

5.7.1. How do we ensure sustainability of the rabies control programme?

The design of sustainable mechanisms will be crucial to ensure effective rabies control programmes and maintain freedom from canine rabies once elimination has been achieved. There are a number of aspects that you will need to consider to create long term sustainable strategies:

- ▶ Political stability needs to be in place to ensure government commitment, sustainability and staff safety.
- ▶ Raising awareness among policy-makers about the burden and health and economic impacts of rabies is a critical factor in generating political commitment, contributing to higher regional and national priorities for rabies control and mobilizing resources.
- ▶ High commitment towards multisectoral involvement linking veterinary and medical sectors as well as other ministries is required to provide countrywide cooperation. Click [here for the list of agencies](#) that should be involved and [their responsibilities](#). Good inter-sectoral and inter-institutional communication needs to be maintained throughout the rabies control programme. Depending on the setting, international collaborations involving relevant agencies of neighboring countries will also be needed to avoid reintroductions of rabies and promote canine rabies control in adjacent areas.
- ▶ High awareness among local communities is also important to ensure strong community participation and commitment towards rabies control. [This section](#) will provide guidelines on how to develop effective communications plans.
- ▶ Strong leadership at the central and community levels is needed to champion the cause of dog rabies control and engage and motivate all parties involved.
- ▶ Sufficient infrastructure for rabies surveillance (surveillance networks and laboratory diagnosis) should be in place or should be quickly put in place and sustained.
- ▶ Adequate financial resources will be a prerequisite for long-term sustainability. Integration of budgets for rabies prevention and control across sectors, especially veterinary and medical, could provide a mechanism to sustain dog rabies control using savings in human rabies prevention.
- ▶ Plans for sustainability should be based on successful pilot projects demonstrating the feasibility of canine rabies control/elimination and benefits for human health. Such projects can provide a benchmark for the successful control of rabies at larger scales and encourage other areas to engage in similar programmes.
- ▶ Careful consideration should be given to possible mechanisms to ensure long-term availability of biologicals provided free of charge to the population.
- ▶ Strategies should be developed for maintenance of rabies-free areas once these have been created. Click [here](#) for information on activities you should carry out to avoid re-introductions of rabies.
- ▶ Collaborations with large international organizations should be established and it should be ensured that dog rabies control is maintained among their priorities.