

Empowering our neighbours to tackle biological threats

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A smartphone app created in Adelaide is helping developing nations swiftly combat biological threats to humans or animals.

The SuspectED App was developed by Flinders University's Torrens Resilience Institute (TRI) to allow for the simple recording of evidence and [secure communication](#) directly from the field, while providing guidance on the use of personal protective equipment and best practice in handling and collecting suspicious materials.

The need for a resource of this nature was identified by an international working group, with development funded by the Government of Canada's Weapons Threat Reduction Program.

Project Manager Glen Cuttance of the Flinders University TRI says the platform was created with an international audience in mind, particularly developing countries that often lack the dedicated staff and systems to efficiently deal with biological risks.

"When faced with indicators of biological threats, rapid response is imperative. In Australia there are documented [communication](#) pathways that ensure emerging or deliberate biological risks are acted on quickly in line with government regulations," Mr Cuttance says.

"But organizations in many countries operate in an environment of reduced resources and less structure, so a variety of identification and communication tools might be used without clear response and feedback mechanisms. This can translate to delays in the flow of information and loss of valuable time to constrain a [threat](#)."

The SuspectED App is helping public health professionals and veterinarians who undertake first responder roles efficiently deliver a chain of evidence to biological threats anywhere in the world.

Since its recent release, countries engaging most with the app include India, Pakistan and Indonesia.

The practical tool allows for recording notes, labeling evidence, storing images, and creating reports for storage or direct communication from the field via email or secure messaging service.

More information: For more information, see www.flinders.edu.au/torrens-research-institute/suspected-app

Provided by Flinders University

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