**NATIONAL STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN ON MANAGEMENT AND CONTROL OF DOGS WITH AND WITHOUT OWNER IN THE REPUBLIC OF KOSOVO**

**2022-2028**

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# **ABBREVIATIONS**

CA- Competent Authority;

DPCP- Dog Population Control Program;

DPM- Dog Population Management;

EU- European Union;

ARK - Animal Rights Foundation;

FVA - Food and Veterinary Agency;

I&R- Identification and Registration;

ICAM - International Coalition for Companion Animal Management coalition

TNVR- Trap- Neuter-Vaccinate-Return;

MAFRD - Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development;

MESTI - Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation

MFPT – Ministry of Finance, Labor and Transfers

MIA - Ministry of Internal Affairs;

MK – Municipalities of Kosovo

MLGA - Ministry of Local Government Administration;

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization;

OIE World Organization for Animal Health;

PEP- Post-Exposure Prophylaxis;

SAT- Self-Assessment Tool;

SOP - Standard Operating Procedure;

TNR- Trap- Neuter-Return;

VCK – Veterinary Chamber of Kosovo

# **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The situation of animal welfare and population control of dogs with and without owners in Kosovo is not in a good state. The enormous number of stray dogs shows that is necessary to create a sustainable system to control and manage the dynamics of dogs with and without owners. The number of stray dogs is the result of relinquishment, what endangers their health and causes a risk to the citizens’ safety.

Uncontrolled number of dogs may be a source of zoonotic diseases, so it is extremely important to control free-roaming dogs, implementing control measures especially those that may have a direct impact on the sources of dog breeding.

The National Strategy and Action Plan on Management and Control of Dogs with and without Owners has the main purpose to coordinate actions and tasks of relevant and responsible institutions for effective management and control of the number of dogs with and without owners, in order to address and solve the problem of increasing the number of dogs on the streets by focusing on the sources of the problem with a sustainable and humane approach.

The Law on Animal Welfare (02/L-10) and the Law on Veterinary (2004/21) are the laws that regulate the field of animal health and welfare and define the obligations and responsibilities of private and legal persons in order to protect health and welfare of animals. The European Union does not have legislation to control the number of dogs with and without owners, but there are guidelines and recommendations detailing the different tools and options for action measures. In 2009, the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code adopted Guidelines on Stray Dog Population Control.[[1]](#footnote-1) Kosovo, as an OIE observer member, must implement this Code through the national legal framework and national strategy.

An integral part of the strategy implementation plan will be the list of strategic policies and legal infrastructure that must be implemented at the central and local level, as well as the action measures to address the dog issue at the local level, which must be humane and sustainable.

The overall concept of the National Strategy and Action Plan on Management and Control of Dogs with and without Owner should focus on the problem’s root causes, meaning that the sources of the increase in the number of dogs should be identified and addressed, rather than to work on the measures aiming at the existing number of stray dogs.

This strategy highlights the necessity for the contribution of relevant, central and local institutions as well as non-governmental organizations that have an important role in the implementation of the action plan activities, it also aims to reduce the number of stray dogs and maintain security of people in the Republic of Kosovo during 2022-2028 period.

Considering that the National Strategy introduces new measures that are not implemented so far and to successfully implement this strategy and its measures, the Government of the Republic of Kosovo must allocate sufficient funds in order to create stable DPM system.

# **INTRODUCTION**

The compilation of this strategic document is the result of the working group of the Ministry of Local Government Administration established upon decision of the Minister of MLGA, in order to address the situation with stray dogs.[[2]](#footnote-2)

The strategy defines immediate measures and actions that must be undertaken by the Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo during 2022-2028 period.

This document will be the main tool for instruction on how to select problem with street dogs in the working and budget plans of MLGA, the Government and the Municipalities, as well as the Medium-Term Expenditure Framework in Kosovo.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development is the authority responsible to draft relevant legal infrastructure in the field of veterinary and the program for protection of animal health and welfare, which special attention to infectious diseases and dangerous zoonoses, whereas the Food and Veterinary Agency implements the legislation issued by the MAFRD in the field of animal welfare and health.

The strategy is a main national document which connects the responsibilities of central and local institutions focusing on the following priorities:

1. Preventing proliferation of street dogs focusing on managing of dogs with the owner as one of the sources of the stray dog proliferation,
2. Preventing the relinquishment of dogs on the street,
3. Prohibition of uncontrolled breeding and sale of dogs,
4. Prevention of smuggling of companion animals,
5. Prohibition of reproduction of unsterilized dogs on the street.

Central and local institutions are responsible for monitoring and implementing this strategy. It is essential that state bodies consider the strategy as an important document for the management and control of dogs with and without owners. The strategy will have a term of up to 7 years, including an action plan of up to 3 years, as is provided in the Administrative Instruction for the Drafting and Planning of National Strategies in Kosovo.

The Ministry of Local Government Administration as the bearer of this document will responsibly monitor the strategy implementation at both central and local level to ensure that the strategy and action plan implementation is on time.

The Strategy on Management and Control of Dogs with and without an Owner provides a clear picture about timeline and institutional, administrative and local responsibilities, financial resources and human capacities within the responsible institutions.

# **METHODOLOGY**

The drafting of the Strategy on Management and Control of Dogs with and without Owners has resulted after several meetings and working groups that have been held organized by MLGA, this document characterizes a comprehensive consultative process of all relevant partners, including ministries, agencies, Municipalities, Chamber of Veterinary, Faculty of Agriculture and non-governmental organizations, the whole process is coordinated by the Ministry of Local Government Administration.

In accordance with the Administrative Instruction[[3]](#endnote-1)of the Government, MLGA, issued the Decision on the Establishment of the Inter-ministerial Working Group[[4]](#endnote-2), including all stakeholders. During the strategy draft process, regular meetings of the working group, regular consultative meetings of members of the working group were organized.

During the drafting of the strategy, all past experiences, the current situation with stray dogs in Kosovo, as well as the issues that require revision and new orientation in the period 2022-20228 have been examined.

In addition, the draft has been made available to the general public, through its publication on the official website of MLGA, in order to give everyone the opportunity to contribute to the final draft of the strategy.

* The inter-ministerial group for the drafting of the strategy is as follows:
* Teuta Fazliu, Ministry of Local Government Administration / Chairperson
* Arsim Memaj, Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development / Deputy Chairperson
* Fëllanza Podrimaj, Advisor to the Prime Minister, Office of the Prime Minister / Monitoring
* Arianit Abazi, Political Advisor to the Minister of MLGA / Monitoring
* Hysnije Berisha, Political Advisor to the Minister of MLGA / Monitoring
* Flurim Arifi, Ministry of Local Government Administration / Member
* Ferdi Kamberi, Ministry of Local Government Administration / Member
* Jehona Ademi, Ministry of Finance and Transfers / Member
* Merita Junuzi, Ministry of Education, Science and Technology and Innovation / Member
* Gresa Krasniqi, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Public Administration/ Member
* Sadik Heta, Food and Veterinary Agency/ Member
* Arsim Osmani, Association of Municipalities of Kosovo / Member
* Hamdi Aliu, Faculty of Agriculture and Veterinary / Member
* Hasan Limani, Chamber of Veterinarians of Kosovo/ Member
* Elza Ramadani, Animal Rights Foundation (NGO) / Member

The drafter of the strategy was Mrs. Alexandra Hammond – Seaman, project expert of the EU-funded project "Support on establishment of animal disease surveillance and control programs and alignment with the Acquis Chapter 12".

The continuous participation and involvement of the representatives of the responsible institutions has been essential to widely communicate the action agenda of this strategy and to maintain the dynamics of its realization. The final document was also presented in the joint meeting with the members of the working group, the Prime Minister of the country, the Minister of MLGA and all competent actors.

After a brief analysis of the current situation, the strategic objectives, specific objectives, activities and concrete actions have been defined, which are also included in the action plan.

The process for drafting the strategy had three phases:

1. In the first phase, a working group was formed for the political analysis of the current state of management and control of dogs with and without owner, evaluating it as an urgent situation which needed reaction from the state. From MLGA a working group was formed for the drafting of the national strategy that will control and manage dogs with and without owner;
2. During the second phase, we analyzed and commented on the draft document drafted up by the EC expert. Regular meetings were held, as well as two workshops. After finalizing the draft strategy and action plan, it was sent to the working group members for final comments. The comments of the members of the working group have been incorporated and evaluated by the experts and the monitors of the strategy.
3. While in the third phase, the draft strategy and action plan have been published in the online platform for public consultation, with a deadline of 15 working days according to the AI No. 07/2018 [[5]](#footnote-3)

# **Definitions**

Some used definitions have the following meaning:

**Dog Control Program (DCP)** is a program that aims to monitor, control and reduce the number of dogs.

**Animal shelter** is the object created by a private or legal person in accordance with the relevant legislation in force.

**Animal owner/carer** is the legal or physical person who is responsible and has the duty to take care of the animals, permanently or temporarily.

**Owned dog** is the animal owned and supervised by the person responsible for it.

**Lost animal** is the animal lost from the holder against his/her will.

**Abandoned animal** is the animal that has no permanent shelter, is deprived from its owner/ carer and is intentionally abandoned.

**Free roaming dog** is alost, abandoned or any dog ​​which is not under the owner's constant control, kept by the owner from free roaming. There is a sub-population of free-roaming dogs that could be grouped into four other categories:

1. free roaming owned dog;
2. lost owned dog;
3. community dog;
4. dog without owner.

It is important to understand that these are dynamic categories and an individual dog may be in more than one sub-population during its lifetime. Dog population dynamics is defined as the different dog sub-populations that interact to form the entire dog population. This takes into account births, deaths and reproduction, and how dogs move between different sub-populations during their lifetime.

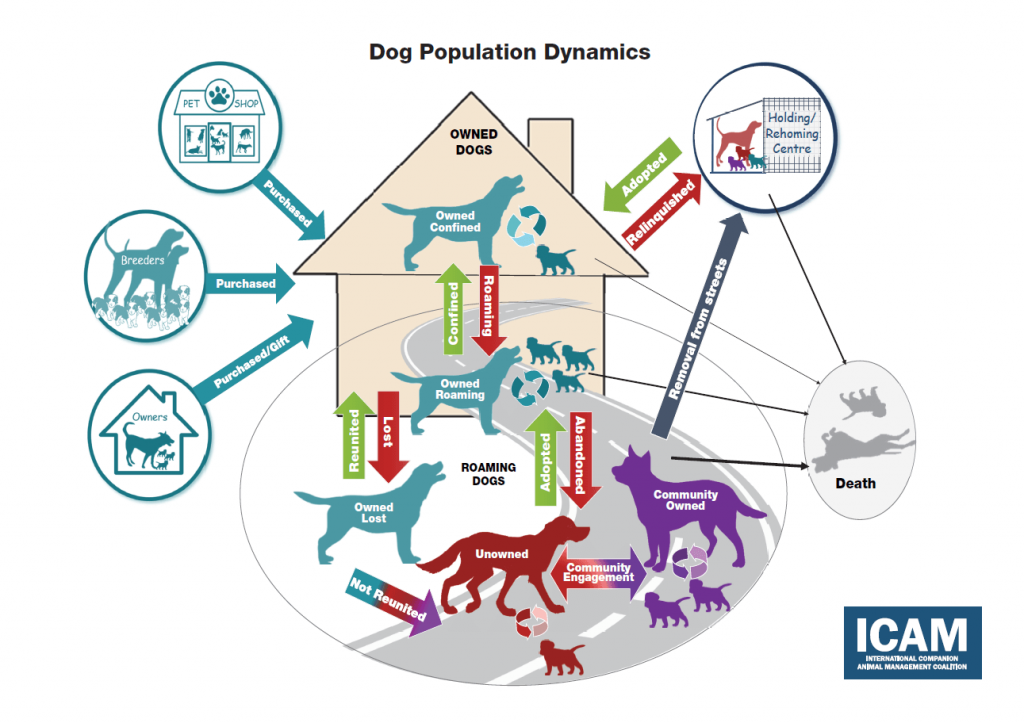


Photo. 1. For the full diagram, see *Guidelines on Humane Dog Population Management*, ICAM, 2019

**Euthanasia** is a killing procedure performed by permitted methods defined for this purpose and described in such a way as to cause the animals as little pain, suffering and fear as possible.

**TNR** (trap-neuter-return) or **TRNV** (trap-neuter-vaccinate-return) is one of the possible measures for the dog population control in the country, where dogs roaming freely are trapped, vaccinated, neutered and returned to the trapped spot.

# **BACKGROUND**

# ***5.1 General background and the current situation in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo***

The Dog Control Strategy in Kosovo covers abandoned dogs and owned dogs that are not under human control and as such may present a problem in terms of dog health and welfare and public health. The continuous increase in their number and the lack of control of their health pose a constant risk to the health and safety of citizens, so it is important to control dogs that roam freely by implementing control measures, especially those that may have a direct effect on dog breeding resources.

Institutions mandated to address dog with owner and stray dog ​​problems, until now there were no data on dog ownership, ecology, owner behavior, commercial breeding and dog sales data that would contribute to identifying the sources of the increase of stray dogs. The main problems can be noticed from the lack of strategic inter-institutional coordination to build a stable and humane system for DPM, the lack of legal provisions regulating the responsible keeping the dog ownership and the lack of punishments for abandonment, bad keeping and abuse of dogs etc.

Despite the lack of data, the main sources of stray dogs in Kosovo are easily identified and are related to:

1) Abandonment of owner unwanted dogs,

2) Uncontrolled breeding and sale of dogs

3) Illegal import of companion animals and

4) The continuous reproduction of unsterilized dogs on the street.

The abandonment of dogs in Kosovo is due to the lack of an effective I&R system for companion animals. An effectively implemented I&R system will facilitate full traceability, so by registering all companion animals in Kosovo it will be possible to implement other legislative acts and lead to a greater reduction in abandonment, breeding and illegal sale, as well as the movement of dogs inside and outside the country.

Moreover, there is a lack of infrastructure for sheltering dogs that would potentially end up abandoned on the streets. The development of sustainable and humane sheltering infrastructure will be important to support the implementation of DPM services and programs only if it is followed by other measures that are foreseen in this strategy and that aim to reduce and control the number of stray dogs, because sheltering facilities must be used for temporary sheltering.

Considering easy possibility of buying companion animals and the illegal importation of animals from neighboring countries, including impulsive purchases, the negative phenomenon of the abandonment of companion animals is quite present in the Republic of Kosovo.

There is also a lack of educational programs for animal welfare and responsible keeping. Consequently, as a result of the latter, most potential and current owners of companion animals have little or no information on how to care for the animal while fully respecting their well-being, where they have no information on how to behave in public with their animals.

Under the OIE Animal Welfare Platform for Europe, the Balkan countries have agreed to achieve full compliance with Chapter 7.7 by 2025. The OIE has therefore created a regional map of the stray dog ​​situation for 11 Balkan countries to support and monitor the progress achieved. The self-assessment that was carried out under the OIE Platform in 2015 and 2018 in 11 countries showed a low level of compliance with Chapter 7.7. The evaluation identified a number of shortcomings such as:

* Lack of systematic monitoring of the number and prevalence of dogs and their ownership ~~tendencies~~;
* Lack of education and awareness of dog owners that can affect dog control and responsible behaviour of owners;
* Lack of professional training for veterinary inspectors, shelter operators, municipal services and non-governmental organizations;
* Poor housing conditions in shelters for abandoned animals, both in registered and unregistered shelters;
* The need for the creation or improvement of systems for the identification and registration of dogs and the creation of a central database;
* The lack of resources and technical capacities for the development and implementation of provisions for the control of free-roaming dogs;
* Poor public perception of free-roaming dogs and lack of effective stakeholder involvement;
* The large number of dog bites and compensations paid to citizens, as well as the high costs of post-exposure prophylaxis (PPE) treatment;
* The need for greater coordination and communication of stakeholders (veterinary professionals, private and public sector, national and local authorities, NGOs, citizens).

# 5.2 DPM recent interventions

The TNVR method offers an opportunity to prevent and control dog reproduction. This is not the only solution and should be used in combination with other control measures to manage other sources of stray dogs. This can be considered as a managing method for stray dogs and thus an alternative to shelter or adoption.

In the past, the TNVR model has been used during projects supported by local institutions. The main shortcomings of this method have been the failure to target dogs that reproduce more successfully or that come from the source of dogs with owner. In addition, in some cases, there has been a lack of veterinary and technical capacities to implement TNVR interventions. While TNVR may improve animal health and welfare and lead to reductions in nuisance behaviors, the impact on population size and density is often lacking.

TNVR has a role in the DPM implementation as a comprehensive measure in Kosovo as DPM infrastructure at the local level is being developed and the population size is not yet effectively managed. Adoption rates from shelters are still extremely low and resources at the local level for sheltering dogs are limited, so TNVR is a temporary solution.

It is worth noting that the TNVR will have a limited, localized effect if it is not implemented with other accompanying and sustainable measures, such as: registration of dogs with owners, prevention of abandonment and control of the breeding of companion animals, as sources of stray dogs. Reducing their number on the street can only be achieved with a strategic and sustainable institutional approach. As most free-roaming dogs are owned or come from an owned source, breeding control of owned dogs will have the greatest impact on population size.

TNVR is not suitable for all dogs and should be applied on a selective basis. Health assessment and behavioural observation may be used to assess whether dogs should be released onto the streets. If they are not suitable for release or adoption, euthanasia must be applied according to the legislation in force. Dogs must be released at the trap place. When dogs are not released near the trap place, this can have negative consequences for the dogs and the community due to the change in the environment that is unfamiliar to the dogs.

Another shortcoming observed by the monitoring of state programs during 2018 and 2021 was that some of the contracted veterinarians did not have experience in surgical techniques for companion animals, such as dogs or cats, leading to poor health outcomes at treated companion animals.

# *5.3 DPM principles*

The national strategy is based on the basic principles of Dog Population Management (DPM)[[6]](#footnote-4):

**1. Humane and ethical**, minimizing harm and avoiding practices that cause animal suffering and improving the welfare and improving the welfare of dogs;

**2. Adapted to the dog number dynamics -**the national dog control strategy should be implemented at the local level through programs tailored to the specific environment in which it is implemented;

**3. Sustainable and feasible -**need for dog population control is ongoing, with measures evolving over time and adapting to new conditions. This requires the support of an integrated and sustainable dog control system and the cooperation of stakeholders;

**4. Based on data -**the dog control specific indicators should be included in the design of intervention measures, therefore monitoring and evaluation is a part that evaluates the effectiveness of the measures and the adaptation of the program to local needs;

**5. Focusing on the main sources –**DPM will have a limited effect if is only focuses on the existing population of stray dogs and not on the main causes that have led to the abandonment of these dogs;

**6. Contributes to changing human behaviour -**people's behaviour plays a central role in DPM. Promoting responsible ownership can have one of the most important contributions to reducing the number of abandoned dogs and reducing cases of bites and zoonoses. The behaviour and responsible ownership of dog owners is a fundamental component of a control program that should contribute to permanent and sustainable results. Dog ecology is closely related to human behaviour and any intervention to be successful must be accompanied by a change in human behaviour, above all at dog owners and the way they behave.

# *5.4 DPM stakeholders*

Cooperation between the various actors involved in DPM is important for the proposed measures to be implemented.

The OIE provides a list of key stakeholders in Chapter 7.7 of the Terrestrial Animal Health Code on stray dog ​​population control, although other stakeholders may also be relevant.

In the Republic of Kosovo as interested parties are:

* Ministry of Local Government Administration
* Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
* Ministry of Internal Affairs
* Ministry of Finance and Transfers
* Ministry of Education, Science, Technology and Innovation
* Food and Veterinary Agency
* Municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo
* Private sector vets
* Non-Governmental Organizations
* Dog owners

In addition to the parties mentioned above, the following are also considered as relevant parties:

* Academic communities with relevant expertise
* MEDIA
* International organization
* Community

According to OIE 7.7.5 and the ICAM Humane Dog Population Management Guidance in the program development, is recommended to create an advisory group or a working group to implement the strategy including veterinarians, experts in dog ecology and behaviour and representatives of stakeholders (NGOs, municipal authorities and community representatives). The main purpose is to analyse and determine the scale of the problem, identify causes, obtain public opinion about dogs, propose interventions, direct and adapt DPM systems as needed.

# *5.5 Existing DPM legal framework*

* Law No. 02/L-10 on Animal Welfare (hereinafter "Law on Animal Welfare").
* Law No. 2004/21 on Veterinary (hereinafter "Veterinary Law").
* Law No. 03/L-016 on Food (further referred to as "Law on Food").
* Law No. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government (hereinafter "Law on Self-Government").
* Law No. 06/L-113 on the Organization and Functioning of the State Administration and Independent Agencies
* Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - No. 04/2017 on the Technical Conditions to be met by the Temporary Care Centres for Stray Animals (hereinafter "Administrative Instruction on the Technical Conditions to be met by the Centers for the Temporary Care of Stray Animals").
* Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - No. 02/2018 on the Identification and Registration of Pet Animals (hereinafter "Administrative Instruction on the Identification and Registration of Pet Animals")
* Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - No. 02/2021 on the Amendment and Supplement of the Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) 02/2018 on the Identification and Registration of Pet Animals
* Administrative Instruction No. 02/2009 on the Conditions of Movement of Non-Commercial Pets"
* Regulation no. 03/2010 on the Organization of the Food and Veterinary Agency (hereinafter "Regulation on the Organization of the Food and Veterinary Agency").
* Regulation GRK - no. 29/2013 on supplementing and amending Regulation no. 03/2010 for the Organization of the Food and Veterinary Agency, approved at the 151st meeting of the Government of the Republic of Kosovo. (hereinafter "Regulation for supplementing and amending the regulation for the Organization of the Food and Veterinary Agency")
* Regulation (M.VU) 01. no. 87/15 on the Conditions of Keeping Dogs and Cats as well as the method of action in case of their abandonment or loss (hereinafter "Regulation on the Conditions of Keeping Dogs and Cats as well as the method of action in case of abandonment or loss" )
* Regulation (M.DE) 01. no. III. 2 on the Conditions of Keeping Dogs and the method of action in case of their abandonment or loss and shelter for stray dogs (hereinafter "Regulation on the conditions of Keeping Dogs and the method of action in case of abandonment or loss and stray dog ​​shelter")

# *5.6 DPM key components*

To control the number of dogs, the various measures that are an integral part of a comprehensive dog population control program should be combined. The implementation of only single control measure does not lead to effective results in reducing the number of stray dogs.

Chapter 7.7 of the OIE Terrestrial Animal Health Code on stray dog ​​population control lists the following measures:

* Developing a legal framework that encourages responsible ownership and education of dog owners;
* Creation of the system on dog identification and registration;
* Control of commercial breeding and sale of dogs;
* Reproduction control;
* Creation of DPM humane services, including trapping and treatment, creation of shelters for abandoned animals in accordance with the national legislation standards in force;
* Environmental protection;
* Control of the movement of dogs (international);
* Laws on dog control (national);
* Euthanasia.

Guidelines and recommendations for dog population control are also subject of interest of the international and professional animal welfare organizations such as FAO, ICAM, etc. The OIE guidelines are based on scientific evidence and best practices and many countries in Europe have successfully tackled the problem by creating a comprehensive dog control framework that includes the following important components, such as identification and registration, control of breeding and sale, reproduction control and promotion of responsible ownership and effective criminal policy.

In the revised ICAM (2019) dog population management guidance measures for DPM are divided into basic measures and context-dependent measures. DPM is a permanent commitment where is needed to continuously manage dog population and it is essential to be conducted on stable basis. DPM services are activities, which are selected and combined to address location-specific dynamics.

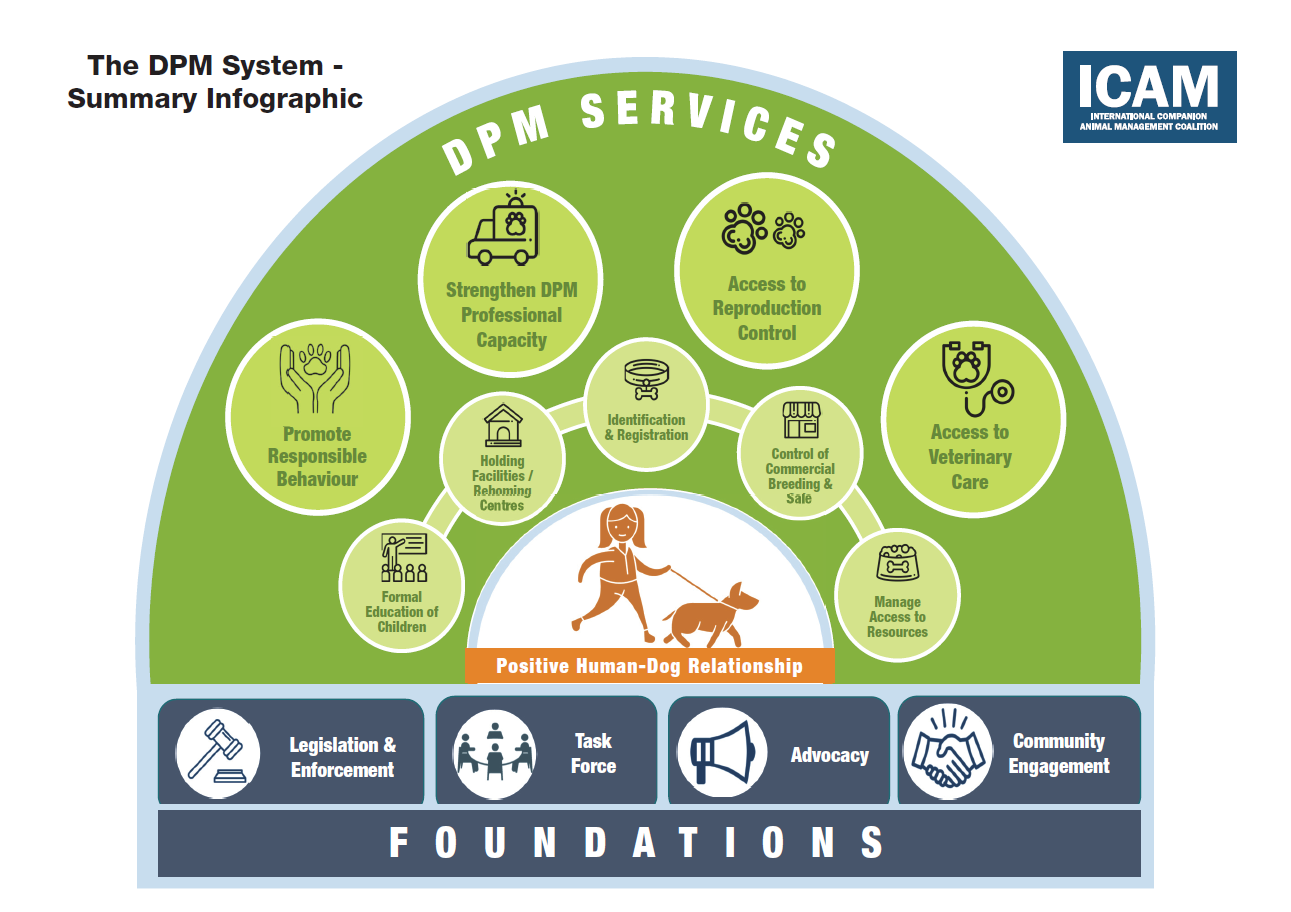


Photo. 2, *Humane Dog Population Management Guidance*, ICAM, 2019

The main development objectives of the effective DPM system are to:

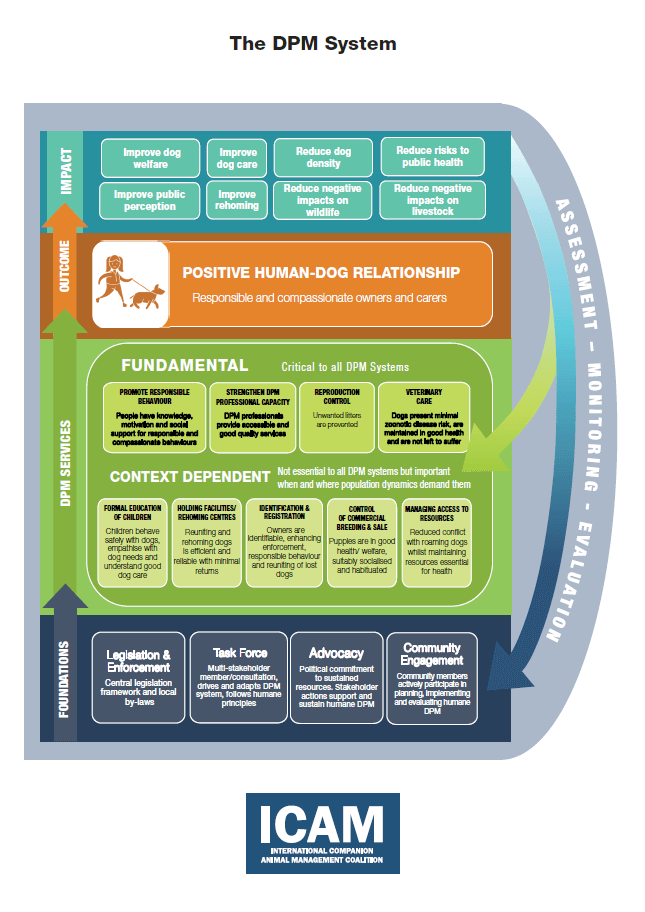
* encourage and support responsible dog owner’s and/or carer’s behaviour
* provide a safety dog network that are not successfully managed by owners and/ or carer
* minimize risks posed by dogs so that they are accepted as part of the community

Not all services will be required for every location. DPM system design should select those services that match with the prioritized problems, targeting dogs and people identified through assessment and design. The competent authorities should encourage and support the development of local programs to control local DPCP dog population which should take into account the following aspects:

* The size of the number of dogs and population dynamics,
* Resources and capacities available to DPM,
* Budget planning and allocation,
* Available technical skills and capacities,
* Infrastructural needs and capacities,
* Monitoring and evaluation.

It is of primary importance to form a local level coordinating group, consisting of representatives of interest groups (municipal authorities, civil society, vets etc.) to approve local programs for the implementation of dog control that contain the following elements.

The infographic below illustrates the DPM system, highlighting the different bases, services and impacts that can be expected if a customized system is implemented that best fits the specific condition of dog management in their community.



# *Institutional roles and responsibilities*

Based on the legislation in force, the competent institutions regarding the stray dogs control and management are:

1. Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development
2. Food and Veterinary Agency and
3. municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo

# *Competences and responsibilities of the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (MAFDR***)**

The Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development (hereinafter: MAFRD) based on the official mandate for public protection health according to the legislation, Law No. 2004/21 on Veterinary and Law No. 02/L-10 on Animal Welfare and by-laws derived from these laws addresses the impact of abandoned, lost or free-roaming dogs (hereinafter: dogs without owners) on public health by cooperating with institutional mechanisms, organizations professional and civil society organizations dealing with animal rights. Within the institutional commitments, in cooperation with the Food and Veterinary Agency, the Ministry of Local Government Administration and the civil society for animal rights, is responsible for completing the legal basis, policies for dealing with problems for dogs without owners in order to achieve standards for public health protection, environmental protection and comply with the international standards for animal rights. Capacity building of animal owners and breeders, potentially for abandonment, will focus on achieving the specific objectives of raising awareness of animal owners and citizens in general for humane and dignified treatment of animals by implementing legislation and good breeding practices of animals. To achieve the strategic objectives of the Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development, priority will be given to the public health protection, respecting the animal healthcare and welfare standards and the environmental protection. To achieve strategic objectives and developments in public health, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science and Technology is mandated to review and classify priorities, taking into consideration other official documents at the country level, regional and international initiatives. The strategic objectives for the public health protection while respecting the of animal healthcare and welfare standards and environmental protection will be prioritized through the action plan and investments in strengthening the mechanisms for the implementation of legislation, in healthcare and the achievement of zootechnical and zoohygienic standards of the infrastructure physical capacities for treatment of abandoned animals and animals without owner.

# *5.9 Competencies and responsibilities of the Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA)*

The Food and Veterinary Agency (FVA) of Kosovo is the highest executive authority for food and veterinary responsible to protect human life and health by ensuring a high level of food safety, including animal nutrition, animal health, plant health, animal care as well as the quality of food of plant and animal origin. In the field of veterinary, FVA is responsible to provide monitoring and controlling of infectious animal diseases, zoonoses and animal welfare, prevention of disease outbreaks and eradication of diseases, application of all necessary control measures and diagnostic research to prevent the entering of infectious diseases and zoonoses in the territory of the Republic of Kosovo.

According to the legislation in force, the FVA’s duty is to monitor and inspect the treatment of stray dogs respecting the rules of animal health and welfare, prevention of infectious diseases coming from dogs, identification and registration of dogs with owners as well as registration and licensing of breeders of pet animals. It is also responsible to license shelters for stray and owned animals.

Based on the Veterinary Law, the FVA is responsible to identify and register livestock and pets and is obliged to keep a central register for animal registration and identification. MAFRD has the power to issue administrative instructions in accordance with this law to create systems for the animal identification and registration.

It should be noted that in accordance with the Veterinary Law and Law on Animal Welfare, the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development has issued an Administrative Instruction on the Identification and Registration of Pet Animals, which is being implemented by the FVA.

# *5.10 Competencies and responsibilities of municipalities*

The Veterinary Law defines the authorizations and responsibilities that municipal authorities have in relation to the control and management of stray dogs, which must be exercised in accordance with the procedures established by the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development.

Municipal authorities are responsible to register dogs, vaccinate dogs against rabies and dehelmetizing against echinococcosis.

In addition, the municipal authorities are obliged to catch stray dogs and if they use euthanasia, then their duty is to destroy and bury the animal bodies according to the legislation in force for the environment protection.

Based on the legislation in force, the municipalities of the Republic of Kosovo must create shelters or places for the care of dogs.

Municipalities must issue regulations according to the legislation in force to raise awareness among citizens about their behavior towards animals.

It is important to note that in 2015, the Municipality of Vushtrri and Deçan, based on the Law on Local Self-Government, issued the Municipal Regulation on the Conditions of Keeping Dogs and Cats and the Procedure in Case of Abandonment or Loss. These regulations provide establishment and operation of shelters. It is determined that the establishment of shelters must go through the FVA, respectively the entities that establish shelters must be licensed by the FVA.

For the operation of the strategy in question, municipalities may form task forces or working groups to monitor national strategy implementation for the management and control of dogs with and without owners.

Based on the legal analysis, it can be concluded that although there is a sufficient legal infrastructure for the relevant institutions to control and manage the stray dogs population , it is necessary to issue additional by-laws on this issue, for which the Ministry of Agriculture, Forestry and Rural Development is responsible.

# **VISION AND MISSION**

# 6.1 STRATEGY PRINCIPLES

The National Strategy is based on the following principles:

* General principles of **animal welfare** (including animal health and welfare) based on scientific evidence and include disease prevention and veterinary care.
* Promoting **responsible ownership** may be an important contribution to reducing the number of abandoned dogs and reducing incidents of bites and zoonoses.
* The dog ethology is closely related to the people’s behaviour and any intervention and measure to be effective must be accompanied by a change of the people’s behaviour, above all, of dog owners and their awareness about responsibility as animal carer.
* The need for dog control must be ongoing, with interventions evolving over time and adapting to new conditions. This requires the support of an **integrated and sustainable dog control system** based on partnerships within the government, relevant institutions, professional veterinary organizations and the civil sector.
* This document is in accordance with the existing **legal framework** of the Republic of Kosovo and with OIE Chapter 7.7 on stray dog control, but it does not limit and encourages the further development of legislation that would further improve and strengthen legal measures in this field.
* The national strategy on dog control should be implemented at the local level through programs **tailored to the specific environment** in which they are implemented.
* Necessary **professional, technical and budgetary capacity building** in order to ensure a high level of public support for the proposed strategy in order to successfully implement the strategy at the local level.
* Specific indicators for dog control should be included in the designed measures in order that **monitoring and evaluation** have impact on measure effectiveness at local level and adapt the program to specific needs.

# 6.2 NATIONAL STRATEGY IMPACT ON THE DPM IN KOSOVO

Based on the current situation and preliminary assessment, the comprehensive strategic objectives and desired impacts are as follows:

***1. Reducing the number of dogs on the street.***

***2. Improving the dog health and welfare.***

***3. Reducing risks to public health and safety.***

***4. Improving public perception and public awareness.***

***5. Improvement of housing conditions and rehoming.***

***6. Reducing negative impacts on livestock and wildlife.***

These impacts will be achieved by a series of proposed measures and specific activities conducted through the action plan within this strategy.

# 6.3 IMPLEMENTATION FRAMEWORK

The importance of developing a comprehensive national framework is essential and includes the key elements of dog control and sets out a series of legislative, preventive and remedial measures. Therefore, designed interventions must respond to local situations, needs and resources. Experience shows that effective control involves adopting more than one approach. In Kosovo, pet ownership is on the rise, a long-term solution requires a comprehensive, coordinated and progressive program of owner education, environmental management, mandatory identification and registration, controlled breeding and sale, and the conducting of stray dog ​​control services. In addition, the comprehensive program will seek to advance and improve the vet capacity services and vet skills and knowledge. Education of dog owners and related professionals is extremely important to any DPM program. The strategy should be accompanied by preparation of an implementation framework, which should include the following elements:

* **Action plan,** will set out the specific activities, timelines, current and additional budget for the implementation of strategic objectives.
* **Ministry of Local Government Administration** as the bearer of this strategy, recommends to the Prime Minister's Office the creation of an inter-institutional mechanism to monitor the action plan implementation at central and local level. MLGA will monitor strategy and action plan implementation periodically every six-month and drafts an annual report on the implementation of this strategy.
* **Local plans on dog control** must be developed according to the national strategic framework;
* **Communication and awareness campaign** to promote the strategy and gather necessary support from relevant parties including the wider community;
* **Training and development plan** to provide technical and professional capacities to support the strategy implementation;
* **Community involvement** is an important process to build relationship between people who have a role or interest in improving the situation of dogs in their community and state institutions mandated to protect animal and human health. Citizens should work together with municipalities as a community to assess the situation with dogs and to draft and implement an appropriate and sustainable system at the local level.
* **Financial sustainability and partnerships** within the interstate cooperation, the Government of Kosovo can support and receive expertise from other countries and local and international organizations interested in helping the DPM in Kosovo. It is very important that Kosovo continues to work within the OIE 2025 vision on stray dogs in the Western Balkans and utilize regional and international expertise and experience.
* **Monitoring and Evaluation** to track and monitor progress; both nationally and to regularly monitor, review and adapt local dog population control programs.

# 6.4 Needs for DPM legal framework expansion and strengthening

Law on the Animal Welfare defines "keeping, caring, housing, breeding, transporting and other issues related to the animal welfare" but its implementation is not yet been fully put into practice. On the other hand, it is important to add that the current animal welfare legislation is very general and the by-laws have not yet regulated the specific welfare conditions of pet animals and the manner in which they should be kept. Regulating the way the pets are kept will directly contribute to their better welfare, public health and reducing the large number of stray dogs in the country. Given the four identified sources that contribute to the increase in the number of stray dogs, is necessary to develop a comprehensive legal framework which will facilitate and support consistent, sustainable and effective dog management measures.

Regarding the amendment of the by-laws, is approved the amendment of Administrative Instruction (MAFRD)- No. 02/2021 on Amending the Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) 02/2018 on Identification and Registration of Pet Animals which makes the pet identification and registration mandatory, prohibits their abandonment and provides punitive provisions for all persons who do not respect the legal obligations of this AU.

Beside registering dogs as pets, an administrative instruction regulating the breeding and sale of companion animals must be drafted and approved. So far there is no registry of pet stores or breeding facilities that sell pets.

# 6.5 The need to increase public awareness and community participation

In 2017 the OIE supported the public awareness campaign in the Western Balkans entitled "Be Its Hero", because abandonment and responsible ownership was identified as one of the main causes of stray dogs in the Balkans. The campaign materials were developed by OIE and distributed throughout Kosovo by FVA. Community participation is essential for the successful implementation of DPM interventions. This is especially important in the case of TNVR projects which require a high level of citizen support. According to a study by the Kosovo Centre for Security Studies (KCSS), was found that during three-year period 2016-2018, more than half of the citizens perceived stray dogs as a threat to public safety. In 2016, 55% of citizens perceived stray dogs as a threat to their personal safety, while in 2017 the number increased to 63%. However, in 2018, the percentage dropped to 59. In 2018, the TNVR state project was implemented and the KCSS report suggests that this may be a reason to decrease citizens' perception of the danger of stray dogs. KCSS clearly states that projects like TNVR combined with awareness raising are important to control the number of stray dogs and improve public perception of them.

# STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

# 7.1. SUITABLE ENVIRONMENT FOR DPM DEVELOPMENT

According to OIE 7.7.5 and the ICAM Humane Dog Population Management Guidance in the development of the control program, but also according to point 5.3, the inter-institutional mechanism must be created for the coordination and monitoring of the action plan implementation at central and local level, which should include vets, dog ecology and behaviour experts and representatives of relevant stakeholders (NGOs, local and municipal authorities and community representatives).

FVA, which is responsible for the implementation of animal health and welfare legislation, in coordination with other competent government agencies and institutions, has an important role in creating a favourable and feasible environment for DPM. Its specific contributions include, but are not limited to:

* + - * proposing sub-legal acts for the dog control in accordance with national legislation, EU *Acquis* in the field of pet animals and OIE standards and,
      * providing professional advice on animal health and welfare to central and local institutions.

# 7.2. DEVELOPING A COMPREHENSIVE LEGAL FRAMEWORK FOR DOG POPULATION MANAGEMENT

The Law on Animal Welfare sets out provisions for responsible ownership - duty of care, prohibition of animal abandonment, setting out the owners’ responsibility to prevent uncontrolled breeding, identification, registration and vaccination, so is important that current legislation is applied to avoid the increase in the number of stray dogs in Kosovo.

Besides central level institutions, municipal authorities are responsible to take care of stray dogs found on the streets and in shelters. Municipalities must issue by-laws based on the legislation in force. The Central Government should allocate additional budget to the municipalities for the implementation of this strategy.

It is necessary for the FVA to provide further guidance to local and municipal authorities on planning, development and implementation of local dog control programs. Municipalities are obliged to seek instructions from the FVA in cases where they do not have sufficient knowledge about stray dog ​​control.

Competent authorities should develop and maintain a database to identify and register microchipped dogs. Competent authorities must also ensure that through the microchip there is a tracking system for the movement of dogs in cases where a dog is found on the street. Owners must be informed and supported to access dog identification and registration services timely and in compliance with applicable legal provisions. Besides identification and registration, a system should be created for the approval of breeders of pets in Kosovo, where registration of all breeders should be required and their work to be controlled to avoid abandonment from breeding.

To prevent misuse of passports/booklets and microchips, the competent authority should include in the I&R database the unique number of passports and microchips, and vet details who received and issued the passport numbers of the microchip and pets. Penalties must be imposed on law breakers.

MAFRD is responsible for developing legislation that enforces minimum standards for the housing and care of dogs. The implementation of the standards is supported by the approval and inspection of shelters, based on the legislation in force. Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - No. 04/2017 on the Technical Conditions to be met by the Centres for the Temporary Care of Stray Animals is in the amending process. Amendments will better reflect the role of shelters in DPM programs and will establish precise technical provisions and conditions for licensing and inspection.

Veterinary Law 21/2004 respectively UA no. 02/2009 on the Conditions of Movement of Non-Commercial Pets specifies the criteria for the international movement of dogs. As Kosovo is on the list of countries with an unknown epizootiology situation regarding rabies from the EU conditions point of view, strict rules are applied for the entry of dogs from the Republic of Kosovo into the territory of the EU. The dog must be identified with a microchip, vaccinated against rabies and a serological test about the presence of antibodies in the blood must be conducted. Because the test must be performed 3 months before the move and at the same time 30 days after the current vaccination against rabies, the dog must be at least 7 months old when it can be legally imported into the EU from Kosovo. There is evidence that a significant proportion of dogs sold in Kosovo come from Serbia, therefore official border controls should be strengthened to prevent illegal entry of dogs.

The Law on Animal Welfare, Article 6 specifies that breeding of animals, shall be conducted in accordance with rules on animal breeding including the method of breeding according to species and categories of animals, to be used for breeding purposes and to prohibit uncontrolled breeding.

However, this law does not specify detailed provisions and mandates the MAFRD to issue by-laws to regulate the issue of breeding. Therefore, a new administrative instruction regulating commercial breeding and sale should be drafted to set the conditions for dog breeders and sellers. Due to the lack of data on ownership tendencies and the number of dogs bred and sold, it is difficult to determine the breeding and sale impact on the dynamics and growth of the number of dogs.

DPM measures should target the sources of abandoned and free-roaming dogs. Competent authorities should consider including data on registered dog breeders and sellers in the central I&R database. They must oblige the mandatory sterilization of all dogs that are not intended for breeding and sale, with the limitation of reproduction to only one birth per year or the introduction of mandatory sterilization for dogs that are not intended for breeding. To prevent or reduce overproduction of puppies, health and welfare standards for both mother and puppies should be specified. Registration of breeders must include all breeders regardless of the number or sex of animals.

In order to better control and regulate the breeding of dogs, standards should be set out in order to regulate their sale and purchase.

* Breeding and sale aims to ensure that the trade protects the welfare of dogs, protects buyers and ensures transparency in the sale of dogs;
* The legislation implementation is supported by the mandatory registration of all breeders and sellers by the competent authorities;
* Advertisements for the sale of dogs may be required to carry the breeder's and seller's registration/ license number;
* Identification and registration of the puppies must be done before the sale, which establishes the breeder as the first owner and other details about the new owner of the animal;
* Breeding practices must include limits on the number of births, minimum breeding age of the dog, health of both parents and avoidance of selective breeding that leads to inherited diseases, body deformities or aggressive behaviour. They should also describe the specific requirements for the accommodation, care, socialization and habitat of the puppies, the minimum age of the puppies before leaving the mother and the training of the staff. Sales must be restricted to adults over the age of 18, from breeders and sellers licensed by the competent authority.
* Awareness of owners/ farmers on dog sterilization and treatment that are not bred for the household or the needs in order to avoid/ prevent the expulsion/ abandonment of unwanted dogs and puppies.

Keeping dogs that pose a risk to public health and safety or dog breeds prohibited for breeding must be handled according to applicable legislation. Effective measures to reduce dog bites are education which aims raising awareness and responsibility of dog owners and implementing the punitive provisions set out in the Law on the Animal Welfare. Establishing an effective dog identification and registration system is important for locating the dog's owner. Also, one of the measures for protection from dog attacks is the registration of dangerous dogs and the development of responsible ownership for people who have aggressive dogs. An owner who keeps a dangerous dog should undergo training with the dog, checking the degree of socialization of the dog. If, after checking the degree of sociality, the dangerous dog does not reach a satisfactory level of sociality and still poses a danger to humans and animals it must be euthanized.

Implementation of identification and registration leads to reduction of dog bites. Reduction of dog bites will lead to a significant improvement in public perception and increase tolerance towards stray dogs, which will be an important factor for successful implementation of DPCP.

Effectively implemented local decisions on how to keep dogs in public spaces can prevent and significantly reduce the possibility of biting and endangering animals and people. Keeping specific breeds that are used to organize dog fights is a widespread problem in Kosovo. Organizing dog fights is considered a criminal offense according to Article 346 of the Criminal Code. Dogs kept and used for fighting suffer cruel treatment and also pose a threat to public safety. It is not uncommon for dogs used for fighting to end up abandoned on the streets. A dog that has been trained to be aggressive with people and other animals can attack and cause problems for the community.

# 7.3 GENERAL SOCIAL EDUCATION AND PROMOTION OF RESPONSIBLE OWNERSHIP

Human awareness is one of the most important elements of a comprehensive approach to stray dog ​​population management, as human behaviour is an extremely influential factor in dog population dynamics. In general, awareness and education of the society includes information on how to act around and with dogs (with and without owner), how dog owners should behave in the community and how the community should act to help the successful implementation of DPCP and ensure a genuine coexistence between dogs and people and to avoid potential incidents.

School education and community awareness is a sustainable measure that will make the community more aware of animal welfare and the positive impacts resulting from better animal care, focusing on human health and well-being. especially children.

Encouraging dog owners and the general public to be more responsible will reduce the number of dogs allowed to roam free, improve the health and welfare of dogs and minimize the risk dogs pose to the community. Promoting responsible dog ownership through education and enforcement of framework regulations and local legislation is an essential part of a dog control program. All this commitment is the obligation of all institutions responsible for the implementation of this strategy, including educational, educational and training institutions.

Education on *responsible dog ownership* (for the dog with current ownership and any offspring) should address the following elements:

* 1. Providing adequate care for the dog welfare according to five standardized freedoms (suitable environment, suitable diet, housing with or away from other animals, ability to show normal behaviour and protection from pain, suffering from injury and disease);
  2. Prevention of diseases, in particular zoonotic diseases, e.g. through regular vaccination against rabies;
  3. Follow-up of trainings by owners for the appropriate behavior of dogs with the environment and the community;
  4. Registration and identification of dogs;
  5. Preventing negative impacts of dogs on the community, through pollution (e.g. faeces and noise), risks to human health through bites or traffic accidents and risks to other dogs, wildlife, livestock and other pet species;
  6. Dog reproduction control.

Achieving sustainable responsible ownership requires recognition of the barriers and motivations for responsible behaviour and actions to address them. This requires a combination of measures including the advancement of legislation, public awareness, awareness campaigns in various spheres and education in schools. It is also necessary to improve access to services that support responsible ownership, such as veterinary care, identification and registration services, and zoonotic disease control measures.

# 7.4 CONTROL OF REPRODUCTION OF OWNED AND STRAY DOGS AND VETERINARY CARE PROVISIONS

**Reproduction control** has been considered as a means of reducing the dog population. There are various methods of reproduction control, but spaying/neutering is currently the most reliable option. Surgical spaying/neutering should be performed by a vet.

When applying spay and neuter projects is important to consider their sustainability –the stray dog ​​population management is a permanent challenge, so it is essential to consider continuity of TNVR projects during the drafting of state projects.

Removal of reproductive organs under general anaesthesia provides permanent sterilization and can significantly decrease sexual dog behaviour, especially if is carried out in the early stages of an animal's development, but not earlier than 2 months after their birth. Upon surgery, must be implemented a high standard of asepsis and pain management which must be maintained at all times. This can only be achieved through adequate postoperative monitoring throughout the recovery period.

Surgery may seem expensive at first, but it is a permanent solution and is more cost effective in the long run. This type of intervention, beside trained vets, requires a real infrastructure and professional equipment as required by the applicable legislation.

As in Kosovo is necessary to control the reproduction of stray dogs, it is important that this is done through the TNVR method.

TNVR projects for stray dogs should be continuously implemented and should not be interrupted for months**. If TNVR projects are not active all the time, it will be very difficult to manage the stray dog ​​population.** TNVR projects alone cannot be successful in reducing the number of stray dogs, but they are nevertheless a very important component for the effective and humane management of the stray dog ​​population, therefore they must be implemented together with measures of other necessary to reduce the number of stray dogs.

As stated in this strategy, TNVR method should be considered as a temporary measure until the number of dogs on the streets stabilizes, because even if shelter infrastructures are created, due to the large number of dogs on the streets currently, not all dogs of the street will be able to be sheltered, since the source of the problem of the increase of dogs on the street is still not treated. Therefore, TNVR will serve as an assistance in reproduction management.

In order to have the most successful projects, it is necessary to have continuous controls to supervise the work of veterinarians in the field. Therefore, increasing the number of veterinary inspectors will increase the effectiveness of TNVR projects.

**Veterinary care** is essential for the control and prevention of zoonotic infectious diseases, and DPM control measures should include or be consistent with all dog-related disease control measures. Especially street dogs when they are taken for spaying and neutering. This includes vaccination against rabies and the fight against parasitic diseases according to the legislation in force.

Beyond the preventive care provided as part of DPM control measures, DPM's contribution to disease control is in creating a healthier dog population, with reduced turnover of their numbers. Herd immunity for rabies control is supported by DPM by improving the survival of vaccinated dogs and reducing the birth of unvaccinated puppies. DPM can also improve responsible ownership and responsible care, especially by encouraging owners and community members to take an active role in practices and awareness campaigns for vaccination and control of parasitic or other diseases.

Beyond the control of infectious zoonotic diseases, veterinary care also protects the health and welfare of dogs and includes euthanasia to end suffering where treatment is not feasible. From DPM's perspective, this potentially reduces the abandonment of sick or injured dogs. Competent authorities can identify the dog population that do not have basic veterinary care. How to deal with this problem depends on the barriers to access to veterinary care. Possible solutions may include the organization of group vet services in the field and the reduction of treatment costs for a majority of dogs with and without owner.

Expanding access to veterinary care as part of DPM increases opportunities to identify health concerns in dogs that might otherwise go unnoticed. This measure can support the surveillance of diseases, including zoonotic diseases, in the dog population. The zoonotic disease control plan should be drawn up by the veterinary authorities including rabies, leishmaniasis, echinococcosis and parasitic diseases affecting public health security and animal welfare.

# 7.5 DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL DOG ​​POPULATION MANAGEMENT SERVICES

Local DPM services are activities that, when properly selected and combined, encourage and support positive human behaviors and provide a safety net for unmanaged dogs. These services affect the internal processes of population dynamics and therefore change sub-populations of dogs by controlling them with appropriate local services.

The services necessary for the effective management of dogs are selected by the municipalities, based on it and the knowledge of the dynamics of dogs achieved through the assessment of dog groups and the implementation of the principles of humane measures of the DPM. The particularly important principles for the implementation of the DPM are as follows:

**Humane and ethical**; implementing services in a humane manner while improving the welfare of dogs by ensuring that their interactions with the necessary services are a positive experience.

**Sustainable and adaptive**; implementation of the action plan for the sustainability of all services from the beginning, so that the context changes and there is time for assessment and necessary adaptation.

**Human behavior**; the implementation of services can be done in different ways, to ensure a sustainable approach to motivate responsible behavior and people.

**Feeding stray dogs** through feeding points will prevent aggression. This is because dogs become aggressive in the absence of food and water. The municipalities will plan the places for the placement of feeding points designed according to the number of dogs in their territory.

Systematic data collection should be an integral part of local PLKQ plans, which include data on dog group dynamics, demographic data, owner data, clinical data and epidemiological data. One of the most important factors influencing the dynamics of dog groups is human behavior, so it is very important to assessed people's attitudes and behavior in order to understand what may influence their behavior towards animals. Environmental factors and the reproductive capacity of the dogs will also affect their dynamics.

The initial steps will focus on assessing the current situation in Kosovo in terms of legislation, technical capacity and resources, in order to develop a dog control system that will be implemented at the local level. After the initial assessment, it is essential to highlight the most important factors that should be prioritized to ensure that resources are spent in a way that will have an impact on the wider problem.

This phase should precede any intervention to ensure that PLKQ programs are adapted to the specific needs of the community and the specific characteristics of the dog population. This will also be essential in the monitoring and evaluation phase. Following an initial assessment process, learning from past and current DPM examples, and developing relevant policies and legislation, a comprehensive program will emerge, which will include a range of tools. Means must be chosen to identify and treat the root causes of the dog problem and to bring dog populations under control in a humane manner. Currently there is only limited data on the size, dynamics and trends of the numbers of dogs in Kosovo and it will be essential that this information is collected before drawing up local intervention plans.

This information will be critical to identify the source of stray dogs and enable the competent authorities to define clear intervention targets and indicators for monitoring and evaluation of local action plans. In addition, the design of the assessments will include a demographic survey with a particular emphasis on ownership trends and owner attitudes and behavior.

Reducing the size or density of dog numbers is usually stated as a desired impact of dog management (DPM). This is often targeted towards 'stray' dogs, as opposed to the general population. However, the important outcome of the initial survey will be **to determine the main sources of stray dogs**, which will often come from owned sources (irresponsible ownership, breeding and unregulated commercial sale). Before starting a dog management intervention, it is essential that dynamics of the numbers of dogs are understood and measured objectively. This approach ensures that the final DPM program will be adapted to the characteristics of the number of dogs for a given location/municipality.

The municipal survey conducted in 2022 revealed that very few municipalities survey and monitor the size of the dog population and their dynamics. This, in turn, leads to the implementation of interventions that do not necessarily address the specific problems encountered by both citizens and free-roaming dogs.

The survey methodology and intervention design tools are in Appendix 1.

Technical capacities to implement a national action plan for dog control are limited at the local level. The action plan will need to identify gaps in skills, knowledge and a training plan should be designed to address these gaps. To develop and implement the national action plan and effective local PLKQs, a whole system for the control of stray dogs will have to be developed, including technical capacities and knowledge at all levels. Upskilling may be required for those already working in the provision of DPM services.

Training to develop the PLKQ will need to start with dog group surveys and it is essential that key individuals are trained in the use of such methodologies so that this knowledge is available locally. The target groups for training are the actors responsible for the implementation of the action plan of this strategy and others who may be involved in the provision of services. It is essential that all those involved directly or indirectly with the problem of abandoned dogs participate in the consultation process. This process should serve for their suggestions to be used in the design of interventions depending on the situation. It should be emphasized that the problem of street dogs is a socio-economic problem and therefore it is necessary to involve and receive support from the wider community. It is imperative that any program support and include the interests of the local community that will support the methods and goals set. This Strategy should be accompanied by a communication and awareness campaign that will influence the promotion and implementation of this document. In the initial phase of the implementation of the strategy, it is proposed to organize forums and workshops at the local level for the implementation of the strategy and action plan.

Facilities that provide permanent housing for stray dogs cannot be considered a single service of the DPM.

The welfare of the dogs in such facilities can be very poor and the financial costs of keeping the dogs can be very high including large capital outlays and high ongoing financial costs and staff management/training challenges. Shelters only address the symptoms of the current number of roaming dogs and not the source of the increase in the number of street dogs. Shelters fill up quickly as dogs are replaced on the streets through migration and abandonment, creating an ineffective DPM service. Therefore shelters should not be used where there are large numbers of stray dogs and minimal adoptions.

However, holding facilities and new housing systems that provide temporary accommodation can play a role in DPM, when they are used in conjunction with other DPM services that address abandonment, and where there is a real potential for reunification with owners and adoption.

Shelter facilities are used to house dogs on a short-term basis for reunification with owners and for quarantine while monitoring and screening for disease. If a healthy dog ​​is not reunited with its owner within the statutory period, it may be eligible for rehoming.

Dog shelters can accomplish a number of different outcomes:

1. Catching and retrieving the dog(s) - return to the owner if the dog is lost, when the owner has been identified and found;
2. Capture and take the dog(s), if the owner cannot be found, provide temporary care and if appropriate offer the dog for adoption;
3. Catching and taking the dog(s), vaccination, sterilization and return to the same territory where they were caught in accordance with the rules for the KSVL.
4. Seizure and retrieval of dog(s), and euthanasia in accordance with existing law – dogs suffering from incurable diseases or zoonotic diseases that pose a risk to public health and dogs with irreversible behavior that pose a risk to humans and other animals must to be euthanized according to the legislation in force.

# **Things to consider in a new housing center:**

Financial resources for new shelters are extremely important, as it is difficult for shelters to close after sheltering dogs. Capital costs and running costs must be determined before committing to building a shelter. Veterinary services will be essential and a large part of running costs such as: creating sufficient internal capacity and/or effective relationships with external veterinary services, should be part of financial planning.

Policies are required on several issues, including sterilization, dog health and behavior assessment, rehoming, capacity (how many animals per kennel and in total, and what will be done once capacity is reached), release, adoption and euthanasia. They should prioritize the welfare of individual animals, but also consider the cost implications and the role(s) and responsibilities of the facility/centre towards the DPM system. These policies should be clear and agreed upon by all staff and developed/revised with staff involvement.

The euthanasia policy is of particular importance as it has a direct impact on animal welfare and is an emotive issue for staff and the public. Euthanasia must be performed in accordance with the Animal Care Law and the Veterinary Law. To ensure maximum transparency, it is recommended that every decision to euthanize a dog be properly reviewed and evaluated.

The goal is for euthanasia to be used only for those dogs that are dangerous, suffer from an incurable disease, injury, or unmanaged behavior problem that prevents them from being rehomed or returned to the streets that do not adapt to life in a shelter for maintain a reasonable level of well-being and health. ICAM has published a guidance document on euthanasia, "The Welfare Basis for Canine and Feline Euthanasia and Policy Development" which can be a useful tool for developing the ethical review process in relation to euthanasia policy.[[7]](#footnote-5)

Protocols should be drawn up for each stage of the process; from quarantine upon arrival, and vaccination against rabies and other diseases, sterilization as well as daily routines such as cleaning, feeding and exercise, to record keeping, adoption or release according to the KSVL method and re-homing. Detailed health and behavioral assessment of each dog, followed by training/socialization, maximizes the chances of a successful adoption.

To be a functional part of the DPM system, each dog must only be placed temporarily in a rehoming centre. This underlines the vital role of these dogs. Effective restoring will require community outreach, potentially drawing on the support of public and private agencies to advertise the dogs and promote the concept of rehoming and community dogs.

The design of the center should take into account the welfare needs of the dogs. Rehoming centres should also consider potential adopters by creating adoption-friendly areas for visitors to meet dogs.

Licensing and inspection of rehoming centres should be considered to protect the welfare of the dogs in these facilities. Controlling the admission of dogs to rehoming centres can be difficult; overpopulation and declining animal welfare standards are a major risk.

Animal hoarding is an unfortunate reality; there is no restricted housing, but hoarders may claim to run such a rehoming or "rescue" service. Licensing and inspection can help to control and respond to premises where hoarding appears to be taking place, but psychological intervention may be needed to help these people stop hoarding.

Stray dogs can be removed to shelters to be reunited with their owners for rehoming or returned to the territory where they were captured as members of the community. This only addresses the current number of stray dogs and not the source of the increase in the number of these dogs, so it should be used in combination with other control measures to prevent the replacement of abandoned dogs. Reunification and adoption must be possible and accessible or else facilities quickly fill to maximum capacity creating an ineffective and costly control measure. The Competent Authority must ensure the collection of dogs that are not under direct supervision and verify their ownership. Catching, transporting, handling and keeping or releasing and euthanizing dogs must be done in a humane manner.

# When using TNVR, it must be done correctly and the following principles must be respected:

* Engaging local communities to understand, support, design and be an active part of KSVL activities by raising awareness of the program within the local community to ensure understanding and support;
* Use of humane methods for catching, transporting and keeping dogs;
* Correct surgical technique with a good standard of asepsis, anesthesia and analgesia, followed by post-operative care;
* Disease control should include general vaccination (eg rabies or other vaccines against other diseases) and treatment and testing for diseases (eg leishmaniasis) and, if necessary, euthanasia of the dog;
* KSVL is not suitable for all dogs and must be applied on an individual basis. Health assessment and behavioral observation can be used to assess whether dogs are suitable for release; if not suitable for release or return, euthanasia should be considered;
* Permanent markings (eg microchip, ear tag) to indicate that the animal has been sterilized; individual identification also allows tracking of vaccination status and treatment history and identification of a level of 'ownership' by the organization/authority responsible for carrying out this intervention; the earring/ear tag should also be used as a visible identification measure to prevent unnecessary recapture of dogs from the street;
* The dog must be returned to a place as close as possible to the place of capture;
* The welfare of dogs after release should be monitored and action taken if required. The involvement of local communities increases the monitoring and care of animals, thus reducing incidents between people and animals.
* Provisions should be made for keeping the dogs for a reasonable period of time to allow for reunification with the owner and, where appropriate, for rabies observation.
* Complaints from citizens about the problems dogs cause when they are released or returned to the place of capture must be taken into account. The possibility of them being adapted by citizens, keeping them for a longer time in shelters or performing euthanasia after all possibilities have been exhausted should be seen.

#### MANAGEMENT OF ACCESS TO RESOURCES

Reducing food sources accessible to stray dogs, such as edible manure, is sometimes listed as an appropriate measure for DPM; however, it has significant negative welfare challenges. Where stray dogs rely on these food sources for their food, any reduction will lead to malnutrition and potentially starvation. This may be associated with increased competition and aggression between dogs for limited food resources, with the potential for negative interactions with humans over food. Controlling dog packs through resource reduction is unethical and inhumane and endangers public safety.

Rather than reducing food resources, interventions should aim to manage access to reduce conflict with humans and other animals; limiting access to food in areas where stray dogs are not tolerated while increasing access to more acceptable areas. For example, if foraging by stray dogs is creating conflict in a particular location, such as in a public park, closed baskets should be considered to protect the community from dogs in the area where there is location conflict, includes a transition period where dogs will be encouraged to find food in new locations; preserving food resources for the current dog population but physically relocating them to low conflict areas. Where most free-roaming dogs are owned, the best option is improved access to food sources in their home.

Waste must be managed in accordance with relevant legislation to avoid any possible cross-contamination and spread of disease. This is particularly important for the safe disposal of animal products and animal carcasses.

Managing access to resources will lead to reduced conflict with stray dogs while preserving resources essential to health.

#### CONTROLLING THE MOVEMENT OF DOGS IN PUBLIC AREAS

It is necessary to have a legal framework and a national or local infrastructure that includes organizations, state administration, staff and resources to encourage the reporting of stray or lost dogs to the responsible authorities.

* For reasons of public safety;
* For the safety of 'owned dogs' in an area or locality where there is a stray dog ​​control programme;
* To reduce potential citizen disturbances caused by dogs with owners;
* To protect wildlife and livestock.

The way dogs are kept and their movement around cities can also be regulated at the local level, through city ordinances, which can describe the following: dog-friendly areas, where dogs are allowed to walk, rules for wearing mouth masks and belts (ropes) such as the rules and provisions for the collection of faeces, the maximum number of dogs per family in residential blocks, etc. Ideally, these should be developed in collaboration with civil society and municipal inspectors.

# 8. MONITORING AND ASSESSMENT

Once the program is underway, it will be necessary to regularly monitor progress and evaluate the effectiveness of the measures. Monitoring is the measurement of indicators that reflect progress towards the targeted impacts of an intervention. It is an ongoing process that aims to monitor the progress of the program and allow room to plan improvements to ongoing measures. Assessment is periodic that uses data provided through monitoring to explore cause and effect, and therefore test theories of change. Assessment supports implementers to learn how to improve the efficiency of achieving the desired impacts.

The four main reasons for monitoring and assessing programs are:

1. Improving implementation, identifying problems and successful action measures;
2. Assessment of the situation to show the degree to which the program achieves its objectives;
3. Comparing the success of strategies used in different countries and in different situations (assuming that the methods are standardized).
4. For regular adaptation and updating

Monitoring and assessment is a continuous process that aims to check the progress of programs against the objectives defined by the strategy and action plan and allows for regular adjustments.

The general indicators to be followed are:

* Size, distribution and density of dogs;
* Health and welfare of dogs in the target population (eg body condition, skin condition, injury or lameness) and dogs covered by the programme, eg KSL (if interventions involve direct treatment of dogs, welfare of dogs should be monitored as a result of that treatment);
* Incidence of zoonoses in animals and humans;
* Community attitudes and behavior towards dogs, ownership trends and owner responsibility;
* There are many sources of information that can be used for monitoring purposes, including:
* feedback from municipalities - local governments (eg through the use of questionnaires or surveys);
* Information and opinions obtained from relevant experts (eg vets, doctors);
* Measurements and estimates of dog numbers and fitness (direct observations and assessments of numbers and densities).

Recommended methodology for setting specific program objectives and designing monitoring and assessment can be found in ICAM's “Are we making a difference” - a guide to Monitoring and Assessing Dog Management Interventions.

# References

* + - 1. OIE- Terrestrial Animal Health Code 2009, Chapter 7.7. Guidelines for controlling stray dogs;
      2. ICAM, Guidelines for the Humane Management of Dogs, 2007 and 2019;
      3. ICAM, Making a difference - A guide to monitoring and assessing dog management interventions, 2015;
      4. ICAM, Welfare Basis for Canine and Feline Euthanasia and Policy Development, 2008;
      5. RSPCA, Guidelines for the Design and Management of Shelters;
      6. RSPCA, Operational Guidelines for Dog Control Staff;
      7. Trade Traceability: The FOUR PAËS Model Solution for Full Traceability in the EU Online Dog Trade;
      8. Law no. 02/L-10 on Animal Welfare Law on Animal Welfare;
      9. Law no. 2004/21 on Veterinary Medicine "The Veterinary Law;
      10. Law no. 03/L-016 on Food Law on Food;
      11. Law no. 03/L-040 on Local Self-Government Law on Local Self-Government;
      12. Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - no. 04/2017 On Technical Conditions To Be Met By Temporary Care Centers For Stray Animals Administrative Instruction on Technical Conditions To Be Met By Temporary Care Centers For Stray Animals;
      13. Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - no. 02/2018 for the Identification and Registration of Companion Animals Administrative Instruction for the Identification and Registration of Companion Animals;
      14. Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) - no. 02/2021 on the Amendment and Supplement of the Administrative Instruction (MAFRD) 02/2018 on Identification and Registration of Pet Animals;
      15. Administrative Instruction No. 02/2009 "Concering of Non-Commercial Pet Animals Movement Conditions"
      16. Regulation (M.VU) 01. no. 87/15 on the Conditions of keeping dogs and cats as well as the method of action in case of their abandonment or loss Regulation on the Conditions of keeping dogs and cats as well as the method of action in case of their abandonment or loss and
      17. Regulation (M.DE) 01. no. III.2 on the conditions of keeping dogs and the method of action in case of their abandonment or loss and shelter for stray dogs Regulation on the conditions of keeping dogs and the method of action in case of abandonment or loss and shelter for stray dogs.

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# APPENDIX 1- Methodology for the initial assessment

The methodology proposed for the design and implementation of DPM programs has been developed by ICAM [1]. In addition to the Guide for Humane Management of Dog Populations, the Dog Indicators document should also be used to develop program objectives and establish a framework for monitoring and assessment. It is recommended that institutions responsible for developing and managing dog population control programs use DPM's impact assessment methodology to help define clear program objectives.

What results are intended to be achieved through the defined measures?

1. Improving the welfare of dogs
2. Improving the care provided to dogs
3. Reducing of the number of dogs on the street / Stabilizing the circulation of reproduction and abandonment
4. Reducing risks to public health and safety
5. Improving public perception towards dogs
6. Improving the performance of rehousing centers
7. Reducing the negative impacts of dogs on wildlife
8. Reducing the negative impacts of dogs on livestock

Each DPM program may aim to achieve one or more of the desired impacts.

The purpose of assessment is to provide a basis for monitoring and assessment to regularly check whether the intervention is achieving the desired results. The survey is by no means an isolated activity and should be repeated periodically to ensure that the intervention is achieving the desired results. It is recommended to use the ICAM tool to easily establish intervention objectives, indicators and measurement methods.

Design for the assessment study

Reduction in dog size or density is commonly stated as a desired outcome of DPM. This is targeted at stray or 'stray' dogs, as opposed to wanting to reduce the overall street dog population. Population stabilization, also called reduced breeding turnover, may also be desired (reduced births and deaths, with each dog living longer on average). Reduced turnover may have welfare benefits (eg fewer pups are born and die) and may also be beneficial todisease control; if vaccinated dogs live longer and give birth to fewer puppies, the proportion of the population that is immune to the disease (called herd immunity) will remain higher for longer, providing a greater barrier to disease transmission.

There are three main reasons for a population survey

roaming:

To assess the **need** for intervention:

This usually involves comparing areas within a city or comparing different urban areas in order to prioritize where intervention is needed. Areas with the highest number or density of stray dogs can be selected as priority areas; however other factors (eg frequency of dog complaints, or welfare problems experienced by dogs in certain areas) may also be relevant for prioritization.

To **plan** an intervention: Counting the stray population can be combined with questionnaire surveys to show which factors are most important in controlling stray dogs and therefore the type and size of action needed. This will determine the resources required for implementation and may suggest targets that should be set to assess progress.

To **assess** the intervention/measure: Once an intervention is in progress, further surveys may be able to detect changes in the number of stray dogs and show, in combination with other factors such as bite incidence and disease prevalence in the dog population, the effectiveness of the intervention.

There are two main ways of using counts to assess the stray dog ​​population:

In the section on the impact of reducing dog density, the indicator of dogs per km (or mile) of surveyed road was presented as an accessible measure of dog density that could be monitored over time.

The simplest approach is to multiply the average number of dogs per km of road by the total road length for the area in question, this road length is usually accessible from local government data or Geographic Information System (GIS) maps (exclude stretches of highways and side roads when calculating the total length of roads, as stray dogs are very unlikely to be found on these types of roads). If the roads used for the road survey were within administrative areas for which data are available on factors that may be associated with the density of stray dogs (such as the number of unoccupied houses or socio-economic factors related to housing provided by recent censuses), such factors could have been tested for their association with the number of dogs seen on the street. Route length is first included as a covariate and then the factors are tested for their additional predictive value using multiple regression. If significant covariates are found, these can be used together with route length to refine the assess for areas that have not been surveyed, but for which there are data on interacting factors. This method will provide the total number of dogs seen roaming at the particular time of day chosen for the survey and not the total number of stray dogs as some dogs will have been missed by observers and others will roam at different times of the day.

To determine the total stray dog ​​population an estimate of detectability will be needed - this is the chance that a stray dog ​​has been seen and recorded by observers conducting the street survey/survey. The detectability assessment then can be used to 'correct' the dog-calculated assessing of road km surveyed and total road length into a total population size estimate.

Determining detectability requires more intensive survey efforts, using either owner questionnaires to determine the number of owned dogs allowed to roam or sign review experiments (see explanation below). Because these methodologies are more intensive, the rapid road survey method described for measuring the number of dogs per km of surveyed road can be widely used and then, only in a sample of areas, the more intensive method is used alongside the method of quickly to determine the total number of dogs in that area. The assessed population size in that area from the rapid survey can be compared with the assessing from the intensive survey, exposing the underassessing produced by the rapid survey:

*Detectability assessment = rapid road survey assessment, intensive survey assessment*

Collecting an indicator of the roaming population (sometimes referred to as an abundance index). This is simply a count that, under certain assumptions, is expected to increase or decrease as the number of stray dogs in the area increases or decreases. It won't tell you how many stray dogs there are in your area, but a repeat count 12 months later can be compared to the initial count to show if the number of stray dogs has reduced.

The calculation of a population estimate can be done for an entire city or for a part of a city such as a specific municipality. Counts made in selected regions are combined to estimate the total number of stray dogs on public property at any time. This number allows you to calculate statistics such as the density of stray dogs per unit area (eg "there is an average of 35 stray dogs per km2 in a specific municipality"). As with indicators, assessments made at the same time of year in different years can be compared. However, assessments can also calculate the 'significance' of any observed changes. A significant difference in assessments is one that has a very small chance (usually less than 5%) of being simply due to a difference in numbers.

Each measurement can also be broken down by age, gender and reproductive status:

**Age**: puppies and adults – puppies are usually classified as puppies while they are dependent on their mother for the first four months or so. To ensure consistency, counters must comparethe way they classify a sample of dogs of different ages.

**Gender**: male, female and unknown (puppies and dogs seen only from a distance can be difficult to tell the sex).

**Reproductive status** will depend on the sterilization and marking methods used locally; (in the Republic of Kosovo, the label/earring is used); Lactating females should be distinguished from non-lactating females and it may be possible to distinguish neutered males from non-neutered males and spayed females from non-spayed females. It is possible to include additional categories, such as those that may reflect the welfare status of the population (eg presence of a skin condition, lameness or body condition score).

**Number of indicators:**

For the dog survey in Kosovo, the indicator of the number of stray dogs per km (or mile) of surveyed road is an indicator of dog density and is preferable to an estimate of the total population of stray dogs (known as even as abundance) or area-based density assessments.

First, it may be an ideal reflection of public perception of the stray dog ​​'problem'; although the average citizen has no concept of the total number of dogs roaming their city, they have a very real experience of the number of dogs they encounter on their way to work or on their children's journey to school.

Further, urban areas often expand and become denser (loss of open spaces to more streets and associated housing) leading to changes in the total dog population that were beyond the influence of any DPM intervention and may be invisible to the average citizen. However, the average number of stray dogs along the streets will be related to the likelihood that the average citizen will encounter a stray dog ​​while traveling on the street and therefore remains a valid indicator of the impact of the intervention. Comparisons can also be made of the average number of stray dogs per km of road surveyed between locations and perhaps more importantly how this number is changing over time, allowing interventions in different locations to be compared in terms of impact their in dog density. Finally, measuring the number of dogs per km of surveyed road can be done relatively easily compared to establishing an accurate estimate of the total population size.

The advantage of an indicative count is that it requires fewer resources to complete than a population estimate. Picking one or more streets through the city or municipality and counting the dogs along those streets can provide an indication. The route chosen must be accurately recorded so that the count can be repeated over and over again. It should also be as representative as possible for the given location and avoid potential confounding factors that could affect the count over time:

**Representative roads**. It should be aimed to select roads that cross a number of different regions of the city or municipality. If a single street is targeted in a region, there is a risk that local changes in the stray dog ​​population may not be a true reflection of what is happening across the city. Different road types and open areas should also be included in the selected roads.

**Confounding factors.** The number of stray dogs seen on a street will of course be affected by the time of day and possibly the weather and also by the person counting the dogs. It is important to try to reduce the effect of these factors by keeping everything the same as possible (eg counting should be done at the same time of day and avoid times of unusual weather and including and same people). It is also necessary to decide on a consistent counting protocol, for example whether to count dogs seen on side streets or to check dogs under parked cars.

“The Road Surveys” section describes a method of observing dogs along a series of standard roads. These surveys may measure the number of dogs seen and their apparent welfare state using indicators introduced elsewhere in these guidelines (ie, body condition score and skin condition score). Street surveys are then repeated over time (every 6 or 12 months is recommended), using exactly the same streets and counting protocols, to determine how this indicator of dog numbers is changing. It is important to compare data from the same time of year, as the number and welfare of stray dogs can vary with the season.

Keeping the time of day of observation consistent is also very important, as this indicator is actually the number of dogs per km of road surveyed at a given time of day and the number will change throughout the day as the dogs react to people's movements, traffic and environmental temperature changes. The best time of day for street surveys is peak travel time, usually at dawn when traffic is lightest.

In some cases, an estimate of the total size of the stray dog ​​population will be needed, perhaps most often before planning a new intervention. A population size assessment is not required for monitoring and assessing the impact of the intervention and thus is not discussed in detail here, but appendix A should be consulted for more information on conducting population size assessments.

**Street surveys** are an efficient method of collecting data on a variety of indicators. Their efficiency makes them particularly suitable for monitoring and assessment because they can be repeated several times during an intervention. The data collected only relates to stray dogs seen on public property (ie not those behind fences or within compounds) and the ownership status of these dogs may not be clear (although good welfare and wearing collars are possible signs of ownership): these stray dogs may be owned strays, community owned dogs or completely unowned dogs, either born unowned or abandoned/lost by their former owners. This means that closed dogs will not be accessed via street polls; this can be a disadvantage, but since closed dogs are usually not a priority target, this can be a minor concern for some interceptions

Street surveys are most commonly used to measure impacts related to the density of stray dogs, i.e. on streets, demographics and welfare. Street surveys can also be useful for assessing the coverage of an intervention where the intervention has involved visible marking of dogs, for example collars or spray paint during vaccination campaigns or ear tags during neutering. These marks are marked and recorded for each observed dog to assess the percentage of the population that has been achieved by the intervention. See the section "Street surveys and questionnaires for measuring vaccination coverage" for the specific use of this method after vaccination.

The method described here involves counting dogs on a route that runs along the streets. It is similar in principle to the "strip transect" method of wildlife studies, in that observers move relatively quickly along an extended line to avoid double counting and gather information on how animal densities vary across the whole area. The difference to removing transects is that there is no intention to extrapolate counts into an assessment of abundance, but the concept is to replicate these routes in a consistent manner and compare counts over time (see Appendix D for how estimates can be calculated of abundance if necessary). Thus, the method depends on protocol consistency; using one or more standard routes at a consistent time of day and year and following a standard counting protocol, for example using a consistent average speed and mode of transport that will affect 'search effort' ie. Chances are you'll spot a stray dog ​​through your observational skills. Ideal modes of transportation include motorcycles that carry a

Survey team with 2 people, cars and bicycles; the pace is generally too slow to allow the survey to be completed within a reasonable period of time and risks double counting dogs as the survey team will be moving slower than some dogs.

Dog observation protocols

* + - 1. The survey team consists of 2-3 people (a driver, navigator and observer, with navigator and observer combined as a role when using a 2-person team, and no driver if using bicycles). However, all members of the survey team are responsible for dog detection/dictation.
      2. The team follows the predetermined route (see route selection section following) traveling at a maximum of 15 km per hour, slowing down or stopping to record each dog seen before moving as fast as possible; keeping a pace is important to avoid double counting and cover the route efficiently.
      3. Every stray dog ​​seen on the route is counted. Dogs confined within the property, walking with the owner were excluded from the survey. In some cases, a dog will be inside a fenced area, but the gate will be open and the survey team must agree to a consistent rule about how these dogs will be handled.
      4. Each dog is divided into one of 5 categories: male, female, lactating female, puppy (under 4 months), unknown adult. This extends up to 10 categories when the intervention involves visible marking, as each of the 5 categories can be marked or removed. This only falls into 8 categories when the signs are, such as the ethics of the ears applied during sterilization/castration as lactating females and puppies will not have passed the intervention yet and thus can be removed from the non-relevant category.
      5. Each dog is also assessed for welfare status and potentially whether it is on a leash (in some countries where leashing is common, dogs leashed but not fenced may be included in the survey as these dogs are accessible to roamer/stray dogs and are also a relevant part of the population in terms of breeding and transmission of eventual diseases.
      6. In some cases additional attributes (sex, interference signs and welfare status) will not be possible to judge accurately due to the dog's movement out of sight or range. Observers should not guess at these attributes, but either categorize the dog as unknown or leave the welfare status unrecorded (ie, not observed) for that dog. Data for these attributes will be obtained from a sample of dogs that can be reliably assessed.
      7. Standard survey routes can be designed within existing administrative boundaries, such as neighborhoods or municipalities, or streets can be drawn randomly throughout the area: Roads within administrative boundaries ('ward' is used here as a general term for administrative boundary): One or more roads may be drawn in each ward, but if the area is too large to cover, a sample of wards may be selected. Routes should be approximately 25 - 30 km (15 - 18 miles) long to allow the survey to be completed within 2 hours. They should include different types of roads, excluding only those roads where dogs are unlikely to be found and where observation would be difficult (eg highway), and also including different types of environment such as dense urban areas versus open rural environments that fall within the ward. These types of roads and environments should be included in the itinerary in roughly the same proportion as they appear in the ward. Drawing and saving itinerary can be done online using Google My Maps. Roads along a random sampling of roads across the intervention area: If the use of wards is not possible or preferred, roads can instead be drawn along a random sampling of roads across the area of ​​interest. This sample of routes should be selected without prejudice to where the dogs are located. One option for selecting the sample is to create a zig-zag track across the survey area. This can be done using Google My Maps; a zig-zag line can be drawn across the area using the "add line" function; then the "add driving/cycling/walking route" function (depending on the selected travel mode) can be used to create a route that fits as closely as possible to the original zig-zag line. This should create an unbiased route that covers minor and major roads.

Mobile phone applications are particularly suitable for street surveys because they can be easily carried by surveyors, can record Global Positioning System (GPS) information, and can eliminate the need for transcription of later data.

Owned stray dogs - questionnaire

Because dog ecology is linked to human activities, control of dog populations must be accompanied by changes in human behavior. This will take the form of an awareness and education campaign in Activity R5-A4.

If almost all stray dogs are owned, the most efficient approach is to use a questionnaire, which asks owners about the number and confinement of their dogs. (Appendix 3 – model for attitude/behaviour questionnaire). The essential element is the design of a questionnaire adapted for use in different locations across Kosovo, therefore it is essential to train selected representatives in the development and conduct of such questionnaires including the ethical review component. There are many different tools available for demographic surveys and the recommended tool for attitude and behavior survey is Kobotoolbok https://www.kobotoolbox.org where a simple and friendly questionnaire can be prepared for Kosovo.

This results in an estimate of the average number of dogs per household that own dogs that are not always confined (ie allowed to roam for at least part of the day/night), and the total number of dog-owning households in the area. One reason to avoid questionnaires and use the following brand review method is when owners have reason to be dishonest about confinement, such as if there is a local ordinance requiring dogs to be confined.

Conducting questionnaires can be relatively time consuming and so tools to reduce the various processes involved are potentially very useful. Questionnaires can be designed on survey sites such as Survey Monkey (www.surveymonkey.com) and then, if internet access is reliable enough, responses can be completed on a mobile phone or tablet during face-to-face interviews (note, any drop in internet access would mean interrupting the interview until the connection is restored). This avoids the need to print forms and transcribe data from forms to the computer later, and also provides some basic analysis features. If internet access is unreliable, there are apps for phones and tablets that allow data entry even when you are offline, e.g..devicemagic.com), SurveyToGo (www.dooblo.net) or Open Data Kit (www.opendatakit.org).

1) **Where do stray dogs come from?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **question** | **METHODS/TOOLS** |
| **Unknown dogs**  Is the dog population itself unknown capable of successful reproduction?    Can unknown dogs raise puppies to adulthood? | Observe dogs of all age classes (puppies, juveniles and adults) for up to six months |
|  |  |
| **Owned dogs**  Are unwanted owned dogs abandoned on the streets to become part of the stray population?    Are owned dogs allowed to stray free?    Why does this resource exist?    What are the beliefs, attitudes, or environmental factors that underlie these behaviors? | This information can be collected in the form of a questionnaire for citizens, including dog owners  (APPENDIX II: Sample questionnaire)    Also, discussions with shelter managers, NGOs, dog owners and veterinarians can help uncover opinions and attitudes about why the resource exists, using specific questions to guide the discussion. |

**2)** **What welfare problems do stray dogs face?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **question** | **METHODS/TOOLS** |
| What is the welfare status of the stray dog ​​population? | This information can be obtained by counting dogs by observing body scores, lameness, injuries and skin condition. |
|  |  |
| What is the welfare status of owned dogs?    Are owners providing their dogs with the resources they need for good welfare?? | This information can be collected in the form of a questionnaire for dog owners  (APPENDIX II: Sample questionnaire) |
|  |  |
| What is the welfare status of the dogs affected by the current control measures? (e.g. Shelters, dog catchers, catch, spay and release programs, euthanasia) | Observations of stray dog ​​control measures in municipalities and NGOs.    Discussions with municipal and NGO managers about their welfare methods, practices and standards. |

**3)** **What is currently being done both formally and officially to control the dog population?**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **question** | **METHODS/TOOLS** |
| What is currently being done to manage the stray dog ​​population?    Why are these measures in place? | Discussions with municipalities, NGOs, veterinary organizations and dog owners. |
|  |  |
| Do people think there is a problem with local dog population management?    What problems do stray dogs cause? | This information can be collected in the form of a questionnaire for citizens  (APPENDIX II: Sample questionnaire)    Discussions with municipalities about the nature, number and geographic location of complaints    Discussions with health departments about the number of medical cases caused by dog ​​bites, zoonotic diseases or road traffic accidents. |
|  |  |
| What legislation exists relating to dog population management? | Collect all legislation from national and local governments relating to dogs. It is possible that relevant regulations exist in more than one act. |

[1]International Coalition for Companion Animal Management, 2019

# ANNEX 2- KSVL Instructions for Municipalities

SPECIFIC CONSIDERATIONS FOR CATCHING STERILIZATION, VACCINATION RELEASE (KSVL)[[8]](#footnote-6)

1. KSL has been misunderstood as a stand-alone solution suitable for a comprehensive national approach to DPM. However, KSVL is an approach to providing reproduction control and, as with any DPM service, must be used in combination with other services to form a properly functioning DPM system.
2. KSL is not suitable in all locations; requires a tolerant community that accepts stray dogs and an environment suitable to support a reasonable level of welfare. It is also essential that there is full authority approval for KSL and that it is integrated into the wider DPM system. There are significant risks to dogs when this is not achieved; an extreme example is when a 'catch and kill' approach and KSL are implemented in the same country, leading to the killing of sterilized and vaccinated dogs.
3. KSL is not suitable for all dogs; should be applied on an individual basis. For example, rehoming may be more appropriate for some dogs, such as well-socialized puppies, while dogs that cause conflict through aggressive behavior towards community members may also not be suitable for rehoming.
4. KSL will reduce the number of pups born, which is beneficial as community/unknown pup mortality tends to be high, with considerable suffering before they die and associated concerns for the community. Where pup mortality is high, the unknown community/population is not sustained by breeding, but instead through abandonment and migration; KSVL does not address dropout and migration, so it must be combined with other DPM services to have an impact on the size of the adult population.
5. Where there is successful breeding from current/unknown dogs, it is sometimes assumed that 70% of females should be spayed. It may make logistical sense to aim for 70% if this is also the target for rabies vaccination coverage (and neutering and vaccination can be performed on the same dogs). Otherwise, there is nothing special about this figure. The percentage of females that need to be spayed per year depends on the potential growth rate of the population (the number of dogs that will be in the population after one year, compared to the initial number of dogs).
6. The more dogs that are neutered per year, the faster the rate of decline will be and the lower the density will be. Most KSVL clinics are designed to sterilize a stable number of dogs. However, if logistically possible, sterilizing a larger number of dogs through VHS intervention in the early months/years (may be called 'front loading') and then reducing to a maintenance level of sterilization as the population stabilizes at its new lower level, will help to reach the lower population number more quickly.
7. To maintain a population at a reduced density by culling requires killing many more dogs than would need to be sterilized to maintain the same reduced density. To prevent population growth, the same percentage of females capable of producing cubs must be killed or spayed; but in a murder-maintained population, this is a percentage of all females. With sterilization that is only the percentage of females left unsterilized. Therefore, extermination is less effective than sterilization and inhumane.
8. Dogs must be returned to where they were captured and not released elsewhere. Keeping dogs in their original territories ensures they have access to the same resources as before capture, avoids the risk of dog-dog aggression resulting from release into unfamiliar territories, and is particularly important when KSL involves pediatric sterilization, as puppies they must return to their mother.
9. Wrongfully seizing and neutering owned dogs without the owner's consent is a risk of KSL; therefore it must be implemented with full community engagement to identify the right dogs. This also provides the opportunity for community members to fully engage with the intervention, for example helping to handle the dogs (following basic training and supervision) and providing post-operative supervision.
10. Throughout this process, humane handling should be emphasized to maintain good dog welfare and model positive human-dog interactions for the community.

# **APPENDIX 2. ACTION PLAN**

1. OIE Animal Code [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Decision of the Ministry of Local Government Administration [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. [↑](#endnote-ref-1)
4. [↑](#endnote-ref-2)
5. Administrative Instruction (GRK) No. 07/2018 for Planning and Drafting of the Strategic Documents and Action Plans [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
6. ICAM, Humane Dog Population Management Guidance , 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
7. [https://ëëë.icam-coalition.org/doënload/the-ëelfare-basis-for-the-euthanasia-of-dogs-and-cats-and-policy-development/](https://www.icam-coalition.org/download/the-welfare-basis-for-the-euthanasia-of-dogs-and-cats-and-policy-development/) [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
8. ICAM Dog population management guidelines, 2019 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)