



# Factsheet:

## StAR One Health Action Plan 2024-2027

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## Setting priorities to strengthen efforts to combat antibiotic resistance

The goal of the Swiss Strategy on Antibiotic Resistance (StAR), launched in 2016, is to maintain the availability and effectiveness of antibiotics for human and animal health over the long term. Eight years on, the interim assessment of StAR indicates that its strategic objectives remain relevant. In the light of new scientific knowledge and policy developments at the national and international level, there was a need to review or prioritise the various measures. In view of this knowledge and these challenges, the One Health Action Plan for StAR 2024-2027 has been developed in collaboration with key stakeholders. It has now been adopted by the Federal Council.

The activities defined in the Action Plan for human and animal health, agriculture and the environment come under three broad headings:

- **Strengthening of binding force:** Utilisation of the tools already developed under StAR, such as treatment guidelines and guidance on appropriate use of antibiotics and prevention of infections, is to be promoted among target groups, their binding force strengthened, and their routine application assured. This will be supported by the following measures: development of programmes for the rational use of antibiotics in the hospital and outpatient sector and in veterinary clinics; establishment of antibiotic use benchmarks for veterinarians, livestock farmers and hospitals; infection prevention and control at healthcare facilities, veterinary clinics and practices; strengthening of continuing education and training.
- **Innovation:** New scientific findings and new technologies are to be appropriately used. These activities include in particular the strengthening of One Health cross-sectoral resistance monitoring through the systematic collection of sequencing data in the human and veterinary medicine and environmental fields combined with the use of a shared data platform, which should help achieve an improved understanding of resistance gene flow and thus of the transmission pathways between different domains. Also under consideration are innovative incentive-based approaches designed to promote the development of new antibiotics and the availability of certain substances on the Swiss pharmaceutical market.
- **Sustainability:** Measures to combat antibiotic resistance require a long-term commitment. The relevant structures and processes thus need to be strengthened so as to ensure the continuing availability of resources. Switzerland's activities to prevent and control antibiotic

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resistance, at the national and the international level, must be targeted so that this grave threat is adequately addressed. Legal foundations will also be created for this purpose.

Under these headings, the Action Plan specifies six priority areas and defines national goals. The priority areas are as follows:

### **Appropriate use of antibiotics**

The Action Plan aims to promote more appropriate use of antibiotics at healthcare facilities and in the outpatient and veterinary sectors. Switzerland has set itself the goal of reducing hospital antibiotic use to the level achieved by the best European countries. In the outpatient sector, the goal is to consolidate the country's position as an international leader in the appropriate use of antibiotics and to reduce regional differences. In the veterinary sector, Switzerland is to reach the level of critical antibiotic sales achieved by the best five European countries, without however jeopardising animal health or welfare.

To achieve these aims, it will be necessary in particular to improve the monitoring of the use of antibiotics and to promote programmes supporting the rational use thereof. The activities specified in the Action Plan will ensure that the tools required for this purpose are made available, and that corresponding needs are defined. In addition, per-unit dispensing of antibiotics will be considered in depth. The monitoring of the consumption of antibiotics in veterinary medicine should illuminate the sector's antibiotics use compared to elsewhere through the development of a benchmark system.

### **Preventive measures and health promotion**

The number of care-related infections involving antibiotic-resistant pathogens occurring at healthcare facilities, veterinary clinics and practices and livestock farms is to be reduced. Implementation of the Action Plan will make it possible, for example, to detect resistance at an early stage and to break transmission chains in human medicine thanks to the systematic screening of high-risk patients admitted to hospital (such as travellers who have received medical treatment abroad). Other measures envisaged are the development and implementation of minimum standards of infection control for small-animal veterinary practices and of programmes suitable for farm-animal practices and clinics. Animal health should further improve as veterinarians work with farmers to promote preventive measures designed to maintain and enhance it and to promote and utilise existing tools such as biosecurity guidance or vaccination recommendations. In the environmental sector, the goal is to minimise the quantities of antibiotics entering surface waters via wastewater discharges, especially during heavy rainfall. The stakeholders concerned such as healthcare providers, cantonal water authorities, communes and wastewater treatment plant associations must be made aware of the problem, and must pay due and full regard to the relevant wastewater management regulations.

### **Use of whole genome sequencing methods**

The use of whole genome sequencing (WGS) will make it possible to strengthen multisectoral antibiotic resistance monitoring in a systematic and coordinated manner. The data collected will be analysed using shared infrastructure, thus providing additional information on resistance transmission pathways. This will facilitate more targeted efforts to combat resistant pathogens. Thanks to improved identification of relevant transmission pathways, it will thus be possible in future to formulate effective measures to control the spread of resistance.

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### **Availability of new and existing antibiotics**

Worldwide, the number of new antibiotics being developed for the treatment of WHO priority list pathogens remains insufficient. Switzerland is to play an active role in promoting the research and development of new antibiotics. Under consideration are new incentives for the development and availability of new antibiotics on the Swiss pharmaceutical market. The goal is, in the medium term, that new antibiotics should be introduced at the global level and made available in Switzerland. The availability of existing antibiotics for humans and animals is also to be improved.

### **International efforts**

Effective action also requires measures to be agreed and coordinated at the international level. Switzerland wishes to be actively involved in the development of international agreements and programmes, to participate in major multilateral initiatives and to maintain close contacts with neighbouring countries to combat antibiotic resistance.

### **Information and awareness raising**

Targeted communication efforts on the topic of antibiotics and antibiotic resistance among professionals and the public should ensure that the tools available are well known, and that recommended measures are implemented. Regional and sociocultural differences are to be taken into account here.

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