

The new TAHC Chapter 7.7 on dog population management

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The revised CHAP 7.7 on dog population management

Adopted at the 89th OIE General Session, 2022

- The **scope was redefined** to focus on the welfare of dogs when implementing **Dog Population Management (DPM) programmes** aiming at improving human health and safety and minimizing potential negative socio-economic and environmental impacts (a **One-Health** perspective)
- The **terminology was harmonised** to be consistent with other TAHC Chapters
- **New articles** were either added or reorganised to address roles and responsibilities and to ensure **most up-to-date guidance**
- To be read in conjunction with Art. 7.1 on **"Introduction to recommendations relating to animal welfare"** and **"Guiding principles"** (Art 7.7.4)



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REPORT OF THE MEETING OF THE OIE
TERRESTRIAL ANIMAL HEALTH STANDARDS COMMISSION
Paris, 1–11 February 2022
PART A – Texts to be proposed for adoption in May 2022

The OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Standards Commission (the Code Commission) held its meeting electronically from 1 to 11 February 2022. The list of participants is attached as [Annex 1](#).

Considering the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic the 89th Annual General Session of the World Assembly of Delegates will be held in a semi-hybrid format from Monday 23 to Friday 27 May 2022. During the 89th General Session new and revised chapters of the OIE International Standards (the *Aquatic Animal Health Code*, the *Terrestrial Animal Health Code*, the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests for Aquatic Animals* and the *Manual of Diagnostic Tests and Vaccines for Terrestrial Animals*) will be proposed for adoption.

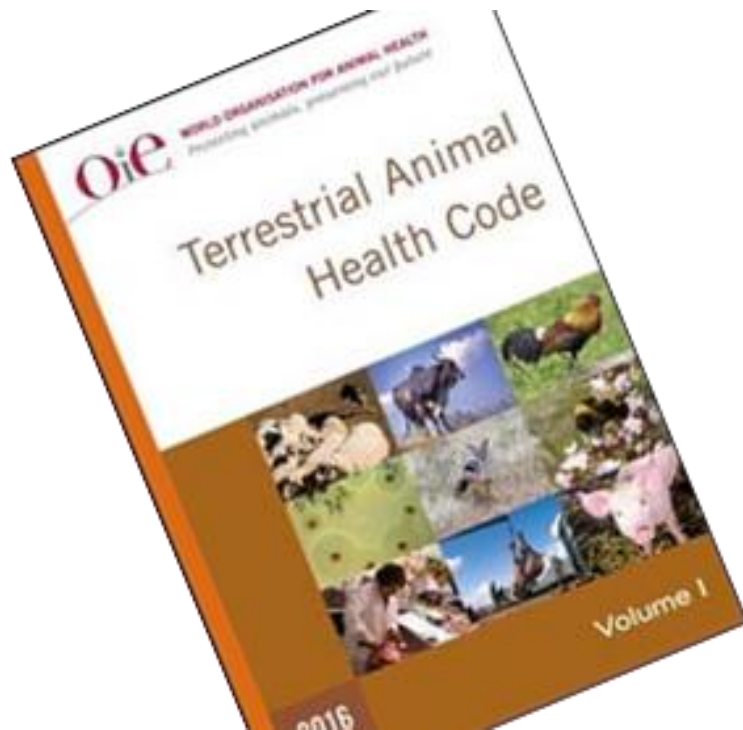
To facilitate this process, the **February 2022 meeting report of the Code Commission will be distributed in two parts: Part A** (herewith) provides information about the new and revised texts for the *Terrestrial Code* that will be proposed for adoption at the 89th General Session; and **Part B** (to be published in April 2022) will provide information about other topics discussed at the Commission's February 2022 meeting including texts circulated for comments and information.

In preparation for the 89th General Session, the OIE will once again organise information webinars to ensure that Members are aware of the background and key aspects of the standards being presented for adoption. Attendance to these webinars will be by invitation only. Please note that Delegates will soon receive detailed information about the 89th General Session, and in particular the process for the adoption of standards.

The Code Commission thanked the following Members for providing comments: Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, China (People's Republic of), Chinese Taipei, Colombia, Japan, Mexico, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norway, Saudi Arabia, South Africa, Switzerland, Thailand, the United Arab Emirates, the United Kingdom (UK), the United States of America (USA), Zimbabwe, the Member States of the European Union (EU), the African Union Inter-African Bureau for Animal Resources (AU-IBAR) on behalf of African Members of the OIE. The Commission also thanked the following organisations for providing comments: the Global Alliance of Pet Food Associations (GAPFA), the International Meat Secretariat (IMS), the World Renderers Organization (WRO), as well as various experts of the OIE scientific network.

The Code Commission reviewed all comments that were submitted prior to the deadline and supported by a rationale. The Commission made amendments to draft texts, where relevant, in the usual manner by 'double underline' and 'strike-through'. In relevant annexes, amendments proposed at this meeting are highlighted with a coloured background to distinguish them from those made previously. Due to the large number of comments, the Commission was not able to provide a detailed explanation on the reasons for accepting or not each of the comments considered, and focused its explanations on significant issues. Where amendments were of an editorial nature, no explanatory text has been provided. The Commission wished to note that not all texts proposed by Members to improve clarity were accepted; in these cases, it considered the text clear as currently written.

The Code Commission encourages Members to refer to previous reports considering longstanding issues. The Commission also draws the attention of Members to those instances where the Scientific Commission for Animal Diseases (the Scientific Commission), the Biological Standards Commission (the Laboratories Commission), a Working Group or an *ad hoc* Group have addressed specific comments or questions and proposed answers or amendments. In such cases the rationale is described in the reports of the Scientific Commission, the Laboratories Commission, Working Group or *ad hoc* Groups, and Members are encouraged to review these reports together with the report of the Code Commission. These reports are readily available on the [OIE website](#).



Dogs can present public health and safety, and animal health and animal welfare issues, especially when free to roam.

Dog Population Management (DPM) refers to the holistic approach that aims to improve the welfare of dogs, reduce problems they may present and create harmonious co-existence with people and their environment.

DPM supports ***effective and sustainable rabies control programmes*** and the control of other zoonoses

Reducing population turnover allows the maintenance of ***herd immunity within a vaccinated dog population.***

Reproduction control also reduces breeding behaviours which may increase the risk of rabies transmission due to increased contact rates between dogs.

Promotion of responsible dog ownership strengthens owner motivation, knowledge and therefore behaviour in caring for their dogs, including ***timely rabies vaccination.***

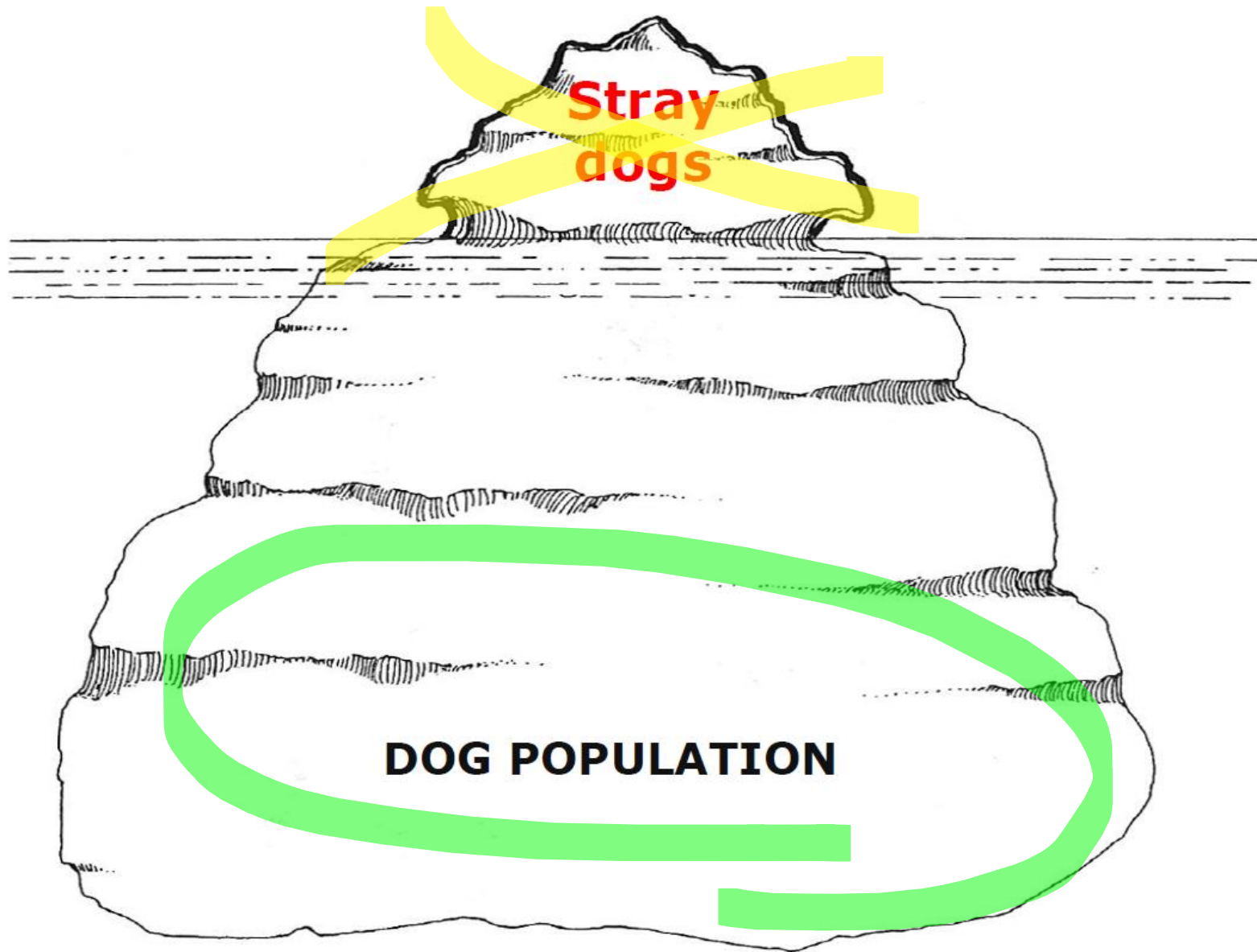
Dog populations must be managed without compromising animal welfare



The term 'stray dog' has been replaced with 'free-roaming dog'

"any owned dog or unowned dog that is without direct human supervision or control, including feral dogs"

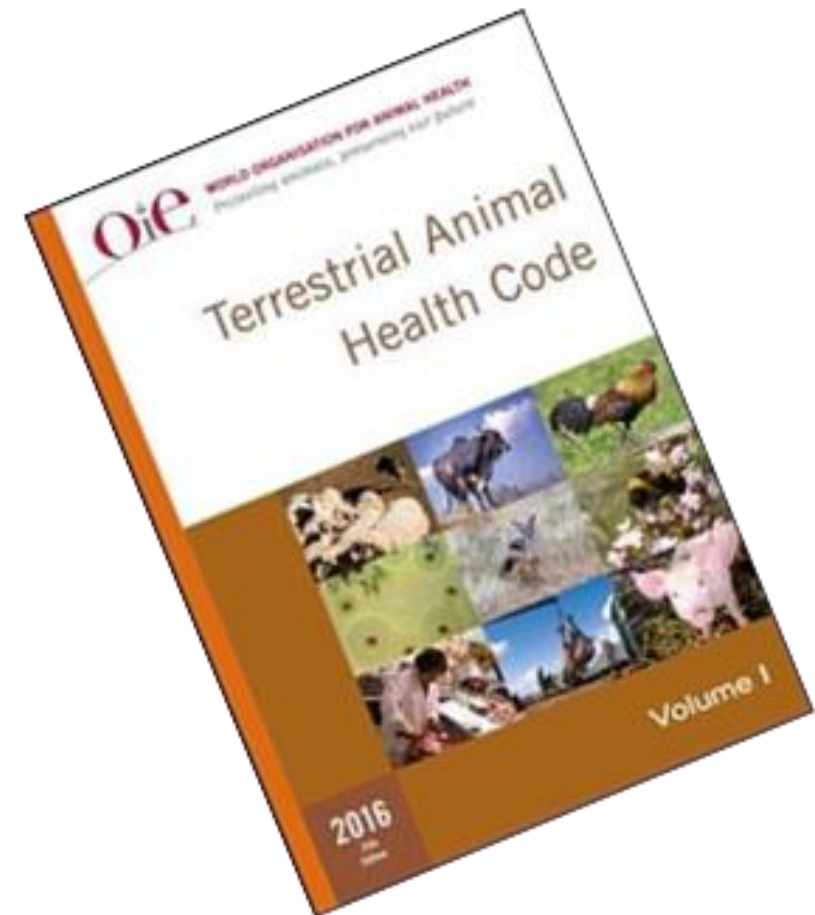
Based on the behaviour of a dog roaming without restriction,
not on the ownership status



- The owned dog population is a common source of free-roaming dogs, ***DPM programmes should consider all dogs.***
- ***Local dog population dynamics and community attitudes is a key element*** in determining whether and how DPM programmes might contribute to rabies control and which tools would be most successful.
- Sources and drivers of free-roaming dogs and management goals differ across communities, ***DPM programmes should be individually tailored to local and national contexts***, and they should be designed to be sustainable, aligned with legislative requirements, evaluated and adaptable.

The revised TAHC Chapter 7.7 on dog population management

- Article 7.7.1. Introduction
- Article 7.7.2. Definitions
- Article 7.7.3. Scope
- Article 7.7.4. Guiding principles
- Article 7.7.5. Dog Population Management objectives
- Article 7.7.6. Roles and responsibilities
- Article 7.7.7. Competent Authority for Dog Population Management (DPM)
- Article 7.7.8. Other organizations and actors involved in DPM
- Article 7.7.9. Regulatory framework
- Article 7.7.10. Evidence-based programme development
- Article 7.7.11. DPM programme assessment and planning
- Article 7.7.12. Monitoring and evaluation
- Article 7.7.13. Recommendations for DPM measures
- Article 7.7.14. Registration and identification of dogs
- Article 7.7.15. Regulation of commercial dog breeding and sale
- Article 7.7.16. Control of national and international (export or import) dog movements
- Article 7.7.17. Promoting responsible dog ownership
- Article 7.7.18. Reproductive control
- Article 7.7.19. Catch, neuter, vaccination and return
- Article 7.7.20. Reuniting and adoption
- Article 7.7.21. Access to veterinary care
- Article 7.7.22. Environmental controls
- Article 7.7.23. Educating in safe dog-human interaction
- Article 7.7.24. Specific considerations for DPM
- Article 7.7.25. Capture and handling
- Article 7.7.26. Housing
- Article 7.7.27. Euthanasia





The universally recognized concept of Dog Population Management is that **free-roaming control interventions should focus on root causes of the problem**, meaning that the sources of dogs need to be identified and addressed, rather than just focus on measures targeting the existing free-roaming dog population.

It remains essential to develop **a medium to long-term (5 to 10 years), sustainable Dog Population Management strategy at country level**, based on an **actionable National Action Plan** aiming at creating a supportive and enabling environment for the implementation of ***tailor-made Dog Population Management (DPM) programmes***, to be constantly monitored and evaluated.

This will require a **systematic, comprehensive, coordinated and progressive approach** to progressively curb and finally eliminate the presence of free-roaming dogs.

Article 7.7.7. Competent Authority for Dog Population Management

A template for the drafting of a **National Action Plan** for dog population control has been proposed in 2019, in order to create an enabling national environment for the operational implementation of DPM programmes at local level.

How many Countries have used it?

OIE Platform for Animal Welfare in Europe
Improving animal welfare in Europe by empowering Veterinary Services to take action in compliance with OIE standards

DRAFT TEMPLATE to be discussed in SDB3
Veterinary Services national plan to support local governmental authorities in the development and implementation of dog population control programmes (DPCPs)

Context - what are we trying to achieve?
Chapter 7.7.7 on stray dog population control of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code (TAHC), adopted in 2006, describes the general guiding principles, objectives, control measures and monitoring and evaluation of dog population control programmes (DPCPs). It also recommends the establishment of an Advisory Group to develop such programmes, composed of various experts and relevant stakeholders, to analyse and quantify the problem, identify the causes, obtain public opinion on dogs and propose the most effective approaches to use in the short-term program.

In 2015, OIE and WHO, together with FAO and GIZ, also adopted the [Global Framework for the elimination of dog-mediated rabies](#) by 2030 with a companion Strategic Plan. This Framework is based on 5 pillars (socio-cultural, technical, organization, political and resources).

Under the [OIE Platform on Animal Welfare for Europe](#), Balkan countries agreed to reach full compliance with Chapter 7.7.7 by 2025 (sub-regional vision). OIE therefore established a [Working Group on Rabies](#) for 11 Balkan countries, to support and monitor progress towards the achievement of the vision.

4 first (2015) and second (2016) self-assessments were conducted by Balkan countries, using the OIE self-assessment and Monitoring Tool (Self-Tasks). Results, collected by OIE and Zoonosis Technical Regional (STR) experts, showed a low level of compliance as regards the analysis of the situation, the control measures in place and their monitoring. Rabies disease 'reality' incorporated in the Self-Tasks showed that dog-mediated rabies situation in the Balkans is acceptable but vigilance must remain high in light of rabies situation prevailing in wildlife, despite important control efforts (oral vaccination of foxes).

In majority of the countries in the Balkans and Turkey as shown from the first and second country self-assessments, municipal authorities have competency and responsibility for stray dog population control. The Veterinary Services, in their public part, play a limited role - except when a national television broadcast (regulation, MR, database, rabies mass vaccination, etc.) is needed - and coordinate between the central and local level is insufficient as a result stray dog population control remains locally managed, un-harmonized and uncoordinated across the country and the Veterinary Authority does not get the broad picture at the central level to monitor progress at the national level (or across the country).

Important roles in stray dog population control are yet to be played by the Veterinary Authority - that is responsible for the implementation of animal health and animal welfare legislation in coordination with other competent government agencies and institutions - and current sub-optimal results obtained by Balkan countries - despite some remarkable efforts deployed locally - may actually be the result of insufficient involvement and clear roles of the Veterinary Authority.

- Specific contributions could include, but not be limited to:
1. Provide the legal basis for stray dog population control (and rabies) in line with OIE standards;
 2. Provide technical advice with specialized expertise in regard to public health, animal welfare and animal health to the local governmental authorities for effective design, implementation and monitoring of DPCPs in line with OIE standards;
 3. Coordinate DPCPs at national level to ensure the sustainability and efficiency of efforts made locally with harmonized and well-understood terminology and concepts (in any of the official languages);
 4. Monitor the operational implementation of DPCPs at international level with a view to getting a greater understanding of the whole country situation based on local efforts and define a national objective control by 2025;
 5. Provide the necessary (adequate) support to leverage some resources (financial, human and/or technical) to ensure the success of DPCPs.

In other words, this could be described as how the Veterinary Authority can create an accountable, sustainable and enabling environment (see graph below, red + yellow framework) for stray dog population control to be implemented by local governmental authorities/municipalities, with the necessary external coordination in place.



The OIE Platform Secretariat therefore established a small stray dog Task Force to draft a Template for a Veterinary Services national plan to support local governmental authorities in the development and implementation of DPCPs in compliance with OIE Chapter 7.7.7 and ensure their monitoring. It suggests a possible outline of how to structure such Plan by guiding the identification of possible obstacles, activities and associated costs to be undertaken in the next 5 to 7 years with the overall objective to achieve full compliance with OIE Chapter 7.7.7 by 2025. The activities proposed in the Plan should be in concert with those of the Veterinary Authority, for the activities to be implemented by the local governmental authorities; reference should be made to the [Public Guidance on Stray Dog Situation, Management and Guide to Monitoring and Reporting on Dog Population Management](#).

This Template (still to be discussed) with countries during the 3rd workshop of the OIE regional stray dog Roadmap for Balkan countries (SDCB), held in Serbia in June 2016 and countries' comments taken into account into a revised version of the Template is recommended that Balkan countries use the Template to prepare their OIE national plan to support local governmental authorities in the development and implementation of DPCPs before the end of 2016. The quality of the Plan will be assessed by the stray dog Task Force. However it is important to note the political commitment to support the Plan must be secured to ensure its adequate implementation and long-term success.

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Summary of main terms used (OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code):

Animal welfare Means how an animal is coping with the conditions in which it lives. An animal in a good state of welfare (as indicated by scientific evidence) is healthy;



A combination of measures that enhance the care of dogs and influence dog population dynamics to sustainably improve dog health and welfare, public health and safety, and the environment, while taking into consideration related economic benefits and costs

Article 7.7.8. Other organisations and actors involved in Dog Population Management

Veterinary Services should play an active role and coordinate their activities with relevant *Competent Authorities*, and may be responsible for the organisation, implementation and supervision of **DPM programmes.**



Evidence-based DPM programmes should include:

- ✓ **Review of the current regulatory framework** and evaluation of the efficiency and effectiveness of DPM control measures
- ✓ **Identification of the priority issues** from the perspective of all relevant stakeholders.
- ✓ **Exploration of dog population dynamics in the whole dog population** (not limited to the current free-roaming dog population) to identify the sources of free-roaming dogs
- ✓ **Identification of people's knowledge, attitudes and practices** regarding care and responsibility for owned and unowned dogs
- ✓ **Estimation of dog population size and demography.**

DPM programmes (Art 7.7.5)

May include the following objectives:

- promote and establish ***responsible dog ownership***;
- ***improve health and welfare*** of dog populations;
- reduce the number of ***free-roaming dogs***;
- ***stabilise the dog population*** by reducing turnover;
- reduce ***risks to public health and safety*** including dog bites, traffic accidents, and zoonotic diseases such as rabies, leishmaniosis and echinococcosis;
- contribute towards ***eradicating dog-mediated human rabies***;
- ***reduce nuisance*** caused by *free-roaming dogs*;
- ***prevent harm to livestock*** and other animals;
- ***prevent illegal trade*** and trafficking of dogs.

DPM measures (Art 7.7.13)

A combination of the following measures to develop successful DPM programme:

- **Identification & Registration (I&R)**
- **regulation** of commercial **breeding and sale**
- control of **national and international (export and import)** -> dog movements
- promotion of **responsible dog ownership**
- **reproduction** control
- **"Catch, Neuter, Vaccinate and Return"** approach
- **reuniting** and **adoption**
- access to **veterinary care**
- **environmental controls**
- **education** on safe dog-human interaction

To be implemented in accordance with the national context and local circumstances.



DPM activities (Art. 7.7.24)

May be required for the implementation of the DPM measures:

- Dog capture and handling
- Dog housing
- Euthanasia *“inducing death using a method that causes a rapid and irreversible loss of consciousness with minimum pain and distress to animal”* (WOAH TAHC Glossary)



Monitoring and evaluation indicators/measurables

- **Owned dog population size**, demographics and vaccination status, sterilisation, registration, identification, level and method of confinement and how they were acquired
- **Free-roaming dog population** density, demography (age, sex, sterilisation, lactating females and puppies) and welfare (e.g. BCS, skin lesions)
- **Prevalence of zoonotic diseases** in both the animal and human populations (I.e., rabies; echinococcosis).
- **Knowledge, attitudes and practices of communities** regarding **responsible dog ownership**.
- **Dog population movements** from owned to unowned dogs or from confined to free-roaming dogs
- **Reuniting-rehoming facilities/shelter performance** including intake, adoption rates, welfare state of dogs in their care, mortality and euthanasia rates.
- **Number of dog bites** or **rabies post-exposure prophylaxis** treatments, or the **costs incurred**
- Number and nature of **complaints about dogs**
- **Compensation costs** relating to dog-related **damages to people, livestock, or property**

CHALLENGES

- **Complexity of Animal Welfare** with important scientific, ethical, cultural, religious, economic and political dimensions
- **Animal welfare, public health and safety related issues**
- WOAHA standards need to be **relevant to all Members** and they are **not legislation**, should be **adapted to local conditions**
- DPM to be addressed **from One-Health perspective**



Thank you



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