

REPORT ON

Tackling Agro-Crime: Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement Agencies

Harare - Zimbabwe

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**Organised by the
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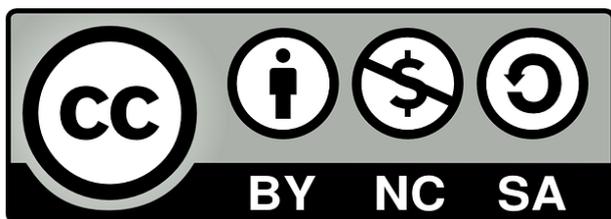
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Table of Contents

Acknowledgement.....	4
Executive summary.....	4
Background.....	5
Session 1: Opening.....	6
Session 2: Workshop Introduction.....	7
Session 3: The agro-crime threat landscape.....	8
Sessions 4 and 5: Agro-crime introductions.....	8
Session 6: National prioritisation of agro-crimes.....	10
Session 7: Introducing the agro-crime collaboration roadmap.....	10
Sessions 8 and 9: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps.....	13
Session 10: Scenario-based exercise and summary country outputs.....	13
Session 11: Closing.....	14
Conclusion.....	14
Annexes.....	15
Annex 1: Photos.....	15
Annex 2: Agenda.....	15
Annex 3: Pre-workshop survey.....	17
Annex 4: Post-workshop participant feedback.....	17
Annex 5: The learning worksheets.....	17

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- Peter Ballantyne, Facilitator and communications consultant, The United Kingdom
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- Meyir Yiryele, Wildlife Forestry Commission, Wildlife Division, Ghana
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- Tirelo Bakae, Botswana Police Service, Botswana
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- Fanny Ewann, Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, INTERPOL
- Daniel Donachie, Programme Manager-Emergency Management, WOAH
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This meeting report was produced by Emma Wijers and reviewed by Peter Ballantyne, Ian Peter Busuulwa, Daniel Donachie, and Fanny Ewann.

This workshop was part of WOAH's Fortifying Institutional Resilience Against Biological Threats (FIRABioT) project, funded by Global Affairs Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program in support of the Global Partnership's Signature Initiative to Mitigate Biological Threats in Africa (SIMBA).

Executive summary

The Tackling Agro-Crime: Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement Agencies, held in Harare, Zimbabwe from 25 – 28 November 2025, was jointly organised by the World Organisation for Animal Health (WOAH) and International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL) under the *Fortifying Institutional Resilience Against Biological Threats* (FIRABioT) project, funded by Global Affairs Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Programme. The workshop brought together over 50 participants from Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies across the nine FIRABioT beneficiary countries: Algeria, Congo (Republic), Kenya, Madagascar, Malawi, Morocco, Namibia, Tanzania, and Zimbabwe. The main objective of the workshop was to foster cooperation between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement at national and regional levels, using the Agro-Crime Roadmap as a practical guiding tool to enhance joint efforts in combatting agro-crime. This landmark workshop underscored the critical importance of interagency collaboration in addressing the growing threats posed by agro-crime. Facilitators and resource persons from multidisciplinary backgrounds guided participants through the different learning materials and contributed to the rich discussions.

Participants engaged in plenary sessions introducing the Agro-Crime Roadmap and the nine categories of agro-crime: falsified products, non-compliance, animal welfare crimes, illicit wildlife use, food fraud, smuggling, theft, poaching and other illegal activities, Deliberate release of pathogens and toxins (including agro-terrorism, and disinformation. Case studies and practical exercises assisted participants to identify national priority agro-crimes, define concrete actions to address them, and map key stakeholders responsible for implementation. Discussions provided valuable feedback on the roadmap, including strategies to ensure its adoption by national Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services. Going forward, the countries will continue developing and implementing their agro-crime roadmaps, while WOAH and INTERPOL will refine the guiding tool and provide technical assistance to Members for its implementation.

Background

Animal agro-crimes encompass a wide range of offenses, such as falsified products, non-compliance, animal welfare crimes, illicit wildlife use, food fraud, smuggling, theft, poaching and other illegal activities, Deliberate release of pathogens and toxins (including agro-terrorism), and disinformation. Such crimes not only harm the immediate victims but also undermine the integrity of food systems, disrupt ecosystems, and threaten the economy, public health and safety. Moreover, agro-crimes have the potential to introduce zoonotic diseases, disrupt global trade, and weaken biosecurity frameworks. Agro-crimes also have the potential to undermine public confidence in regulatory authorities, creating broader governance challenges.

Effectively addressing these issues requires that Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies work better together to mobilise necessary resources, expertise, and regulatory powers. The complexity and transnational nature of animal agro-crimes demand coordinated, multi-sectoral responses that leverage the unique skills of both sectors. By fostering collaboration, agencies can enhance intelligence-sharing, improve risk and threat assessments, and conduct joint operations that combat animal agro-crime more efficiently.

Reflecting this need for stronger and more effective collaboration, WOA and INTERPOL have been working together for several years to support their Members in preventing, preparing for, and responding to agro-crime incidents involving animals, animal products and/or animal pathogens and toxins. They have developed an Agro-Crime Roadmap intended to guide Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies in addressing animal agro-crime. The Roadmap provides a structured approach to support collaboration by presenting different types of animal agro-crime, including case studies, key actors to consider, as well as practical actions to foster collaboration. The Roadmap will be used by both organisations in capacity building efforts and made public for WOA and INTERPOL Members to use themselves.

Using the Agro-Crime Roadmap as a guiding tool and at the request of the beneficiary countries of the Fortifying Institutional Resilience Against Biological Threats (FIRABioT) project, funded by Global Affairs Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program, WOA and INTERPOL organised this Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement.

Objectives

The workshop purpose was to foster cooperation between Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services at national and regional levels using the roadmap as a guiding tool. The workshop objectives were to:

1. Enable participants to understand agro-crime and its effects.
2. Strengthen understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key stakeholders from Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services in countering agro-crime.
3. Introduce participants to the agro-crime roadmap, its key elements and uses.
4. Using the agro-crime roadmap, support Member delegations in developing draft national roadmaps that:
 - Identify priority agro-crime;
 - Set out concrete actions and identify key stakeholders for implementation;
 - Provide a foundation for follow-up beyond the workshop.
5. Foster stronger relationships between Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services, both within countries and across borders.
6. Obtain feedback on the roadmap including strategies for its uptake by national Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services.

Methodology

The workshop adopted an interactive and participatory approach, combining expert-led presentations, exercises, and facilitated group discussions (see the agenda in Annex 1). This approach was designed to encourage cross-sector dialogue and support the practical application of concepts discussed during the workshop.

Plenary sessions provided the foundational knowledge required to understand agro-crime and effective interagency collaboration. These sessions included presentations on the global agro-crime threat landscape, the collaboration framework between WOA and INTERPOL, and detailed briefings on the agro-crimes and collaboration pathways outlined in the Agro-Crime Roadmap.

During group sessions, Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agency representatives worked on the development of draft National Agro-Crime Roadmaps. To support this, each country delegation was provided with three structured

worksheets (see Annex 5). Worksheet 1 guided participants in identifying and analysing priority agro-crimes within their national contexts. Worksheet 2 focused on collaboration mechanisms between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies. These inputs were then consolidated in Worksheet 3, which brought together key findings from the previous exercises and supported countries in outlining concrete next steps and priorities for implementation. Facilitators and subject-matter experts actively supported the groups throughout the process by providing guidance, clarifying questions, and ensuring alignment with the roadmap framework.

Session 1: Opening

Welcome remarks for WOAHA were delivered by Dr Daniel Donachie, Programme Manager for Emergency Management, on behalf of Dr Moetapele Letshwenyo, Sub-Regional Representative for Southern Africa.

Donachie highlighted that no country in the world is immune to agro-crime. He noted that agro-crime is complex, can affect multiple countries through cross-border activities, and is constantly evolving. In the Africa region, additional challenges include porous borders, resource constraints, and vast informal markets, all of which create vulnerabilities that criminals can exploit.

He underscored the long-standing collaboration between WOAHA and INTERPOL to support their Members at the intersection of animal health and security. Together, WOAHA and INTERPOL developed the Tackling Agro-Crime Roadmap, which forms the basis of the workshop.

Mr Adrien Sivignon, Coordinator of the Bioterrorism Prevention Unit at INTERPOL, highlighted the strong partnership between the two organisations, noting that they are fundamentally committed to protecting societies from risks that cross borders, sectors, and disciplines. Sivignon also emphasised that trusted relationships are the foundation of collective success, as criminals exploit gaps, borders, and lack of coordination. He stressed that responses must be unified and well-connected both within countries and across the region. Finally, he encouraged participants to draw on their experiences to shape national agro-crime roadmaps that are grounded in local realities.

Both WOAHA and INTERPOL acknowledged the support by Global Affairs Canada Weapons Threat Reduction Program through the FIRABioT Project that organised the workshop.

On behalf of the Government of Canada, Ms Jessica Dawson, Counsellor at the Embassy of Canada to Zimbabwe, highlighted the significant impact of infectious diseases across Africa and noted that many countries across the global still face gaps in emergency preparedness and cross-sector coordination. Through its Weapons Threat Reduction Program and the *G7-led Global Partnership Against the Spread of Weapons and Materials of Mass Destruction* (GPWMD). Canada reaffirmed its commitment to strengthening cooperation between veterinary services and law enforcement agencies. In collaboration with Africa CDC, Canada launched the *Signature Initiative to Mitigate Deliberate Biological Threats in Africa* (SIMBA) to reduce bio-threats through the aligned activities of GP and African countries working cross inter-connected priority areas for collective action. Lastly, participants were complimented for their expertise and dedication to advancing national and regional capacities to prevent, detect, and respond to agro-crime and other biological emergencies.

Professor Dr Obert Jiri, Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water, and Rural Development of the Government of Zimbabwe, provided opening remarks on behalf of the host country. He welcomed participants to Harare and highlighted Zimbabwe's pleasure in hosting the workshop. He underscored the serious threat posed by agro-crime and that this workshop is not only timely but also essential.

He outlined Zimbabwe's commitment to national biosecurity, and multi-sectoral cooperation, supported through FIRABioT activities and partnerships with WOAHA, INTERPOL, and Global Affairs Canada. He encouraged participants to use the workshop to deepen their understanding, strengthen networks, and use the new Agro-Crime Roadmap. He concluded by reaffirming that collective action is essential to protect food security, public health, and regional stability.

Participant expectations

Through a quick introductions exercise, participants expressed interests in enhancing collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies, particularly to better understand how agro-crime can be mitigated and controlled. They highlighted that, while some countries have strong scientific and laboratory expertise, there is a need to establish a platform that enables systematic collaboration and information exchange. Participants also wished to learn how outbreak investigations in cases of suspected deliberate release of pathogens can be conducted more effectively, and how to engage

with the stakeholders present to build useful and sustainable networks. Lastly, participants emphasised the importance of exchanging experiences with other countries on how they address agro-crime.

Session 2: Workshop Introduction

Following the formal welcomes, Daniel Donachie (WOAH) and Fanny Ewann (INTERPOL) outlined its purpose: to foster cooperation between Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services at national and regional levels, using the Agro-Crime Roadmap as the main guiding tool.

They emphasised that agro-crime, in this context, refers specifically to crimes involving animals and animal products, it does not include plants or crops, which fall outside the scope of this initiative.

They reminded participants of the working definition of agro-crime used in the workshop: A deliberate or accidental criminal act or omission against, involving or impacting (directly or indirectly) animals, the inputs used to raise them, or their products. When deliberate, such crimes can be motivated by financial or personal gain, negligence or ideological reasons. They can harm or disrupt human, environmental or animal health and welfare, food safety, food authenticity, economic and social activity or national security. When financially motivated, they often boost the activities of organised crime.

Donachie and Ewann introduced the Agro-Crime Roadmap, which serves as the working tool for the workshop. Throughout the workshop, countries would draft their national agro-crime collaboration roadmaps bringing together key actors from both Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services. While many actions are required to recognise, prevent, and respond to agro-crime, a robust collaboration framework and strong relationships between the two sectors are fundamental.

Donachie also presented the results of the pre-workshop survey, which captured the expectations of participants (Annex 3). A total of 29 responses were collected (59% of all participants), with 59% coming from Veterinary Services and 41% from Law Enforcement.

WOAH and INTERPOL collaboration

Also, in this scene-setting session, participants were introduced to the missions and mandates of INTERPOL and WOAHA as well as their recent collaborations in this space.

INTERPOL supports law enforcement agencies in 196 member countries. It facilitates cross-border cooperation, enables secure information sharing, coordinates operations, and provides technical and analytical support to help countries prevent and combat transnational crime, including biological and agro-crime threats, through initiatives such as BioTracker.

WOAH is an intergovernmental organisation responsible for improving animal health, animal welfare, and veterinary public health worldwide. With 183 Members, it sets international standards, supports countries in strengthening their veterinary services, and enhances global preparedness and response to animal diseases, including zoonoses and biological threats.

The collaboration between WOAHA and INTERPOL began in 2017 and was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) in 2022 that strengthens support to Members in addressing threats posed by agro-crime, agro-terrorism, and incidents involving animal or zoonotic pathogens or biotoxins.

Together, the organisations have produced several technical publications and guidelines, including on [Countering Disinformation and Misinformation in Animal Health Emergencies](#) and forthcoming guidelines on conducting investigative interviews.

In November 2025, WOAHA organised the [Global Conference on Biological Threat Reduction](#). The Zimbabwean delegation expressed appreciation that global health security discussions increasingly integrate law enforcement, recognising their essential investigative expertise.

In July 2024, INTERPOL held the first edition of its Global Security Conference, with the next scheduled for November 2026 where plant and animal biosecurity will be integrated. INTERPOL shared its work on biosecurity and emerging technologies, presenting 12 key action points to strengthen global biosecurity including one specifically on the prevention of agro-crime.

As part of the WOAHA–INTERPOL collaboration agreement, several large-scale international simulation exercises have been conducted, including:

-
1. **Exercise Phoenix** (February 2023) was organised jointly by WOAAH, FAO, and INTERPOL. The regional simulation exercise brought together Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies from 12 countries to strengthen sustainable resilience against animal health emergencies caused by agro-terrorism and agro-crime.
 2. **Exercise Nyx** (October 2023), a tabletop exercise organised by WOAAH, FAO, and INTERPOL, aimed to explore interoperability, particularly in signal detection and information sharing between the organisations in the case of a deliberate biological event affecting human and animal health with cyberthreat elements.

Both organisations have also improved their real-time response by sharing information to support risk assessments, for example during Animal Swine Fever events in the Americas, and by providing key facts on Foot and Mouth Disease to Law Enforcement agencies during the disease re-emergence in Europe.

The Agro-crime Roadmap emerged from a WOAAH, FAO, and INTERPOL project on “Building Resilience Against Agro-Crime and Agro-Terrorism” that aimed to strengthen global preparedness against threats to animal health, public health, and national security. While agro-terrorism was relatively well understood, agro-crime lacked a clear definition, prompting a multi-sectoral virtual workshop in July 2020 to explore its types, propose a working definition, and identify opportunities for collaborative action.

The discussions in that workshop led to the development of the **WOAH–INTERPOL Agro-Crime Roadmap**, which is designed to support Veterinary Services and law enforcement agencies address agro-crimes, mobilise resources, expertise, and regulatory powers.

An INTERPOL [movie on fighting agro-crime](#) was displayed to demonstrate the importance of coordinated action among Law Enforcement agencies and Veterinary Services when preventing and investigating criminal and terrorist acts with potential for animal disease spread.

Session 3: The agro-crime threat landscape

Michael Bryan introduced participants to the global threat landscape of agro-crimes and showed [‘The Fever’ video](#) (THE FEVER | 2025 Official film | World Organisation for Animal Health).

He outlined how agricultural systems, high-value yet low-security, are increasingly targeted by criminal networks exploiting weaknesses in veterinary and law-enforcement coordination. Factors that make agriculture attractive to criminals include large economic value, dispersed operations, complex supply chains, poor traceability, and limited surveillance capacity. Bryan highlighted systemic vulnerabilities such as institutional fragmentation, weak enforcement, technology gaps, and under-resourced Veterinary Services.

His presentation also explored the criminal ecosystem behind agro-crime, ranging from opportunistic offenders to organised crime groups and non-state terrorist organisations. A spectrum of low-, medium-, and high-sophistication attacks was introduced, illustrating scenarios from the simple introduction of infected materials into a clean zone to highly sophisticated actions such as the genetic modification of strains to enhance virulence. A key challenge highlighted was that Veterinary Services often do not consider who might profit from unusual animal health events, while Law Enforcement agencies frequently do not view agricultural crimes as a priority and therefore may fail to link disease events with potential criminal activity.

For this reason, one central message was the importance of detecting early warning signs to prevent small incidents from escalating into major crises. Examples of indicators that should prompt immediate joint investigation between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies include epidemiological improbabilities, economic motives, insider-threat indicators, intelligence suggesting intent, genetic anomalies, and unusual geographic patterns.

Sessions 4 and 5: Agro-crime introductions

Each of the nine agro-crimes was presented by an expert from the team, including real examples, underlying drivers, potential impacts, and the actions required to detect, prevent, and respond to them. For each crime type, experts highlighted why these offences occur, how they affect national systems, and which stakeholders need to be involved in countering them effectively. Worksheet 1 (see annex 5) was completed by participants as a mechanism to support their understanding of the presentations.

1. Falsified Products

Jimmy Tickel explained that falsified products include medical, veterinary, or other items used in animal production, feeding, or health. These products are often distributed through informal trade networks, online platforms, or unlicensed vendors. Drivers include high demand, weak regulation, limited inspection capacity, and the high cost of genuine products. The impacts range from treatment failures and antimicrobial resistance (AMR) to major disease outbreaks caused by ineffective vaccines. Tickel emphasised that such incidents can significantly undermine public trust in Veterinary Services. An example provided was a criminal case in China, where a group distributed illegal ASF vaccines. Enforcement actions by the Ministry of Agriculture and Law Enforcement resulted in seven arrests after the group caused economic damage estimated at USD 2.5 million.

2. Non-compliance

Daniel Donachie highlighted that many agro-crimes arise from deliberate or accidental failures to comply with existing regulations. Examples include breaches of biosecurity measures, unsafe disposal of carcasses, illegal feeding practices, failure to report animal diseases, and non-compliance with animal movement. Key drivers identified for non-compliance were lack of awareness, limited resources, financial motivations, and weak regulatory oversight. Donachie stressed that the impacts of non-compliance can be severe, leading to for example, rapid disease spread or food safety threats. He also discussed the example of the 2001 Foot-and-Mouth Disease outbreak in the UK, which originated from a farmer feeding illegal waste and failing to notify the competent authority when animals became ill. The outbreak triggered a whole-of-government response and spread widely across the UK and into Ireland, France, and the Netherlands. Approximately six million animals were culled, devastating rural communities and livelihoods, with estimated economic losses exceeding GBP 5 billion and significant impacts on the mental wellbeing of farmers and veterinarians.

3. Animal welfare

Fanny Ewann emphasised that, although animal welfare is not universally recognised as a criminal offence, serious welfare violations can constitute agro-crime. Animal welfare crimes involve breaches of the *Five Freedoms*: freedom from hunger and thirst; discomfort; pain, injury or disease; fear and distress; and freedom to express normal behaviour. Such crimes may result from ignorance, traditional or cultural practices, or deliberate cruelty, and are increasingly recognised as being linked to other forms of criminal activity, including human abuse. Key drivers include traditional slaughter practices, lack of awareness, financial incentives, deliberate exploitation, and weak regulatory oversight. The donkey skin trade in Sub-Saharan Africa for *ejiao*, a traditional medicine product, was discussed as an example of serious animal welfare crime. Driven by international demand, approximately 5.9 million donkeys are killed annually, often under inhumane conditions. Additionally, trade and shipping routes used for donkey skins are frequently exploited by organised criminal networks involved in wildlife trafficking and other illicit activities. The trade has led to severe population declines and has negatively affected livelihoods that depend on donkeys for transport and farming. In 2024, the African Union (AU) outlawed the donkey skin trade, introducing a continent-wide ban that prohibits killing donkeys for their skins and represents a crucial step in protecting Africa's estimated 33 million donkeys from theft, trafficking, and slaughter.

4. Illicit wildlife use

Meyir Yiryele explained that certain practices, such as bushmeat consumption or captive breeding of wild species, may constitute criminal offences depending on national legislation. Economic incentives were identified as the key driver, alongside increased market access through online platforms, weak regulatory oversight, and traditional or cultural practice. Yiryele noted that in some African contexts, the continued use of skins from endangered species by traditional leaders can fuel illicit wildlife exploitation. The impacts of illicit wildlife use can include the transmission of pathogens, including zoonotic and reverse zoonotic diseases, and severe ecological consequences such as species decline, extinction, and ecosystem imbalance. A case study from Zambia in the 2020s illustrated the impact of illegal bushmeat trade targeting wild mammals. The trade is partially driven by the belief that wildlife meat is healthier because it is perceived as free from veterinary drugs. The commercialisation of bushmeat has resulted in significant declines in wildlife populations, particularly large mammals, inhumane killing practices, and increased biodiversity loss. Cultural perceptions and social prestige associated with bushmeat consumption were also highlighted as reinforcing demand and perpetuating illegal activity.

5. Disinformation

Michael Bryan explained that disinformation involves the deliberate spreading of false or misleading information to deceive or cause harm, whereas misinformation is the unintentional spread of such content. Disinformation can be highly disruptive, comparable to the deliberate release of a pathogen, as it exploits trust in authorities and spreads rapidly via digital platforms. Key drivers include low awareness, poor digital literacy, weak regulation, the use of AI tools, economic incentives, and mischief. Impacts can include eroded trust in governments and science, public confusion, lower compliance

with disease control, and social unrest. Bryan highlighted the 2024 case study from the Philippines during an African Swine Fever outbreak showing that false rumours from traders caused panic selling, economic losses for smallholder farmers, and disrupted local markets. Compliance with disease control measures dropped, complicating outbreak response, prompting authorities and cooperatives to call for stronger regulation and sanctions against deliberate disinformation.

6. Theft, poaching and other illegal activities

Meyir Yiryele underlined that animals are increasingly targeted for theft, illegal hunting or exploitation in activities such as gambling. He noted that sport betting, including ram fighting, has become a growing concern in parts of Africa, contributing to increased theft of livestock. Driven by economic incentives from the sale of animals and animal products, as well as cultural, social, and conflict-related factors, these crimes are often perpetrated by organised groups. Yiryele emphasised that such activities have serious consequences for animal welfare, biodiversity, and livelihoods, and are closely linked to organised crime. He cited examples from Nigeria and Mali, where cattle rustling since 2020 has involved armed actors, criminal networks, transporters, and buyers. These activities have fuelled conflict financing, large-scale violence, intercommunal tensions, illicit supply chains, and broader regional destabilisation, effectively sustaining a “war economy.”

7. Expert panel introducing agro-crimes

During this session, an expert panel discussion explored the final three agro-crimes from the Roadmap: food fraud, smuggling, and the deliberate release of pathogens, highlighting their drivers, impacts, and implications.

On **food fraud**, Jimmy Tickel illustrated how adulterated meat products, such as horse or pork meat sold as beef, undermine public trust, harm industry reputation, and create potential health risks, especially when falsified veterinary treatments are involved. Economic gain is the primary motivation, though intentional harm to impact industry can also occur.

Regarding the **deliberate release of pathogens**, Michael Bryan explained that perpetrators, ranging from organised crime groups to politically or ideologically motivated actors, may aim to cause economic sabotage. They exploit poor traceability, or spread fear, even through hoaxes. Historical examples, such as anthrax letter threats and environmentally motivated attacks, show that agro-terrorists do not need to succeed biologically to create major economic and social disruption.

On **smuggling**, Tirelo Bakae stressed that the illegal movement of animals and plants poses serious risks in Africa, including pathogen spread, ecological damage, introducing invasive species, and cross-border transmission of diseases like FMD. Moreover, improved training, especially for veterinary students, remains essential to enable veterinarians to recognise agro-crimes, and finding sustainable funding mechanisms is crucial.

Session 6: National prioritisation of agro-crimes

Participants were asked to complete the first worksheet (see Annex 5) based on the presentations delivered, following national-level discussions to identify the top three agro-crimes considered priorities in their respective contexts.

One example highlighted disinformation as a priority issue that can amplify other criminal activities, while others emphasised smuggling linked to porous borders, facilitating the illegal movement of veterinary products and animal feed.

The deliberate release of pathogens was identified as a serious threat due to its intentional nature and potential to cause harm beyond economic damage.

Discussions also underscored that agro-crimes are often interrelated, with cumulative impacts on animals, the environment, and government resources. Additional examples included human–wildlife conflict leading to the killing or poisoning of wildlife, weak compensation mechanisms and insufficient enforcement of international conventions such as CITES, and increasing disease spillover between wildlife and livestock, resulting in outbreaks such as PPR and FMD.

Session 7: Introducing the agro-crime collaboration roadmap

In addition to outlining the nine agro-crimes, the WOA–INTERPOL Agro-Crime Roadmap highlights the broad range of stakeholders involved in agro-crime risk reduction.

Dr Daniel Donachie and Dr Fanny Ewann emphasised that these stakeholders vary by country, region, and level of governance. On the law enforcement side, police, border control forces, wildlife rangers, and related services play key roles in detection, investigation, and prosecution. On the animal health side, veterinarians, veterinary paraprofessionals, community animal health workers, and other animal health actors contribute to disease detection and control, epidemiological investigations, inspections, and risk communication.

Challenges to collaboration were discussed, including differing priorities and resources, lack of shared understanding due to distinct skill sets and legal frameworks, absence of formal protocols, and legal constraints on joint investigations. The benefits of collaboration were also highlighted, notably improved risk and threat assessment, more effective addressing of root causes, expanded operational reach, better alignment between epidemiological and criminal investigations, and harmonised communication that strengthens public trust.

The session introduced core components of the **Agro-Crime Collaboration Framework**, which comprises nine actions structured around three pillars: the foundation for partnership, such as mutual understanding, advocacy, and regulatory harmonisation; strengthened collaboration through clear roles and responsibilities, information and intelligence sharing, and joint capacity building; and coordinated response actions, including joint threat assessment, response, and communication.

Worksheet 2 (see annex 5) was completed by participants as a mechanism to support their understanding of the presentations.

1. Component: Mutual understanding

Meyir Yiryele presented the first pathway of the Agro-Crime Collaboration Framework, which focuses on building mutual understanding between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement. The objective of this action is to establish trust, develop a shared understanding of respective mandates, and formalise intersectoral relationships. Yiryele highlighted key actions such as holding regular interagency meetings, developing a memorandum of understanding (MoU), designating clear points of contact, and regularly reviewing progress. He emphasised that joint training activities are essential to strengthening this collaboration. As an example of an output, the MoU between the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) was highlighted, demonstrating how clearly defined roles, responsibilities and joint investigation protocols can enable effective responses to agro-terrorism.

2. Component: Advocacy

Tirelo Bakae addressed advocacy to build sustained political commitment and public awareness necessary to secure resources and formal interagency mandates. The discussion highlighted the importance of clearly explaining what agro-crime is and communicating its far-reaching consequences, including economic losses, impacts on animal and public health, food security, public trust, and national security. Practical advocacy measures include preparing concise policy briefs for decision-makers, sharing case studies that demonstrate both the risks of inaction and the benefits of coordinated responses, and engaging directly with ministers and parliamentarians. Effective advocacy was illustrated by Bakae through the example of Botswana, where biodiversity conservation is considered a national priority and closely linked to livestock health and food security. By framing agro-crime and wildlife crime as serious national threats, the government successfully mobilised cross-sector engagement and political support, ultimately leading to the introduction of legislation in Parliament.

3. Component: Regulatory harmonisation

Ian Peter Busuulwa focused on regulatory harmonisation to establish a coherent and harmonised legal framework that supports joint action and removes legal barriers to cooperation. He highlighted that inadequate legislation could limit information sharing, joint investigations, and coordinated prosecutions. To address this, countries were encouraged to systematically review existing laws and work closely with legal experts to draft amendments or new provisions where needed. Engagement with parliamentarians was also emphasised to ensure timely adoption of harmonised legislation. Busuulwa highlighted the biological threat reduction focus of the WOAHA Veterinary Legislation Support Programme (VLSP), which can support countries in assessing and strengthening veterinary legislation in line with WOAHA standards and national security frameworks, and provides assistance to develop legislation that promotes cooperation with Law Enforcement authorities.

4. Component: Awareness and understanding of roles and responsibilities

Michael Bryan emphasised the need for Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services to clearly understand each other's mandates, capacities, and operational requirements when addressing agro-crime. He highlighted practical actions such as establishing interagency working groups, harmonising terminology, developing joint standard operating procedures

(SOPs), and defining clear triggers for information sharing and joint action. Regular meetings and staff secondments were presented as effective tools to strengthen day-to-day cooperation. These measures aim to build trust and improve the effectiveness of joint operations and investigations. An example from France illustrated this approach, where advisors are embedded within police stations and gendarmeries to handle animal abuse cases, liaise with Veterinary Authorities and animal protection organisations.

5. Component: Information and intelligence sharing

Fanny Ewann highlighted the importance of strengthening how Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services collect, analyse, and exchange information to prevent, detect, and respond to agro-crime. Defining clear triggers and standard operating procedures for sharing data and intelligence, supported by appropriate legal frameworks, was identified as a key action for both agencies. These measures contribute to faster detection and response to agro-crime incidents, while reinforcing trust and communication between the two sectors. An example was shared from cross-border cooperation between Italy and Austria, where a “bio-crime model” uses International Police and Customs Cooperation Centres (IPCCCs) to enable rapid information exchange on the illegal trade of animals and animal products through close collaboration between veterinary public health authorities, justice, and law enforcement across borders.

6. Component: Joint capacity building

Daniel Donachie described the objective of joint capacity building is to strengthen the ability of these sectors to detect and respond to agro-crime, while simultaneously fostering trust. Key actions discussed included conducting needs assessments to identify capability gaps, defining core competencies, developing and delivering joint training programmes, and organising regular joint simulation exercises (e.g., drills, tabletop, functional, and full-scale exercises). This improves operational readiness. [Exercise Phoenix](#) was presented as a concrete example, demonstrating how joint simulation exercises can enhance preparedness for deliberate biological threats and reinforce interagency collaboration.

7. Component: Joint threat assessments

Michael Bryan explained that the aim of joint threat assessments is to establish a mechanism for conducting cross-sectoral assessments of agro-crime to guide joint response planning and operations. Key actions include developing and agreeing on a standardised methodology, establishing pre-defined triggers and information-sharing protocols, and practicing procedures through exercises. Outcomes include increased situational awareness, improved early detection and response capacity, more efficient use of resources, and stronger trust and collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement. Notably, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) has conducted wildlife crime threat assessments in West and Central Africa, emphasising the need for cooperation between wildlife services and security sectors, and has published guidance on preparing and using serious and organised crime threat assessments.

8. Component: Joint response

Tirelo Bakae explained that the establishment of clear protocols that define responsibilities is essential for effective joint response and includes specifying who is responsible for communicating with stakeholders, media, and authorities. Field investigations into suspicious events are conducted collaboratively, while prosecutors are engaged early to ensure joint investigation procedures are followed. Liaison officers are appointed to strengthen interagency coordination and facilitate information flow across sectors. By the end of a response, teams ensure that all investigative actions are documented, enforcement measures are executed, and staff are trained to apply lessons learned in future incidents. These efforts lead to faster responses and stronger trust between sectors. Bakae gave the practical illustration of the joint response in the management of foot-and-mouth disease (FMD) in Botswana, demonstrating how a cross-sectoral response can contain disease, protect livelihoods, and reduce further risks.

9. Component: Joint risk communication

Tirelo Bakae stressed that joint risk communication ensures that Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies deliver co-ordinated, timely and coherent messages on agro-crime risks and response actions. This involves agreeing a shared communication strategy in advance, clearly defining roles and responsibilities, appointing a designated communication lead, and preparing pre-approved joint messages that are embedded in contingency plans. During incidents, trained spokespersons provide joint briefings while disinformation and misinformation are monitored and addressed. She highlighted the main outputs as joint communication protocols and key messages, with outcomes including increased public trust, better awareness of agro-crime risks, and improved compliance with control measures. An example comes from the Mpox response in Ghana and Nigeria, where Law Enforcement, Veterinary Services and Public Health professionals activated a WhatsApp group after Mpox was declared a Public Health Emergency of International Concern

in August 2024. Together, they developed guidance to support outbreak response, protecting first responders, preventing criminal activity and raising public awareness.

Sessions 8 and 9: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps

Following all nine collaboration pathway presentations, participants completed learning worksheet 3 (see annex 5) that brought together the key points from the presentations in country-specific frameworks.

Delegations were then invited to exchange and discuss their results with other countries, focusing on the rationale behind their prioritisation, the clarity of intended outcomes and indicators, and any standout elements within the proposed pathways. This exchange encouraged reflection on whether objectives were clearly articulated and allowed countries to identify good practices that could be adapted within their own roadmaps.

Finally, the rough learning materials were translated into draft country agro-crime roadmaps (using a standard PowerPoint template) that were the basis for summary presentations on the final day and were taken home after the event for in-country follow-up

Drawing on her recent internship at the WOAHA Sub-Regional Office for Eastern Africa in Nairobi, Kenya, Emma Wijers presented research that highlighted the importance of multi-sectoral and regional collaboration in Africa, using the development and implementation of animal disease contingency plans in five African countries as an example. The presentation showed that outdated legislation, limited dissemination, and the involvement of only a narrow range of national stakeholders in the development of contingency plans hindered effective implementation. She therefore emphasised that closer collaboration, including the integration of Law Enforcement into Veterinary Services operations, is essential to improve uptake of contingency plans and strengthen broader cooperation, as already demonstrated in some countries through national One Health coordination platforms.

Session 10: Scenario-based exercise and summary country outputs

On the last day, as part of a scenario-based exercise, participants received an email in the morning from the fictional World Anti-Agrocrime Alliance (WAACA). Country delegations were asked to prepare a short briefing based on their national agro-crime roadmap, including an overview of their current level of preparedness and planned next steps. During the country briefings, the facilitators assumed various roles within WAACA and asked the delegations questions based on their presentations. The role-play exercise functioned as consolidation of the workshop content, allowing participants to apply agro-crime concepts to their national realities.

Through this exercise, countries presented core elements of their draft Agro-Crime Roadmaps, outlining challenges, existing strengths, priority stakeholders, and what they would aim to change if all necessary resources were available. Several countries reported weak or informal collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies, with agencies often working in silos and lacking formalised coordination mechanisms. Specific challenges included weak controls at points of entry, limited joint action among Veterinary Services, Law Enforcement and public health authorities to address issues such as poaching, and inadequate livestock traceability systems, particularly for cattle theft. Some countries also identified limited laboratory capacity to detect agro-crimes. Facilitators noted that WOAHA Laboratory Twinning projects could help address these gaps.

Few countries reported having regulations in place that encompass aspects of agro-crime, such as food security legislation. However, the majority noted that although relevant legislation exists, it is outdated and insufficient to address emerging agro-crime threats. One delegation highlighted strong operational collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, with immediate notification during incidents, although this cooperation is not yet formalised through a memorandum of understanding. Another country emphasised the value of harmonised policies and joint border meetings with neighbouring countries to address cross-border agro-crime. Facilitators also noted that while One Health platforms exist in several countries, Law Enforcement agencies are often not included. Key stakeholders identified included traditional livestock practitioners, who could play an important role in traceability and awareness campaigns, as well as Regional Economic Communities, which were seen as essential partners for tackling cross-border agro-crime challenges.

The simulation exercise was perceived by participants as highly effective and engaging, providing a valuable platform to identify gaps and discuss practical ways to strengthen national responses to agro-crime. The interactive nature of the exercise, especially during the facilitators questioning, made the discussions realistic and offered clear opportunities for learning from the experiences of other countries. Facilitators congratulated participants for their work during the exercise and highlighted the need for regional and national collaboration in addressing agro-crime.

Fanny Ewann, Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, INTERPOL: "This exercise identified actionable points and demonstrated that we have collective capacity to address agro-crimes."

Session 11: Closing

The workshop concluded with a wrap-up session outlining the next steps for finalising the development of the national agro-crime roadmaps and their implementation. Participants were invited to share their views on the most important inter-country collaborations to be pursued as a next step.

Proposed actions included the establishment of shared platforms for the exchange of best practices, particularly among countries facing similar challenges in agro-crime detection and response; strengthened communication and intelligence-sharing mechanisms; the formalisation of memoranda of understanding between sectors; veterinary laboratory twinning programmes; joint and cross-border simulation exercises; and collaboration between one or more countries to address transboundary threats.

WOAH committed to supporting these next steps through technical assistance on the roadmap, targeted webinars on specific agro-crimes, and the organisation of a regional simulation exercise in the coming year.

INTERPOL highlighted the availability of the secure information-tracking tool, BioTracker, to facilitate bilateral and multilateral information-sharing among designated points of contact. Additionally, participants were invited to share their feedback (Annex 4).

Closing remarks

Closing remarks were delivered by Daniel Donachie on behalf of WOA and Fanny Ewann on behalf of INTERPOL. Donachie expressed his gratitude to all participants for their valuable contributions and emphasised that the inputs provided to the roadmap would help foster sustainable collaboration among countries, noting that addressing even a single agro-crime could generate benefits across the region. Representing INTERPOL's Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, Ewann highlighted that, while significant work remains, this workshop can be used to build on and advance future efforts. INTERPOL committed to leveraging its capabilities to ensure that the outcomes of the workshop are integrated into and supported through its Global Enhanced Biosecurity Programme at national, regional, and international levels.

Dr Pious Makaya, Chief Director at the Directorate of Veterinary Services and WOA Delegate for Zimbabwe, congratulated participants on their outstanding efforts and expressed appreciation to Global Affairs Canada for supporting the workshop through the FIRABioT project.

Conclusion

The Tackling Agro-Crime: Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement marked a historic step in translating the WOA-INTERPOL Agro-Crime Roadmap from guidance into practice. By bringing together Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies from nine FIRABioT beneficiary countries, the workshop demonstrated the critical value of structured, trust-based, and sustained collaboration to prevent, detect, and respond to agro-crime. Through a combination of expert presentations, practical case studies, and hands-on development of national agro-crime roadmaps, participants identified priority threats, key stakeholders, and concrete actions tailored to their national realities. The workshop not only strengthened mutual understanding between sectors but also generated practical feedback to further refine the roadmap. Moving forward, the continued development and implementation of national agro-crime roadmaps, supported by WOA and INTERPOL through technical assistance and capacity building, will be essential to enhancing institutional resilience and safeguarding animal health, public health, livelihoods, and security against agro-crime threats.

Annexes

Annex 1: Photos

[Flickr - https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjCCydm](https://flic.kr/s/aHBqjCCydm)

Annex 2: Agenda

Day 1		
Time	Session	Notes
0830-0900	Registration	
0900-0930	Session 1: Opening 1. Welcome remarks 2. Opening remarks	
0930-1000	Session 2: Co-organiser introductions – WOA and INTERPOL	Dan Donachie / Fanny Ewann
1000-1030	Session 3: Introductions / icebreaker exercise	Facilitator
1030-1100	Break	
1100-1130	Session 4: Agro-crime introductions – Framing presentation	Michael Bryan, University of Oxford
1130-1300	Session 5: Agro-crime introductions – Short presentations: 1. Falsified products / Animal welfare crimes / Non-compliance / Illicit wildlife use / Theft, poaching and other illegal activities / Disinformation	Short presentations and group activity
1300-1400	Lunch	
1400-1500	Session 6: Agro-crime introductions – Panel 2. Deliberate releases of pathogens / Smuggling / Food fraud	Short discussion and group activity
1500-1530	Session 7: Agro-crime introductions – Group work	
1530-1600	Break	
1600-1630	Session 8: Introducing the agro-crime collaboration ‘roadmap’	Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann
1630-1645	Session 9: Review of the day / plans for days 2 to 4	Facilitator
Evening	Workshop reception and dinner	

Day 2		
Time	Session	Notes
0845-0900	Session 10: Agenda and process update	Facilitator
0900-0945	Session 11: Agro-crime collaboration roadmap – introduction 1. Roadmap stakeholders 2. Roadmap collaboration framework	Short presentations and group activity
0945-1045	Session 12: Agro-crime collaboration roadmap – pathways 1. Mutual understanding / Advocacy / Regulatory harmonisation	Short presentations and group activities
1045-1115	Break	

1115-1245	Session 12 (continued): Agro-crime collaboration roadmap – pathways 2. Roles and responsibilities / Information and intelligence sharing / Joint capacity building / Joint threat assessments / Joint response / Joint risk communication	Short presentations and group activities
1245-1400	Lunch	
1400-1530	Session 13: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps – Introduction exercise	Country teams start on country roadmaps
1530-1600	Break	
1600-1715	Session 14: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps – first plenary and cross-country check-in.	
1715-1730	Session 15: Review of the day / plans for days 3 and 4	Facilitator

Day 3		
Time	Session	Notes
0845-0900	Session 16: Agenda and process update	Facilitator
0900-1030	Session 17: Developing country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps	Teams work on country roadmaps
1030-1100	Break	
1100-1230	Session 18: Developing country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps	Teams work on country roadmaps
1230-1400	Lunch	
1400-1530	Session 19: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps – second plenary and cross-country check-in.	Check-in on progress and learning / feedback and peer assist
1530-1600	Break	
1600-1715	Session 20: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps – drafting country roadmap presentations.	Prepare country ‘presentations’ for day 4
1715-1730	Session 21: Review of the day / plans for day 4	Facilitator

Day 4		
Time	Session	Notes
0845-0900	Session 22: Agenda and process update	Facilitator
0900-0930	Session 23: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps – finalising country roadmap presentations.	Pulling together country ‘presentations’
0930-1200	Session 24: Country agro-crime collaboration roadmaps – presentations	Teams interactively share and present
1000-1030	Break	
1200-1245	Session 25: Review and taking stock	Next steps; feedback
1245-1315	Session 26: Closing and Certificates	WOAH / INTERPOL
1315-1415	Lunch	

Annex 3: Pre-workshop survey

The pre-workshop survey captured the expectations of participants ahead of the Tackling Agro-Crime Strategic Planning Workshop. A total of **29 responses** were received, representing both **Veterinary Services (59%)** and **Law Enforcement (41%)**. Overall, participants expressed a strong desire to deepen their understanding of agro-crime and strengthen interagency collaboration.

Participants' pre-workshop survey responses highlighted a strong desire to deepen their understanding of agro-crime, including its various forms, impacts, and the roles of different agencies in addressing it. They also emphasised the importance of strengthening collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, hoping the workshop would clarify responsibilities and provide practical tools for joint action. Many participants were eager to exchange experiences with other countries, gain new skills and techniques, and build networks that support regional cooperation. Overall, the survey showed clear expectations for practical learning, improved coordination mechanisms, and actionable guidance to enhance national and cross-border responses to agro-crime.

Annex 4: Post-workshop participant feedback

A total of 37 out of 43 country participants—approximately 86%—provided post-workshop feedback. Participants consistently praised the workshop for its high-quality facilitation, rich technical content, and strongly participatory format, noting that the combination of expert presentations, group work, case studies, and simulation exercises significantly deepened their understanding of agro-crime. They highlighted that the workshop greatly strengthened collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement and created valuable opportunities for cross-country networking and exchange. Suggestions for enhancement included adding more real-world case studies, expanding simulation components, involving additional stakeholders such as customs and wildlife authorities, providing more structured follow-up support, and allowing additional time to explore complex topics. Overall, participants expressed strong appreciation for the workshop and emphasised the importance of continued capacity building and regional cooperation to effectively tackle agro-crime.

Annex 5: The learning worksheets

To support learning and for participants to track and internalise their own understandings of the key concepts shared, the organisers provided 3 worksheets, below, in English and French. During the sessions, country teams updated these in real time, discussing and contextualising the expert presentations to their own situations.



Tackling Agro-Crime: Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement – WORKSHEET 1

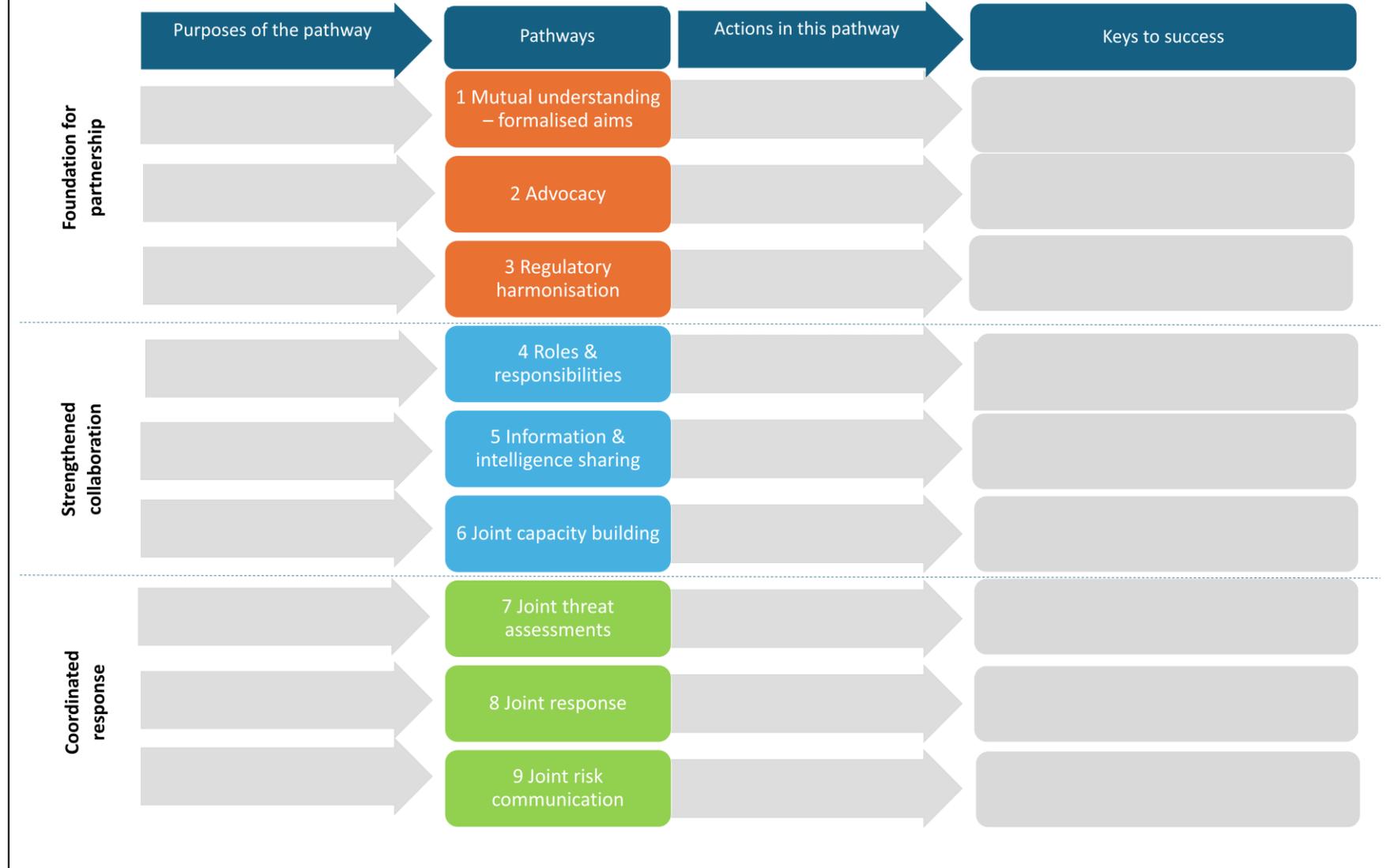
Based on what you heard/ what you know and experience / looking to your own country - Discuss and add information with the post-it notes

Priority (1-9)	Drivers – why the crime happens	Agro-crime	Impacts – the damage it causes	Stakeholders – who can tackle this
<input type="radio"/>		Falsified products		
<input type="radio"/>		Animal welfare crimes		
<input type="radio"/>		Deliberate release of pathogens or toxins		
<input type="radio"/>		Food fraud		
<input type="radio"/>		Non-compliance		
<input type="radio"/>		Illicit wildlife use		
<input type="radio"/>		Smuggling		
<input type="radio"/>		Theft, poaching and other illegal activities		
<input type="radio"/>		Disinformation		



Tackling Agro-Crime: Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement – WORKSHEET 2

Based on what you heard/ what you know and experience / looking to your own country - Discuss and add information with the post-it notes





Our agro-crime priorities and why

Priority 1 Deliberate release of pathogens or toxins

Priority 2

Priority 3

Our collaboration outcomes and what success looks like

Outcomes

Indicators

Actions to build buy-in

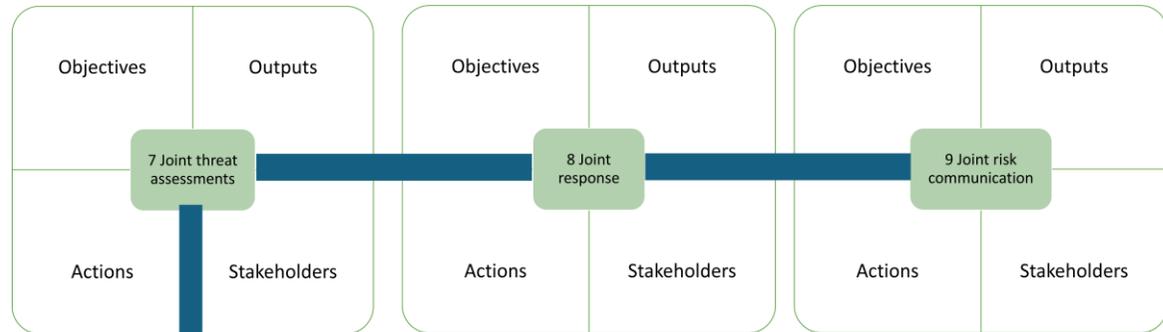
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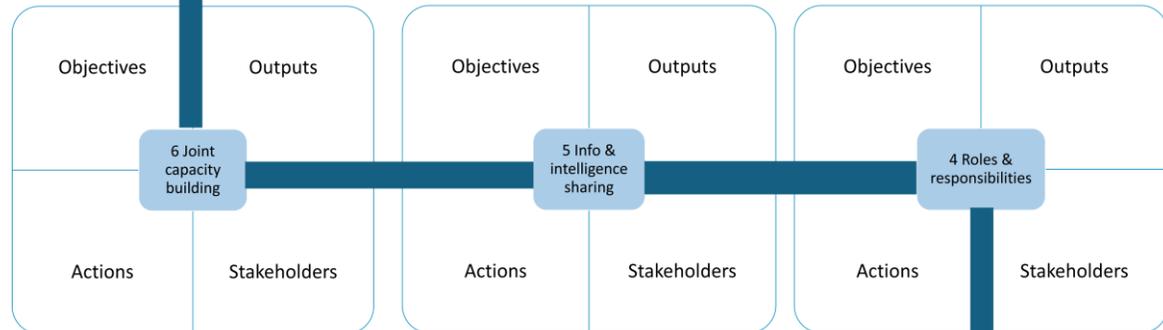
Who	Who	Who	Who
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Coordinated response



Strengthened collaboration



Foundation for partnership

