

- Support system interoperability through EU and UN frameworks.
- Encourage innovation for real-time data exchange and analysis.
- Promote interoperability between national and sectoral platforms.
- Encourage sharing of data to guide policy and research globally.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Structured collaboration, early stakeholder engagement, simple scalable tools, and visible benefits, are prerequisites for successful communication.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Everyone is responsible for communication.

Solution Four: Enhancing Communication

Description

Clear, inclusive, and consistent communication builds trust, strengthens collaboration, and facilitates coordinated action across all levels.

Practical Steps

Within institutions

- Appoint communication leads and contact points.
- Prepare communication strategies for policymakers, staff, and the public.
- Use plain language and avoid unnecessary acronyms.
- Review and adapt strategies annually.
- Establish feedback channels for continuous dialogue.
- Use storytelling and visual communication to highlight success and shared benefits including social media and AI-supported campaigns to engage young audiences.
- Promote awareness campaigns emphasizing the roles and contributions of each sector in protecting and improving the health of humans, animals, plants and ecosystems.

At national level

- Establish communication contact points across agencies to ensure consistent messaging.
- Create formal communication platforms linking ministries and communication protocols for consistent messages.
- Conduct joint training, events, and workshops to build shared understanding.
- Develop coordinated narratives on One Health benefits and use One Health ambassadors to promote storytelling.
- Promote two-way communication with civil society, industry, and academia.

At EU and regional level

- Provide shared communication tools and resources for Member States.
- Strengthen the role of EU as a global One Health champion, including engagement outside EU.
- Promote consistent messaging for enlargement countries and international partners.
- Encourage continuous evaluation of communication effectiveness.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Reach out and have a dialogue with stakeholders to improve communication.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Organisation, implementation, and communication are interlinked.

Solution Five: Integrating One Health in Education

Description

Education and professional development are essential for long-term collaboration, innovation, and preparedness. Early exposure to One Health principles — from schools to professional training — fosters understanding and resilience.

Practical Steps

Within institutions

- Develop accessible learning materials.
- Include One Health training in vocational and professional programmes.
- Encourage staff exchanges and cross-unit experiential learning.
- Organise One Health-themed workshops, serious games, and simulations.

At national level

- Start inter-ministerial coordination meetings, even informally at first.
- Identify responsible ministries and institutions.
- Collaborate with education authorities to integrate One Health into curricula, education materials for the different levels of education, and educational goals at various education levels.
- Promote educational initiatives for schools, universities, and professional training.
- Create a national coordination group to promote One Health education.
- Make educational materials widely accessible.

At EU and regional level

- Facilitate exchange of resources and best practices.
- Coordinate with different EU Directorates-General, EU agencies, and the Regional Quadripartite to develop a common approach to One Health education.
- Support joint EU initiatives on professional education and training.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Stronger integration of relevant strategies into the One Health approach.

KEY TAKEAWAY
Cooperation of relevant sectors at one level has to be reflected at other levels.

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