OIE Regional Vaccine Bank for Asia provides 50,000 rabies vaccines to Lao PDR

September 28th 2012 – OIE has donated 50,000 rabies vaccines to Lao PDR through its Regional Vaccine Bank for Asia supported by the European Union’s regional cooperation programme on Highly Pathogenic and Emerging and Re-emerging Disease in Asia (HPED). The vaccine bank is managed by the OIE Sub-Regional Representation in Bangkok.

“Today it is unacceptable that thousands of people and animals die of rabies each year while we have efficient control methods available; the Regional Vaccine Bank for Rabies was developed because dogs are responsible for more than 95% of human cases and vaccination is an effective way of controlling the disease at the source” OIE Director General, Dr Bernard Vallat commented. “This first delivery is definitely a milestone for OIE and for the European Union who supports our fight against the disease in the region,” he added.

Lao PDR’s Department of Livestock and Fisheries of the Ministry of Agriculture and Forestry is the first beneficiary of the vaccine bank. Authorities have organised a vaccination campaign of dogs in five high-risk provinces: Vientiane Capital, Savannakhet Province, Champassack Province, Luang Prabang Province and Vientiane Province on September 28th 2012, coinciding with the celebration of World Rabies Day. Other countries are prepared to receive vaccines soon.

Strategy, science, impact and cost

Rabies kills up to 70,000 people each year throughout the world, with Africa and Asia being the most affected regions. However, efficient vaccines for dogs are available and dog vaccination is the preferred method of control, preventing more than 95% of human cases at only about 10% of the costs needed for post-bite treatment in people.

“Through dog vaccination we have efficient strategy and science, a high positive impact on animal and public health at a very low cost. The launch of this vaccine bank is a first step towards the global control of this dreadful disease and a means to prevent the thousands of people killed annually,” Dr Vallat said.

This first regional rabies vaccine bank was launched in early 2012 and could serve as a model for the development of other rabies vaccine bank for other regions of the world. Ideally a vaccination campaign should impact about 70% of the existing dog population.

Vaccine bank eligibility criteria

Priority is given to providing emergency vaccines to developing countries with the lowest GDP within the region. Countries must provide justification of their need for vaccines, as well as information on the epidemiological, logistics, and administrative framework for their use.

The applicant country must in particular:

- Prove that there is an increase in biting rates and human mortality; that the location of the outbreak(s) increases the risk of spread to people and/or animals; and that further spread of the disease could occur;
- Provide a statement that the national Veterinary Services are engaged and will have the authority to implement or supervise the vaccination of dogs;
- Submit a specific vaccination control strategy;
- Specify the nature and quantities of vaccines required;
- Agree to international transportation conditions;
- Relevant NGOs can have access to the vaccine bank if they implement dog vaccination campaigns under the supervision of official Veterinary Services and they inform the beneficiaries on the origin of the vaccines.

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