

NEWS RELEASE

UP's Professor Wanda Markotter Re-Elected as Co-Chair of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel



Professor Wanda Markotter, the re-elected co-chair of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP).

PRETORIA - Professor Wanda Markotter, a leading expert in zoonotic diseases and One Health at the University of Pretoria, has been re-elected for a second term as co-chair of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel (OHHLEP). The Quadripartite organisations confirmed this re-appointment in June 2024.

Professor Markotter was first elected as co-chair of OHHLEP in 2021, serving alongside Professor Thomas C. Mettenleiter. For her second term, she will continue her leadership alongside Professor Carlos Gonçalo Afonso Rolhas Fernandes Das Neves, Chief Scientist of the European Food Safety Authority (EFSA) in Parma, Italy.

The OHHLEP serves as the scientific and strategic advisory body to the Quadripartite organisations, which include the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

Commenting on her re-election, Professor Markotter said, “It is an honour to continue as co-chair of the One Health High-Level Expert Panel. This new term is another valuable opportunity to advance the One Health Joint Plan of Action through evidence-based policies and strategic recommendations. Reflecting on our achievements from Term 1, such as the adoption of the comprehensive One Health definition and the development of the One Health Theory of Change, I am excited to build on these successes. I am dedicated to leveraging my roles to address global health challenges, particularly those affecting African communities, with impactful and transformative solutions.”

In addition to her role with OHHLEP, Professor Markotter serves as the Interim Director of Future Africa, director of the Centre for Viral Zoonoses, and holds the Future Africa Research Chair in People, Health, and Places, as well as the DSI/NRF South African Research Chair in Infectious Diseases of Animals (Zoonoses) at the University of Pretoria.

The new OHHLEP term includes 29 experts from various fields, reflecting a transdisciplinary approach crucial for addressing One Health challenges. Panel members bring expertise in governance, political science, international law, economics, social sciences, health systems, environmental sciences, and infectious disease epidemiology.

Key functions of the OHHLEP include:

- Providing guidance on implementing the One Health Joint Plan of Action (OH JPA) through evidence-based policies, tools, metrics, and identifying research gaps.
- Offering scientific assessments on health threats at the human-animal-environment interface.
- Making recommendations on key issues for attention, action, and future direction in One Health.

Other notable outputs from OHHLEP’s Term 1 include:

- The One Health model surveillance system white paper and the Inventory of One Health tools and resources, including an analysis of gaps in tools.
- An opinion on the Prevention of Zoonotic Spillover, presented to Pandemic agreement discussions.
- An opinion piece on the panzootic spread of HPAI: H5N1, published on the OHHLEP website and forthcoming in a peer-reviewed journal.
- A review of evidence on the drivers of spillover, with preliminary findings discussed despite a pause due to funding issues.

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ABOUT THE UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA

The University of Pretoria (UP) is one of the largest contact and residential universities in South Africa, with its administration offices located on its Hatfield Campus in Pretoria. This 115-year-old institution is also one of the largest producers of research in South Africa.

Spread over seven campuses, it has nine faculties and a business school, the Gordon Institute of Business Science (GIBS). It is the only university in the country with a Faculty of Veterinary Science, which is ranked the best in Africa. UP has 120 academic departments and 92 centres and institutes, accommodating more than 56 000 students and offering about 1 100 study programmes. It has the most academic staff with PhDs (70%), NRF-rated researchers (613).

The 2024 Times Higher Education subject rankings placed UP first in South Africa in the fields of Law, Veterinary Science, Accounting and Finance; Agriculture and Forestry and Electrical and Electronic Engineering. Quacquarelli Symonds (QS) ranked the University among the top five in Africa, as part of their 2024 World University Rankings (WUR). UP was the only South African university featured in the 2023 World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI), falling within in the 101-200 range of innovative universities.

For more information, please go to www.up.ac.za