Almost every country invests in managing its dog population in some form, many following the concepts outlined in the OIE’s Stray Dog Population Control standard (chapter 7.7 Terrestrial Animal Health Code). However there is relatively little investment in assessing whether an intervention is ‘working’. The International Companion Animal Management Coalition (ICAM) felt this was a real block to progress. Without impact assessment of various interventions in different contexts we struggle to make evidence-based decisions about how to manage dog populations humanely and effectively.

The Article 7.7.7 of the Stray Dog Population Control standard establishes the importance of monitoring and evaluation. In 2015, ICAM launched Are we making a difference? A guide to monitoring and evaluating dog population management interventions; to provide practical guidance for implementation of this article.

This guide describes potential indicators, and accompanying methods of measurement, for eight impacts of dog population management (DPM), including reducing risks to human health such as rabies. Most interventions will have just a few impacts in mind; so not all the document will be relevant. Hence, ICAM have also developed an online navigation tool, which asks a series of questions about the dogs and intervention, resulting in a shorter tailored guidance document based on the answers. There are also tools available to help people train and test themselves on body condition scoring, one of the recommended indicators of dog welfare.

A number of case studies that have applied this ICAM guidance in the field will also be presented.

The scope of the guidelines is international with a particular objective of supporting those implementing DPM in resource limited communities. Hence the focus is on simple methods and meaningful indicators. The goal is to help people evaluate their work efficiently, and therefore increase the rate at which they adapt, improve and replicate humane interventions for the benefit of dogs and communities they live amongst.

Keywords: dogs –evaluation – indicators – monitoring– population management – stray dog control.