

# MERACON

## Returning to rabies elimination in 2021 Webinar

### Introduction

Rabies remains a globally important zoonosis causing over 59,000 estimated human deaths every year. The Global Alliance for Rabies Control (GARC), WHO, OIE and FAO have agreed a strategy for elimination of dog-mediated human rabies by 2030, also known as “Zero By 30”. However, in the Middle East (ME) and surrounding regions, the rabies burden and barriers to its control are poorly defined. This is further exacerbated by movements of free-roaming dogs and wildlife across borders that have the potential to enhance rabies spread and confound control efforts. Unfortunately, these challenges are not well quantified, and a lack of regional coordination and cooperation has negatively affected the possibility of achieving elimination in some participating states (PS). There also remains a risk of reintroduction into rabies free areas, that will not reduce until rabies is controlled throughout the region. As approaches and progress towards achieving rabies elimination in the various PS within the target region differ drastically, transboundary cooperation and coordination remains challenging. However, with a standardized and well-coordinated approach, demonstrable progress will be made.

MERACON (<https://rabiesalliance.org/networks/meracon>) aims to be a sustainable inter-sectoral (public and veterinary health) and transdisciplinary (scientific, policy, and implementation) network that assists national governments in developing and advancing effective rabies elimination programs in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, Central Asia and North African region. MERACON will build on the successes of the former MEEREB network, whilst introducing members to novel tools, resources and practices that may assist their efforts in achieving the Zero by 30 goal.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, global travel and rabies activities were hampered for the duration of 2020. Because of this, the planned regional MERACON workshop was postponed to 2021. As a means to continue remote support, foster collaboration and continue to drive progress towards rabies elimination in the MERACON countries, an online webinar has been planned for early 2021 as a precursor to a more formal workshop later in the year.



## Objectives

This webinar is aimed to maintain active participation and interest in rabies control and elimination within all participating countries in the MERACON network.

- 1) Maintain contacts with country focal persons from participating countries in MERACON network.
- 2) Informally assess the situation in terms of rabies control in MERACON participating countries and evaluate the impact of COVID-19 on efforts.
- 3) Identify and set the expectations for the MERACON network moving forward.
- 4) Introduce certain foundational tools to focal persons.
- 5) Demonstrate progress through a case study from a participating network country.

## Details

**Date:** 26 February 2021

**Time:** 09:00 – 12:00 CET (GMT+01:00)

**Duration:** 3 hours

**Time zone:** All times below are CET



## Agenda

<b>MERACON: Returning to rabies elimination in 2021</b>			
	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
<b>26 February</b>	8:45 - 09:00	Participants join webinar	N/A
<b>Session 1:</b>			
<b>Welcome, Introductions and Scope of MERACON</b>  <b>60 minutes</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
	15 minutes	Welcome and Introductions	Louis Nel
	10 minutes	MEEREB Network: what was achieved & the integration to MERACON	Valentina Picot
	10 minutes	Rabies situation in the region	Dan Horton
	10 minutes	Overview of MERACON: Aims, objectives and the way forward	Terence Scott
	15 minutes	Questions and discussion	Q&A Moderator: Valentina Picot
<b>Session 2:</b>			
<b>Tools</b>  <b>85 minutes</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Speaker</b>
	15 minutes	GARC Education Platform (GEP)	Andre Coetzer
	15 minutes	Rabies Epidemiological Bulletin (REB): What it is and how it can help	Terence Scott
	15 minutes	SARE (Stepwise Approach towards Rabies Elimination): What it is and how it can help.	Chari Amparo



	15 minutes	How the SARE enabled the development and implementation of a National Action Plan from Algeria	Fazia Mahiout
	10 minutes	Multi-Criteria-Decision-Analysis (MCDA) tool for Rabies project managers	Victor del Rio Vilas
	15 minutes	Questions and discussion	Q&A Moderator: Terence Scott
<b>Session 3:</b>	<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Moderator</b>
Expectations for MERACON	30 minutes	Live poll: Current situation and expectations and next steps from MERACON	Terence Scott
<b>30 minutes</b>			
End of webinar			

