BROOKE

AWERB

Brooke's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body

AWERB Guidelines to researchers:

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND MITIGATIONS

AWERB

Brooke's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body

Contents

Glossary of terms

Animal Welfare: The physical and mental state of an animal in relation to the conditions in which it lives and dies.

Assumptive Language: Relating to, or based on, assumption.

Community: A geographically bounded entity, including people and institutions operating within a common environment.

Direct Observation of Procedural Skills: An evidence-based assessment used to guide trainee learning and competency. Where an advanced trainee performs a procedure on a patient, they will be observed by an experienced and knowledgeable assessor who observes the trainee's performance.

Emergency (veterinary): Life threatening condition that poses imminent risk to loss of life, loss of limb use or loss of vision. Also refer to Brooke's Emergency Veterinary Response Guidelines

Gender Aware: An intention to change attitudes, behaviours and beliefs that reinforce inequalities between women and men.

Gender Transformative: Whereby promoting gender equality—the shared control of resources and decision-making—and women's empowerment are central to an intervention.

Gender Responsive: Creating an environment that reflects an understanding of the realities of women's lives and addresses the issues of participants.

Gender Sensitive: Being considerate of other genders' feelings.

Informed Consent: Informed consent is a procedure through which a research participant, after having received and understood all the research-related information, can voluntarily provide his or her willingness to participate.

Invasive Procedure: Where purposeful or deliberate access to the body is gained via an incision or puncture (e.g. blood samples, biopsy). This also includes procedures where an orifice or a body cavity is breached or entered, e.g. gastric tubing, urinary catheters, rectal examinations.

Marginalised Group: A group subject to a process or a condition that prevents them from full participation in social, economic and political life. People can be marginalised due to multiple factors including sexual orientation, gender, geography, ethnicity, religion, displacement, conflict or disability.

Sociocultural: Relating to or involving a combination of social and cultural factors.

Standard Operating Procedure (SOP): A set of step-by-step instructions compiled to help carry out a certain procedure, or detailed, written instructions to achieve uniformity of the performance of a specific function.

Vulnerable Adult: A person who for any reason is unable to take care of themselves or protect themselves from exploitation. This may include persons with disabilities or those frail due to their age.

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Introduction

Brooke's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body (AWERB) looks to ensure that:

- The overall aims of the research are clearly articulated
- The benefits of the research are clearly stated (considering animals/people/environment)
- Any potential or actual harm to people or animals involved is considered and mitigated where possible
- Informed consent is obtained and appropriate information is disclosed to participants
- The involvement of animals or people is ethically justified
- The number of animals or people involved is appropriate to provide meaningful results

AWERB aims to ensure that ethical concerns and mitigation measures are considered in a timely manner, and researchers are encouraged to seek AWERB input at an early stage of research proposal development, and throughout implementation as required.

The purpose of these guidelines:

These guidelines aim to help researchers (and their teams), both within Brooke and externally, to consider AWERB's ethical concerns at the stage of research proposal development. However, please note that research proposals will be considered and reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

For some desk-based or partnership projects, it is not necessary to submit a full proposal to AWERB if these guidelines have been followed and the proposed project has been reviewed by either an academic institution's own ethical review body or the appropriate technical team within Brooke.

We hope that these guidelines will be useful to a variety of stakeholders in the research field.

Any questions on these guidelines can be directed to Research@brooke.org

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Animal health and welfare

How to use this guide:

Red flags

Signals situations or activities that would pose a problem, either ethically or to Brooke's organisational ethos.

Questions to consider

Outlines considerations to ensure all potential questions by the ethical body are addressed in the initial proposal.

Mitigation measures

Suggestions to reduce and alleviate ethical compromise to ensure a strong, ethically-robust proposal.

Red flags

- No research should proceed if it is not in the best interest, immediate or long-term, of the animals involved or affected. No unnecessary suffering should be caused to any human or animal.
- No unqualified or incompetent person may do or attempt to do any veterinary or research procedure.
- No research project should breach legislation of the country where it is undertaken, regarding:
  - Animal welfare
  - Veterinary procedures
  - Animal use in research
- Standardisation should ensure that stress and anxiety is kept to a minimum for animals and humans during the research experience.
- Individual differences in resilience should be accounted for. Despite standardisation measures, some animals or humans may show higher stress levels than others when participating in the research process.
- Any animal or human showing undue levels of stress should be removed from the study.

Questions to consider

- What are the legal aspects of performing veterinary procedures in that country/ state/ region?
- What are the legal aspects of performing procedures on animals for research purposes in that country/ state/ region?
- Has the difference between countries, local laws, customs and policies been considered?
- How can individual variance be allowed for?
- Are there different competencies and legal requirements for different animal health practitioners e.g. veterinarians, para-vets or community-based animal health workers?
- How can researchers assure that people have the skills that they need to perform any procedure or interaction with animals?
- What can Brooke staff and local practitioners learn from the experience (key skills: e.g. interviewing, history taking, sample collecting/ processing)?

Mitigation measures

As per Brooke's animal welfare policy, section 6, Brooke representatives involved in research including animals are required to:

- Follow current guidelines determined by the International Research Group (IRG), including submitting research proposals to Brooke's AWERB, and not deviate from agreed research methodology which may pose risks to humans and animals.
- Never conduct invasive procedures that are not required for diagnosis or treatment, which have not been approved as part of the research methodology by the IRG and AWERB. This includes any research conducted in collaboration with other individuals or institutions.
- Never prolong or increase work for animals.
- Prioritise and address any animal welfare concerns emergent at any time during the research and never continue with a research activity that unexpectedly compromises animal welfare.

The research should not impact the animals further than their current welfare state and consideration should be given to as to whether the welfare of the animals involved will be met in accordance with the Five Domains (Mellor, 2016):

1 Nutrition

- Does the animal have access to food and water?
- Will the research involve any changes or restrictions to diet which could compromise welfare?

2 Environment

- Do the animals have suitable housing without restraints where they can move comfortably?
- Is there appropriate shade, shelter, floor surface and air quality?

3 Health

- Are there regular clinical checks and has the impact of mild procedures and risk of drug side-effects been accounted for?
- Has the risk of using infrastructure and contamination to non-study equids been mitigated?
- Have humane endpoints (e.g. criteria which determine when a research procedure will be discontinued) been considered?

4 Behaviour

- Have the animals' social needs been accounted for?
- If restraints are used, what is the method and duration? Will restraint such as harnesses be removed whilst owners participate in research?
- Have measures been put in place to ensure that human-animal interactions (handling, training, treatments, and reinforcement) are as positive as possible?
- Does the animal have the ability to express their natural behaviour (e.g. through grazing, rolling, roaming)?

5 Mental

- Has the impact of changes to routine and quality of life (and the rebound effects of returning to work) been considered?
- Are there any stressors in the environment (noise, smell, taste, touch and sight from people, animals, machinery) and if so, how can these be mitigated?

Veterinary treatment and euthanasia

Red flags

- Action must be taken without delay when an animal's health and welfare is significantly compromised.
- Advice or referral should be made to local AHP (Animal Health Practitioner) if veterinary treatment is required.
- Existing/ local AHP should be included in these circumstances.
- During the research process, no animal health and welfare emergency should be left untreated.
- Emergency treatment must not be provided by individuals who do not have the appropriate qualification and authorisation within the given location. Research teams should not provide treatment directly other than in an emergency, and wherever possible utilise the services of a local AHP. For detailed information on what constitutes an emergency and suggested emergency treatment, protocols can be found in the Brooke Veterinary Response Guidelines (available on request).
- Euthanasia must not be advocated for or performed unless it is in the animal's best interest. The animal must be diagnosed with intractable pain or be unfit to ever return to work, and all alternative treatment options must have been eliminated.
- Euthanasia must not be provided by individuals who do not have the appropriate qualification and authorisation to do so within the given location.

Mitigation measures:

- Contact a local AHP in advance of conducting the study in the field. AHPs can provide emergency and routine treatments, but can also act as a source of continued animal health and welfare support. Consider inviting them to join the research team in the field so that they can learn about the research and the research team can learn from their experience. Owners should be referred to local AHPs and 'on-call' cover should be requested from local AHPs where possible. If there is a veterinarian or suitably qualified person within the research team, consider carrying a veterinary first aid kit.
- Register with the appropriate professional body within the researcher's country of residence.
- Obtain clearance by the appropriate research/ professional body within the country where the research is to be carried out.
- Abide by the associated country's legislation and guidelines.
- Use standardised operating procedures for directly observed procedures (available on request).
- Make sure the research team's level of competence is certified by a senior/ suitably qualified person.
- Trainers/ assessors should be certified and relevant training/ mentoring should be provided.
- Ensure a technical support mechanism is available.
- Please consult the appropriate sections of the animal welfare policy on delivering or supervising euthanasia and notification of animals in need.

Questions to consider

- What is the plan for if the animal needs veterinary attention?
- What is the plan for if there is a veterinary emergency?
- Who is responsible if an animal becomes injured as a result of taking part in the study (considering the perspective of insurance and liability)?
- Has the local AHP been included?
- What is the plan for follow-up care?

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Invasive procedures

Red flags

- Any invasive procedure that does not have a benefit to animals, either directly or indirectly, should not be conducted.
- Invasive procedures should not be conducted except by a qualified veterinarian / person and supervised appropriately by a senior qualified veterinarian.

Questions to consider

- Are any invasive procedures to be conducted that would need a Home Office license in the UK?
- Would a license be required from the country/ state/ region where the research is being carried out?
- Are invasive procedures being proposed on healthy/ non-affected animals? If so, please justify why, what the risks would be of not including healthy animals in the study, what value their inclusion will bring, and if less invasive procedures have been considered.
- How does the benefit outweigh any potential harm to animals participating in the research?
- How are animals selected? At what point would their condition be assessed as being too poor for participation?
- Is there any risk of adverse effects from the intended procedures? Please provide details on how this risk will be mitigated.
- Has it been considered whether ongoing management or treatment might be required after the invasive procedure and how this can be done?

Mitigation measures

- Please provide a standard operating procedure for the proposed procedure(s), e.g. blood sampling.
- Please give details of qualifications, experience and completed or planned training of individuals who will be conducting the invasive procedure(s). For routine/ minor procedures, vets will be deemed qualified.
- Staff or external researchers involved in any procedures should be qualified and competent.
- The way procedures are carried out must be such that animals are not induced to suffer.

Photo: © Atul Locke/Panos Pictures

Invasive Procedure: Where purposeful or deliberate access to the body is gained via an incision or puncture, performed by trained veterinary professionals, e.g. blood samples, biopsy, plus procedures where an orifice or a body cavity is breached or entered, e.g. gastric tubing, urinary catheters, rectal examinations.

Handling

Red flags

- No research should proceed if it involves aversive handling of animals.
- Handling is considered aversive if the animal is distressed, no matter what handling techniques are being used.
- The following specific practices are unacceptable in any situation: ear, tongue and jaw twitching; pulling by tail, ears or legs; kicking; hitting; goading; use of casting or hobbling.

Questions to consider

- Where in the research process will handling take place and by whom? Consider this question from the start (e.g. recruitment of participants and entry of the animal to the research area) through to the end of the research process. Consider this also for exceptional circumstances (e.g. accidents and emergencies).
- What strategies might be needed to ensure acceptable handling in these different situations? Managing how owners handle their animals whilst they are waiting within the research area is very different from the research team handling animals themselves.
- How will welfare (both emotional and physical) of the animals involved be monitored? Who will be responsible for this?
- How will the planned research process make animals feel? Are there things that can be done to make the process more positive for the animals involved?
- What behaviours of the animal are predicted to occur?
- At what points will a decision be made to pause or terminate the research process?
- How long will the procedure take? Will the animals need breaks?
- How will the number of people around the animal be minimised?
- How will the Guiding Principles outlined in Compassionate Handling for Life be enacted?
- Are there any disease risks associated with handling the participating animals and how will these risks be mitigated?

Mitigation measures

- Make sure that the Guiding Principles outlined in Compassionate Handling for Life are adhered to and standard operating procedures for compassionate handling of animals in research situations (available on request).
- Consider and outline how the researcher/ research team will work in line with the Guiding Principles outlined in Compassionate Handling for Life.
- Outline what appropriate handling equipment (i.e. head-collar of right size and rope) will be used. Additionally, detail the protocol about how the equipment will be cleaned/ disinfected before use to avoid potential disease transmission.
- Aversive physical restraint (e.g. nose twitching) may be used only if evidence is present that environmental and behavioural methods of control have been fairly attempted (in line with Least Invasive Minimally Aversive – LIMA – protocols), and that there was a good reason not to use chemical restraint. Brooke would expect to rarely see this in a research project, as the intended benefits of this sort of physical restraint need to outweigh the potential harms. Please see Brooke's handling factsheets for more information

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Informed consent and transparency

Red flags

- No research should proceed if there is not an absolute guarantee and confidence that all participants have given informed consent to participation.

Questions to consider

- How may consent forms be understood/misunderstood by others?
- To what extent do participants have the ability to provide consent when under the age of 18, as a vulnerable adult, if they are illiterate or when a language barrier is involved?
- Is it possible that people may be unwilling/unable to sign a consent form? What are the acceptable alternatives?
- How can you ensure participants understand what they are consenting to (e.g. some veterinary procedures/ interactions may be quite complex and ones that owners have not seen or come across before)?
- Are side-effects or complications of any procedure or treatment adequately discussed with the animal's owner?
- Have you included an estimate of how long you will need the individuals/ animals for?
- Have you been careful not to raise unrealistic expectations about the outcomes of participation in the research?
- Who is responsible if something goes wrong? This may include situations such as: an animal is injured, a community member is injured, a participant becomes offended and upset by a line of questioning, etc.

Informed Consent: Informed consent is a procedure through which a research participant, after having received and understood all the research-related information, can voluntarily provide his or her willingness to participate.

Mitigation measures

Informed consent must include:

- An explanation of the research to be carried out and its purpose/ objectives.
- Who the researchers carrying out the study are, and what relevant training they have.
- A statement that participation is voluntary, and any compensation/ remuneration for participation.
- What the participant is expected to do.
- How long the study is expected to take, any risks involved in participating in the research, and how these have been mitigated.
- Any benefits involved in participating in the research.
- What data will be collected, how it will be stored, for how long and for what purposes.
- At which point the participants can withdraw from the data collection and have their data destroyed (usually within the data collection period).
- At which point it will not be possible to destroy the data due to anonymity (usually after data collection has occurred).
- At which point animals will be withdrawn from the study on welfare grounds.
- How the participants' identities will be protected, who participants can contact, and how, in the future with any further questions.

WHO provides templates for informed consent forms.

Understanding informed consent:

- Ensure the purpose and use of the research are properly detailed in consent forms, without risking bias or leading the subject, and ensure that participants are informed on any feedback they will receive on the research findings.
- Design and undertake all research in a way that protects people from any risk of harm that may arise from their coming into contact with the researchers. This includes the way in which information about individuals in our programmes is gathered, stored, accessed and communicated.
- Include the form translated into the appropriate language, so that it can be read to participants in its entirety and as designed (therefore avoiding omission of information due to translation on site, or accidentally sharing key research aspects that can introduce bias); and also so that when obtaining written consent, participants sign forms in their language, not in English.
- A researcher should not start asking focused questions about the research until they ensure that the participant has a full understanding of the purpose of the research, AND the nature of their contribution, and has fully expressed their consent.
- Use layman's terms and plain language; test understanding with the target population before full use.
- In certain cases, detailed step-by-step pictures or videos would be more appropriate than explaining the research in a written form or verbally.
- Obtain a declaration from participants that they have seen the video or picture explanation to gain accurate knowledge and that they have understood the message.
- Ensure that participants understand what is required of them – if possible, the researcher should ask the participant to explain it back to them.
- Ensure a neutral third person is present to witness verbal consent. Consider recording of verbal consent on appropriate forms.

Informed consent with animals:

- If live animals are involved in the research, informed consent forms from the owner must include specific reference to the use of live animals and how any negative outcomes will be addressed.
- Where animals are used for training/ teaching, this should be included and explained, and be clear to participants, with an explanation of the benefits, potential risks and how these will be mitigated.
- Include an estimate of the time commitment required from participants and/ or their animals.

Data and data collection:

- Include an explanation that once data has been anonymised, it is no longer removable from the research. If possible, a code, a number or another identifier could be used if participants would like data removed or withdrawn at a later date.

Age of participants:

- The age at which consent is obtained from the participant to use their personal data will vary according to country laws and legislation. In the UK, the age of consent for a data subject to be featured in case study imagery is 13 years of age and will apply to Brooke's work unless stipulated otherwise. The age of consent for other data will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.
- Children under 13 years of age should not be considered for interview purposes.
- Any child under 18 years old will need written consent (from a parent, guardian, teacher or a medical professional) before taking part in any form of research. If the appropriate person is illiterate, verbal consent will be sufficient, accompanied by an adequate explanation and a signature from an impartial third party.

Other:

- Brooke is committed to ethical guiding principles on communications to minimise the risks of people misusing photographs and related information beyond the agreed purpose and consent. The best interests of the featured adult or child are to be safeguarded as a primary consideration.
- Where applicable, Brooke Country Programme Representatives should put in place protocols around this area and will be mindful of when there is a risk of a case study or imagery depicting the subject being involved in illegal activities within their own country (e.g. under-age/ bonded labour in brick kilns).
- Researchers should familiarise themselves with Brooke's Safeguarding Policy and Code of Conduct (particularly Section 9 about gaining consent to communicate case studies with children and those in vulnerable circumstances), available on request from Brooke's research team.

Photo: © Richard Dunwoody/Brooke

Age and level of vulnerability

Red flags

- Involvement of under 18s and or vulnerable adults must be justified and will be considered by AWERB on a case-by-case basis. A child is defined as someone under the age of 18 regardless of the age of consent in that country.
- A vulnerable adult includes persons who may be incapable of understanding what it means to participate in research and/ or who may not understand what constitutes informed consent.

Questions to consider

Privacy and anonymity:

- How will privacy be ensured in the research setting?
- How will it be ensured that identities of children, their families and communities are not revealed?

Informed consent and involvement of parents/ guardians/caregivers:

- How will the study be explained in such terms that a child/ vulnerable adult can understand?
- Parents/ guardians/ caregivers must give informed consent before research is conducted.
- How will the research team respond if parents/ guardians/caregivers will not allow children or vulnerable adults to be interviewed on their own?
- What impact may this have on the information that children/ vulnerable adult's may share?

Other:

- What will the gender and number of interviewers be in relation to the children/vulnerable adults being interviewed? Why?
- How will the research be enhanced through the use of children/ vulnerable adults?
- Will the research be beneficial for the children/ vulnerable adults?
- If compensation is being offered, will it be of benefit to the children/ vulnerable adults rather than other adults (the requirement is that the compensation should be focused on animal care)?

Mitigation measures

- The Ethical Research Involving Children (ERIC) compendium can be used as a tool to improve research practices involving children.
- Informed consent should be obtained from both the children/vulnerable adults and the parents/ guardians/ caregivers.
- All children and vulnerable adults should be treated with equal respect and care, irrespective of race, gender, social status, sexual orientation, disability or religion.
- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and it is relevant to all projects and participants. The lead researcher holds ultimate responsibility for safeguarding. Brooke's Global Safeguarding Policy (available upon request) is standardised via the Department for International Development (currently the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office).
- For research involving vulnerable individuals, input should be sought from Brooke's designated Global Safeguarding Officer (GSO), as well as Safeguarding Focal Points (SFP) in each country office, where applicable.
- Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks may be required for anyone travelling to countries where research may be carried out in communities or where any aspect of communities is accessed (you will need to arrange it in advance).
- If the involvement of children/ vulnerable adults is crucial, an 'appropriate adult' may be considered to sit in if guardians are not available.
- It should be made explicitly clear whether consent is active (opt-in) or passive (opt-out). Consideration should be given to the systematic bias that active consent can produce.

Data transportation and storage

Red flags

- The research undertaken must not breach UK General Data Protection Regulations (GDPR) and legislation. More information on UK GDPR can be found here.

Questions to consider

- What data protection regulations exist within the country that the research is to be carried out?
- Has proper consideration been given to data protection and security?
- What strategies are in place for the safe and secure storage of data?
- How, where and when will data be backed up, to mitigate against unintended losses?
- When and how will the secure destruction of all personal information be ensured?
- Is there a point at which data would no longer be removed and destroyed, e.g. once participant data has been anonymised?

Mitigation measures

- Make sure you adhere to Brooke's Data Protection and Retention Policy (available upon request) and procedures.
- Consider who can access the data, what is anonymised, password protection, and how long the data is kept.
- Ensure that data protection, transport, storage and use is covered in the informed consent script.
- Treat anything with personal data on it as precious and take relevant precautions during transport and storage to keep this information private and safe.
- Anonymise the information as soon as possible.
- Have a minimum of two back-ups before destroying any hard copies (e.g. cloud storage and encrypted hard-drives) and ensure that these meet GDPR regulations.
- Whether the data will be made available on an open-sourced science platform will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis and a statement should be included on the proposal about when the data will be made publicly available.

Photo: © Sylvain Cherkaoui/Brooke

Communicating research aims and results

Questions to consider

- Are the aims and objectives clearly articulated? How will you communicate the aims and objectives to speakers of other languages?
- How will you communicate the aims and objectives to the lay public?
- Will results be communicated and shared with participants and, if so, how?

Mitigation measures

- The contribution of the research to Brooke's objectives/ mission must be clearly stated.
- During the planning stage, a clearly articulated process by which the research outcomes are implemented should be in place, so benefits to equids are realised.
- It should be stated how anonymised data will be used, e.g. for conference presentations or publication in peer-reviewed journals.


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Human health and wellbeing

Red flags

- Language and statements should not raise unrealistic expectations.
- Questions should not be leading or condone or promote law-breaking activities.
- Identification of individuals should not be possible (particularly marginalised or undocumented groups or those engaged in unregulated or controversial livelihoods activities).

Questions to consider

- Does the research put any of the researchers at risk?
- Are the aims of the research well-explained to participants without introducing bias?
- Do the research participants clearly know their role and what to expect from the research?
- Are the research participants able to access the research findings where appropriate?
- Is the location of the research safe?
- Is the research space inclusive/ exclusive of certain groups or individuals as appropriate?
- Does the research benefit the people taking part?
- How are subjects selected, approached and recruited? Have power dynamics in group scenarios been considered?

Mitigation measures

- Ensure that the purpose and use of the research are properly detailed in consent forms, and participants are informed of any feedback they will receive on the research findings.
- Ensure that the aims of the research are clearly explained, as well as the role of those involved. It should be clear to the participant why their input is needed and how it will ultimately benefit them in the short, medium and/ or long term but without introducing bias.
- Consider whether the subject matter of the research or line of questioning could be upsetting for people and whether there is any risk that the questions or responses could damage domestic or community relationships (e.g. with spouses or community leaders). Provision of contact details for local support groups could help with this.
- Consider whether the research puts the people involved at any risk in terms of exposing their location or activities to authorities or other third parties. This is especially important when dealing with marginalised or undocumented groups or those engaged in unregulated or controversial livelihoods activities.
- Ensure that the time and day of research are suitable to avoid impacting on work and domestic commitments of the participants.
- Ensure that the research location is comfortable and properly equipped so as not to undermine people's health or well-being, particularly if research sessions are lengthy (e.g. proper shade, access to water).
- Ensure that people are not unnecessarily exerted: waiting for a long time, taking more time than agreed, raising people's expectations by making false hopes, disturbing their routine, engaging people when they are busy or tired from work, putting people or animals at risk (e.g. data collection in the sun, rain or on a busy roadside).
- Research should avoid any risk associated with physical, mental and/ or economic wellbeing (e.g. ego, dignity, familiarity, and business damage, loss or stress).
- Establish the participants' interest in the results and ensure these are shared with them at a later date where appropriate. This helps build trust for future work and further interventions.
- Where appropriate, ensure that correct communications mechanisms are in place to ensure participants can engage with the research findings.

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Moral and sociocultural belief systems

Red flags

- Language must not be assumptive or directed at any sociocultural structure within that community.
- Questions should not be leading or risk passing judgement on moral standings.

Questions to consider

- Does the research negatively contradict or encroach on any of the participants' moral standings or convictions?
- Does the research engage the participant in an uncomfortable conversation when it is not required?
- Are the questions easily understandable and without implied judgement?

Mitigation measures

- Ensure the researcher has a contextual understanding, including the moral and socio-cultural paradigms at play and that this is demonstrated in the proposal.
- Remove or minimise any research questions or activities that infringe on this belief system if/ when appropriate.
- Ensure that the researcher respects the values, norms, beliefs and culture of the participants, avoiding socio-political or religious discussions and taking this into account to engage participants respectfully.

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Gender mainstreaming

Red flags

- Research should be gender-sensitive and informed by a process of gender mainstreaming, which seeks to understand the implications for women and men of any planned actions related to undertaking the research or use of results.
- To ensure research does not perpetuate inequalities, research projects should seek to employ gender accommodating at a minimum, or transformative strategies as appropriate to answering the research question. In addition, research should also collect sex-disaggregated data whenever appropriate to answering the research question.

Questions to consider

- Have gender dynamics and related roles and responsibilities within the local context of research been assessed and understood? Are researchers aware of how gender dynamics and roles and responsibilities (as well as other factors such as religion, class, age, ethnicity) may impact the undertaking of research and the results yielded?
- What are men's and women's concerns and experiences in relation to the topic of research, and how are these being used to inform the design, implementation and use of the research as appropriate to the research question and local context?

Mitigation measures

- Ensure the researcher has a contextual understanding, including the gender dynamics and related roles and responsibilities of the community and Brooke's gender equality and diversity and inclusion policies (available on request).
- Research project is informed by an intersectional lens: researchers have an understanding of the local context and how different groups' social characteristics (e.g. gender, ethnicity, religion, class, and age) may cause them to experience differential discrimination and/or risks of vulnerability. This understanding is used to identify different social groups' capacity to participate in, and benefit from the research. This understanding also enables the research project to be effectively designed and implemented so as not to support or exacerbate these inequalities (e.g. using female researchers to interview female respondents to ensure their perspectives are considered when relevant to the research question, when this is not the cultural norm).

Gender Sensitive: Being considerate of other genders' feelings.

Sociocultural: Relating to or involving a combination of social and cultural factors.

Compensation

Research participants can, and in some cases should, be compensated for costs incurred or income lost during the research, inconvenience and time spent. Compensation can be monetary or non-monetary, but forms of compensation that benefit animal welfare must be considered as a priority. AWERB must approve reimbursement and compensation for research participants.

Red flags

Compensation should not be provided if:

- It may undermine local services or health providers, e.g. providing free health care, farriery.
- It may result in a reduction of business from local suppliers, e.g. tack, bits, supplies, feed.
- It is to be used for euthanasia.
- It is for attendance at community meetings, unless participation in the research directly causes a loss of earnings.
- It may result in an increased risk of compromised welfare to an animal.
- The research might detract from the participant's ability to continue with their normal daily routine without reason and/ or appropriate compensation.

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Questions to consider

- How will working animals benefit from the form of compensation being offered?
- What various forms of compensation would be acceptable to people in this context?
- Who is providing this funding/ monetary support?
- What conditions are attached for those involved in research to receive compensation?
- Is compensation being made for increased animal welfare risk and is this risk justified (e.g. the number of journeys or load carried)?
- Have the views of Brooke supporters been considered/ explored?
- What are local practices and the usual ways of working by NGOs?
- Will compensation cause tension amongst communities or competition to participate in the study?
- Does giving compensation compromise the aims or objectives of the study?
- How does compensation affect any human behaviour change initiatives?
- What are the short-term risks to giving money (ethics, safety, etc.) and long-term risks (e.g. could compensating in the short term make participants more likely to follow guidelines in the long term)?
- Will compensation influence people's involvement in future studies (e.g. create an expectation of compensation)? How can this be avoided and the risk limited?
- Does the research take place within and/ or outside participants' work hours?
- Will the research add value for the participants?
- Is it clear to the participants how this research will benefit them in the short term and long term?

Photo: © Brooke

Mitigation measures

- Ensure rules are in place or a clear explanation is given to participants about the terms and conditions for receiving compensation. These conditions should be clearly laid out and adhered to by researchers rather than pledged without conditions.
- Compensation should be awarded immediately after data collection.
- Compensation is not meant to compensate for the risk that participants agree to undertake, but rather for the inconvenience and time.
- Compensation must not be so large as to induce potential participants to consent against their better judgment ('undue inducement').
- Alternatives to monetary compensation should be prioritised (e.g. vouchers for animal feed or animal services, if using local existing services, and of benefit to humans and/ or animals). When possible these should reinforce links between research participants and local services/ vendors, and should be procured from local businesses.
- If euthanasia is required, compensation offered to provide it must be linked to existing government schemes (if available).
- It should be acknowledged that some tools or products (e.g. computers or tablets) used in the research might be perceived as high value to participants and any risk of theft must be mitigated.
- Protocols should be in place to prevent abuse or exploitation of the compensation system.
- When deciding on the compensation, the time that people give up for this research should be considered (or travel to participate) and how this impacts on their day-to-day activities.
- Although compensation can make up for lost earnings (when participants are involved during work hours), it should be considered whether this may jeopardise their employment or reputation within the work place.
- It should be ensured that participants are not kept longer than required and that research is conducted at an appropriate time for participants, avoiding undermining their livelihoods or other duties (e.g. childcare).
- The research team should consider whether they are appropriately prepared to carry out the data collection promptly. Researchers should be very familiar, comfortable with and have practised the data collection processes before implementing these with research subjects, and be able to do so efficiently.
- The time commitment expected of the participants should be included in the consent form.
- Careful consideration should be given as to whether it is appropriate to contact people when they are at work and whether this might affect the quality of information being collected.
- A risk assessment of the location and impact of timings should be conducted.

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4 Intervention and Cessation of Study

Red flags

- It should never be permitted to cause an animal or human distress or harm just to enable a research study to continue or take place.

Questions to consider

- At what point will researchers or those collecting data intervene or stop the study if you suspect it is causing distress to an animal or a human? What criteria will be used to determine this?
- How will any interventions be conducted? Who is responsible for leading it? What training do they need in advance to support this? Who has the final say over this decision?
- Up until what point can people withdraw from the study (including an explanation that withdrawal of data is only possible before it has been anonymised)?
- How will this withdrawal request be made and to whom?

Mitigation measures

- Communicate to participants that once data has been anonymised, it is no longer removable from the study.
- If during the data collection process someone does not wish for themselves, their animal or their dependent to carry on with the study, then their wishes should be respected and any data already collected destroyed if they request this.
- Clearly explain which indicators you will use to determine if a human or animal should be removed from the study (animals who are restless, e.g. moving around, vocalising, are unlikely to result in standardised results and may pose a risk to researchers).
- Should there, at any point, be concern for human or animal welfare, the study must be stopped, without full justification needed.

Photo: © Brooke

5

The '3 Rs'

1 'Replacement'

Questions to consider

- Have you considered ways in which the research can be carried out without the participation of animals or humans?
- Are there alternative techniques available for the research to avoid the participation of animals or humans?
- Is there already data and literature on the research topic that would deem further participation of animals or humans not necessary?

Mitigation measures

- Replace the use of animals with alternative techniques.
- Other options include:
  - Existing data and literature.
  - Using an owner-based questionnaire for data collection.
  - Using models such as computer models (e.g. disease, fake animals for community work).

Resources and definitions of the 3Rs (Replacement, Reduction, Refinement):
www.nc3rs.org.uk/the-3rs

Consider that other cultures may have different understandings of these principles.

2 'Reduction'

Questions to consider

- Are more animals or humans used in the sample size than are required?
- Would it be beneficial in terms of animal welfare and human relationship building, to use a greater amount of animals or humans than the minimum number (e.g. to limit time commitment of participants)?
- How are the owners and/ or animals chosen?
- What could the implications be for the animals or humans who are not included in the study? Is there a risk that they may have to work harder or longer to compensate? Could they receive something beneficial to them too?
- Could there be unintended consequences of the study (e.g. highlighting the profitability in using equids could lead to an increase in their use)?

Mitigation measures

- Ensure the number of participating animals and/ or humans is justified appropriately.
  - Consider the following points in justifying the sample size:
  - Sample size calculation (best practice).
  - Evidence from current literature and population data (e.g. disease prevalence).
  - Animals available and directly benefiting from the research (e.g. owner engagement with Brooke, health check, preventative care/ treatment).
  - Consideration should be given to preventing more harm to both animals and humans that are used and not used (e.g. avoiding longer working days).

3 'Refinement'

Red flags

- No study should proceed that would cause harm or suffering to animals or humans in the study, or non-study animals (including non-equids) or humans in the vicinity.

Questions to consider

- Does participation in the research bring benefits or a positive impact to the animals and/ or participants?
- Is there any risk of adverse effects from involvement in the study? Please provide details on how this risk will be mitigated.
- Is there a support/ referral system in place for the researcher (e.g. if dealing with sensitive or emotive issues)?
- How will informed consent for this procedure be gained from the animal owner?
- Why is it inappropriate or unfeasible for the research to be conducted in the UK?

Mitigation measures

- Make sure the research adheres to Brooke's animal welfare policy and Safeguarding Policy.
- Consider and outline the wider implications of the study, including potential consequences and the cost benefit of the research for animals.

Photo: © Atul Loke/Panos Pictures

6 Environmental Impact

Red flags

- No research project should take place which will cause a significant or lasting negative impact on the environment.

Questions to consider

- Have biosecurity measures been put in place?
- Has the risk of zoonoses been mitigated?
- Is the environment safe for data collection (including safe for flora and fauna)?
- Who is responsible for the disposal of waste generated (including clinical or chemical waste and carcasses)?
- Have you considered recycling of materials and who is responsible for this? Can single-use plastic or non-recyclables be avoided or minimised?
- Has the climate impact of local and international flights/travel been considered?
- How can this travel be justified and carbon footprint minimised?

Mitigation measures

- Consideration of government guidelines for waste disposal in the country that the research is to be carried out. As far as possible we should try to follow International best practice or UK legislation – whichever is the more stringent rule.
- Individuals should be appropriately qualified to conduct required procedures.
- Ensure that research aligns with the One World, One Health, One Welfare concept.

BROOKE

AWERB

Brooke's Animal Welfare and Ethical Review Body

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