



**WORLD ORGANISATION FOR ANIMAL HEALTH**  
*Protecting animals, preserving our future*

## Regional webinar on Rabies control in the Middle East region

**Dates:** 28 September 2021

**Exact time:**

**Duration:** 2,5 to 3 hrs. virtually

### Background:

Rabies is one of the most deadly zoonotic diseases. It is listed among the World Organisation for Animal Health's (OIE) diseases under the category "multiple species diseases, infections and infestations" (Code chapter 8.14).

It is estimated that approximately 60,000 people worldwide die each year because of rabies, mostly children in developing countries of Asia and Africa. Globally, the vast majority of human cases, more than 95%, are caused by exposure to rabid dog bites.

For hundreds of years, rabies has been a dual public horror and biomedical dilemma. In the 20<sup>th</sup> century scientific improvement and technical advances for rabies diagnosis and vaccination in humans, domestic animals and wildlife, achieved a significant milestones in public health, agriculture and conservation biology.

In spite of rapid advances in diagnostics, vaccine development and the application of novel technologies to control the disease, rabies remains a significant cause of deaths in human following exposure to rabid animals. The disease mainly affects poor rural communities where access to appropriate post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) is limited/neglected or non-existent. In contrast with many other diseases, the tools needed to eliminate rabies already exist.

It is therefore the prime responsibility of any national veterinary service to apply its knowledge, capacity and skills in animal disease control to create a buffer between the animal source and the susceptible human beings.

The OIE, together with WHO, FAO and the Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC), joined efforts and formed the United Against Rabies Collaboration which elaborated the Global strategic plan to end human deaths from dog-mediated rabies by 2030.

As an output of this collaboration, aiming to reinforce and support countries on elaboration and implementation of the national strategies for rabies elimination, were made available various tools to support countries on the development of their national strategies and action plans.

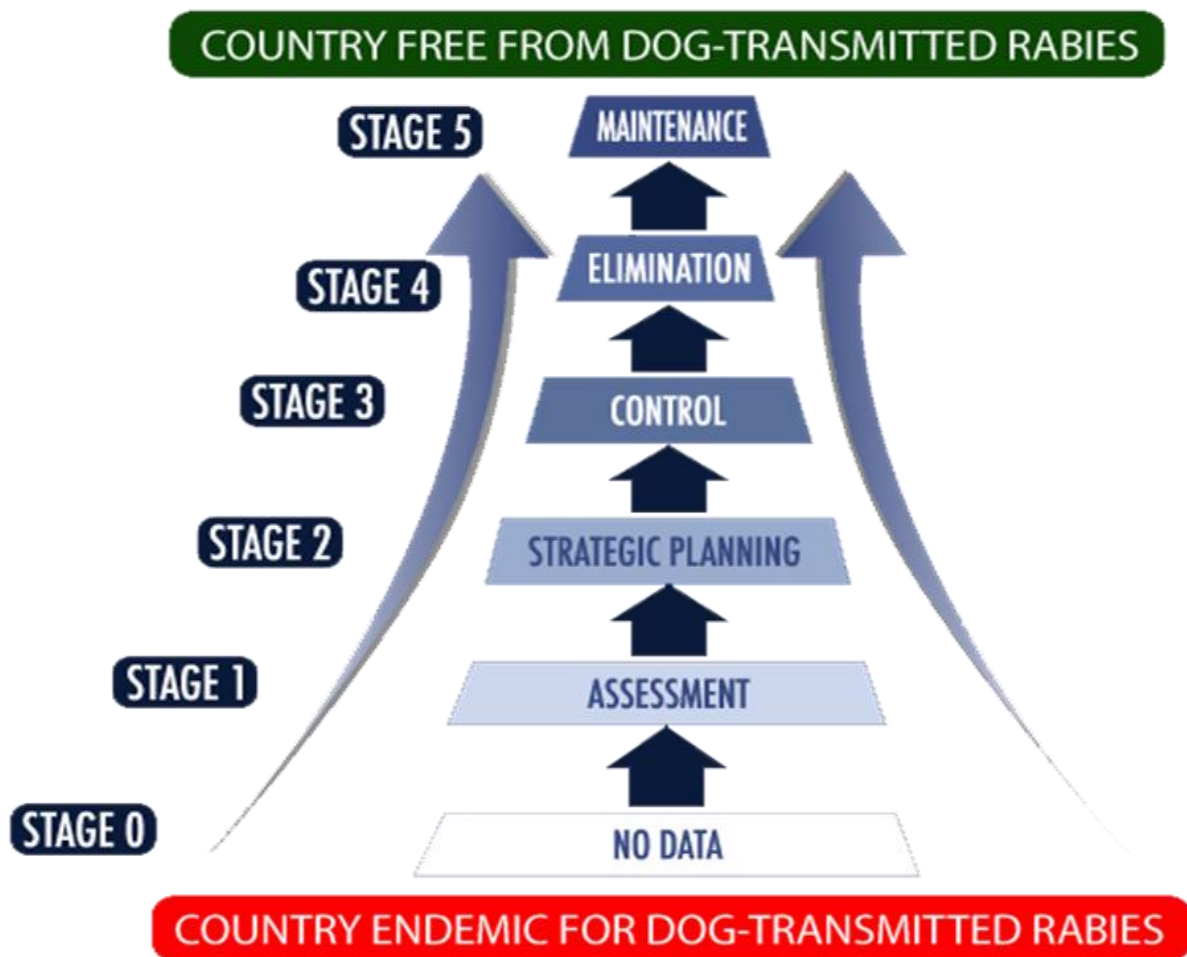
**An important prerequisite to achieve the objective of disease control is the ability of the Veterinary Services to institute and apply the international standards for the control of animal diseases and Zoonoses.**

Since May 2019, OIE Standards on rabies include guidance for countries to apply, on a voluntary basis, for **the endorsement of their national control programmes for dog-mediated rabies.**

Furthermore, any national surveillance plan should also be coordinated with the relevant authorities of neighbouring countries, in order to harmonise actions, especially at border posts, and exchange data, skills and experience.

Working together at the regional level, under the global guidance will enhance the chance to success.

One of these tools is the [Blueprint and Stepwise Approach towards Rabies Elimination \(SARE\)](#).



The regional GF-TADs steering committee for the Middle East, is organizing a two days webinar on 27-28 September 2021, to celebrate the World Rabies Day, and to develop a regional monitoring approach for the elimination of Dog-mediated human rabies in the region.

The essential conditions for an adequate monitoring program, is the development of an adequate rabies surveillance program which must take into account several elements:

### Objectives

- Present an update on the Rabies situation in the Middle East countries, especially those entering the step-wise approach to Rabies control stages.
- Review results of the questionnaires completed by teams from countries prior to this meeting
- Develop a regional approach for “Dog-mediated human rabies elimination “.
- Present the design of planned roadmaps for pilot countries: Jordan and Lebanon
- Encourage members, on presenting dossiers for official endorsement of national control plan.
- To raise awareness of the feasibility of eliminating all human deaths from rabies and the ‘Zero by 30’ strategy led by WHO, OIE and FAO.
- To discuss the value of a coordinated One Health approach for combating Rabies Disease, and potential benefits extending well beyond rabies control.
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### Outcomes and outlook

- The training should assist countries in understanding how to use OIE standards for the stepwise process in elimination of dog-mediated human rabies
- Identifying the current national & regional situation for Rabies, and the progress made in PPR control towards eradication,
- The outcomes of the discussion will also assist in preparing action plans of forthcoming activities and updated National Strategic Plans for Rabies.
- The training will also assist the tripartite to further improve the UAR concept and assist countries to achieve the goal of zero cases by 2030.

**Targeted countries: 14 ME countries (Bahrain, Egypt, Iran, Iraq, Jordan, Kuwait, Lebanon, Oman, Qatar, Saudi Arabia, Sudan, Syria, United Arab Emirates and Yemen).**

## Agenda of the meeting

- (I) Review of the Global eradication plan,
  - (II) Country reports on control of rabies,
  - (III) The stepwise approach for Rabies Elimination (SARE)
  - (IV) Intersectoral collaboration for national control planning,
  - (V) OIE standards on application for endorsement of national control plan,
  - (VI) Rabies diagnostic procedures and vaccines,
  - (VII) The way forward.
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