



World Organisation
for Animal Health

Wildlife Health Programme

Implementation Plan for Europe and Central Asia



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Implementation Plan for Europe and Central Asia

2025 – 2027

WOAH Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels
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Summary

In response to global trends in disease emergence and biodiversity loss, the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) launched its Wildlife Health Programme in 2020, aligned with the One Health approach and WOA's 7th Strategic Plan.

This programme highlights the central role of National Veterinary Services (NVS) in early detection, surveillance, and management of wildlife diseases, recognising their critical function in both animal welfare and broader One Health efforts, their limited resources and the need to reinforce their capacity in wildlife health. Europe and Central Asia face complex wildlife health challenges, including habitat fragmentation, illegal wildlife trade, and zoonotic threats like Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI), which affects biodiversity, human health, and the economy. To address these needs, WOAH established a Wildlife Health Network for Europe and Central Asia in 2023. The network supports National Focal Points for Wildlife (NFPWs) through knowledge-sharing, webinars, and strengthened cooperation across 53 countries. As a follow-up, the Wildlife Health Implementation Plan was developed to adapt the global framework to regional priorities and provide practical tools for improving wildlife health management over a two-year period.

The objectives of this plan are:

- to identify priority topics for NFPWs via a questionnaire,
- to direct WOAH and NFPW efforts toward these priorities beginning with a face-to-face meeting in June 2025,
- to facilitate ongoing collaboration via virtual meetings, and
- to evaluate progress and guide future planning based on outcomes and the evolving global Wildlife Health Strategy.

Through this regionalised approach, WOAHA aims to enhance wildlife health systems in Europe and Central Asia, foster stronger intersectoral collaboration, and contribute to the protection of biodiversity and public health under the One Health approach.

Background

Humans and animals share the same ecosystems and therefore, human health, animal health and environmental health are interconnected. The growth of this interaction, as a result of the expansion of anthropogenic activities and land use change, provides the perfect setting to increase the risk of transmission of pathogens in the human-animal-environment interface. As a response of the global trends in disease emergence and biodiversity loss (Keesing et al., 2010), the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) has developed in 2020 the [Wildlife Health Programme](#), a global project to address wildlife health challenges from the basis of the One Health concept, recognising that the health of humans, domestic and wild animals, plants, and the wider environment are closely linked and inter-dependent (OHHLEP 2022). Aligned with the objectives of the [7th Strategic Plan](#), WOAHA aims through the [Wildlife Health Framework](#) (WHF) to respond to a global need to better manage risks from emerging diseases at the human-animal-environment interface, whilst protecting wildlife.

National Veterinary Services (NVS) are the national Competent Authority responsible for ensuring animal health and welfare, then it is crucial to provide the capacity and resources to strengthen their role in wildlife health protection: early detection, surveillance and management of pathogens in wild animals. NVS are also a key player within the One Health approach, performing different roles in the management of wild animal health, from the implementation of conservation efforts of wild species at risk, to the surveillance and management of zoonotic diseases and diseases of domestic animals of wildlife origin (spillover) or vice versa (spill back), in collaboration with public and environmental health sectors.

In the European region, the wild animals health management faces a wide range of different challenges; from the reduction of their natural habitats as a consequence of human disruption to the challenges of pathogens surveillance and management in wildlife. Europe is recognised as an intermediate route and final destination market of a number of legally and illegally traded wild species, some considered endangered, with consequences for species conservation and a risk to pathogen and invasive alien species introduction (EU Action Plan against Wildlife Trafficking 2016).

Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza (HPAI) A has become a threat to wild bird populations in Europe (Knief et al., 2024), with reports of cases detected in wild (e.g. carnivores) and farm (e.g. minks) mammals; in addition, the transmission of the virus to poultry and the potential of zoonotic risk

associated with, gives avian influenza an economic, human health and biodiversity conservation importance (Fusaro et al., 2024), highlighting the need of surveillance in wild birds under a One Health approach. African swine fever in wild boar (*Sus scrofa*) is one of the most non-zoonotic reported diseases in the region ([WOAH Wildlife Diseases Situation Reports](#)), threatening livestock, food security and biodiversity, represents a major eradication challenge for the NVS linked to its sylvatic epidemiological cycle. Conflicts between wild large carnivores and farmers are on the rise in the last years; wolves (*Canis lupus*), brown bears (*Ursus arctos*), and Eurasian lynx (*Lynx lynx*) populations are increasing, as well as their distribution area, with positive conservation and biodiversity outcomes (Salvatori et al., 2021). However, this expansion is also leading to coexisting conflicts between humans and carnivores, with highly negative consequences for the carnivores and other wildlife species, like the use of poison by farmers or illegal poaching (Delibes-Mateos, 2015). In the Central Asian republics, the sustainable use of wildlife resources still represents a challenge, with illegal hunting activities and trade, and the displacement of wild animals because of livestock encroachment on natural habitats, threatening the region's preservation of biodiversity (Blank and Li 2021) and exposing hunters to zoonotic diseases.

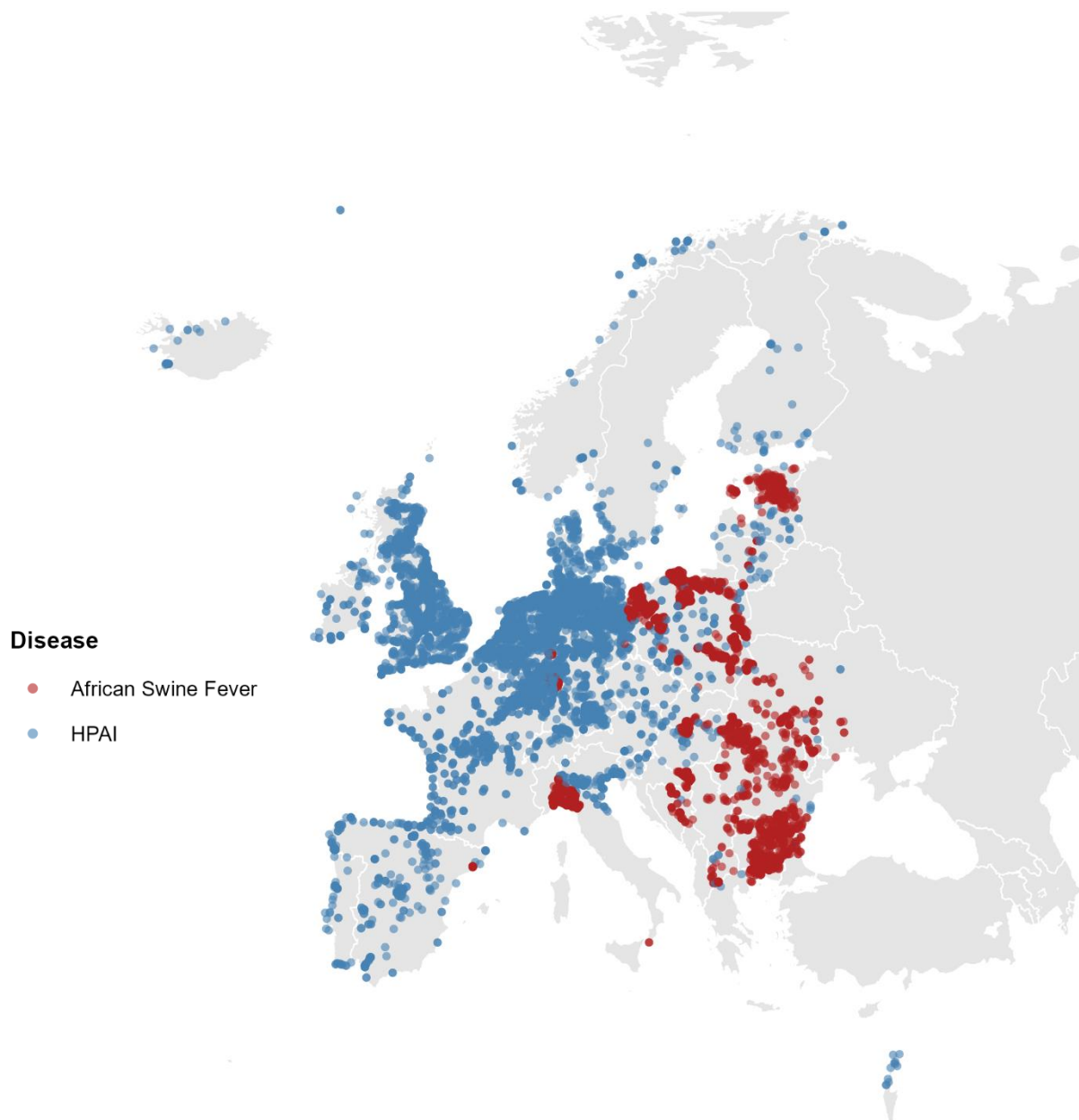


Figure 1: African Swine Fever and High Pathogenic Avian Influenza outbreaks reported in wildlife through early warning systems during 2025 (source: INFUR)

Disease

- Aujeszký's disease virus
- Batrachochytrium salamandrivorans
- Bluetongue virus
- Bonamia ostreae
- Brucella suis
- Echinococcus granulosus
- Rabies virus
- Theileria lestoquardi, Theileria luwenshuni and Theileria uilenbergi
- Tularemia
- West Nile Fever

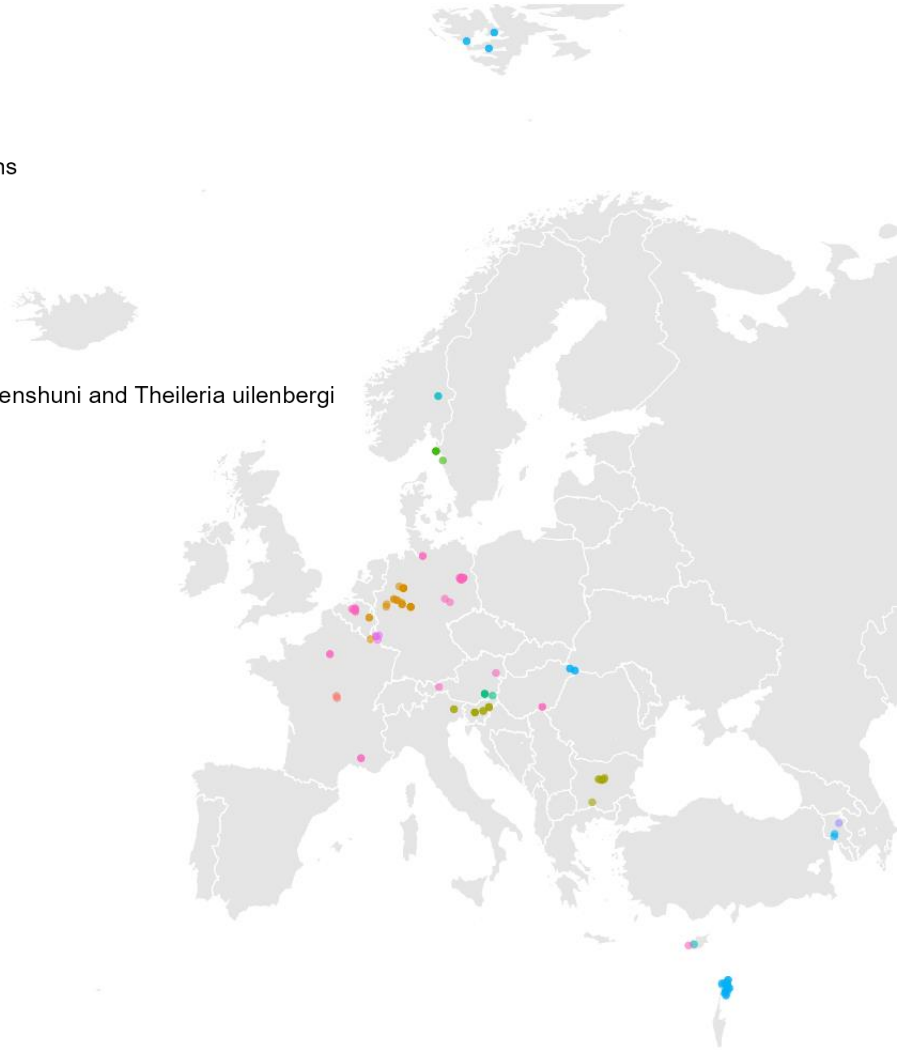
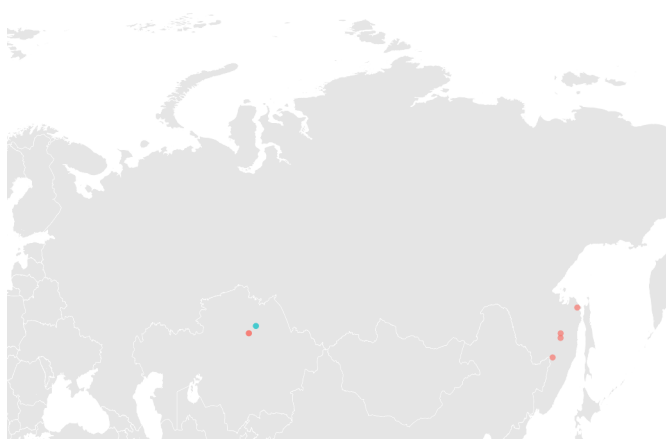


Figure 2: Wildlife diseases outbreaks reported through early warning systems during 2025 (source: INFUR)



Disease

- Influenza A viruses of high pathogenicity (Inf. with)
- Rabies virus (Inf. with)

Figure 3: Wildlife diseases outbreaks reported through early warning systems during 2025 in Russia and Central Asia (source: INFUR)

This demonstrates the wide range of topics that NVS must address in relation to wildlife health management, highlighting the complexity of the scenario and the need for joint collaboration among WOA National Focal Points of Wildlife (NFPWs) and wildlife health stakeholders in the region (e.g. EU DG Sante, DG ENV, EFSA, ECDC, NGOs, and academic institutions), together with the development of a multisectoral approach and the definition of priorities.

In order to support NFPWs in the region, WOA developed in 2023 a Wildlife Health Network for the NFPWs of Europe and Central Asia to build knowledge and awareness amongst national veterinary services about their role in better protecting wildlife health and strengthen WOA Members' capacity for early detection of pathogens in wildlife, wildlife surveillance and management systems, information management, risk assessment, and implementation of mitigation measures in alignment with the pillars of the WHF.

In this context, WOA Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels organised a series of webinars to increase knowledge in different Wildlife Health and One Health topics, to improve the interaction and create new connections between the members of the network, the NFPWs in Europe and Central Asia (comprising 53 member countries) and different wildlife health stakeholders, and to strengthen the collaboration and connection between the members of the network. Finally, in 2025 the global Wildlife Health Framework was adapted through this Implementation Plan to better meet the needs of the NFPWs from the region.

Objectives

In order to reach the objective of “protecting wildlife health to achieve One Health”, WOA will provide support to the NFPWs from Europe and Central Asia to improve and strengthen their capacities to better manage the risk of disease emergence at the human-animal-ecosystems interface while protecting wildlife health and ecosystems.

The general objective of the Wildlife Health Implementation Plan for Europe and Central Asia is to adapt the WOA Global Wildlife Health Framework to better address the needs of the NFPWs in the region.

The specific objectives include:

1. Identify the priority wildlife health topics for the NFPWs of Europe and Central Asia through a questionnaire based on the pillars of the WHF,
2. Focus WOAHA and NFPWs efforts on addressing the identified priorities over a two-year period, beginning with a face-to-face meeting in June 2025, reinforcing joint collaboration among neighbouring countries, following a sub-regional approach,
3. Follow up on activities through the Wildlife Health Network and specific online meetings,
4. Evaluation of the progress obtained in the priorities selected by the NFPWs after two years of implementation of the plan.

Methodology

I - National Focal Points of Wildlife priorities

A questionnaire was conducted among the NFPWs of Europe and Central Asia to identify priority wildlife health topics to be targeted in the next two years. The selection was focused on topics that would benefit most from collaboration with neighbouring countries, following a sub-regional perspective. The questionnaire was designed in English and Russian.

The topics included in the questionnaire were aligned with the two objectives and six outcomes of the [Wildlife Health Framework](#). In addition, it was taken into account responses from WOAHA's [Wildlife Health Survey Report](#) (2020), the [In-country Wildlife Disease Surveillance Survey Report](#) (2023) and the [Sixth Cycle Regional Training Workshop for Europe](#) outcomes.

The complete questionnaire and the results is available in *Annex I*.

II - Supporting NFPWs to strengthen Wildlife Health in Europe and Central Asia

Based on the results of the questionnaire, WOAHA Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels will identify experts able to support the priorities identified regionally and coordinate a series of activities during the next two years, starting in 2025 with an in-person meeting in Tbilisi, Georgia, to provide technical resources, facilitate connections and exchange with experts, provide information to strengthen NFPWs capacity to address wildlife health under the One Health approach.

During this meeting, and based on the key issues selected by the 33 NFPWs that answered the questionnaire (see *Annex I*), the priority topics that will be addressed in collaboration among neighbouring countries in the region will include:

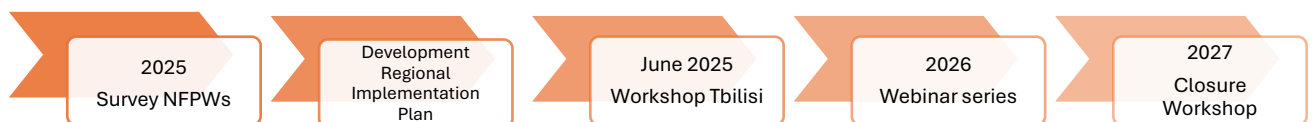
1. Strengthen the One Health multisectoral collaboration and capacity for wildlife health management;
2. Wildlife health surveillance, monitoring, management, and reporting;
3. Strengthen the response capacities to wildlife disease outbreaks.

This proposed Implementation Plan will be launched at the meeting in Tbilisi, and the foundation for ongoing collaboration between countries to address the selected topics will be established. Through working group activities, the NFPWs will discuss, identify and select the main needs, gaps and solutions to address the priority topics selected under a sub-regional approach (see *Annex II*).

Further activities will take place through online meetings. During 2026, three webinars are planned to address the most frequent activities proposed by the NFPWs during the working group activities held in the in-person workshop in Tbilisi, Georgia in June 2025.

III - Evaluation of the progress obtained after the Implementation plan

At the end of the Implementation plan, a survey will be shared with the NFPWs to evaluate the improvements obtained in the topics selected as priority and define the following steps based on new priorities identified by the focal points and in alignment with the new Global Wildlife Health Strategy and the 8th Strategic plan of WOA. H.



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Annex I

Wildlife Health Priorities for Europe and Central Asia

Questionnaire 2025

Objective:

The questionnaire aims to provide regional National Focal Points for Wildlife (NFPW) with the opportunity to select priority wildlife health topics to be addressed from 2025 onward and during two years. While selecting priorities, NFPWs should assess which topics would benefit most from collaboration with neighbouring countries using a sub-regional approach. The results will guide an in-person NFPW meeting in 2025, launching the Wildlife Health Programme Implementation Plan for Europe and Central Asia. Follow-up activities will include online meetings coordinated by WOAHSRR-Brussels. The questionnaire is available in English and Russian.

Questionnaire

Question 1

Which country do you represent as a NFPW?

Question 2

Which of the following topics do you consider a wildlife health priority to address in the coming two years in **your country**? (You can choose up to three options)

1. Raise awareness on wildlife health issues on the political, policy, academic and scientific environment
2. Strengthen the response capacities to wildlife disease outbreaks
3. Strengthen the One Health multisectoral collaboration and capacity for wildlife health management
4. Trade of wildlife and their products
5. Wild animals welfare (capture, handling, transport, farming, slaughter)
6. Wildlife conservation (e.g. management of wild carnivores population)
7. Wildlife health surveillance, monitoring, management, and reporting (if you have a disease that you consider priority you can include it here: ...)

8. Wildlife management during disasters
9. Zoonotic diseases surveillance in wildlife, monitoring, management, and reporting (if you have a disease that you consider priority you can include it here:...)
10. Other:

Question 3

Which of the following topics do you consider a wildlife health priority to address in the coming two years in the sub-region through **active collaboration with the neighbouring countries**? (You can choose up to three options)

1. Raise awareness on wildlife health issues on the political, policy, academic and scientific environment
2. Strengthen the response capacities to wildlife disease outbreaks
3. Strengthen the One Health multisectoral collaboration and capacity for wildlife health management
4. Trade of wildlife and their products
5. Wild animals welfare (capture, handling, transport, farming, slaughter)
6. Wildlife conservation (e.g. management of wild carnivores population)
7. Wildlife health surveillance, monitoring, management, and reporting (if you have a disease that you consider priority you can include it here: ...)
8. Wildlife management during disasters
9. Zoonotic diseases surveillance in wildlife, monitoring, management, and reporting (if you have a disease that you consider priority you can include it here: ...)
10. Other: ...

Question 4

Will you be able to join the in-person NFPW meeting during the last week of June/ first week of July 2025?

Yes / No / Maybe

Question 5

Do you have any other comment?

Results of the questionnaire replied by 33 National Focal Points of Wildlife from Europe and Central Asia.

Question 1. Which country do you represent as a NFPW?

Albania	Greece	Netherlands
Austria	Hungary	North Macedonia
Belgium	Ireland	Norway
Croatia	Italy	Portugal
Czech Republic	Kazakhstan	Romania
Denmark	Kyrgyzstan	Serbia
Estonia	Latvia	Spain
Finland	Lithuania	Switzerland
France	Luxembourg	Tajikistan
Georgia	Malta	Türkiye
Germany	Moldova	United Kingdom

Question 2. Which of the following topics do you consider a wildlife health priority to address in the coming two years in **your country**? (You can choose up to three options)

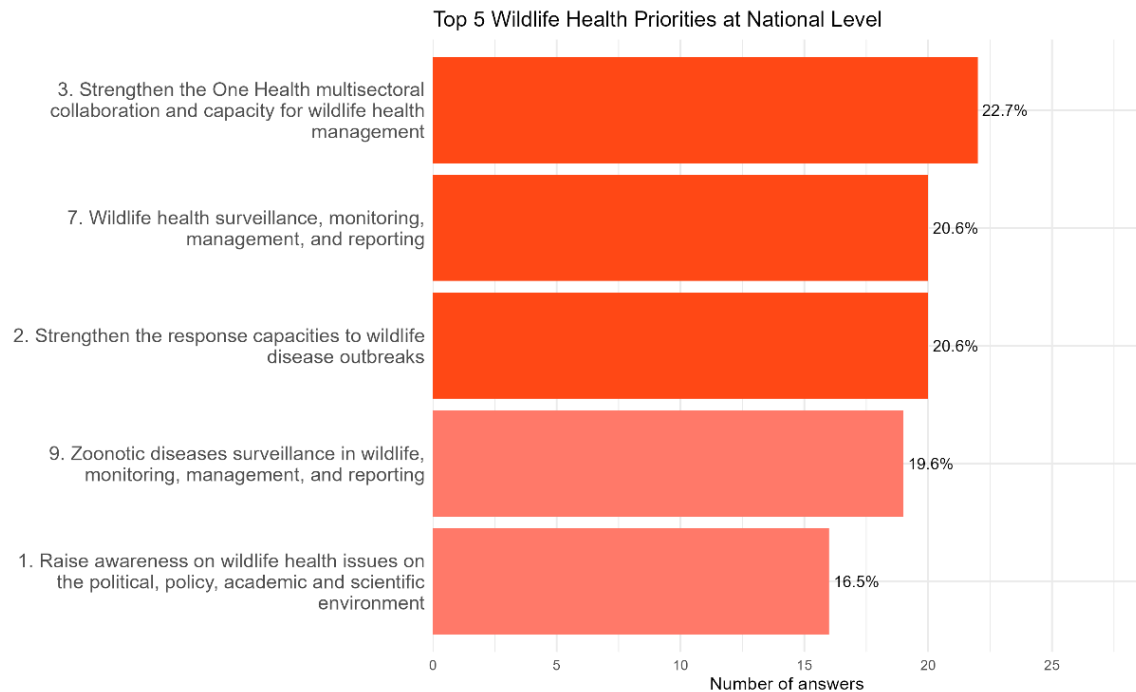


Figure 1. Five most frequent responses provided by the NFPW from 33 countries.

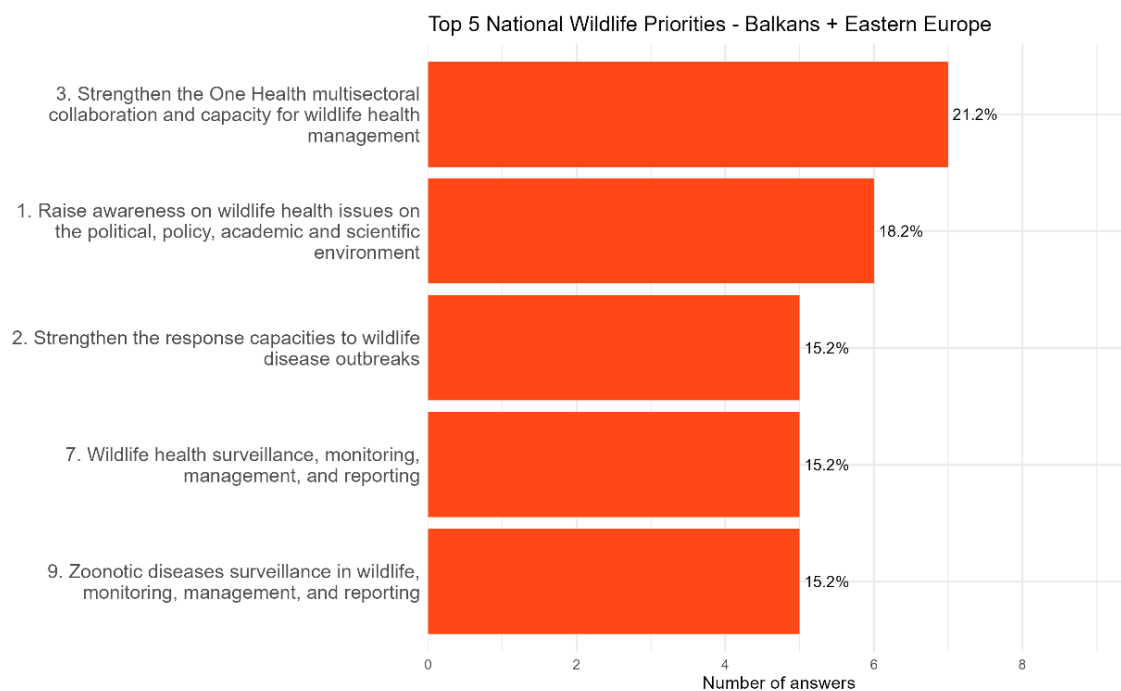


Figure 2. Five most frequent responses provided by Balkans and Eastern Europe* countries: Albania, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia

*The classification of countries in Sub-regions followed practical purposes to facilitate the visualization of the data and does not necessary correspond to a geopolitical classification.

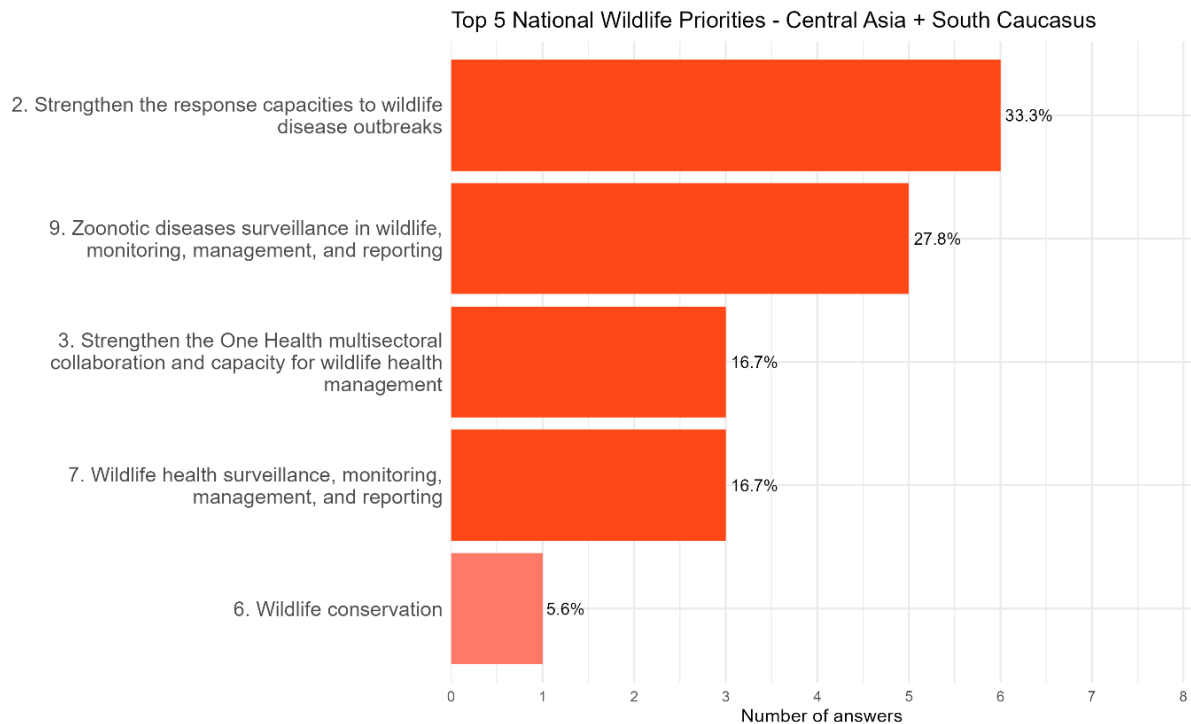


Figure 3. Five most frequent responses provided by Central Asia and South Caucasus* countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Georgia.

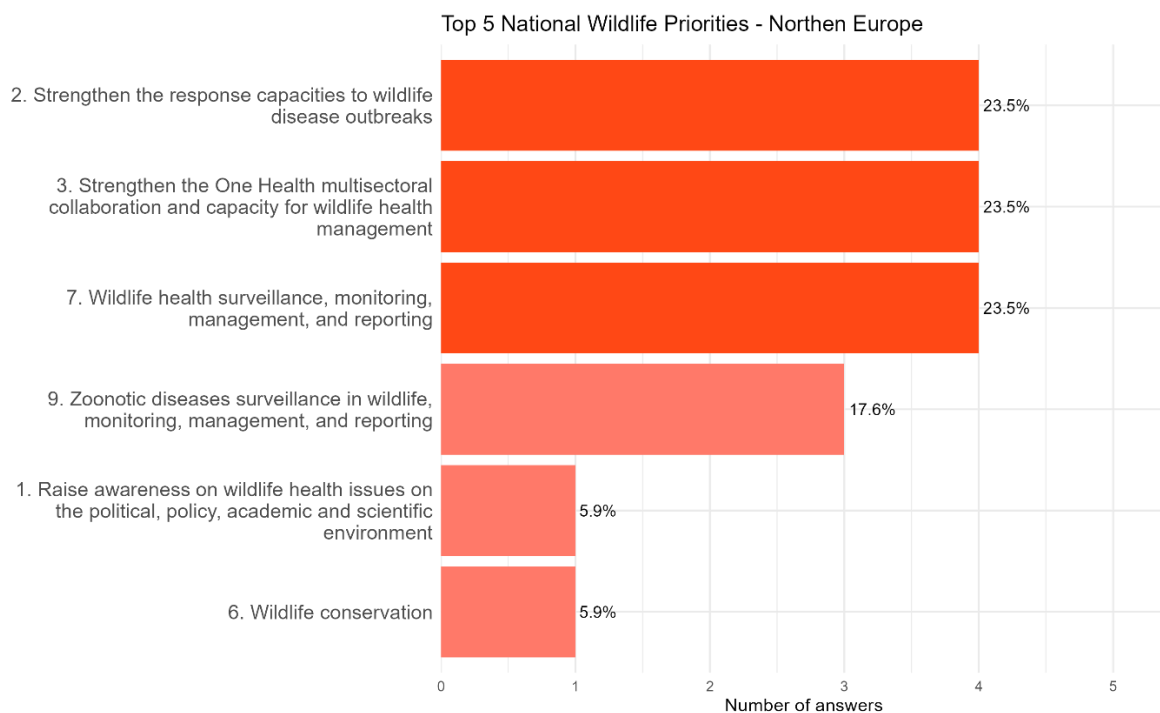


Figure 4. Five most frequent responses provided by Northern Europe* countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

* The classification of countries in Sub-regions followed practical purposes to facilitate the visualization of the data and does not necessarily correspond to a geopolitical classification.

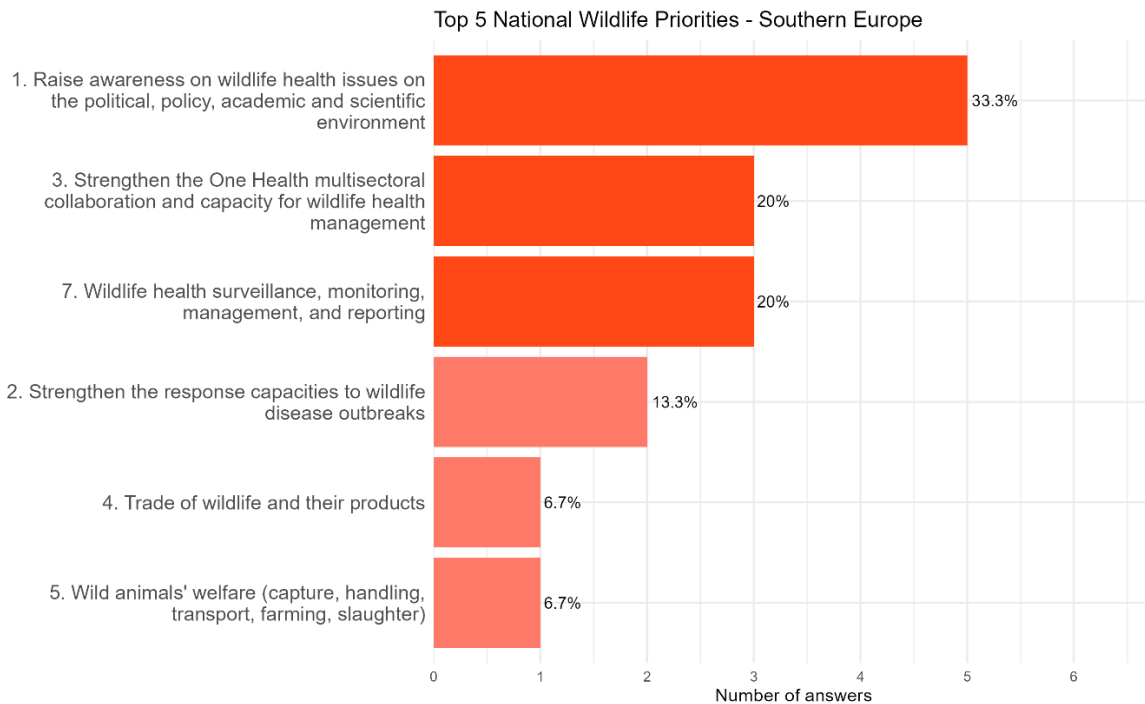


Figure 5. Five most frequent responses provided by Southern Europe* countries: Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Spain.

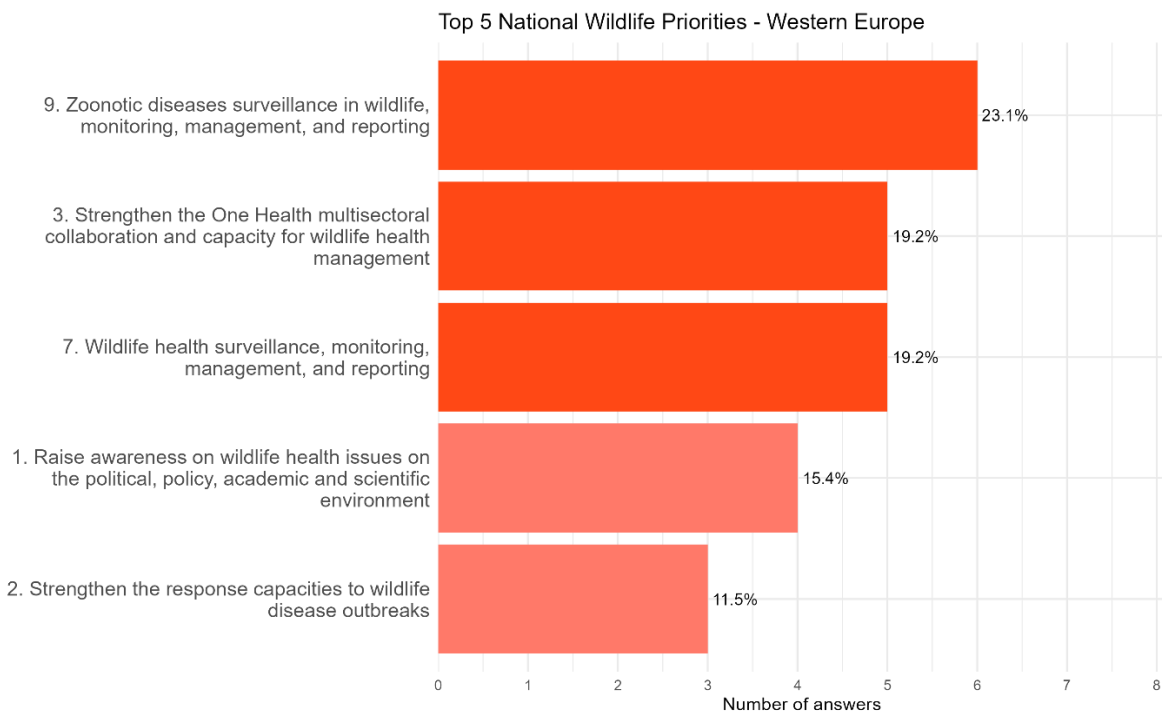


Figure 6. Five most frequent responses provided by Western Europe* countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, and United Kingdom

* The classification of countries in Sub-regions followed practical purposes to facilitate the visualization of the data and does not necessary correspond to a geopolitical classification.

Question 3. Which of the following topics do you consider a wildlife health priority to address in the coming two years in the **subregion** through **active collaboration with the neighbouring countries**? (You can choose up to three options)

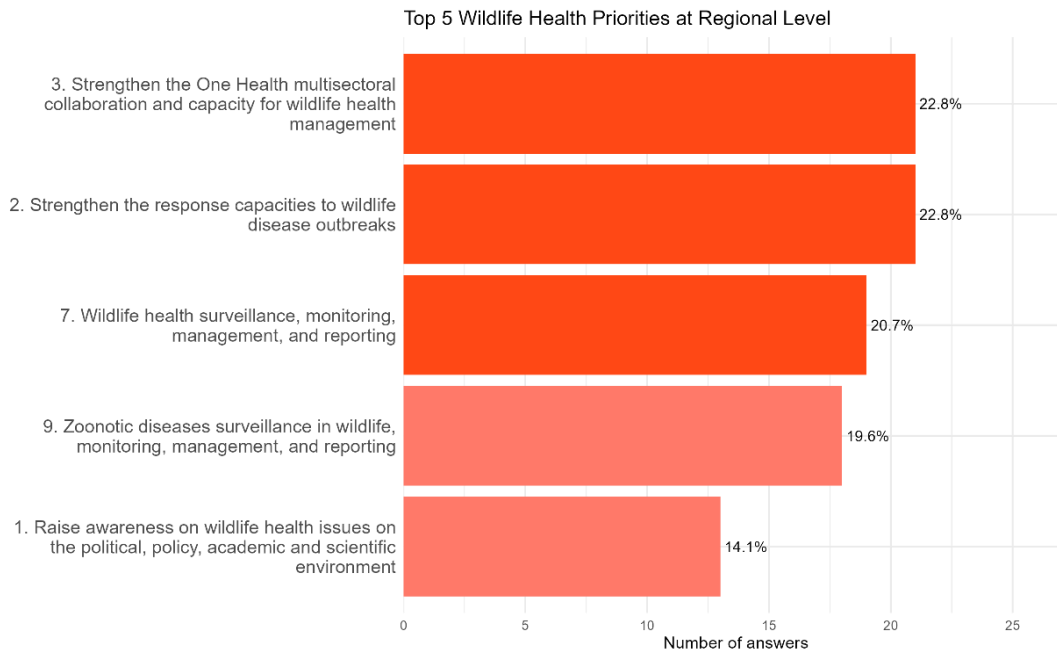


Figure 7. Five most frequent responses provided by the NFPW from 33 countries.

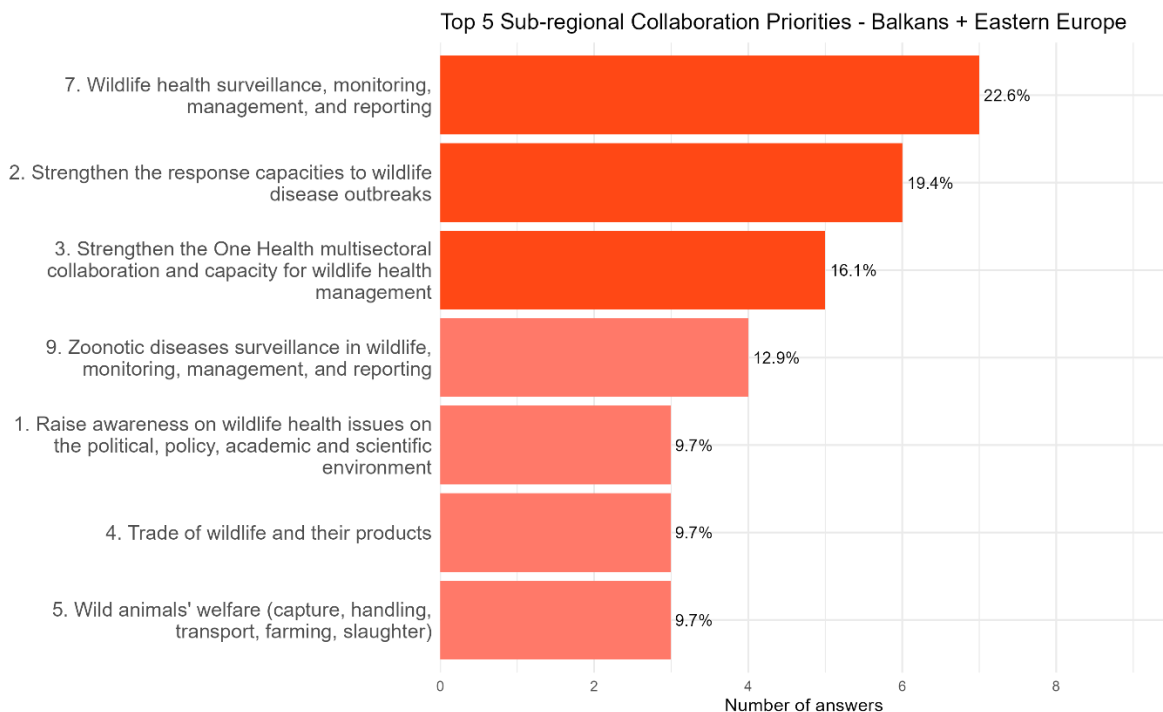


Figure 8. Five most frequent responses provided by Balkans and Eastern Europe* countries: Albania, Croatia, Greece, Hungary, Moldova, North Macedonia, Romania and Serbia.

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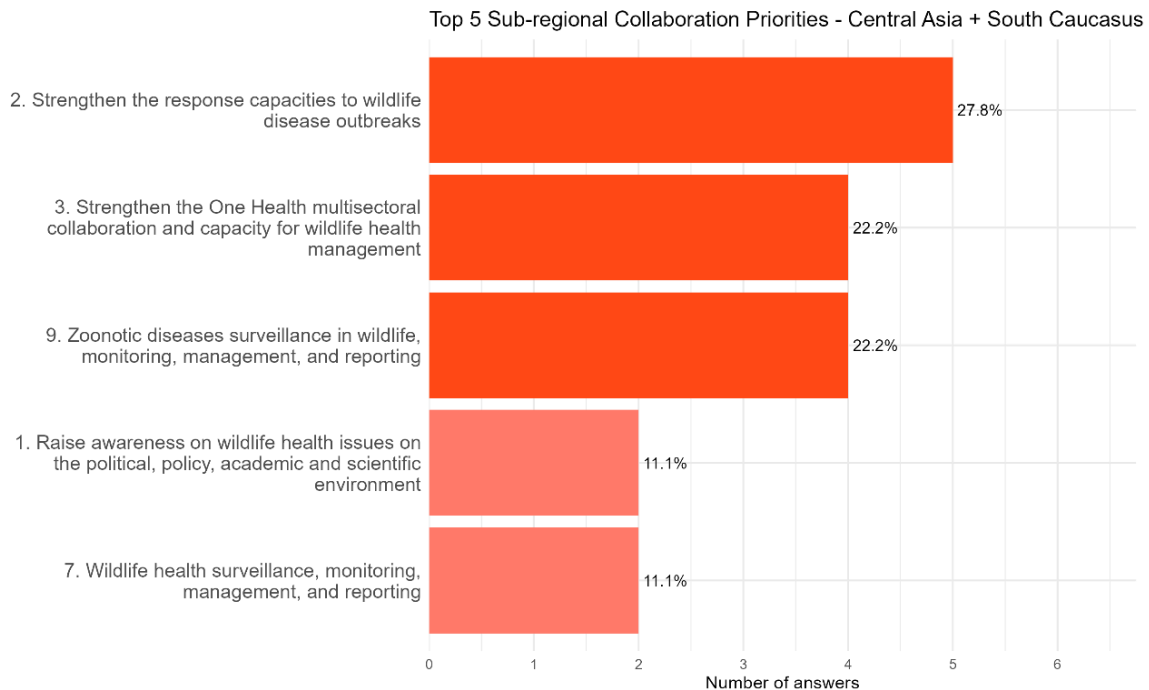


Figure 9. Five most frequent responses provided by Central Asia and South Caucasus* countries: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Türkiye and Georgia.

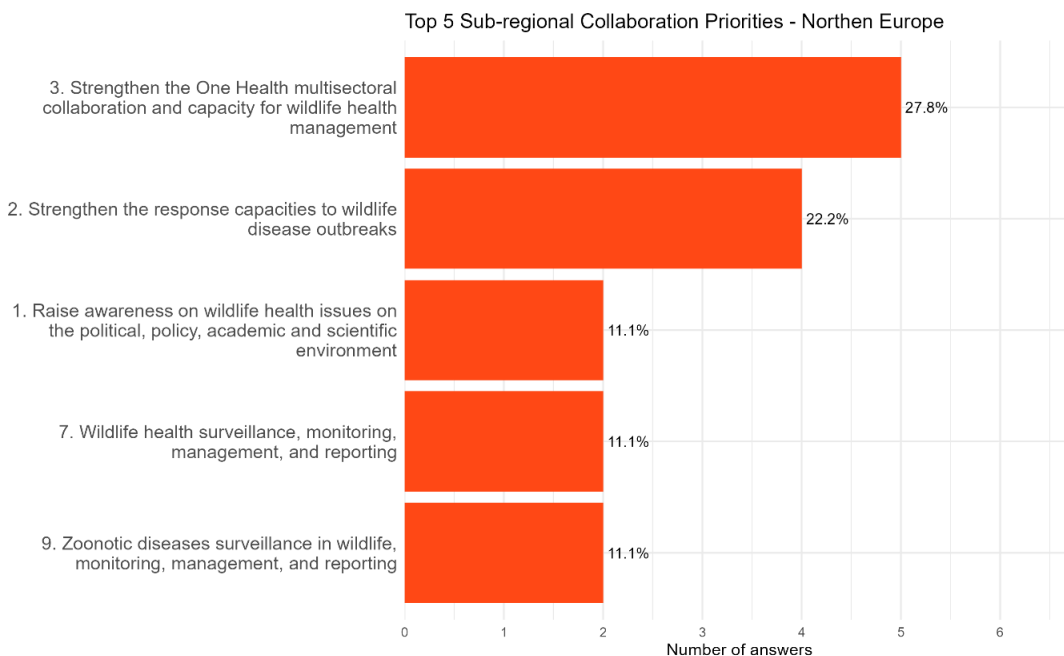


Figure 10. Five most frequent responses provided by Northern Europe* countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Estonia, Latvia, and Lithuania.

* The classification of countries in Sub-regions followed practical purposes to facilitate the visualization of the data and does not necessarily correspond to a geopolitical classification.

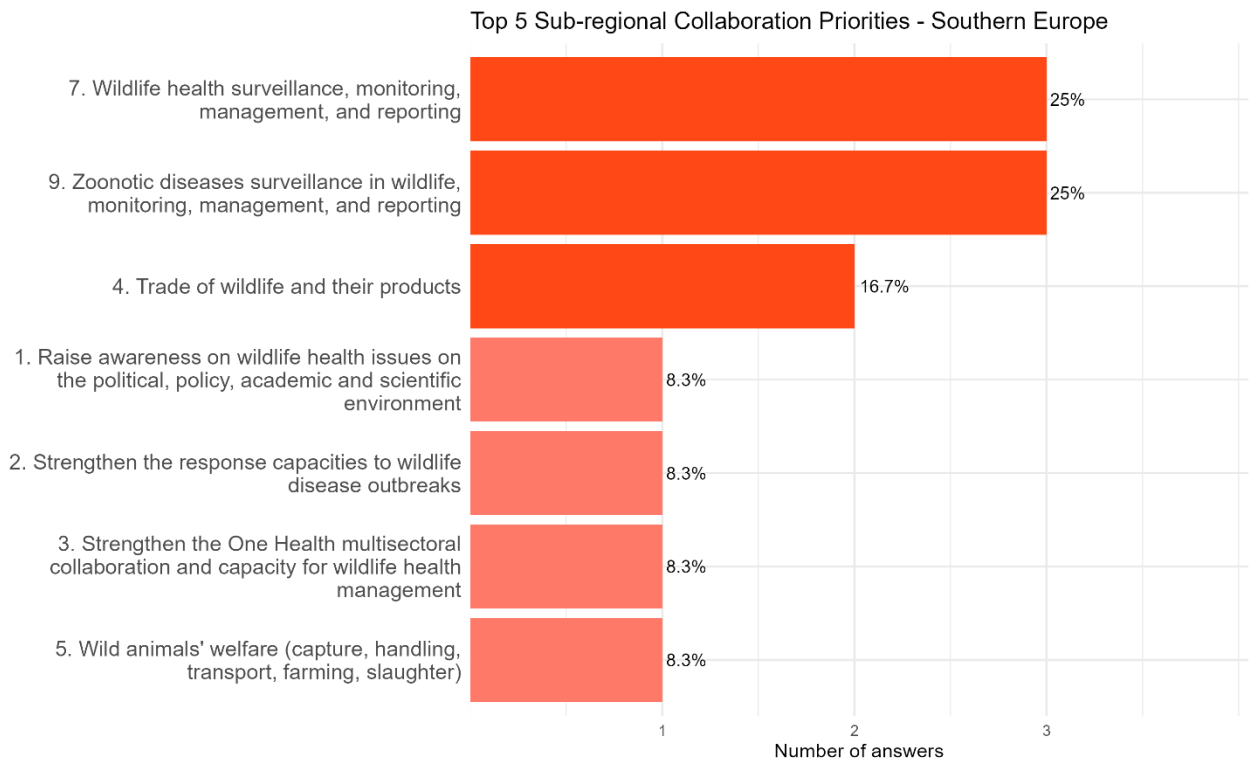


Figure 11. Five most frequent responses provided by Southern Europe* countries: Italy, Malta, Portugal, and Spain.

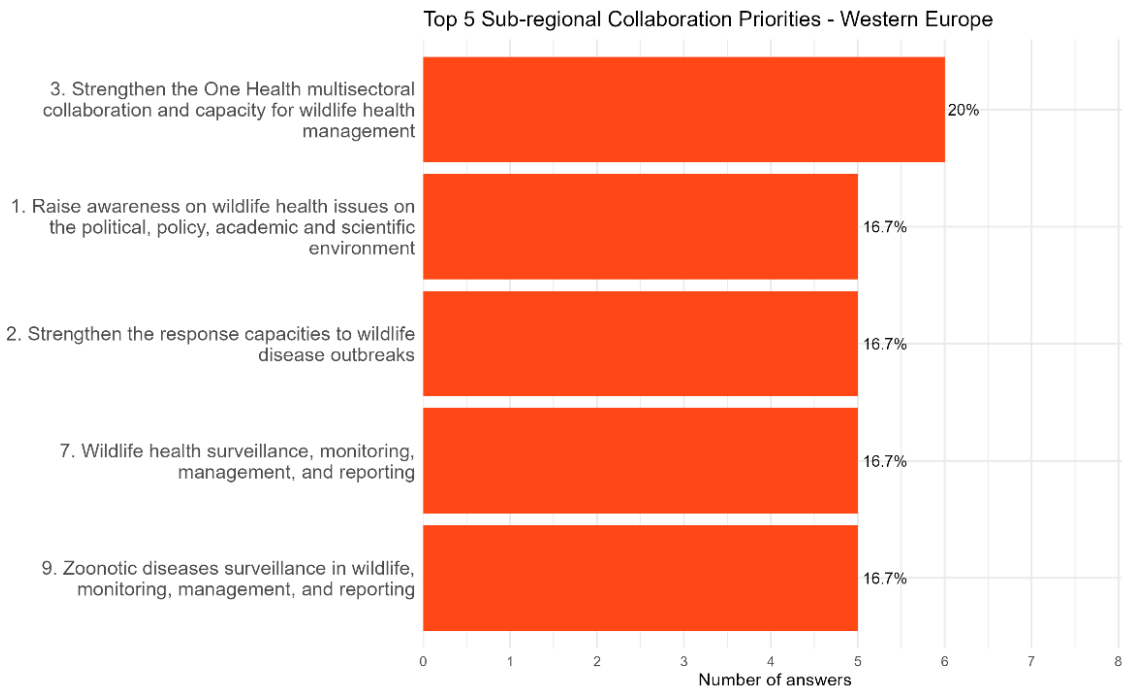


Figure 12. Five most frequent responses provided by Western Europe* countries: Austria, Belgium, Czech Republic, France, Germany, Ireland, Luxembourg, Netherlands, Switzerland, and United Kingdom.

* The classification of countries in Sub-regions followed practical purposes to facilitate the visualization of the data and does not necessary correspond to a geopolitical classification.

Annex II

Workshop for the National Focal Points of Wildlife Europe and Central Asia

25 – 26 June 2025, Tbilisi, Georgia

The workshop gathered National Focal Points representing 32 countries of the region, alongside invited speakers from the Swedish Veterinary Agency, the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), the World Health Organization (WHO), and the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH).

The main objective of the meeting was to strengthen the knowledge, collaboration, and practical capacities of NFPWs to address wildlife health priorities in the framework of the WOAH Wildlife Health Programme Implementation Plan for Europe and Central Asia. The workshop focused on three main areas:

- Strengthening One Health multisectoral collaboration and capacity for wildlife health management.
- Enhancing wildlife health surveillance, monitoring, and management capacities.
- Improving response capacities to wildlife disease outbreaks.

The event combined theoretical sessions, where international experts provided context and insights, with working group discussions, where participants collaborated to define practical steps for joint action.

Ahead of the technical sessions, participants visited the Tbilisi Zoo, where local veterinarians presented ongoing conservation projects in Georgia and shared challenges faced in managing wild animals under human care.

Outcomes of the working group activities

Group composition based on registered participants:

Group 1: Czech Republic, Hungary, Romania, Slovakia

Group 2: Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden, Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania

Group 3: Austria, France, Ireland, Netherlands, United Kingdom + Italy, Spain

Group 4: Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan

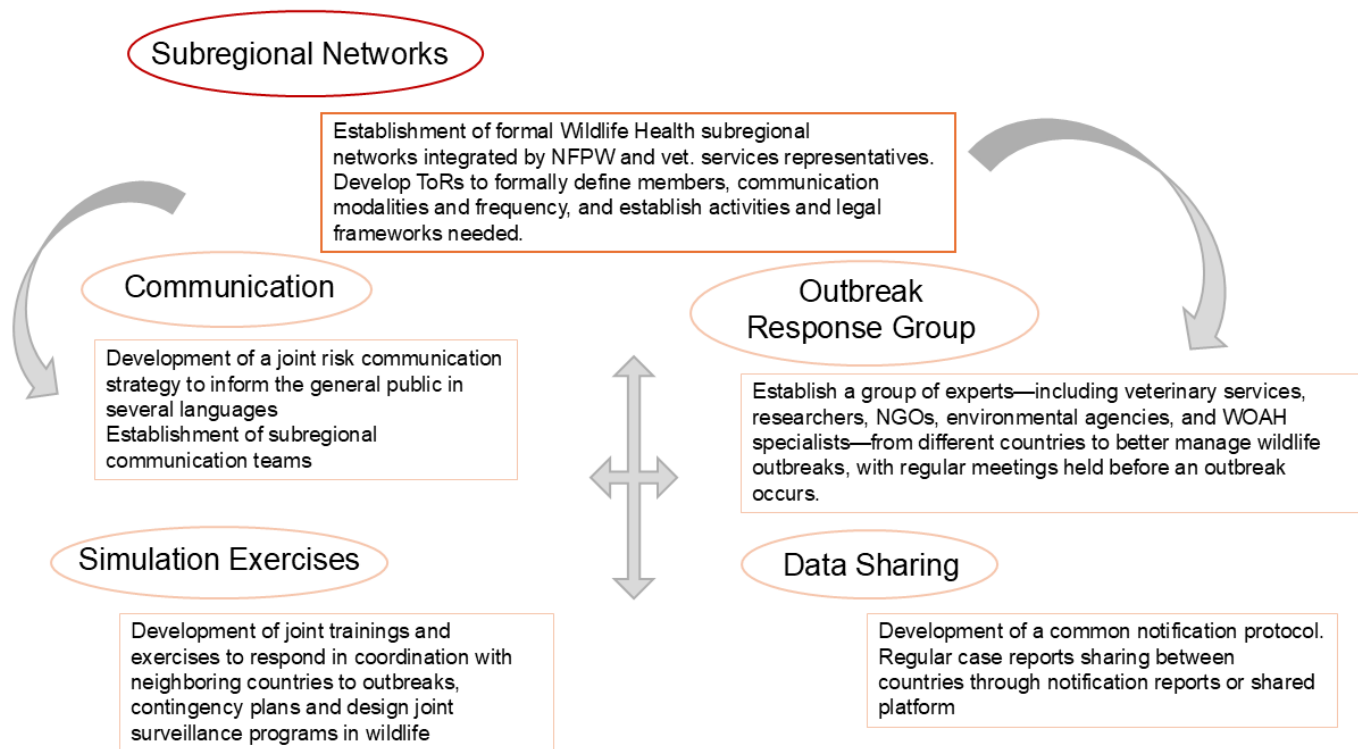
Group 5: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Montenegro, North Macedonia + Cyprus

Group 6: Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia + Belarus, Moldova

Activity 1: *Wildlife disease outbreak management and surveillance addressed with a sub-regional approach*

Based on a fictitious outbreak disease scenario, the NFPWs had the opportunity to reflect on the needs, gaps and solutions to properly respond, in a collaborative way within the sub-region, to an outbreak of a disease in wildlife, and prevent future outbreaks through coordinated surveillance and monitoring. One representative of each group presented the priority gaps and activities selected to all the participants.

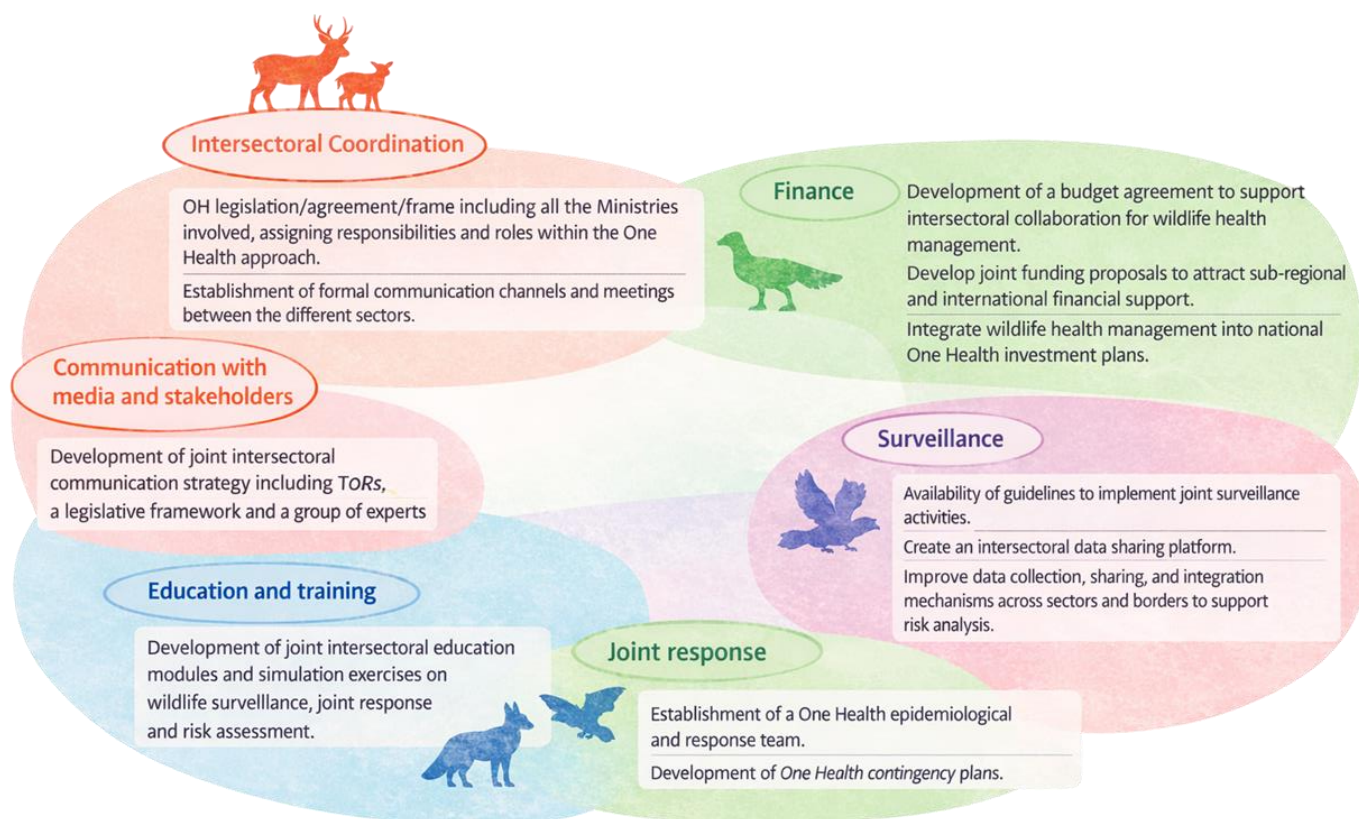
A summary of the most frequently solutions/activities proposed to improve the sub-regional outbreak response and surveillance of wildlife diseases is provided as follows:



Activity 2: *Strengthening the One Health multisectoral collaboration and capacity for wildlife health management*

Based on the same fictitious outbreak disease scenario, participants discussed how to integrate the environmental and human health sector in the outbreak response, surveillance and prevention activities once the outbreak has been controlled. Considering the role of wild animals as reservoirs of diseases but also their role as components of the biodiversity in a global ecosystem. First, participants identified the level of intersectoral collaboration and gaps detected in their **country**, to later identify what are the **common needs in the subregion** to address wildlife health management under a One Health approach and select actions to address the needs identified.

A summary of the most frequently areas of collaboration and solutions/activities proposed to improve **intersectoral collaboration for wildlife health management** is provided as follows:



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WOAH Sub-Regional Representation in Brussels

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