



REPORT ON

Regional Training on the Investigation of Suspicious Biological Events

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

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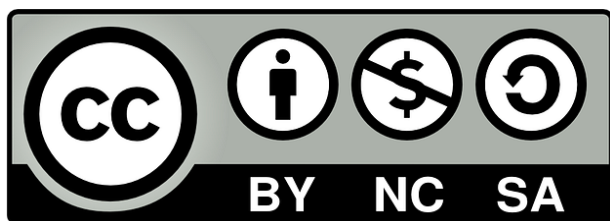
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Acknowledgement

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- Naomi ACQUAH, Ghana Police Service, INTERPOL National Central Bureau Accra, Ghana
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Executive summary

WOAH and INTERPOL under the *Fortifying Institutional Resilience Against Biological Threats* (FIRABioT) project funded by Global Affairs Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program organised a Regional Training on the Investigation of Suspicious Biological Events from 21–24 April 2026 in Dar es Salaam, Tanzania. The training brought together 34 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 workshop objective was to enhance country readiness for the investigation of suspicious biological events through fostering cooperation and coordinated actions among Law Enforcement Agencies and Veterinary Services.

Through technical presentations, practical demonstrations, group discussions, simulations, role-play exercises, country mapping activities, video-based learning, and scenario-based group work, the facilitators guided participants through concepts of triggers and indicators of suspicious biological events, joint threat credibility assessments, logistics of animal health disease investigation, biological crime scene management and coordination, investigative interview techniques, and principles of chain of custody. Participants mapped their existing countries' coordination efforts, gaps and suggested future actions to strengthen collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies at national level.

The pre- and post-training assessments demonstrated improved participant knowledge in joint threat credibility assessments, investigative interviewing, chain of custody, indicators of suspicious biological events, and interagency coordination. Participants also reported stronger multisectoral collaboration and improved professional networking across countries, while appreciating the practical simulations, interactive exercises, and country experience-sharing sessions. Overall, the workshop strengthened regional preparedness, technical capacity, and collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies in responding to agro-crime, agroterrorism, and other biological threats.

Background

Safeguarding animal health is essential because animals and their products underpin food security, livelihoods, public health, and national security. However, livestock systems are increasingly targeted by agro-crimes, which can be described as unlawful acts or omissions involving animals or animal products that violate legislation and negatively affect animal health, public health, national security, and economies. Examples include falsification of veterinary products, illicit wildlife use, non-compliance with disease control measures, and the deliberate release of animal pathogens. Within this threat

landscape, the intentional release of pathogens represents the most serious and complex risk. Agro-crime and agroterrorism, whether driven by economic, ideological, or political motives, can cause severe animal health crises, undermine public confidence in food systems, and destabilise national economies.

The animal health sector is particularly vulnerable due to the complexity and interconnected nature of modern livestock production systems, which involve extensive movement of animals and products across local and international supply chains. Comparably limited physical security at farms, along with regulatory gaps and weak enforcement in some countries, increases exposure to malicious acts. These vulnerabilities can be exploited by criminals to deliberately spread disease through the introduction of infected animals or contaminated materials into disease-free areas. Emerging technologies, such as gene editing and artificial intelligence further increase the risk of pathogen manipulation for nefarious use. In addition, attribution or distinguishing between natural, accidental, and deliberate outbreaks remains challenging due to probable similar initial clinical presentations, deficiencies in metagenomic surveillance capacities and interagency coordination gaps.

Addressing these threats requires strong collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement. Veterinary Services are responsible for disease surveillance, detection, epidemiological investigation, and control measures, but often lack the mandate or capacity to address criminal aspects. Law Enforcement agencies, on the other hand, have the expertise to conduct investigations, gather intelligence, preserve evidence, and support prosecution but lack expertise or awareness to deal with animal diseases outbreaks. Effective investigation of suspicious biological events therefore requires coordinated action between both sectors to mobilise additional resources, expertise, and regulatory powers beyond their immediate mandates.

Building on previous collaborative initiatives between WOA and INTERPOL, including development of national agro-crime roadmaps from a [regional agro-crime workshop in 2025](#), the two organisations jointly organised a regional training on the investigation of suspicious biological events to support practical implementation of national agro-crime roadmaps and address one of the key agro-crime priorities identified by the nine FIRABioT beneficiary countries.

Objectives of the Training:

The purpose of the workshop was to enhance country readiness for investigation of suspicious biological events through fostering cooperation and coordinated actions between Law Enforcement Agencies and Veterinary Services.

The workshop objectives were to:

- Build awareness of suspicious biological events including their triggers and indicators.
- Understand the key components of investigations of suspicious biological events including joint actions.
- Strengthen understanding of the roles and responsibilities of key actors from Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services in investigation of suspicious biological events.
- Foster stronger relationships between Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services, both within countries and across borders.
- Support implementation of national agro-crime roadmaps.

Methodology

The training was delivered using a multidisciplinary and participatory approach that combined theoretical and practical learning methods (see Annex 2). This included conceptual presentations, interactive discussions, scenario-based learning, group work, demonstrations, simulations and role-play exercises, video-based learning, quizzes, country presentations, and structured reflection sessions. These methods enhanced interactive learning, strengthened inter-sectoral collaboration, and enabled participants to practically apply concepts and skills to realistic biological threats scenarios.

Participants were actively engaged throughout the training through mixed country and thematic group discussions. Technical sessions were facilitated by experts from WOA, INTERPOL, and independent experts enabling participants to benefit from diverse expertise and perspectives. Practical activities included demonstrations of biological crime scene management, investigative interview demonstrations and role play using the PEACE model, threat credibility assessments, and scenario-based group exercises focused on agro-crime and agroterrorism events.

The training also incorporated country-level discussions and presentations where participants analysed their existing national systems, coordination mechanisms, strengths, challenges, and gaps related to joint investigations of suspicious biological events. Participants developed country-specific action points and plans for strengthening collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement which they presented about after the training. Learning outcomes were further reinforced through pre- and post-workshop assessments, quizzes, plenary discussions, facilitator feedback, and participant reflections.

Session 1: Opening

Day One started with a housekeeping session led by Mr Ian Peter Busuulwa, during which participants jointly agreed on the rules, guidelines, and procedures to be followed throughout the training. The session aimed to establish a respectful, organised, and interactive learning environment that would promote effective participation and collaboration among participants during the workshop.

Welcome remarks for WOAHA were delivered by Dr Neo Mapitse, the WOAHA Sub-Regional Representative for Eastern Africa. He emphasised that biological threats, whether natural, accidental, or deliberate, are becoming increasingly complex and pose significant risks to animal health, public health, socio-economic stability, and regional security. He noted that many African countries face challenges such as high disease burdens, porous borders, limited diagnostic and investigative capacities, and complex humanitarian settings, which may allow suspicious biological events to go undetected or be misinterpreted. Dr Mapitse further underscored the need for integrated multisectoral preparedness and stronger collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, noting that biological threats are cross-border, sophisticated, and cannot be addressed through siloed approaches. He concluded by reaffirming WOAHA's commitment to supporting its Members in strengthening health security and promoting regional collaboration to ensure suspicious biological events are effectively detected, investigated, and managed.

In his opening remarks, Mr Adrien Sivignon, the Coordinator of INTERPOL's Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, emphasised that biological threats do not respect institutional boundaries. He further noted that criminals often exploit loopholes within systems, underscoring the need for stronger collaboration among Veterinary Services, communities, and Law Enforcement agencies in preventing and responding to agrocrime and agroterrorism threats. He concluded by recognising the contributions of subject matter experts on several health security initiatives and thanking participants for their commitment to attend training.

On behalf of Global Affairs Canada, Ms Carol Mundle, the Head of Cooperation at the High Commission of Canada to Tanzania, recognised the efforts of different stakeholders and emphasised the importance of multisectoral collaboration in addressing biological threats. She noted that Canada has invested in the Global Partnership's Signature Initiative to Mitigate Biological Threats in Africa (SIMBA) because biological threats affect all countries, directly or indirectly, and therefore require collective action. She highlighted that participants' engagement in the training reflected their commitment to strengthening preparedness and response, adding that in today's interconnected world, animal health, public health, and security are inseparable, and everyone has a critical role to play in mitigating biological threats.

The training was officially opened by Dr Fabian Madele, the Deputy Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania, who appreciated WOAHA, INTERPOL, partners and funders for organising the regional workshop. He emphasised that biological threats are complex, transboundary, and require strong multisectoral and transnational collaboration guided by a One Health and health security approach. He highlighted Tanzania's commitment to mitigating biological threats and reaffirmed the Government's support towards regional and international efforts to address agro-crime and agroterrorism. He further encouraged participants to share experiences, strengthen networks, and develop practical strategies that can be implemented across countries to move from strategy to action in combating biological threats.

Both WOAHA and INTERPOL acknowledged the support by Global Affairs Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program through the FIRABioT Project under which the workshop was organised.

Session 2: Co-organiser introductions – WOAHA and INTERPOL

Daniel Donachie from WOAHA and **Fanny Ewann** from INTERPOL jointly facilitated the co-organiser introduction session about WOAHA's and INTERPOL's past, present and future activities. The session introduced participants to the purpose and objectives of the regional training, which aimed to strengthen country readiness for investigation of suspicious biological events through enhanced cooperation and coordinated actions between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies. Key objectives highlighted included building awareness of suspicious biological events and their triggers and indicators, strengthening understanding of joint investigation processes, clarifying the roles and responsibilities of key actors, fostering collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement across countries, and supporting implementation of national agro-crime roadmaps.

Ewann provided an overview of INTERPOL, its mandate, and its role in addressing global security threats, including biological threats and agro-crime. She explained that INTERPOL was established over 100 years ago to facilitate cooperation among national police forces and currently supports 196 member countries through global policing coordination and information sharing. She highlighted that INTERPOL operates through several global programmes addressing different forms of transnational crime: counterterrorism, organised and emerging crime, cybercrime, financial

crime and anti-corruption. She also described the different areas of expertise through which INTERPOL supports member countries in investigations and law enforcement operations.

Ewann emphasised the role of INTERPOL's Counter-Terrorism Directorate in addressing bioterrorism threats and supporting countries in preparedness and response to deliberate biological incidents. In addition, she discussed INTERPOL's use of international notices and databases to facilitate identification and tracking of wanted persons and criminal networks across borders and sharing of information about criminal and terrorist activities. She also introduced INTERPOL's BioTracker platform used for monitoring and tracking biological incidents relevant to Law Enforcement and supporting information exchange between countries.

Donachie provided an overview of WOA's mission, mandate, and global role in improving animal health, food safety, animal welfare, and strengthening Veterinary Services. Daniel also described the brief background of WOA and its operating structure concerning its Members, Regional and Sub-Regional Representations, Reference Centres, and Partners. He further emphasised WOA's core principles of transparency, sanitary safety, international solidarity, food safety, animal welfare, promotion of Veterinary Services, and scientific information sharing in strengthening global animal health systems.

Donachie and Ewann further highlighted the collaboration between WOA and INTERPOL, which began in 2017 and was formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding in 2022 to support Member Countries in addressing threats related to agro-crime, agro-terrorism, and incidents involving animal or zoonotic pathogens and biotoxins affecting animals. Participants were informed that the partnership focuses on data sharing, reciprocal representation, and joint capacity-building activities aimed at strengthening collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies in addressing biological threats. Different forms of animal agro-crimes and agroterrorism were also discussed, including falsified veterinary products, deliberate release of pathogens and toxins, animal smuggling, non-compliance with disease control measures, poaching and theft, illicit wildlife use, food and feed fraud, and animal cruelty and abuse.

In addition, they provided a recap of previous activities conducted under the WOA–INTERPOL collaboration, including the *Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement on Tackling Agro-Crime* held in Zimbabwe in November 2025, which brought together participants representing Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement sectors from the nine FIRABioT project beneficiary countries. During the workshop, countries developed draft national agro-crime roadmaps and prioritised key agro-crimes requiring coordinated national action. The Agro-Crime Roadmap tool was presented as a practical framework for strengthening collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement through mutual understanding, advocacy, regulatory harmonisation, improved understanding of roles and responsibilities, information and intelligence sharing, joint capacity-building initiatives, joint response, and joint communication.

Session 3: Case Studies and scene setting

Transboundary Animal Diseases as Potential Bioweapons

In the scene-setting session, **Reverend Spargo** from Zimbabwe presented on the growing concern regarding the misuse of Transboundary Animal Diseases (TADs) pathogens as potential bioweapons and their implications for animal health, food security, economies, and national security. He also discussed the drivers and risk factors associated with TADs, as well as the challenges of distinguishing naturally occurring outbreaks from deliberate disease introduction.

Spargo discussed several priority transboundary animal diseases of concern in Africa, outlining their epidemiological characteristics, modes of transmission, economic impacts, and potential misuse in agroterrorism. He provided a case study from May 2017 concerning an outbreak of high pathogenicity avian influenza at a large commercial farm in Zimbabwe. He also described triggers and indicators of this case that could warrant discussions between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement.

His presentation further emphasised the importance of strong Veterinary Services and multisectoral collaboration in investigating suspicious biological events, including the complementary roles of Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement in joint investigations. He concluded by discussing a recent Foot-and-mouth disease threat case in Botswana involving extortion emails threatening deliberate spread of the disease sent to Botswana Meat Commission, illustrating the increasing importance of coordinated preparedness and response to agro-crime and agroterrorism threats in the region.

Role of Veterinary Services in Investigation of Biothreats

In another scene setting session, **Daniel Donachie** presented on the role of Veterinary Services in disease investigations and management of transboundary animal disease outlining their key responsibilities in official disease control programmes, active and passive surveillance, outbreak investigations, disease control operations, risk communication,

and biosecurity measures. He further explained the objectives of disease control programmes, including disease prevention, elimination, and eradication, emphasising the importance of control programs, potential sources of disease reports and alerts from different stakeholders.

Donachie described the typical processes involved in epidemiological investigations following detection of a suspicious animal disease event from initial reporting and deployment of official veterinarians to implementation of movement restrictions, sampling, laboratory testing, disease confirmation, and outbreak response measures. He also highlighted the importance of maintaining strict biosecurity protocols during investigations to minimise disease spread and contamination.

He further discussed the role of epidemiological investigations in identifying disease sources, tracing spread pathways, and determining risk factors associated with outbreaks, explained the importance of inspection and examination of animals, records review, mapping affected premises, and conducting interviews to support disease investigations and outbreak management. The session concluded with a group discussion exercise where participants reflected on their countries' priority transboundary animal diseases, reasons for prioritisation, and national processes followed when suspicious animal disease events are identified.

Video Presentation on Anthrax as a Biological Threat

A [video](#) was played illustrating the risks posed by anthrax as a naturally occurring disease that can also be deliberately weaponised as a biological threat. Using a fictional outbreak scenario involving sudden animal deaths, infected humans, and contaminated animal feed, the video demonstrated how suspicious biological events may initially resemble natural disease outbreaks while potentially involving deliberate criminal acts, emphasising the importance of coordinated response and investigations involving Veterinary Services, Public Health, and Law Enforcement agencies. It further highlighted the need for intersectoral collaboration, forensic investigations, information sharing, and rapid response mechanisms to identify perpetrators, contain outbreaks, protect communities, and strengthen preparedness against agro-crime and agroterrorism threats.

Evolving threat landscape of agro-crime and agroterrorism.

Michael Bryan presented on deliberate biological events and the evolving threats of agro-crime and agroterrorism, highlighting vulnerabilities within agricultural systems such as coordination gaps, high economic value, extensive supply chains, porous borders, traceability weaknesses, and information asymmetries that can be exploited by malicious actors. He discussed different threat actors, including transnational organised crime groups, corrupt insiders, competitor sabotage, and terrorist groups, as well as varying levels of attack sophistication ranging from simple introduction of infected materials to advanced coordinated biological attacks involving genetic modification. The presentation also outlined motivations behind deliberate biological events, including economic sabotage, extortion, insurance fraud, political destabilisation, and terrorism, while noting the challenges in distinguishing deliberate events from natural outbreaks.

He focused on indicators and triggers that may require joint investigations between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies such as unusual outbreak patterns, suspicious insider activities, financial motives, intelligence suggesting deliberate intent, and genetic anomalies in pathogens. Bryan emphasised the need for intelligence sharing, coordinated investigations, and stronger collaboration between sectors to improve early detection and response to suspicious biological incidents.

Role of Law Enforcement in Suspicious Biological Events

Following Bryan's presentation, **Naomi Acquah** presented about the role of Law Enforcement in the investigation of suspicious biological events and the importance of coordinated multisectoral response mechanisms. She explained that suspicious biological events are unusual disease outbreaks in animals, crops, or the environment that may suggest intentional, accidental, or unnatural release of harmful biological agents or toxins. The presentation highlighted key indicators of suspicious events, including unusual epidemiological patterns, unexplained mortalities, multiple outbreak sites without natural links, contamination events, illicit animal movement, deliberate release, falsification, trespassing, and wildlife or environmental crimes that may signal potential unlawful activity.

Acquah emphasised the importance of early involvement of Law Enforcement agencies in outbreak investigations where criminality cannot be ruled out, highlighting that delays may lead to loss of evidence and weakened investigations. She discussed key response actions including scene security, evidence preservation, information management, and coordinated communication, while stressing the complementary roles of Law Enforcement, Veterinary Services, and Public Health agencies. Her presentation further highlighted the importance of interagency coordination, intelligence sharing, chain of custody, and collaboration with customs and border agencies in responding to cross-border biological threats and strengthening preparedness for suspicious biological events.

Following these two presentations, participants engaged in group discussions exercise where they reflected on their respective country contexts regarding suspicious and deliberate biological events affecting animals. The discussion explored whether countries had previously experienced suspected or confirmed deliberate biological incidents, potential actors who could perpetrate such acts, biological agents or toxins that could be used to target animal populations, and the roles of national Law Enforcement agencies in investigating such incidents.

Session 4: Triggers and Indicators

Fanny Ewann and **Anne-Lise Chaber** presented on triggers and indicators of suspicious biological incidents, focusing on the identification, assessment, and initial response to potential biological threats. They distinguished between overt and covert attack indicators and emphasised the importance of rapid recognition of biothreats. Participants were introduced to epidemiological, material, and intelligence indicators associated with health threats, biological attacks, laboratory incidents, customs-related threats, and plant-related biological events. The presentation highlighted indicators such as unusual epidemiological patterns, abnormal mortality rates, suspicious activities, illegal possession of biological materials, unauthorized laboratory access, biosecurity breaches, contaminated materials, suspicious documents, and unusual movements of animals or biological products. Different forms of deliberate biological release, including overt and covert attacks designed to avoid detection, were also discussed.

Ewann and Chaber emphasised the importance of rapid recognition and reporting of biological incidents to limit disease spread, protect public health, strengthen food security, and support timely investigations and response. They outlined key principles for frontline responders, including ensuring personal safety, protecting public security, alerting relevant authorities, preserving evidence, collecting and relaying information systematically, that could lead to the intervention of specialised teams. The session also highlighted the importance of documenting epidemiological, material, and intelligence-related information to support threat credibility assessments, coordinated response, and investigations. The presentation concluded by stressing the critical role of frontline personnel, effective information sharing, and multisectoral coordination in preparedness and response to suspicious biological events.

Group Discussions

Participants were introduced to a practical group exercise in which each country received two scenarios to analyse. The groups were tasked with identifying possible triggers and indicators likely to be encountered in the context of a biological incident targeting the animal population and list the four principles of initial response for frontline officers when discovering indicators of biological incidents. During the exercise, participants reviewed the scenario materials, discussed their observations, and analysed the potential biological threats presented in each case. The group discussions were followed by debrief presentations from each country, during which participants provided brief descriptions of the situations and presented the indicators identified from each scenario.

The activity implored critical thinking, collaborative analysis, and practical application of concepts discussed during previous sessions on biological threat detection and response. The exercise also reinforced the importance of vigilance, information analysis, and multisectoral coordination in recognising suspicious biological events and initiating appropriate response actions.

Session 5: Joint threat credibility assessments

Fanny Ewann and **Michael Bryan** jointly facilitated a session on joint threat credibility assessments in biological incidents, highlighting their importance, the process of conducting joint credibility assessments, and how they are performed at national level to determine the likeliness of a suspicious biological event to be natural, accidental, intentional, or a hoax. They re-emphasised the distinction between covert and overt biological attacks and discussed the different actors and response mechanisms involved in each scenario, as well as the roles played by different stakeholders in responding to biological threats. Examples from the United Kingdom and United States systems were used to illustrate national coordination mechanisms, including the involvement of Cabinet Offices, Health Response Partners, Counter-Terrorism Teams, FBI Headquarters, and local public health laboratory networks.

They outlined the objectives of joint threat credibility assessments and the key considerations involved, including technical feasibility, operational practicality, and behavioural resolve or adversarial intent. Ewann and Bryan also discussed different triggers that may initiate joint threat credibility assessments, including unusual disease clusters, suspicious outbreaks, overt threats, articulated threats, powder letters, intelligence suggesting deliberate release, and unusual epidemiological patterns. Participants contributed examples of triggers from their respective country contexts that could necessitate joint credibility assessments.

From the participants' questions, discussions also explored whether joint credibility assessments should be conducted at local or central level. Ewann explained that assessments often begin at local level and escalate to national or central coordination structures depending on existing protocols and the evolving nature of the incident. Additional discussions focused on mechanisms for classifying threats and integrating contingency plans into response decision-making processes.

A video demonstrating a threat credibility evaluation process for a suspected radiological weapon incident was played to illustrate the importance of rapid multisectoral coordination, intelligence sharing, joint assessment, and structured response mechanisms in managing high-consequence threats. The scenario showed how local responders, emergency services, the FBI, and specialised Weapons of Mass Destruction units collaborated to assess a suspicious radiological threat, determine its credibility, secure the area, and coordinate deployment of response assets. Participants were informed that although the scenario involved a radiological incident, the same principles of early notification, coordinated investigations, information sharing, and escalation mechanisms apply to suspicious biological events and biological threat investigations.

Group work

Participants worked in country groups to conduct joint threat credibility assessments using different biological threat scenarios and determine whether the threats were credible, possible, or hoaxes, as well as recommend appropriate response actions. The scenarios included deliberate spread of peste des petits ruminants through livestock smuggling, anthrax dissemination by environmental activists, intentional spread of African swine fever and Tilapia Lake virus, contamination of water sources with cholera, poisoning using oleander toxins, ransom-related Foot-and-mouth disease threats, introduction of white spot syndrome in aquaculture, and hypothetical release of rinderpest using drones.

Participants analysed the actors involved, their motivations, biological agents or toxins used, dissemination methods, intended targets to assess operational practicality, technical feasibility, and behavioural intent within their national contexts. During plenary discussions, country groups presented and justified their classifications based on the joint threat credibility assessment framework.

Participants discussed how joint threat credibility assessments could be operationalised within their countries by reviewing existing coordination structures, communication channels, legislation, contingency plans, and institutional arrangements for responding to biological threats. Key gaps identified included weak coordination between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, limited information sharing, unclear trigger mechanisms, and lack of formalised protocols. Participants proposed strengthening multisectoral coordination, communication pathways, community engagement, and integration of Law Enforcement into biological threat response systems.

Through group exercises, participants identified the agencies involved in joint assessments, coordination mechanisms, triggers for initiating assessments, responsible institutions, and communication channels for information sharing during suspicious biological events. Each country group later presented its proposed national coordination mechanisms and key considerations for implementing joint threat credibility assessments, followed by feedback and discussions with facilitators and participants.

Session 6: Logistics of an animal health disease investigation

Given Law Enforcement may be unfamiliar with agriculture settings and many of these premises are complex environments with multiple hazards and characteristics that can make investigations challenging, this session aimed to provide an overview of animal disease investigations on farms, notably on logistics and risks.

The session began with a scene-setting presentation by **Raphael Mwampashi, Department of Veterinary Services, Tanzania** on key health, physical injury, and animal welfare risks encountered in practice, as well as farm biosafety and biosecurity measures. Participants shared their observations on the visible risks presented in displayed photographs and proposed possible mitigation strategies for the identified hazards. Raphael also provided an overview of farm biosecurity advocacy activities and Veterinary Services information-sharing systems in Tanzania, highlighting that countries operate under different policies and enforcement frameworks.

Following Mwampashi's presentation, participants engaged in a group reflection exercise where Veterinary Services representatives described how disease investigations are conducted within their respective countries. The exercise focused on identifying measures used to establish entry and exit protocols during farm disease investigations, including movement control procedures, use of personal protective equipment, disinfection practices, and access management. Participants also discussed key occupational risks associated with working near or with livestock together with appropriate mitigation measures used to reduce these risks. They were encouraged to exchange country experiences and highlighted

the importance of standardised biosafety and biosecurity practices in protecting animal health, public health, and personnel safety during outbreak investigations.

Session 7: Biological crime scene management

Fanny Ewann and **Emmanuel Bouquot** jointly facilitated a theory session on biological crime scene management, focusing on the principles, procedures, and interagency coordination required when operating on a bio-contaminated crime scenes, particularly within farm and agricultural settings. The session highlighted the importance of integrating crime scene management with animal disease control measures and explained the unique challenges encountered when the crime scene is a farm environment.

The facilitators introduced the concept of CBRN (Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear) zoning within animal disease control operations, including establishment of cold, warm, and hot zones for hazard control and contamination management. Participants were guided through the key steps involved in responding to a biological crime scene, including scene cordoning, deployment of response teams, entry into contaminated zones, hazard assessment, scene reconnaissance, interagency briefings, forensic strategy development, evidence collection, evidence decontamination, packaging, transportation, and laboratory examination. The importance of standard operating procedures, specialised response teams, and coordinated interagency response mechanisms was strongly emphasised throughout the session.

The theory session was followed by the practical demonstrations of zoning and the removal of evidence from a crime scene. These activities were facilitated by Fanny Ewann and Emmanuel Bouquot, with active participation from some attendees in the demonstration.

Session 8: Investigative interview technique

Daniel Donachie and **Naomi Acquah** jointly facilitated a session on investigative interview techniques, elaborating on the key stages involved in planning and conducting effective interviews using the PEACE model involves five stages of investigative interviewing: **P**lanning and preparation, **E**ngage and explain, **A**ccount, clarification and challenge, **C**losure, and **E**valuation. The facilitators described the concept of joint investigative interviews and provided background on the [guidelines](#) developed by WOAAH and INTERPOL to support collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies. They also discussed different situations that may require joint investigative interviews between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement during biological incident investigations.

A critical focus was placed on the cultural and operational differences between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement agencies. Acquah further emphasised the importance of remaining objective during interviews and not allowing emotions or assumptions to influence investigations, while also noting that evolving technologies continue to provide new opportunities for conducting effective interviews.

The facilitators demonstrated the importance of joint interviews in saving time, reducing disruption, and minimising conflicting accounts during investigations. Three joint interview models were presented: Combined Interviews, where both sectors conduct interviews together in the same room; Expert Behind-the-Scenes Support, where health experts support investigations without directly participating in interviews; and Expert Remote Support, used during large-scale or geographically constrained investigations.

Illustrative video

A video was played illustrating a joint investigation involving a suspected deliberate outbreak of *Shigella dysenteriae* type 1 linked to a foodborne illness incident affecting several individuals. The video demonstrated how information sharing, coordinated interviews, epidemiological investigations, and joint evidence gathering enabled investigators to identify a suspect who had intentionally contaminated food using stolen bacterial cultures. Through the investigative process, the suspect's motivations, opportunity, and deliberate actions were uncovered, illustrating the challenges of distinguishing deliberate biological events from naturally occurring outbreaks.

The video scenario further highlighted the importance of collaboration between Public Health authorities and Law Enforcement agencies in identifying biological agents, preventing further spread of disease, preserving evidence, and apprehending perpetrators. Participants gave their key takeaways from the video played.

After the video, Donachie and Acquah described the principles and practical approaches for conducting effective interviews during joint investigations. They described in detail the PEACE model steps of interviewing — Planning and Preparation,

Engage and Explain, Account, Clarification and Challenge, Closure, and Evaluation — as a structured framework for obtaining accurate and reliable information during investigations.

The facilitators emphasised the importance of open-mindedness, professionalism, and avoiding assumptions during interviews, while highlighting the need for broad and open-ended questioning techniques to support evidence-based investigations. Key considerations discussed included legal and policy differences between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, management of vulnerable interviewees, interviewer and interviewee safety, biosafety and biosecurity measures, use of interpreters, cultural sensitivity, and the importance of careful planning and preparation before interviews.

Participants were guided through practical interview approaches including rapport building, effective communication techniques, use of open-ended questions, clarification of inconsistencies, note-taking, evidence recording, and evaluation of interview outcomes. The session also explored indicators of deception, methods for managing challenging interviews, and the importance of maintaining professionalism and objectivity throughout the interview process.

Practical demonstrations

Following the theory session, two interview demonstrations were conducted by the facilitation team in both English and French. In the English interview, Daniel Donachie acted as the interviewee, while Michael Bryan and Naomi Acquah acted as the investigators. In the French interview, Anne-Lise Chaber acted as the interviewee, while Fanny Ewann and Emmanuel Bouquot acted as the investigators.

After each demonstration, participants engaged in discussions with the facilitators to enhance understanding and practical application of the investigative interview principles presented during the session.

Role play

Following the practical demonstrations, participants were divided into country groups and assigned to different breakout rooms for a practical investigative interview exercise. Each group was assigned a facilitator and an actor to support the simulation activity in a different breakout room. Each group was required to assign one Veterinary Services interviewer and one Law Enforcement interviewer before the exercise commenced and participants were encouraged to engage fully with the simulation and learning process.

During the debrief session, participants reflected on the practical interview exercise and shared key lessons learned from their group experiences. Several groups highlighted that the exercise strengthened understanding of joint investigative interviews, particularly the importance of planning and preparation, maintaining professionalism, effective coordination between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement, and conducting structured interviews using the PEACE model principles. Participants appreciated the realistic nature of the simulations, noting that some actors were intentionally resistant, difficult, or uncooperative, which helped demonstrate real-life interview challenges and the need for calm, ethical, and professional interviewing approaches.

Groups also observed the importance of flexibility, teamwork, communication, and role clarity during joint investigations. Some participants acknowledged areas requiring improvement, including better questioning techniques, deeper probing during interviews, and balancing epidemiological and investigative questioning. The debrief further highlighted the value of maintaining composure, building rapport with interviewees, clearly explaining the purpose of interviews, and ensuring goal-setting and proper evaluation during investigations. Overall, participants commended the facilitators, actors, and organisers for delivering a practical and interactive learning experience that strengthened understanding of multisectoral investigative interview approaches in suspicious biological event investigations.

Session 9: Principles of Chain of Custody

Naomi Acquah and **Fanny Ewann** facilitated a session on the principles of chain of custody in biological incident investigations, focusing on proper evidence collection, labelling, documentation, verification, and traceability throughout the investigation process. They explained the double-packaging procedure used for biological incidents investigation and outlined the roles of the evidence collector, note taker, photographer, and logistician in preserving evidence integrity. Participants were also introduced to sample labelling procedures, evidence recovery logs, and the use of unique identifiers for samples and exhibits.

The session further covered forensic photography and evidence management procedures in biological investigations. Participants learned key principles of forensic photography, including framing, lighting, focus, sharpness, and proper positioning to ensure photographs are accurate, dependable, and legally admissible. Legal and operational considerations related to evidence packaging, transport, storage, examination, destruction, and access control were also discussed,

alongside broader considerations for agro-crime and agroterrorism investigations, including legislation, coordination, training, sample management, and access to evidence and information. Following the technical session, participants took part in an interactive Slido exercise where they responded to questions related to chain of custody principles in both English and French, with responses displayed and discussed.

Session 10: Country mapping of existing arrangements, frameworks, and gaps for joint investigation.

Daniel Donachie briefed participants on the country action-planning presentation exercise, where participants worked in country groups to assess and present their existing joint investigation capacities, strengths, and collaboration gaps between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement in responding to suspicious biological events (See Annex 6). The discussions focused on identifying priority actions to be implemented after the workshop, expected outcomes such as improved investigations and deterrence of agro-crime, future priority areas for strengthening multisectoral collaboration, and areas where support from WOA and INTERPOL would be required. During the presentations, participants received feedback and recommendations from facilitators and fellow participants to strengthen their proposed action plans and coordination mechanisms.

Session 11: Closing

Participants completed a post-training assessment (See Annex 4) to evaluate changes in their knowledge and understanding of the subject matter following the workshop. The results demonstrated an overall improvement in scores compared to the pre-training assessment, indicating enhanced participant understanding of suspicious biological event investigations and related concepts. Notably, one participant achieved a perfect score of 100% in the post-training quiz.

Closing remarks

Each country, through a nominated representative, delivered a vote of thanks to the organisers, and facilitators for sharing the knowledge and promised to implement the lessons acquired in their respective workplaces. Following the award of certificates, closing remarks were delivered by Dr Daniel Donachie on behalf of WOA and Dr Fanny Ewann on behalf of INTERPOL. Donachie expressed gratitude to the participants, interpreters, facilitators, organisers, hosts, and funders for their valuable contributions towards the success of the training. Ewann also thanked all stakeholders for their support and encouraged participants to continue raising awareness on agro-crime and agroterrorism, utilise the networks established during the workshop, and strengthen collaboration in responding to biological threats. She further reaffirmed INTERPOL's commitment to providing continued support where possible.

The workshop was officially closed by Dr Geoffrey Omarch on behalf of Dr Stella Bitanyi, Chief Executive Officer of the Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency. In his remarks, he thanked the facilitators, participants, organisers, and Global Affairs Canada for supporting the training. He encouraged participants to apply the knowledge and skills gained in their respective fields of work and continue fostering collaboration against agro-crime, agroterrorism, and other biological threats. He further reaffirmed the Government of Tanzania's commitment to partnerships and regional collaboration in strengthening preparedness and response to biological threats.

Conclusion

The Regional Training on the Investigation of Suspicious Biological Events successfully strengthened participants' knowledge and practical understanding of agro-crime, agroterrorism, and multisectoral investigation of suspicious biological events and further improved their understanding of joint threat credibility assessments, investigative interviewing, biological crime scene management, chain of custody, and interagency coordination. Country discussions and action-planning exercises enabled participants to identify existing strengths, coordination gaps, and priority actions needed to strengthen national preparedness and joint investigation mechanisms. The pre- and post-training assessments, together with the workshop evaluation results, demonstrated significant improvement in participant knowledge, strengthened professional networks, and increased confidence in multisectoral collaboration.

The workshop provided an important platform for enhancing regional cooperation, information sharing, and coordinated preparedness against agro-crime, agroterrorism, and other biological threats. Continued collaboration, practical simulation exercises, institutional support, and implementation of country action plans will be essential for sustaining the gains achieved and strengthening national and regional capacity to investigate and respond to suspicious biological events. Following the workshop, WOA and INTERPOL will review the country action plans in more detail, and provide feedback

with a view to encourage participants to integrate their learnings and reflections into their draft agro-crime national roadmaps.

The materials and resources developed by this workshop could be refined and tailored for future joint capacity building efforts of both WOA and INTERPOL.

Annexes

Annex 1: Photos

[Regional Training on the Investigation of Suspicious Biological Events \(FIRABioT - Africa\) | Flickr](#)

Annex 2: Workshop Agenda

Regional Training on the Investigation of Suspicious Biological Events

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania

21-24 April 2026

Day 1 – Tuesday 21 April 2026		
Time	Session	Facilitator(s)
0830-0900	Registration	
0900-0930	Session 1: Opening - Dr Neo Mapitse, WOA Sub-Regional Representative for Eastern Africa - Mr. Adrien Sivignon, Coordinator, Bioterrorism Prevention Unit, INTERPOL (virtual) - Ms. Carol Mundle, Head of Cooperation, High Commission of Canada to Tanzania - Dr Fabian Madele, Deputy Permanent Secretary for the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries, Tanzania	
0930-0945	Group photo	
0945-1020	Session 2: Co-organiser introductions – WOA and INTERPOL Pre-workshop quiz	Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann
1020-1030	Introduction / icebreaker exercise	Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann
1030-1100	Break	
1100-1300	Session 3: Case Studies and scene setting - High impact transboundary animal diseases - Role of Veterinary Services in disease investigation Group work - Presentation on deliberate release and example of FMD threat case - Role of Law Enforcement in investigation of suspicious biological events Group work Learning Objectives - List at least 2 priority animal diseases at national level. - List at least 3 key roles of veterinary services in disease investigation. - List at least 3 biological agents or toxins that could be used deliberately against animal populations. - Identify which national law enforcement agency would be involved in the investigation of the deliberate use of a pathogen or toxin against an animal population and what role they would play.	Spargo Mooregood Dan Donachie Michael Bryan Naomi Acquah
1300-1400	Lunch	
1400-1500	Session 4a: Triggers and indicators Scenario group work	Fanny Ewann and Anne-Lise Chaber

	- Plenary review with participants <u>Learning objectives</u> - Define the terms trigger and indicator in the context of biological incident detection - Identify at least 4 triggers and indicators likely to be encountered in the context of a biological incident targeting the animal population - List the 4 principles of initial response for frontline officers when discovering indicators of biological incidents.	
1500-1530	Break	
1530-1700	Session 4b: Triggers and indicators (continued)	Fanny Ewann and Anne-Lise Chaber
1700-1715	Review of the day / plans for days 2 to 4	Ian Peter Busuulwa Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann
Evening	Workshop reception and dinner	

Day 2- Wednesday 22 April 2026		
Time	Session	Facilitator(s)
0830-0900	Session 8: Recap and warm-up for the day	Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann
0900-1045	Session 9a: Joint threat credibility assessments - Presentation and <i>Group work</i> <u>Learning objectives</u> - List the 3 elements that are considered when undertaking a Joint threat credibility assessment for a biological incident - Associate the 4 outcomes of the Joint threat credibility assessment to their recommended follow-up actions in the context of a biological incident - List at least 5 elements that should be included in a Joint threat credibility assessment protocol for a biological incident.	Fanny Ewann and Michael Bryan
1045-1115	Break	
1115-1300	Session 9b: Joint threat credibility assessments (continued)	Fanny Ewann and Michael Bryan
1300-1400	Lunch	
1400-1500	Session 10: Logistics of an animal health disease investigation - Presentation - Group reflection – Veterinary Services describe what happens in their own country <u>Learning objectives</u> - List at least 3 measures taken to establish entry/exit protocols when investigating disease on a farm. - Identify 3 risks associated with working near or with livestock and appropriate risk mitigation measures.	Daniel Mdelele Dan Donachie
1500-1530	Session 11a: Biological crime scene management principles and coordination with other sectors <u>Learning objectives</u> - Describe the concept of CBRN zoning within animal disease control measures. - Explain why interagency coordination is essential to biological crime scene management - List the 4 formal steps of evidence removal from a bio-contaminated crime scene.	Fanny Ewann and Emmanuel Bouquot
1530-1600	Break	
1600-1715	Session 11b: Biological crime scene management principles and coordination with other sectors (continued)	Fanny Ewann and Emmanuel Bouquot
1715-1730	Session 12: Recap of the day and plan for tomorrow	Ian Peter Busuulwa Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann

Day 3 – Thursday 23 April 2026		
Time	Session	Facilitator(s)
0845-0900	Session 13: Recap and warmup	
0900-1030	Session 14a : Interview techniques Presentation Demonstrations <u>Learning Objectives:</u> - List the 5 key stages of planning and conducting effective interviews using the PEACE model. - Describe three examples of how Law Enforcement and Veterinary Services can conduct joint interviews.	Dan Donachie Fanny Ewann, Emmanuel Bouquot, Anne-Lise Chaber
1030-1100	Break	
1100-1230	Session 14b: Interview techniques (continued)	Daniel Donachie
1230-1400	Lunch	
1400-1530	Session 15a: Principles of chain of custody <u>Learning objectives</u> - Define the chain of custody in the judiciary process and list the 4 principles underpinning its process. - List at least 4 challenges for maintaining chain of custody when investigating a suspicious animal disease event.	Fanny Ewann and Naomi Acquah
1530-1600	Break	
1600-1630	Session 15b: Principles of chain of custody (continued)	Fanny Ewann and Naomi Acquah
1630-1730	Session 16: Country mapping of existing arrangements, frameworks and gaps for joint investigation.	
1715-1730	Close and plan for tomorrow	

Day 4 - Friday 24 April 2026		
Time	Session	Facilitator(s)
0845-0900	Session 17: Agenda and process update	Dan Donachie and Fanny Ewann
0900-1000	Session 18: Finalisation of country presentations and peer review	
10h00-1030	Session 19: Country presentations	
1000-1030	Break	
1030-1200	Presentations continued	
1200-1230	Post-workshop quiz	
1230-1315	Closing and certificates - Dan Donachie, WOA - Fanny Ewann INTERPOL - Dr Stella Bitanyi, Chief Executive Officer, Tanzania Veterinary Laboratory Agency	
1315-1415	Lunch and Departure	

Annex 3: Pre-workshop quiz

The pre-training assessment was completed by 37 participants, including 24 English-speaking and 13 French-speaking respondents, with average scores ranging from 6.1 to 7.1 out of 12. Participants represented both Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement sectors.

The results showed strong baseline knowledge on the roles of Veterinary Services during outbreak investigations, transboundary animal diseases, and chain of custody principles, with 92–100% of participants answering these questions correctly. Moderate understanding was observed in investigative interviewing and interagency coordination, where 54–85% correctly identified PEACE model stages, joint interviews, and the importance of interagency coordination. However, important knowledge gaps were identified in technical areas related to suspicious biological event investigations. Only 0–23% correctly identified the components of Joint Threat Credibility Assessment, 0–13% correctly identified the principles of initial response to biological incidents, and only 8% identified the formal steps for removing evidence from biologically contaminated crime scenes. Understanding of INTERPOL's definition of an indicator was also low at 23–38%. These findings highlighted the need for strengthened capacity building in joint threat assessment, biological crime scene management, evidence managing, and multisectoral coordination.

Annex 4: Post-workshop quiz

The post-training assessment was completed by 38 participants, including 26 English-speaking and 12 French-speaking respondents, with average scores improving to 8.8 and 9.0 respectively compared to pre-training averages of 6.1 and 7.1. Participants represented both Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement sectors.

The results demonstrated substantial improvement in participants' knowledge across most thematic areas covered during the workshop. High levels of understanding were maintained in Veterinary Services roles during outbreak investigations, transboundary animal diseases, and chain of custody principles, with 96–100% correct responses. Knowledge of the PEACE investigative interviewing model improved from 54–63% during the pre-test to 81–92% in the post-test, while correct identification of joint interviews increased to 83–88%. Understanding of Joint Threat Credibility Assessment also improved, with correct responses on its components increasing from 0–23% to 54–58% and understanding of INTERPOL's definition of an indicator improving from 23–38% to 62–100%. Improvement was also observed in crime scene management and evidence handling, including evidence removal procedures and interagency coordination. Despite these gains, some technical areas remained challenging, particularly the principles of frontline response to biological incidents. Overall, the results demonstrated enhanced participant knowledge and strengthened understanding of joint investigations, threat credibility assessments, investigative interviewing, interagency coordination, and evidence management in suspicious biological event investigations.

Annex 5: Post-workshop participant feedback

The workshop evaluation was completed by 34 participants. Overall, the evaluation reflected a highly positive assessment of the workshop. After the training, 94% of participants rated their understanding of suspicious biological events as high or very high, while all participants reported improved understanding of their own sector's roles and responsibilities. Understanding of the roles of the other sector also improved significantly, with 97% rating their understanding as well or very well. Additionally, 85% described the potential for future collaboration between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement as strong or very strong. Most participants reported strengthened professional relationships both within their countries (91%) and across countries (97%).

Workshop organisation and logistics received high ratings. Participants highlighted the interactive learning approach, simulation exercises, practical sessions, multisectoral engagement, and experience sharing as key strengths. Recommendations included increasing simulation exercises, expanding field-based practical activities, and enhancing scenario-based learning. Overall, 97% of participants indicated that they would recommend the workshop to colleagues, demonstrating high satisfaction and confidence in the training's relevance and impact on multisectoral collaboration and preparedness for suspicious biological event investigations.