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New tools to confront
future biothreats

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At the International Advocacy Meeting on Maintaining Global Freedom from Rinderpest, held from 13 to 16 June 2017 in Kathmandu, Nepal, the five FAO/OIE-designated rinderpest holding facilities (RHF) formally agreed to establish the RHF Network.

The RHF Network defined its priorities for 2017–2018 as follows:

- to reduce the remaining stocks of rinderpest-virus-containing materials (RVCs) within the Network's own facilities
- to exchange expertise, technologies and information
- to collaborate on and develop diagnostic tools, and
- to contribute to preparedness and response activities.

This project is a successful example of cooperation in strengthening the management of rinderpest-virus-containing materials

Within the scope of these key items, the Pirbright Institute (United Kingdom) and the African Union Pan African Veterinary Vaccine Centre (PANVAC), in Ethiopia, are currently undertaking a twinning project to enhance biosafety and biosecurity in PANVAC's Biosafety Level 3 facility. The considerable expertise and experience of the Pirbright Institute – also an OIE Reference Laboratory for rinderpest and peste des petits ruminants (PPR) – will be invaluable in supporting PANVAC to improve its operational procedures, in accord with the relevant international standards. A comprehensive and rigorous biosafety programme, as well as quality assurance training for all relevant staff, is currently under way and will further support the implementation of PANVAC's RHF mandate.

This project is a successful example of cooperation in strengthening the management of RVCs, thereby reducing biological threats, and was made possible by the generous contribution of Global Affairs Canada.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.20506/bull.2018.1.2774>

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Cooperation among the Rinderpest Holding Facilities Network

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