



# Elimination of human dog mediated Rabies through One Health approach in Northern Communal Areas of Namibia.



Dr. Reinhold Haimbodi; Dr. Nehemia Hedimbi; Dr. Rauna Athingo ; Dr. Emmanuel Hikufe; Dr. Albertina Shilongo; Dr. Kenneth Shoomba.  
Directorate of Veterinary Services, Ministry of Agriculture , Water and Land Reform.

## Introduction

Rabies is one of the notifiable zoonotic diseases in Namibia according to Animal Health Act 1 of 2011. Rabies is endemic in the country with the Northern Communal Areas (NCAs) which consists of 8 regions regarded as Rabies hotspots (figure.1). Since 2011 to date more than 250 human lives have been lost due rabies in northern Namibia hence the government of Namibia through the Directorate of Veterinary Services under the Ministry of Agriculture, Water and Land Reform has developed a National Rabies Control Strategy in 2015, aimed at eliminating dog- mediated human rabies and contribute to global rabies strategy for zero human rabies death by 2030. In March 2016, Namibia launched Rabies elimination program which was initially supported financially by the Germany Government, and technically by FLI, WOAHA & the Government of Namibia. The program was carried out in two phases: (i) a pilot phase (March 2016–March 2017) and (ii) a rollout phase (April 2017–March 2018). The pilot phase started in Oshana region which is one of the rabies hotspots in the NCAs. The program was extended to the entire NCAs regions namely Oshikoto, Omusati, Ohangwena, Kunene, Kavango East, Kavango West, and Zambezi, aiming at establishing well managed mass dog vaccination campaigns in each region on annual basis. Due to commitment to fight dog- mediated human rabies that Namibia has shown for years, the national rabies control strategy was endorsed by WOAHA in 2021, being the first Rabies official control program to be endorsed by the WOAHA in Africa.

## Project / programme objectives

- The overall objective of the program is to eliminate dog-mediated human rabies through the following:
  - Mass dog vaccination campaigns to improve vaccination coverage.
  - Timely provision of Rabies post exposure prophylaxis to dog bite victims.
  - Intensive Rabies surveillance and improved diagnostic technology.
  - Improve data collection and management.
  - Promote responsible pet ownership through education and awareness.
  - To promote and strengthen multisectoral rabies control approach through one health approach.
  - Education and awareness campaigns on rabies
  - Enhancing cross border collaboration in rabies control with neighbouring countries.

## Milestones/Achievements

- Since the implementation of rabies control program in 2016, improvements have been made as followings:
  - Mass dog vaccination campaigns have contributed to improved in terms of vaccination coverage (figure.3)
  - Observed drastic reduction in number of human death due to rabies ( figure.2).
  - Significant progress in rabies control in livestock, dogs and enhanced rabies diagnostics and surveillance.
  - Training of life skill teachers and school principals, learners and communities on rabies in all 8 regions of the NCAs to educate and raise awareness.
  - Conducted successful oral Rabies vaccination in Oshana, Omusati and Zambezi region as a complementary tool to parenteral vaccination.
  - Development of an Integrated Bite Case Management tool (underway)
  - Implementation of real time data collection tools during mass dog vaccinations as a way to improve data collection,
  - Scientific publications on rabies control activities in NCA .
  - Strengthened one health approach toward rabies control through collaboration with MoHSS, METF and other key stakeholders.
  - WOAHA endorsement of Namibia official Rabies control program in 2021

## Conclusions

- The government of Namibia is committed to meet the global target of zero human Rabies death by 2030.
- It is evident that rabies elimination program in Northern Communal Areas will be successful through a multi sectoral approach.

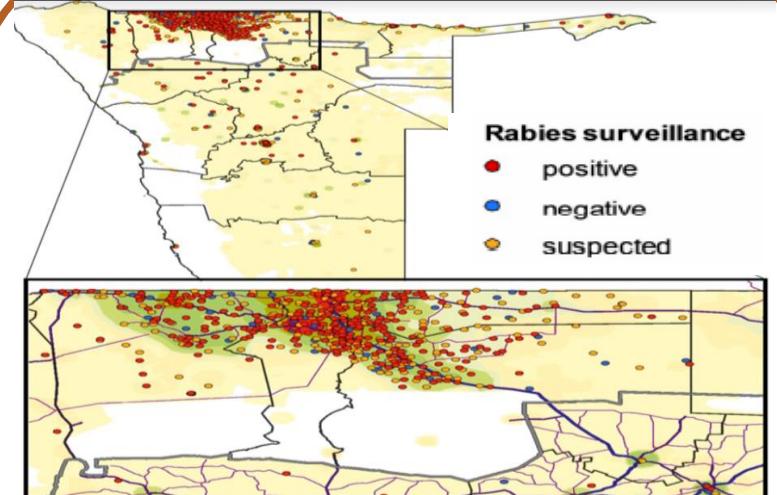


Figure 1. Rabies Hotspot in Northern communal areas of Namibia

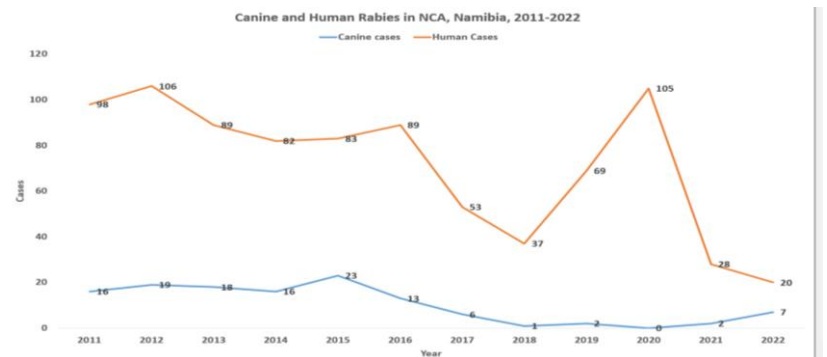
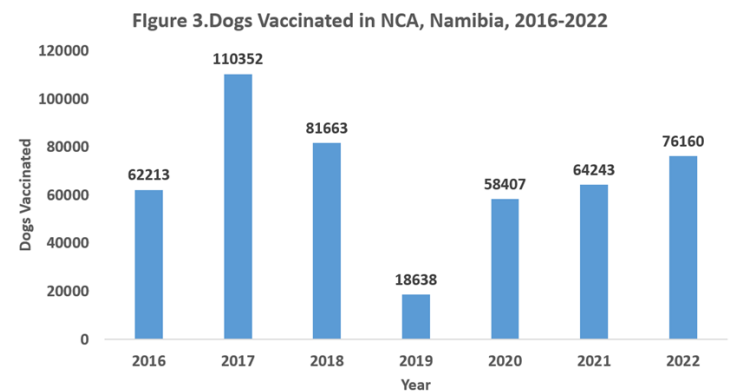


Figure.2. key achievement on Rabies reduction in human and canine



## Future Plans

- Increase the efforts to eliminate rabies by 2030
- Include Rabies control education & awareness in the Namibian school curriculum.
- Intensify rabies education & awareness at schools and communities levels.



World Organisation  
for Animal Health  
Founded as OIE



Republic of Namibia



The  
Federal Government

FRIEDRICH-LOEFFLER-INSTITUT

FLI

Bundesforschungsinstitut für Tiergesundheit  
Federal Research Institute for Animal Health