

**OIE supports the International Criminal Police Organization (INTERPOL)
in a biosafety and biosecurity training course**

Conakry, Guinea, 19-22 February 2019



Managing serious disease outbreaks is challenging and often requires cross-sectoral cooperation between sectors, such as Veterinary Services, public health and law enforcement. In addition, cooperation between the veterinary sector and law enforcement is essential in allowing national Veterinary Services to perform their day-to-day duties during an outbreak. Examples of such cross-sectoral cooperation are as follows:

- Cooperation with **public health** authorities (e.g. in case of zoonoses);
- Cooperation with **customs** authorities to prevent the introduction of transboundary diseases;
- Cooperation with **law enforcement** to assist in the investigation and control of disease outbreaks, the enforcement of animal health laws and logistical support (e.g. road closures, movement control), and investigation and prosecution in other areas, including animal-welfare infractions.

In order to facilitate a fast and qualified cross-sectoral response, it is crucial that the different stakeholders involved know each other well and understand each other's mandates, needs and capabilities. As an integral part of its mandate, the OIE is engaged in fostering cross-sectoral cooperation and inter-organisational collaboration, including issues related to biological threat reduction. To this end, the OIE has developed *Guidelines for Investigation of Suspicious Biological Events*, with the support of INTERPOL, and works with stakeholders from different sectors to address the issue from several angles.

INTERPOL has recognised the importance of law enforcement support for the response to serious disease outbreaks and as a result it has implemented Project RHINO to strengthen law enforcement response to natural outbreaks in West Africa. This project focuses on the following:

Response capability
Hazard assessment
Infection control
National coordination
Organisational Change

Last February, the OIE supported a Project RHINO ‘train-the-trainer’ course in Conakry, Guinea, with the aim of enhancing the capability of Guinea’s Ministry of Security and Civil Protection on biosafety and biosecurity.¹ Participants came from the law enforcement, public health and animal health sectors, and in terms of gender balance, half of the participants were female.

INTERPOL and OIE instructors provided background lectures on topics such as biological agents, and disinfection and decontamination measures. The intensive course was highly interactive using group work on selected tasks, bringing varying perspectives from different sectors to the table. Thus the course provided an excellent opportunity for an exchange of viewpoints for networking between agencies and sectors. In order to demonstrate their ability to be trainers themselves, all participants had to deliver presentations on relevant topics to the group.



Donning and doffing of personal protective equipment

¹ In this context, ‘biosecurity’ refers to a set of management and physical measures designed to reduce the risk of the introduction, establishment and spread of animal diseases, infections or infestations to, from and within an animal population (according to the OIE Terrestrial Code), including the possibility of the intentional use of animal pathogens to harm humans, animals or plants.

A central part of the training was the utilisation of personal protective equipment (PPE) to familiarise participants with its use, especially the critical elements of 'donning and doffing' (putting on and removing PPE). While PPE is essential to protect first responders and medical personnel in the case of human infectious diseases, its proper use and disposal is also vital for preventing the spread of such diseases.

Inter-sectoral training courses, especially train-the-trainer activities, are an important tool in developing and strengthening sustainable capabilities across sectors; building bridges between these sectors; and increasing the level of preparedness to respond to disease outbreaks within the region.

Links:

Project RHINO (in English) www.interpol.int/Crime-areas/CBRNE/Bioterrorism/Project-Rhino

OIE Guidelines in English

www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/eng/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/Guidelines_Investigation_Suspicious_Biological_Events.pdf

Lignes directrices de l'OIE en français

www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/fr/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/Lignes_Directrices_Enquetes_Evenements_Biologiques_Suspects.pdf

Directrices de la OIE en español

www.oie.int/fileadmin/Home/esp/Our_scientific_expertise/docs/pdf/Directrices_Investigacion_Eventos_Biologicos_Sospechosos.pdf

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