World Organisation for Animal Health

CASE STUDY

Implementing One Health: Country experiences and lessons learnt

One Health in Action:
NAOHUN: Strengthening One Health Leadership Across North America's Universities

Issue Overview and One Health Context

Despite having numerous One Health initiatives and programmes across universities and colleges of North America there remains a critical need for cross-hybridising One Health research, education, advocacy, and service missions to synergise these important programmes. The North American One Health University Network (NAOHUN) was formed in response to the common societal problems faced across these regions including infectious disease threats, environmental disasters, antimicrobial resistance (AMR), etc. NAOHUN synergises activities of North American universities in Canada, Mexico, and the United States to enhance collaborations, optimise communications, and amplify the impact of activities promoting the health of people, animals, plants and the ecosystems they share. NAOHUN is organised by a representative steering committee and is focused on the following four principle areas: 1) Research, 2) Education, 3) Service and 4) Advocacy and Outreach.

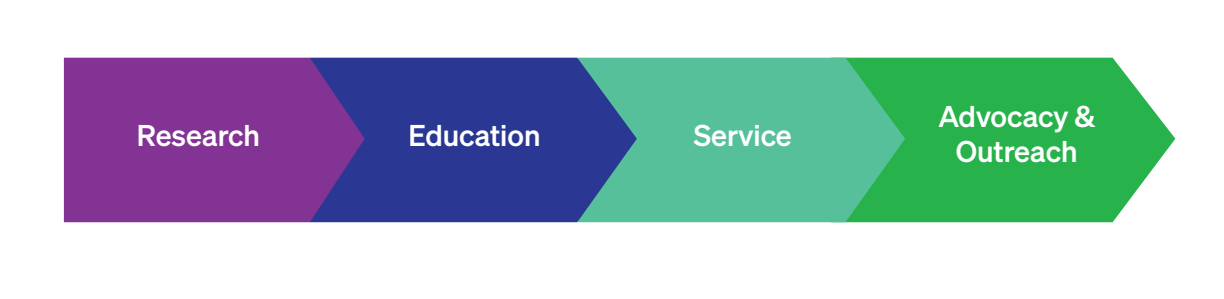


Figure 1. Principle Areas of the North American One Health University Network

Figure 2. North American One Health University Network (NAOHUN) members' meeting

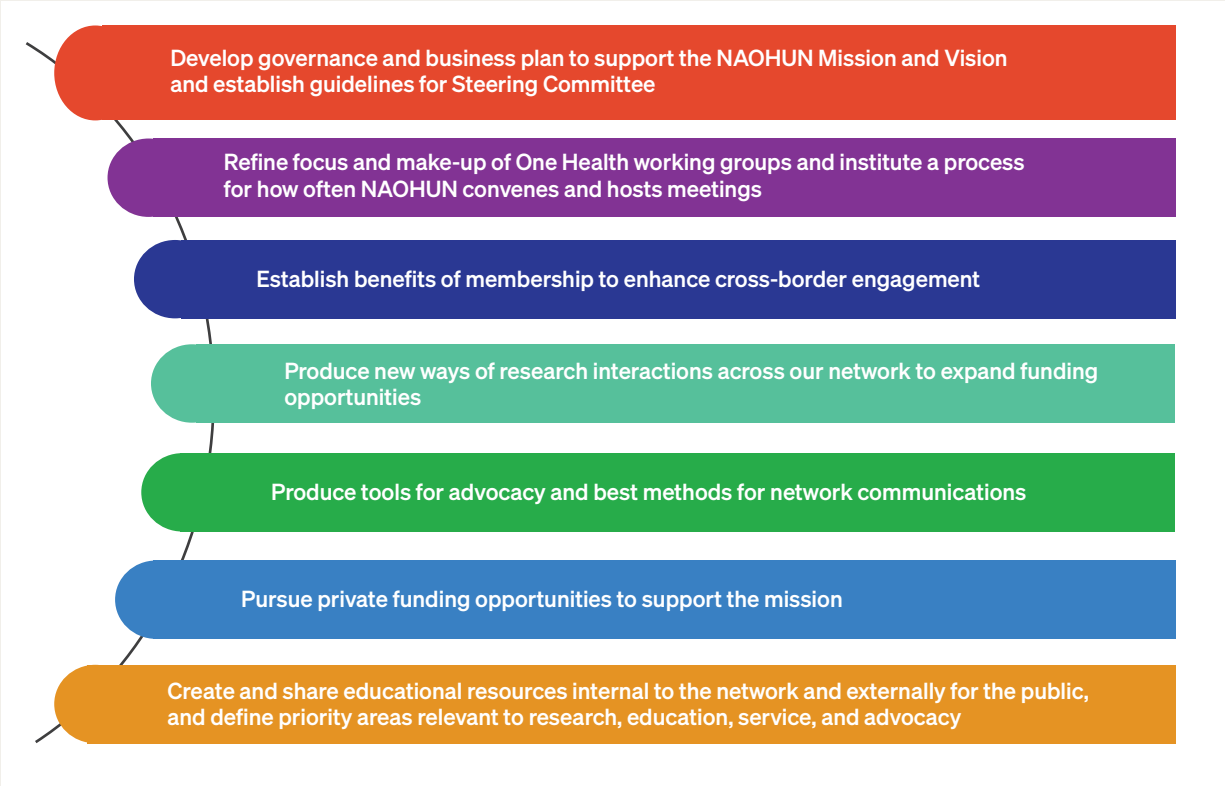
Solution and Mitigation Strategies

The One Health concept is a global framework that fosters interdisciplinary and intersectoral collaborations and communications, recognising the interconnectedness of the health of humans, animals, plants, and the environment. Over the last decades, One Health has emerged as the leading approach to addressing complex global problems that require integrated solutions. Multiple organisations and universities across North America have adopted One Health programmes centred on implementing the One Health approach. At the global level, the Quadripartite agreement signed by the World Health Organization (WHO), Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) is also a clear referendum on support for the One Health approach.

Multiple universities have included One Health programmes in their curriculums and research agendas, translating locally generated knowledge to regional and global applications. These programmes are focused on world-class innovation, training, and information dissemination to improve local, national and global health outcomes.

The establishment of regional university networks, joining hands to develop unified One Health programmes and networks such as Southeast Asia One Health University Network (SEAOHUN), Africa One Health University Network (AFROHUN) and Europe One Health Network (UEOHN) have demonstrated the power of coordinated university partnerships. However, no such university partnership existed in the North America region, until 2024, when the North America One Health Universities Network (NAOHUN) was created to advance One Health activities and to contribute to the goals of the Quadripartite One Health agreement.

The NAOHUN network has the following goals for 2025 and 2026:



The network is developing strategies to attract new funding opportunities for interdisciplinary faculty members relevant to prioritised areas of thematic research. NAOHUN seeks to become an internationally recognised hub for One Health education, research, and community engagement that addresses the six Action Tracks of the Quadripartite One Health Joint Plan of Action. Going forward, the network aims to provide opportunities for students and faculty to collaborate with international, federal, and state agencies, non-governmental organisations, and industry involved in One Health activities.

Stakeholders Involved

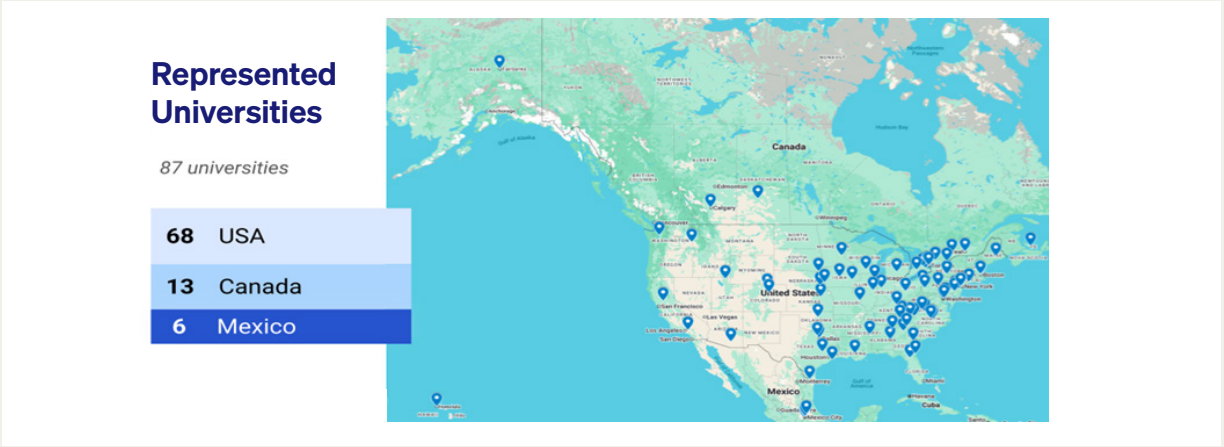


Figure 3. Map of universities represented at the NAOHUN

Source: Global One Health Academy, https://provost.ncsu.edu/global-one-health-academy/2025/09/11/goha-hosts-2nd-annual-meeting-of-the-north-america-one-health-university-network/

NAOHUN is open to all universities or faculty within universities in North America, including the United States, Canada, and Mexico. Its membership includes over 60 institutions and approximately 350 individuals involved in our One Health mission. In collaboration with government agencies, professional associations and non-governmental organisations, the network is driven by its vision to serve as the preeminent network to link together North America university programmes across multiple sectors, disciplines, and communities to advance One Health.

Impact and Outcomes

So far, NAOHUN has convened over 700 individuals through social platforms across 60 universities, hosted its inaugural in-person conference with around 150 participants, held an online meeting with around 200 attendees and launched four active working groups. The Education group is developing a white paper on One Health education competencies, while the Service group is piloting community clinics integrating veterinary and public health services. It has organised and launched a monthly webinar to feature programmes and impact of member institutions. Advocacy materials have been disseminated to member institutions and several universities are jointly applying for One Health research funding.

The network has laid the foundation for governance, communication platforms and student exchange pathways. The network has established a representative steering committee with working groups on the following topics 1) Research to advocate for cross university research and training to promote collaborations, 2) Education focused on developing resources, including a publication, on the current best practices in One Health education including competencies, training modalities and methods for educational resource sharing, 3) Service to communities through One Health Clinics for animals and people, facilitation of emergency response and improving laboratory diagnostics through cross-border activities and 4) Advocacy and Outreach to prioritise activities and develop resources for public outreach, community engagement, policy and advocacy for government leaders to strengthen One Health efforts across working groups.

The network teaching modules will be utilised by hundreds of graduate and professional students across our network. The virtual conference in 2025 will engage more than 200 OH professionals to strengthen our governance and organisational structure, produce multiple communication and marketing resources to advance our goals, and readily available tools to share across NAOHUN members to address societal needs.

> *Our network will play an important role in uniting experts from universities and collaborating partners to tackle important issues through the One Health approach to create a healthier future for communities.*
>
> Dr Tracey Goldstein, Colorado State University One Health Institute Director, CSU News Report, August 2024

Implementation Challenges

The key challenges include establishment of mutually agreed upon governance to embrace the diversity of institutions involved, funding to support our working groups and goals, and the recent decrease in funding through federal government programmes related to our collective mission. To overcome these challenges, the network is exploring alignment with professional associations and independent legal models to assist membership models and financial structures. We are exploring philanthropic efforts from foundations and collaborative measures to advance government funding efforts across the network. We are also actively leveraging member institutional support and resources to advance our mission.

Lessons Learnt

Through its common principles of engagement and values the network have been successful in bridging institutions and individuals across the network to advance its mission. An inclusive governance and accessible structure has encouraged broader participation and new concepts of engagement. Our shared values have encited member institutions to envision novel ways to expand their regional efforts.

The interactions have fostered an enhanced awareness of the power of joint actions in advocating for the One Health approach, education competencies to teach the next generation of One Health professionals, and the value of working across borders to build collaborative efforts to embrace the One Health approach to solve the issues facing our planet.

Relevance to the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA)

This case study provides a paramount example of how the OH JPA is being holistically operationalised at the supranational, regional level. The establishment and activities of the North American One Health University Network (NAOHUN) demonstrate full alignment with all three Pathways of the OH JPA. Furthermore, the network is strategically focused on advancing all six Action Tracks of the OH JPA, from fostering sustainable health systems (Action Track 1) and reducing epidemic risks (Action Track 2) to controlling endemic zoonoses (Action Track 3), strengthening food safety (Action Track 4), safeguarding ecosystems (Action Track 5) and integrating the environment (Action Track 6). By aligning academic research, professional education, community service, and cross-border advocacy across the human, animal, plant and environmental sectors, this initiative underscores the transformative value of One Health in building integrated, resilient systems across the North American region.

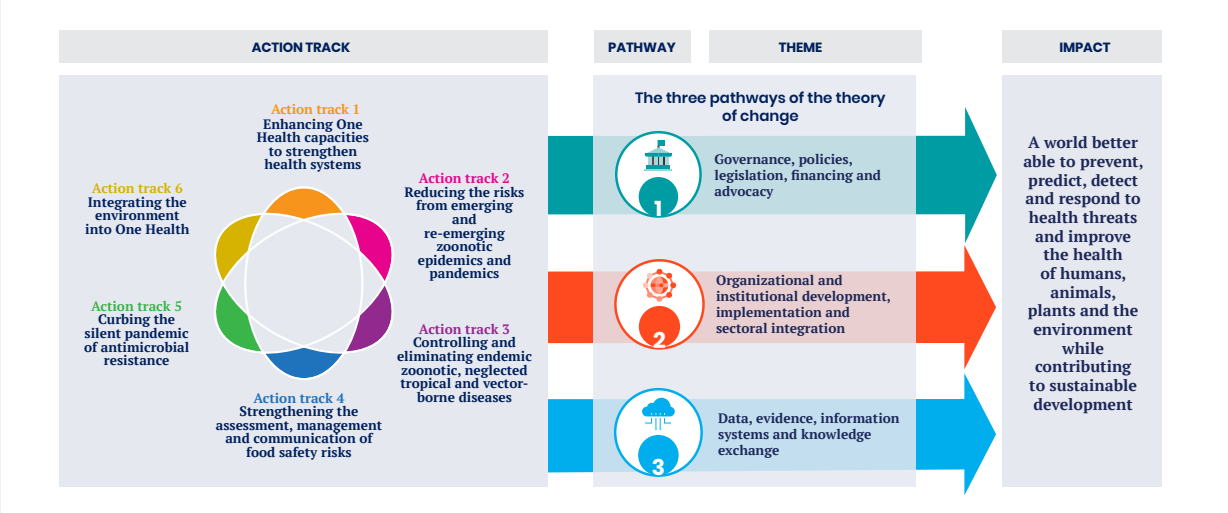


Figure 4. Pathways of Change and Action Tracks of the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA)

Resources

1. North America One Health University Network. LinkedIn. Available at: https://www.linkedin.com/company/north-america-one-health-university-network/?viewAsMember=true (accessed on 20 March 2026).
2. North America One Health University Network (@naohun.bsky.social). Bluesky. Available at: https://bsky.app/profile/naohun.bsky.social (accessed on 20 March 2026).
3. CSU hosts inaugural meeting of universities with One Health programming for collaboration. Colorado State University. 2024. Available at: https://source.colostate.edu/csu-hosts-inagural-meeting-of-universities-with-one-health-programming-for-collaboration/ (accessed on 20 March 2026).
4. Natalie R, *et al*. The One Health clinic: care for young adults and companion animals experiencing homelessness. SAGE Journals. 2025. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1177/21501319251345973 (accessed on 20 March 2026).

Implementing One Health: Country experiences and lessons learnt is a series of case studies showcasing practical examples of how the One Health approach is applied at national and local levels. The series highlights multisectoral collaboration across human, animal and environmental health sectors, demonstrating how countries operationalise the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) to address complex health challenges. Each case study provides insights into the strategies, interventions, and tools used to strengthen surveillance, improve risk management and support evidence-based decision-making. By capturing successes, challenges and lessons learnt, this collection serves as a resource for policymakers, practitioner and partners to inform the adaptation and scaling up of One Health initiatives globally, reinforcing the value of integrated approaches for health security and sustainable development.

Implementing One Health Case Studies is an initiative of the One Health team at the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) Headquarters, under the leadership of **Dr Chadia Wannous**, WOAH OH Global Coordinator, with the support of **Kurmanzhan Dastanbek**, WOAH OH Project Manager.

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For more information on WOAH's work on One Health, please visit the WOAH website