

Every year, rabies kills around 59,000 people. Every death is preventable. Yet rabies remains chronically underprioritised and consequently underfunded. Drawing on perspectives shared at the [WOAH 93rd General Session side event on Mobilising Investment for Dog-Mediated Rabies Elimination](#) (Paris, May 2026), this guidance outlines five elements countries should demonstrate when seeking financing from development partners for rabies elimination.

5 KEY ELEMENTS FOR A COMPELLING INVESTMENT CASE

These elements may need to be adapted depending on the development partner being targeted.

1 Country Ownership & Prioritisation

Many development partners only support national priorities – areas where governments are committed and prepared to invest. A national elimination strategy aligned with 'Zero by 30', backed by a costed plan and domestic budget commitments, demonstrates country ownership. WOAHA endorsement of the official control programme for dog-mediated rabies further demonstrates credibility and commitment. Development banks and other development partners typically establish country-level frameworks for strategic planning, co-financing, and implementation. Ensuring animal health, and ideally rabies, is reflected in these frameworks can help create opportunities for investment. Regional collaboration can further strengthen investment cases by demonstrating coordinated progress across neighbouring countries and creating opportunities for regional organisations to support elimination efforts.

2 Development Impact & Inequality Reduction

Rabies kills predominantly in the most vulnerable communities – children in poor and remote areas with limited access to healthcare face the greatest risks. When rabies is eliminated, children can safely go to school, adults can work without worry, and communities can thrive. Programmes that make life safer for children and reduce inequality will carry significant weight. Frame rabies as a development investment, not a disease control measure. That is the story development partners want to hear.

3 Systems Strengthening

Many development partners have moved away from disease-specific funding. Programmes that strengthen health and animal health systems – surveillance, dog population management, laboratory capacity, cross-sectoral coordination – are far more compelling. Show how rabies investment builds broader health systems, which will support prevention and control of rabies and other diseases over time, not just treat one disease.

4 Cost-Effectiveness

Rabies can be prevented with simple and affordable tools. Dog vaccination prevents transmission at source and has been shown to be significantly more cost-effective than relying on post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) alone. While PEP protects individuals after exposure, dog vaccination reduces risk across entire communities, including vulnerable and hard-to-reach populations. Quantify the return in your investment case: cost per death averted, DALYs gained, and PEP costs avoided. Development partners must demonstrate that resources generate the greatest possible gain per dollar – and rabies delivers a compelling case.

5 One Health Approach

Prevention at source and cross-sectoral collaboration are central to many development partner priorities. Dog-mediated rabies is one of the clearest demonstrations of the One Health principle: an intervention in the animal sector virtually eliminates a fatal human disease and reduces the need for human biologicals as prevalence goes down. Show coordination from the outset between Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Finance and other relevant Ministries in your country, and coordinate planning of activities across sectors. Prevention at source is increasingly recognised by development partners as a cost-effective approach to reducing zoonotic disease risks and strengthening health security.

The United Against Rabies Forum can connect countries to partners who can support the development of investment cases and facilitate engagement with funders.

Further resources: [Rationale for Investing in the Elimination of Dog-Mediated Human Rabies](#)
For more information: globalrabiescoordinator@woah.org | www.unitedagainstrabies.org