

Global framework for the safe use of Life sciences

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In news– In a first of sorts, the World Health Organization has come out with a global guidance framework for the responsible use of lifesciences.

Key highlights of the framework-

- The framework **aims to mitigate biorisks and govern dual-use research**, which has a clear benefit but could be misused to harm humans, other animals, agriculture and the environment.
- The new framework **addresses decades-long challenges of preventing the accidental and deliberate misuse of biology** and other life sciences, as well as how to manage governance to accelerate and spread innovation, while mitigating negative impacts.
- Life sciences are increasingly intersecting with other fields, such as chemistry, artificial intelligence and nanotechnology, which changes the landscape of risks, and could be missed.
- It also **outlines the need for anticipatory and responsive governance mechanisms**, including foresight approaches, which are participatory and multi-disciplinary ways of exploring trends, emerging changes, systemic impacts and alternative futures.
- To help manage risks, **it covers issues such as preventing misinformation and disinformation**, as well as managing large health data sets.
- The framework is intended as the go-to starting point for the development and **strengthening of biorisk management, which relies on three core pillars:** biosafety, laboratory biosecurity and the oversight of dual-use research.

Note:

- This list of life sciences comprises the branches of science that involve the scientific study of life – such as microorganisms, plants, and animals including human beings.
- This science is one of the two major branches of natural science, the other being physical science, which is concerned with non-living matter.
- Biology is the overall natural science that studies life, with the other life sciences as its sub-disciplines.