



INTERGROUP
ON THE WELFARE
& CONSERVATION
OF ANIMALS



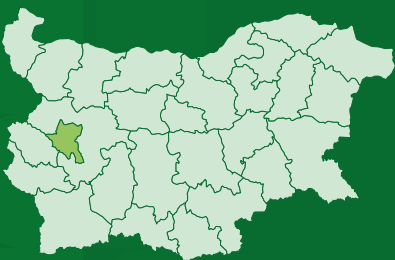
CASE STUDY

Sofia, Bulgaria

WHERE: Sofia, Bulgaria

WHEN: 2006–2020

WHO: Sofia Municipality (Lead),
Ecoravnovesie, FOUR PAWS



The project resulted in a reduction of the stray dogs in the municipality of Sofia, from an estimated **11.124 dogs** in 2007 to **3.589** in 2018.

PROJECT DESCRIPTION:

After unsuccessful attempts to permanently reduce the number of stray dogs, in 2006 Sofia Municipality decided to apply a new approach, which consisted of mass sterilization and rabies vaccination of the stray dog population in the city.

COOPERATION AND ENGAGEMENT:

The project involved local authorities with the engagement of a municipal enterprise Ecoravnovesie and the veterinary clinic of FOUR PAWS Foundation which turned out to be the key to the success of the project. All the changes at the policy and legislative level provided solid ground for a more lasting change. The project also required cooperation with local NGOs on raising awareness of responsible pet ownership.



1 Background






2 Implementation

3 Monitoring and Evaluation

4 Impact



PROJECT TOOLBOX:

-  Promoting responsible ownership
-  Trap/Catch, Neuter and Return (T/CNR)
-  Veterinary care
-  Adoptions
-  Surveys

PROJECT STAGES:

Regular data collection on population size and its origin. Between 2007 and 2018, the city of Sofia ran six dog counts. In 2008, the first Bulgarian Animal Protection Act entered into force, where in Chapter V the measures for controlling the stray animals population based on the method "Trap/Catch, Neuter and Return (T/CNR)" accompanied by tight control over domestic dogs were identified as the only effective approach for a lasting solution to the problem. The law today not only encourages neutering of pets, but also requires registration of dogs, thus aims to eradicate the root cause of the problem - the abandonment of unwanted and unidentified pets.

Establishment of a mass sterilization program for stray dogs in the city of Sofia with a clinic of municipal enterprise **Ecoravnovesie** and the veterinary clinic of **FOUR PAWS** Foundation. Launching campaigns for free neutering of pet animals of owners from risk groups. Improving shelter capacity- at the end of 2012, a large municipal shelter was opened in the village of Gorni Bogrov with a capacity of 840 animals (increased by another 684 places in 2013). Increasing dog adoptions: according to **Ecoravnovesie** in the period 2018-2020, estimated 2.866 dogs got adopted.

Thanks to the collection of data, it was possible to estimate a very accurate impact of the project.

The project resulted in a reduction of the stray dogs in the municipality of Sofia, from an estimated 11.124 dogs in 2007 to 3.589 in 2018. Furthermore, the characteristics of the stray population changed from mainly unsterilized, young animals to an estimated sterilization rate of over 70% with the dog population aging over time and very few new stray dogs observed. In addition, the welfare status of the remaining dogs has improved with most of the aging dogs having dedicated caregivers providing them with shelter, water, food and veterinary care if required.

