Feedback

Seminars Central Authority for Scientific Procedures on Animals (CCD)

'Illustration of the project license application system'

Zwolle, Rotterdam, Maastricht, Utrecht

December 18th 2014 the revised Animal Experimentation Act ,which concerns the use of animals for scientific purposes, became in force. Basis for the review of this act is the European Directive (2010/63/EU). As a consequence of this new legislation the process concerning the assessment of research proposals which include the use of Laboratory Animals has changed. The CCD holds an important position in this new system.

One of the results of the revision of the Animal Experimentation Act is the license application system; one must apply for a project license at the CCD. A project can entail one or more procedures with laboratory animals. Without a project license it is not permitted to use animals for scientific procedures. To illustrate the new system in the context of the new legislation the CCD has organized 5 seminars respectively in Zwolle (12th february), Rotterdam (19th february), Maastricht (26th february) and twice in Utrecht on march 5th (Spoken language Dutch and English)

These seminars aimed to inform scientists about the utilization of the new formats of the application forms and how the process is organized. Also which information needs to be written down in a project application to be able to perform an assessment of a project. Furthermore the opportunity to share in sub groups the first experiences with the proces and use of the new formats was offered.

The CCD has highly appreciated the large attendance and constructive atmosphere at these seminars. At the same time it became clear there are still a lot of questions and uncertainties about the 'new way of working' for the scientific community. In this report a summary of the most frequently asked questions; when feasible already provided with an answer. The questions which are still under debate or need more investigation we will provide the answers as soon as possible on the CCD website www.zbo-ccd.nl in the FAQ.

We hope the answers will contribute to the clarification of the project license application process.

The CCD wants to acknowledge the participants who volunteerd for panel chairman and those who made minutes of the sub groups; without your efforts the seminars would have been less effective.

The dialog with the scientific community and users of the system is perceived as very valuable for the CCD, the input by means of questions and suggestions which contribute to the progress of research or implementation of this new system in general is highly appreciated. For this purpose you can use the email adress of the CCD info@zbo-ccd.nl (new email adress).

Your remarks concerning the user (un)friendly formats and forms have been adressed by the CCD imediately. The functionalities of the forms has been adapted. Do you still encounter problems with either the forms or the secured NetFTP connection please let us know at info@zbo-ccd.nl

Questions and Answers

The questions are categorised as followed

- Projectapplication
- Procedures on animals
- Ethical Committee (EC)/ Animal Welfare Body (AWB) / CCD
- Non Technical Summary (NTS)
- Freedom of Information Act (WoB), Object & Appeal procedures

Project Application

1) Level of detail: How broad can an application be? This also concerns contract research, for this type of research it might be feasible to apply for an "umbrella" project. When such a project proposal is submitted not all details of the animal procedures are clear yet. How does the CCD handle such a proposal?

The CCD evaluates a project application on the following criteria:

- *Are the proposed research strategy in combination with the proposed animal procedures likely to provide the answers for the underlying scientific questions?*
- *Is the use of animals unavoidable or are other research methods available which are also likely to provide the answers.*
- *Does the utility and neccesity of the proposed research outweigh the discomfort caused to the animals.*

It is not required to describe in detail for instance the chemicals or substances used. Details like this will be assessed by the AWB in a later stage. If anything changes in a project proposal which is already evaluated and licensed and these changes will negatively impact the welfare of the animals one must apply for an amendment at the CCD. The project execution may only proceed when the CCD has approved the amendment.

The CCD has esthablished a working group which will study some topics more indept and draft an interpretation on these issues; the topics which are under discussion are: "what entails a coherent projectproposal" and what is "low discomfort compared to inserting a needle". This working group exists of AWB members amongst others. The output of this group will be published on the CCD website.

2) Transmission of a project license: who owns the license, the scientist or the esthablishment license holder?

The decision to grant a license is adressed at the esthablishment who applied for a license hence not at the scientist/ applicant. The applicant is either the esthablishment license holder or someone who is authorized to submit a project application on behalf of the esthablishment license holder. The trnsmission of a project license from one esthablishment to another must be approved by the CCD to make sure the following conditions are met: the consent of the original license holder. The conditions to responsibly perform the project at the new esthablishment must be present.

3) Research projects which include multiple (EU) countries: which country/partner should apply for a project license?

In each of the countries involved one must apply for a projectlicense. To provide context and coherence it would be feasible to describe the whole project hence the relation with the project parts that will be performed in another (EU) country. The project license will only be valid to use animals for scientific purposes in the Netherlands.

Concerning research staff holding a non-Dutch license to perform procedures on animals, formerly known as the art.16 dispensation, the working group Education & Training is preparing an advice on this topic. We will keep you informed of the output of this group via the CCD website.

4) Sharing responsibilities in consortia (collaborations in the Netherlands): who is responsible for project license application and how are the responsibilities shared when multiple animalfacilities are involved?

In case of collaborations within the Netherlands between multiple esthablishments only one esthabloishment license holder will apply for a project license. For instance the esthablishment where the majority of the procedures will be performed. This (main)applicant will be accountable for the projectlicense, in case part of the project will be executed at other (external) animalfacilities/ esthablishments the workprotocol for that specific procedure must be reviewed by the Animal Welfare Body of the esthablishment involved.

5) In some cases grant applications preferrably include a letter of consent form an Ethical Committtee ; is it possible to receive such an endorsment from the CCD?

The CCD will not endorse projectapplications pro forma however the CCD acknowledge this complication for grant applications. Therefore the CCD has approached health organiations discuss review of the grant application process and investigate other options to realize this precondition.

6) Can one apply for a projectlicense when the procedures are not directly related to a larger scientific project? For instance to validate equipment like Imaging devices or *in vitro* tests or to harvest organs?

Indeed this is possible providing a clear motivation of the aim of the procedure is provided.

7) how should one perceive the hierarchy between licenseholder/ authorized license holder versus principal investigator versus technical assistant in terms of accountability?

Formally the esthablishment license holder being the applicant of the projectlicense is responsible for the execution of the project. If any omisions are identified by the NVWA the license holder will be held accountable. In common practice the principal investigator will manage the project on a daily basis which includes planning, contactperson for the AWB and processing the results. The technical assistant will take responsibility for animal welfare conditions like husbandry, performing procedures, and safegurding the discomfort will not exceed the classification level which was estimated upfront. Also this person will monitor the humane endpoints as described in the project plan and discuss with teh AWB and principal investigator if these criteria are met.

Procedures

8) To what extend can one describe statistical methods and power calculations when there is a low level of detail in a project application. And which information about group size is minimal for the CCD in order to assess a project?

The exact number of animals which will be used for a procedure and a justification of this by use of a powercalculation will be reviewed by the AWB when a workprotocol for a particular procedure is assessed. When assessing a project application the CCD needs appraisals of both the expected groupsize as well as the expected severity classification of the individal procedures. This information is neccessary to be able to make an assessment whether design of the the project is scientifically relevant and to make an estimation if the number of animals needed to detect an effect is justified. Therefore it should be sufficient to describe in the projectapplication a justification or poiwercalculation in such a manner the CCD has sufficient information to asses the project.

9) What are rules for duplication or repeating of a project; in the current projectapplication forms and guidelines the explanation is mainly describing regulatory required procedures. Nevertheless for publication purposes it is often required to (partly) duplicate projects. How does the CCD handle these requirements. Do you describe the option to duplicate in the initial projectapplication?

When the projectapplication forms refer to duplication you should read it as for regulatory required purposes. This to prevent duplication of safety research for a certain product or substance. Duplication in terms of verification of scientific results id not perceived as duplication. Describe in your initial project application the possible need for verification of your results.

10) Can the CCD clarify the new regulations on the breeding of (new) GMO strains? When is the breeding of GMO animals a scientific procedure and therefore obliged to apply for a projectlicense?

You need to apply for a projectlicense for the breeding of GMO animals when it concerns a new strain or modification of which it is not trusted whether the genotype will imply discomfort to the animal. These animals must be monitord up to the second generation (F2). When esthablished the animals do not encounter discomfort of the modification the breeding itself is no longer seen as a scientific procedure and therefore does not need to be performed under a project license. Subsequently it is only allowed to breed animals for scientific procedures in esthablishments which hold a NVWA license to "breed and supply laboratory animals". The numbers of animals originating from this breeding colony are registerd according to the NVWA requirements originating from artikel 8, derde lid, van de Dierproevenregeling 2014 and the uitvoeringsbesluit 2012/707 /EU belonging Richtlijn 2010/63/EU.

EC/ AWB/CCD

11) What is the relation between CCD, EC and AWB in terms of responsibilities?

The tasks of the committees CCD, EC and AWB result from the EU Directive and are layed down in the revised Animal Experimentation act, §4 art. 14 a,b,c and §6 art. 18 and 18a. the CCD is the entity which grants projectlicenses, to make an ethical assessment of the project aplication the CCD is advised by an Ethical Committee. The CCD will only diverge from this EC advice under motivation. When a license is granted the person meant in art. 13f third and fourth section, is responsible the project is performed within as described in the license. The AWB monitors the progress and results of the project in terms of effects on the animals, identify opportunities which contribute to 3R's. Prior to project application at the CCD the project proposal must be reviewed by the AWB of the esthablishment.

12) Fee for projectlicense, AWB and EC advice, are these expenses accounted for?

The fee for a projectlicense is:

- *Projectlicense € 741,-*
- *Simplified projectlicense € 461,- (definition on the CCDwebsite)*
- *Amentment / modification of a project license € 461,-*

The fees for the CCD are esthablished and approved by the secretary of state of Econimic Affairs,

This approvement was taken on december 18th 2014 and has subsequently been published in the "Staatscourant". The esthablisment of these fees has been a transparant process and only covers the expenses made by the CCD. The report "handreiking kostentoerekening van het Rijk, leges en tarieven" was the basis for the calculations of these expenses.

The CCD is legally obliged to request for the advice of an Ethical Committee when assessing a project license. The applicant is accountable for the expenses of the advice of an ethical committee; this also has a legal basis. The CCD requires of Ethical Committees to also clarify their expenses and therefore the basis of their fee in the regulations of the committee.

Every esthablishment is legally required to constitute an Animal Welfare Body, the esthablishment therefore also decides what costs are recharged at the applicant's budget. The CCD is not accountable for the costs of EC and AWB.

13) Responsibilities : who will monitor the performance of the CCD?

The CCD is an independent administrative authority (ZBO), which has been esthablished by the ministry of Economic Affairs. It has been formalised in legislation the CCD is independent and objective. Via annual reports the CCD will give accountability to the secretary of state and the government (Tweede Kamer) The secretary of state is politically accountable for the CCD and monitors the performance of the CCD.

14) The legal assessment time for a projectlicense is 40 working days. Does this mean it always takes 40 days or can this timeframe be shortened?

The expiration time on decision making for a project application originate from the EU Directive, also prolongation terms and conditions are fixed in legislation. The 40 working days is a maximum, when communicatingconcerning your project the CCD will always presume the maximum period. However the CCD will always strive to process your project application as soon as possible. When already accompanied by an advice of an ethical committee the process time will be likely shorter than 40 working days. However when planning your project always keep in mind the maximum of 40 working days.

Non Technical Summary (NTS)

15) What will be published and how is the privacy of applicants and esthablishments safeguarded?

The principal investigator is responsible for writing the NTS. The AWB and/or communication department of the etshablisment can (preferably) be involved. The NTS is completely anonymus en must be written in dutch. Preferably the NTS holds no more than 500 words, excluding the text already present in the format. While wrinting keep in mind the audience, laymen, common society, for whom the NTS is written. Avoid technical details and scientific jargon, be unambiguous and understandable Provide only mandatory and relevant information. The principal investigator is also responsible to review the tekst whether names of private persons or tekst which refers to the esthablisment is not present.

16) in the NTS the maximum number of animals is mentioned, does the CCD indicate this might not be the factual number of animals used for the project?

On the CCD website it is pointed out that the number of animals in the published NTS might not be the factual number of animals used for the purpose of the project. Not only is the number a total over several years, depending on the duration of the project hence it is notified the factual number used can be found in the annual statistics of the NVWA which is published in 'Zo Doende"

Freedom of Information Act and Appeal procedures

17) Who can make a request under the freedom of information act?

Any citizen can make a request for information under the freedom of information act. After receiving such a request the CCD decides which information is covered by this request and and thus will be made available to the requestor.

18) Will the applicant be informed when such a request has been received and processed?

When the request includes 3rd party information, for instance a project application, then a review by the 3rd party will always be asked for. This means the applicant receives the information that is intended to be made available under the request. This will give the applicant the opportunity to give their point of view and check if no company private information is made available or personal information of private persons. The CCD will involve the point of view of the applicant in their decision making process. Since the law provides certain boundries for the amount of information onecan withdraw, the CCD can not always meet with the suggestions of the project applicant. The requests on the freedom of Information Act will always be proceeded in collaboration with the legal department of the CCD.

19) Who can start an object & appeal procedure?

Against a decree of an independent administrative authority in this case the CCD, one can always make an objection. The person making this objection must have a concern with the decree. The person objecting can be the applicant or another party concerned. Within 6 weeks after publication of the decree you can hand in a notice of objection in writing. When processed and you do not agree with the decision on your objection you can make an appeal in court. Information on these procedures you can find on www.overheid.nl (in Dutch)