

Fortifying institutional resilience against biological threats (FIRABioT) project

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Introduction

Recognising the risks emanating from the accidental or deliberate release of animal pathogens and zoonoses, WOAAH developed and adopted its Biological threat reduction strategy, through which it collaborates with key partners at the health security interface, including the *Global Partnership against Weapons of Mass Destruction*.

The COVID-19 pandemic, African swine fever, and other events of international concern have recently exposed gaps and vulnerabilities in emergency preparedness and response of the international community to all hazards, including to events arising from crime and terrorism.

Through previous work funded by *Global Affairs Canada* (GAC), WOAAH has also identified gaps in the emergency management capacity of some of its Members, particularly in Africa

Project objectives

Through the *Fortifying institutional resilience against biological threats* (FIRABioT) Project, WOAAH aims to develop an organisation-wide sustainable emergency management system allowing it to respond to events linked to deliberate or accidental releases of biological pathogens in an agile and efficient manner, incorporating the technical response to an emergency and ensuring business continuity. **More importantly for the Africa region** is that WOAAH will also implement targeted activities to support Members in Africa and support the *Global Partnership* (GP) *Signature Initiative to Mitigate Biological Threats in Africa*.

Key areas (pillars) of capacity-building

WOAH will develop eLearning resources, emergency management personnel exchanges involving representatives from Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, and security-relevant WOAAH Focal Point Seminars to build emergency management capacity. Projects, in collaboration with WOAAH Reference Centers, will improve epidemic intelligence and surveillance capabilities. Through its *Veterinary Legislation Support Programme*, WOAAH will enhance the enabling environment for emergency preparedness and response of WOAAH Members.

1. Emergency management
2. Disease intelligence
3. Sustainable Laboratories
4. Veterinary Legislation

Conclusions

The project commenced in 2022 and will continue until 31 March 2025, with a budget of approximately EUR 7 million.

Following a Call for Expressions of Interest launched in August - September 2022, ten (10) African countries (WOAH Delegates) expressed interest in benefiting from this project, focusing on some or all of the above four pillars.

Meanwhile, several partner organisations are on board as well, willing to provide specific support to some or all of the beneficiary countries, e.g. EMC-AH (FAO), INTERPOL, UNICRI, VERTIC, PANVAC, and many more

Initial (10) beneficiary countries

Algeria
Congo (Rep)
Cote d'Ivoire
Kenya
Madagascar
Malawi
Morocco
Namibia
Tanzania
Zimbabwe



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Future Plans



The official launch of the project (in Africa) will take place in Nairobi, Kenya from 14 – 16 March 2023.

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