Strengthening the Interface Between Security Sector and Animal Health for Biological Threat Reduction

Fanny EWANN

Workshop on Biothreat Reduction in South-East Asia, June 2-3 2026

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80% of agents with potential bioterrorist use are zoonotic pathogens



©WOAH

When foot-and-mouth disease stopped the UK in its tracks

By Claire Bates
BBC News Magazine

17 February 2016 Share



Fifteen years ago foot-and-mouth disease led to the culling of millions of animals and the UK losing billions of pounds. Could it happen again?

In today's Magazine

South African man in court over disease threat

Brian Roach arrested on terror charges after emails to UK and US governments threatening to spread foot-and-mouth disease



▲ The farm of an expelled white farmer in Zimbabwe. Roach is believed to have been motivated by the farmers' plight. Photograph: Alexander Joe/AFP/Getty Images

A South African businessman accused of threatening to unleash biological weapons on Britain and the US may have been driven by concern over the plight of white farmers in neighbouring Zimbabwe, a spokesman for the prosecution said.

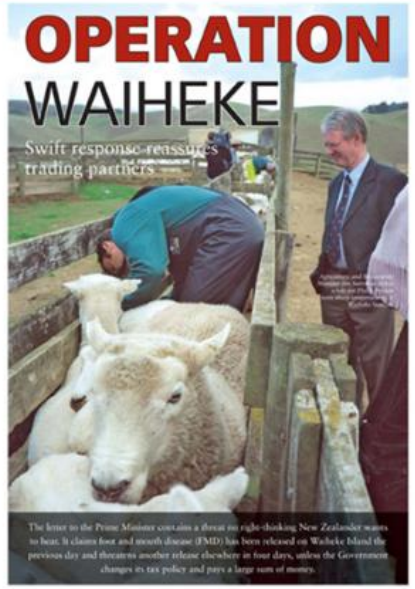
The suspect, Brian Roach, did not have the means to carry out his threats to spread foot-and-mouth disease, according to Mthunzi Mhaga. The 64-year-old Roach, who owns an engineering firm outside Johannesburg, appeared in a Johannesburg court after his arrest on terror charges.

Roach allegedly threatened in letters and emails sent to the British government to spread the disease in Britain and the US unless he was given $4m (£2.5m).

FRONTLINE NEWS

OPERATION WAIHEKE

Swift response reassures trading partners



The letter to the Prime Minister contains a threat no right-thinking New Zealander wants to hear. It claims foot and mouth disease (FMD) has been released on Waiheke Island the previous day and threatens another release elsewhere in four days, unless the Government changes its tax policy and pays a large sum of money.

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Animal Agroterrorism - Example

Mau Mau insurgents in Kenya, 1952





Synadenium Boissier

33 dead cattle, poisoned with euphorbia plant

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ANIMAL AGROCRIMES



Smuggling



Deliberate release of pathogens and toxins (including agro-terrorism)



Non-compliance



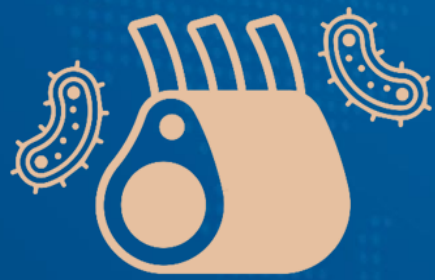
Falsified veterinary products



Poaching & Theft



Illicit wildlife use



Food/feed fraud



Animal cruelty & abuse

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AGROCRIME

Any offense impacting animals, the inputs used to raise them, or their products that is classified as a crime as per a country's **civil and penal codes**.

Committed for **personal or financial gain**.

AGROTERRORISM

The **intentional release** of biological agents or toxins for the purpose of harming or killing animals with the intent to intimidate or coerce a government or civilian population to further political or social objectives.

To further **political or social objectives.**

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Advantages of agroterrorism

- Agriculture is already a target for terrorism
- Biological agents are easy to source
- Often less dangerous to handle
- Duration of the attack (incubation, silent spread)
- Hard to distinguish from natural occurrence
- Economic impact, food insecurity, loss of livelihood
- Confusion, loss of trust in government institutions

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Consequences of agroterrorism and agrocrime

- Human health
- Livelihoods
- Animal health and welfare
- Biodiversity
- Economies







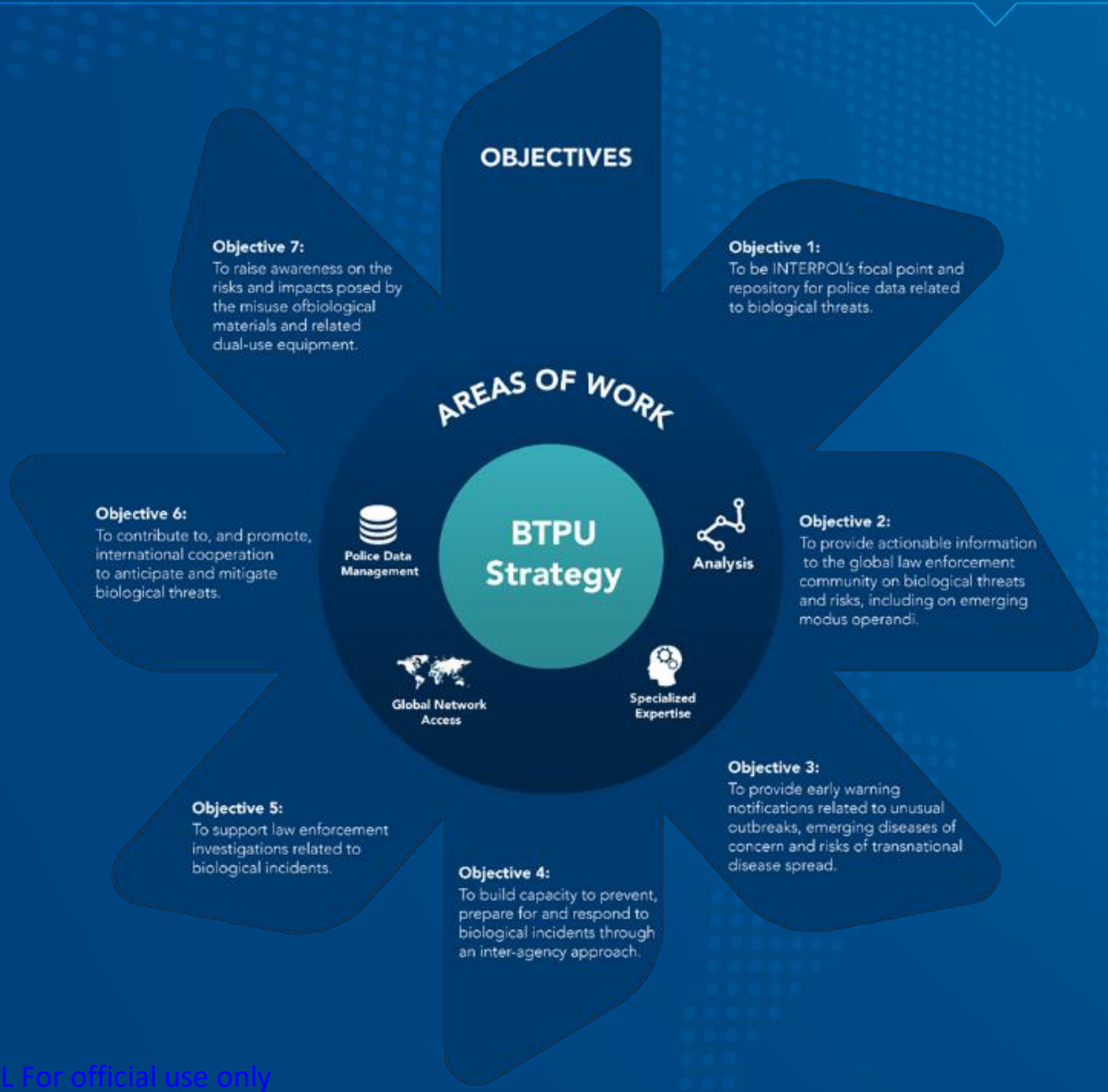
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INTERPOL BIOTERRORISM PREVENTION UNIT (BTPU)

"To support INTERPOL's global law enforcement community, through an inter-agency approach, to execute duties related to the prevention, preparedness and response to biological incidents, in particular the misuse of biological agents by non-state actors"

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INTERPOL BIOTERRORISM PREVENTION UNIT (BTPU)



Global Biosecurity Enhancement Programme



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POLICE DATA MANAGEMENT & CRIMINAL ANALYSIS



Global data repository to gather information about biological threats and incidents, including personal data on individuals involved in deliberate threats and incidents;

Early warning system;

Data visualization and tracking interface for the worldwide law enforcement community.

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INTERPOL NOTICES

226,538 VALID NOTICES | **16,862** ARE SHARED PUBLICALLY VIA OUR WEBSITE

PURPLE NOTICE
MODUS OPERANDI

INTERPOL-UN SECURITY COUNCIL SPECIAL NOTICE
GROUPS AND INDIVIDUALS SUBJECT TO UNSC SANCTIONS

RED NOTICE
WANTED PERSONS

YELLOW NOTICE
MISSING PERSONS

BLUE NOTICE
ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

BLACK NOTICE
UNIDENTIFIED BODIES

GREEN NOTICE
WARNINGS AND INTELLIGENCE

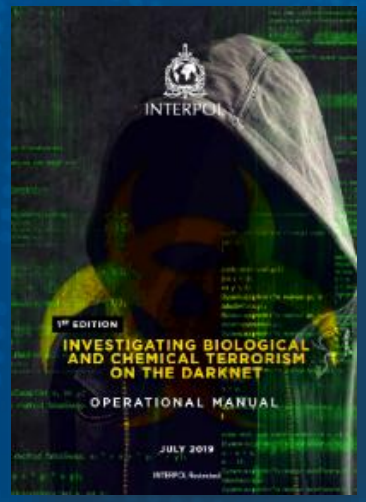
ORANGE NOTICE
IMMINENT THREAT

December 2023

VIRTUAL ACADEMY & CAPACITY BUILDING and TRAINING







- Manuals & Guidelines
- Videos (awareness & training)
- E-learning modules
- SPOC on Law enforcement preparedness and response to disease outbreaks



Crime Scene Training



Evidence Recovery



Basic Biosafety



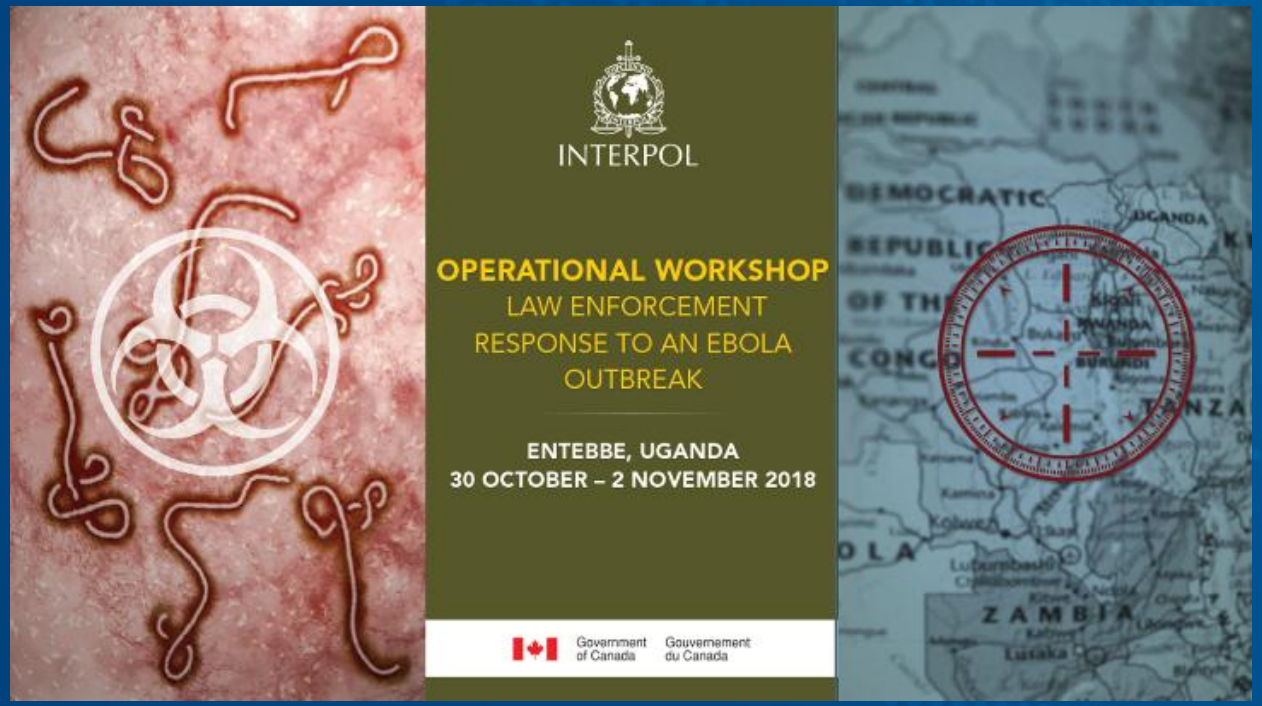
Dual-use Equipment



Joint investigation

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OPERATIONAL SUPPORT



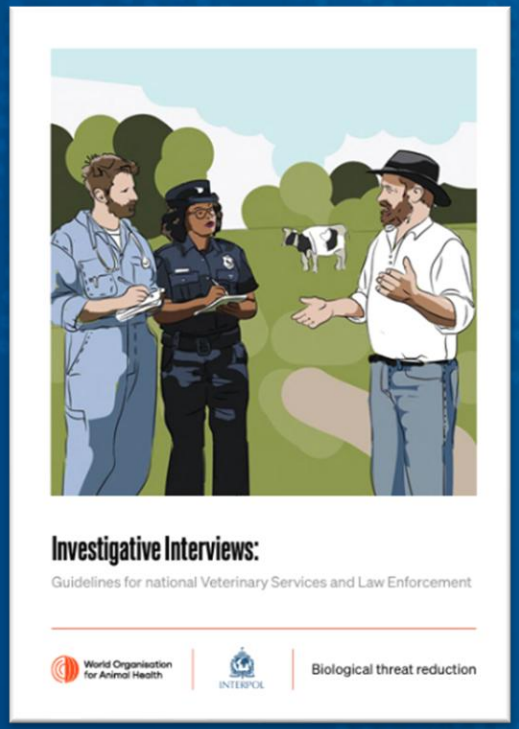
Incident Response Teams (IRT)

- Remote/On-site support
- Expert assistance
- Investigative support

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WOAH and INTERPOL Partnership



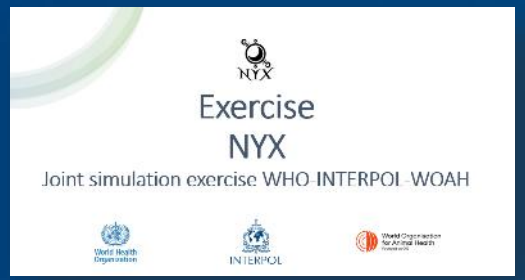


WOAH and INTERPOL working together since 2017. Relationship formalised into an MoU in 2022 to support their respective Memberships regarding threats posed by agro-crime, agro-terrorism and incidents involving animal or zoonotic pathogens or biotoxins affecting animals. MoU covers:

- Sharing of data
- Reciprocal representation
- Joint capacity building activities

Highlights include:

- Guidance on Countering Disinformation and Misinformation
- Emergency Management Exchanges
- Simulation Exercises
- Guidance on Investigative Interview Technique
- Agrocrime Roadmap (upcoming)





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CHALLENGES TO COLLABORATION

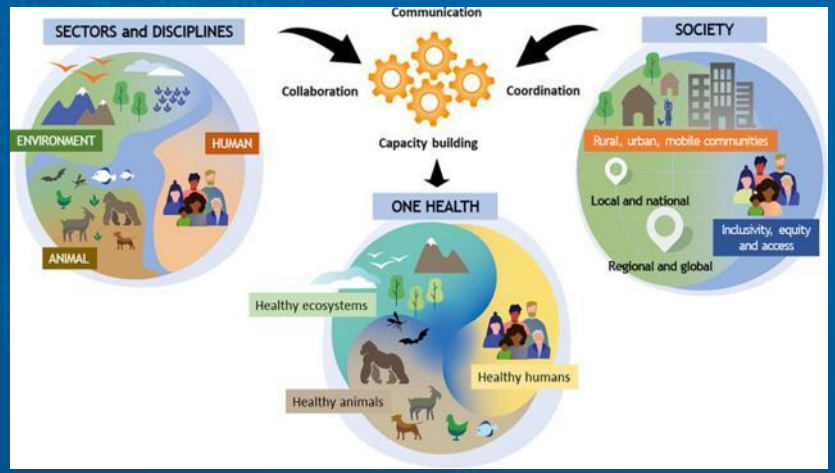
Aims, priorities and resources: Different visions, agendas and understanding of the threat

Lack of shared understanding: Different skillsets, terminology, legal frameworks. Veterinary Services may not recognise a crime scene and Law enforcement may not perceive a health threat.

Collaborative framework: Often no protocols or guidance in place setting out collaboration. concerns about overstepping authority may hold back joint work.

Legal framework: Close cooperation and participation of other services in criminal investigation may be limited by legal texts.





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BENEFITS OF COLLABORATION

- **Improved understanding of agro-crime risks and threats** through multiple perspectives and shared intelligence
- **More effective prevention** by addressing the root causes of criminal behaviour
- **Expanded reach and impact** by leveraging complementary strengths and networks
- **Better coordination of investigations**, avoiding conflicts between epidemiological and enforcement actions
- **Stronger responses** by applying diverse crime prevention and response models
- **Increased public trust** through clear, consistent, and harmonised communication



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AGROCRIME ROADMAP



- **Purpose: Supports Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement in addressing agro-crimes. Help mobilise resources, expertise and regulatory powers.**
- **Key Uses:**
  - **Strategic Planning:** Identify types of agro-crimes and their impacts to design prevention, preparedness, early-warning and response strategies.
  - **Joint Action & Decision-Making:** Guide creation of joint workplans and cooperation agreements.
  - **Collaboration & Dialogue:** Facilitate inter-agency discussions, clarify roles, and establish shared goals.
  - **Threat & Risk Assessment:** Inform evaluations of agro-crime risks and key considerations for the prioritisation of actions.
  - **Capacity Building:** Support joint training and simulation exercises to improve coordination and readiness.
- **The roadmap is not prescriptive — adaptable to local, national, or regional contexts based on threats, mandates, and available resources.**

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Actions for stronger partnership between Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement

Establishing the foundation for partnership

1 Mutual understanding
Trust, mutual understanding
Formalised intersectoral relationships

2 Advocacy
Sustained political commitment
Public awareness

3 Regulatory harmonisation
Harmonised and coherent legal framework to enable interagency collaboration (prevention, investigation & prosecution of agro-crime)

Strengthening collaboration

4 Awareness and understanding of roles and responsibilities
Understanding of each other's roles, respsonsibilities and operational needs
SOPs for interagency collaboration

5 Information and intelligence sharing
Strengthened collection, analysis and sharing of information and intell

6 Joint capacity building
Personnel capabilities to detect and respond to agro-crime
Trust and relationship building

Coordinated response

7 Joint threat assessment
Mechanism for conducting cross-sectoral threat assessments of agro-crime to guide joint response planning and operations

8 Joint response
Coordinated and real-time joint response and operations to investigate and respond to agro-crime incidents

9 Joint communication
Coordinated, coherent and timely communication on agro-crime risks and response actions

For each, we specify objectives, actions, case study, summary of actions, outputs and outcome

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WOAH and INTERPOL Tackling Agro-Crime : Strategic Planning for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement workshop (November 2025)

- 9 African Partner countries (Algeria, Congo (Rep), Kenya, Malawi, Morocco, Madagascar, Namibia, Tanzania, Zimbabwe) - 50 participants from across Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement.
- Roadmap used to raise awareness of different types of agro-crime and concrete collaboration actions.
- Countries worked on their own national roadmaps and prioritised 3 agro-crimes to focus on
- Participants consult national colleagues on their draft roadmaps and shared back to WOAH and INTERPOL for review





Ministry of Lands, Agriculture, Fisheries, Water and Rural Development Zim
November 25, 2025 ·

Zimbabwe Charts Unified Strategy to Combat Rising Agro-Crime Threats

Today, Permanent Secretary, Professor Dr. Secretary Professor Dr. Obert Jiri, delivered a compelling keynote address that set the strategic tone for the *Tackling Agro-Crime: Strategic Planning Workshop for Veterinary Services and Law Enforcement* in Harare. He underscored Zimbabwe's pride in hosting this critical gathering with partners such as WOAH and INTERPOL at a time when transnational agricultural crimes threaten regional stability and food security.

SIMBA
Signature Initiative to Mitigate Biological Threats in Africa

In partnership with Canada

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Roadmap next steps

Our agro-crime priorities and why

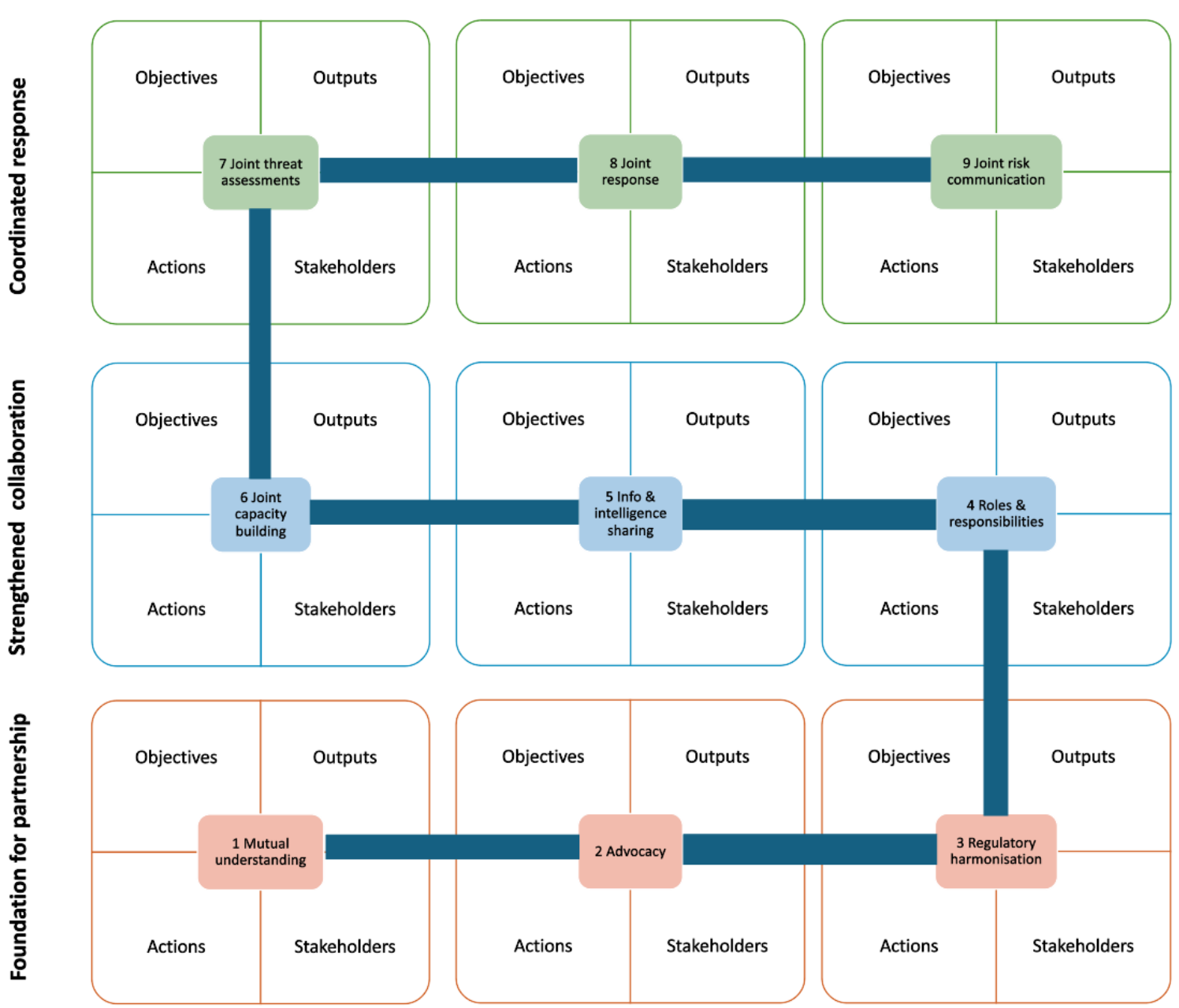
- Priority 1
- Priority 2
- Priority 3

Our collaboration outcomes and what success looks like

- Outcomes
- Indicators

Actions to build buy-in

Action	Action	Action	Action
Who	**Who**	**Who**	**Who**



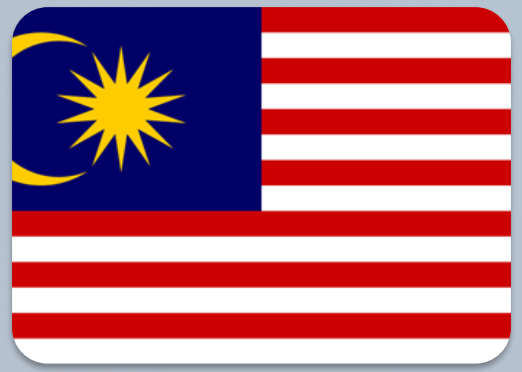
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INTERPOL'S initiatives in South-East Asia



- Biosecurity Needs & Capabilities Assessment
- Bioterrorism Risk & Control
- Joint crim-epi investigation
- Bio CSM
- Biothreats posed by FTF
- Impact assessment



- Biosecurity Needs & Capabilities Assessment
- Bio CSM
- Bio-contaminated evidence strategies
- Joint Procedures development
- Practical SIMEX
- Impact assessment



- Biosecurity Needs & Capabilities Assessment
- Biosecurity Risk & Control
- ToT Triggers & indicators
- Bio CSM
- Practical SIMEX
- Impact assessment



- SPOC
- Global Biosecurity Conference
- Information sharing working groups (Nov 2025)

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[*Crime Areas >> CBRNE >> Bioterrorism*]

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