



THE HISTORY OF APWA-ICOFA

The Animal Personality and Welfare Assessment (APWA-ICofA) has its origins in Norway. The assessment was initiated in 2004 as an independent Norwegian enterprise, registered in the Norwegian Business Registry under organization number 987091002. The original aim was to establish a systematic, scientifically grounded approach to assessing individual differences in the personalities of domestic animals.

Over the following years, the assessment was refined through practical experience, research, and collaboration with professionals in animal behavior and welfare. Species-specific protocols were developed for dogs, cats, equines, and livestock, reflecting the behavioral characteristics and welfare needs of different animals.

Originally known as PADA (Personality Assessment of Domestic Animals), the assessment continued to develop under the International Community of Anthrozoology (ICofA), supported by a growing international network of trained professionals.

Establishment of the Advisory Board

In 2025, an international Advisory Board was established to strengthen the scientific and professional development of the assessment.

The board brought together six experts with complementary backgrounds in animal behavior, personality research, animal-assisted services, animal welfare, and technology: Kenth Svartberg, James Serpell, Amy Binder, Melissa Winkle, Anna Zamansky, and Christine Olsen.

The Advisory Board provides an important foundation for APWA-ICofA's continued development. By bringing together expertise from different disciplines, it supports scientific exchange, critical discussion of the methodology, and the identification of new research opportunities. It also helps connect the assessment with a wider international community of researchers and practitioners.

From PADA-ICofA to APWA-ICofA

In 2026, the assessment was renamed APWA-ICofA (Animal Personality and Welfare Assessment).

The new name reflects the assessment's broader emphasis on the relationship between personality, emotional responses, coping, and animal welfare. It also reinforces the principle that understanding an animal's individual characteristics is essential to supporting its well-being.

Today, APWA-ICofA continues to evolve through international collaboration, research, and methodological refinement. Collaborative research involving ICofA and the University of North Florida explores the assessment and its measurement properties, while work with Tech4Animals investigates the potential of artificial intelligence in behavioral assessment.

Throughout its development, APWA-ICofA has maintained one central principle: understanding the individual animal is essential to supporting its welfare.