AstraZeneca believes that the use of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) is an essential activity in the discovery and development of new and improved medicines. GMOs enable us to produce materials that are vital for our research in drug discovery and development to better understand the role that specific genes and associated individual proteins play in human disease and the potential for therapeutic intervention.

GMOs may be:

- Laboratory animals, micro-organisms (viruses, bacteria, fungi, yeast) and genetically modified animal and human cells. In some cases the genetically modified human cells may be derived from human embryonic stem cells.

As a minimum standard, all use of GMOs at AstraZeneca is conducted in accordance with national and international legislation. Their use also complies with AstraZeneca’s rigorous internal policy and compliance framework governing their use, storage and disposal and with the high ethical standards outline in the Code of Conduct and Bioethics Policy. The AstraZeneca positions regarding human embryonic stem cells, and animals containing human material (including both genome-edited and non-genetic models) are already described in separate position statements.

Staff who work with GMOs are scientifically qualified, trained and competent in the area.

We also use GMOs in our biopharmaceutical activities in the discovery, development and manufacture of medicines derived from biological materials, for example antibodies (proteins produced by living organisms in response to disease, but which can also be manufactured using new technologies involving recombinant cells).