

List of Africa Regional Subject Matter Experts (Af-RMSE) in Biorisk Management



Anastasia Trataris-Rebisz

Professional Title: Biorisk Specialist

Nationality: South African

Institution: National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD)

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2023

Anastasia Trataris-Rebisz is a biorisk management specialist at the National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD), in Johannesburg, South Africa. She holds a Masters of Science in Medicine degree from the University of the Witwatersrand and is currently in the process of completing a PhD at the University of Pretoria. She has 16 years' experience working at the NICD, 11 and a half of which were spent working as a medical scientist in a high containment (BSL-3) laboratory (BSL3) working with select agents such as Bacillus anthracis, Brucella spp. and Yersinia pestis.

Anastasia has been involved in drafting of various biosafety and biosecurity policies, as well as implementing and overseeing institutional Biosafety and Biosecurity-related legislative compliance. She serves on the Institutional Biosafety and Biosecurity Committee (IBBC), and holds two IFBA certifications in Biorisk Management and Biosecurity. She is an alum of the Global Mentorship Program where she now serves as a Mentor for the program. She is an experienced trainer for IATA shipping of dangerous goods and Biorisk Management.

Anastasi is a member of the National World Health Organization (WHO) Joint External Evaluation (JEE), the National Action Plan for the implementation of the International Health Regulations (IHR), National Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Working Group and the Biological Weapons Working Committee (BWWC) of the South African Council for The Non-Proliferation of Weapons of Mass Destruction (NPC). She is also a BSL3 facility inspector under the National Department of Health in enforcing Regulation 178 and serves as a Biosafety and Biosecurity subject matter expert for the National Department of Health. She is also a member of the United Nations Secretary General Mechanism (UNSGM) rostered expert and a member of the International Organization for Standardization (ISO) Technical Committee (TC212) 212 Working Group 5 (WG5) for Biorisk professionals.

Anastasia is currently the African Biological Safety Association (AfBSA) President.



Christopher Brandt

Professional Title: Biosafety Officer

Nationality: South African

Institution: Agricultural Research Council- Onderstepoort Veterinary Research

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2023

Christopher is a scientist within the Onderstepoort Veterinary Research Institute, Vaccine Development and Diagnostic Programme. He holds a Baccalaureus Technologiae degree in Veterinary Technology and Diploma in Safety Management and is currently a master's candidate. He has over 15 years' experience in the veterinary laboratory environment, with sufficient knowledge in molecular biology, quality management systems (ISO17025:2018), biosafety & biosecurity promotion together with biorisk management CWA (CEN Workshop Agreement 15793).

Christopher has received specialized training including the Biorisk Management Trainer Development Program, Handling of Chemicals, Laboratory Biosafety & Biosecurity, Facility Operational Biosafety [Biosafety (BSL) Level 1-4] and Biological Waste Management. He has undergone several training and mentorship programs under the African Centre for Integrated Laboratory Training (ACILT-South Africa), Sokoine University of Agriculture (SUA-Tanzania) and American Biological Safety Association (ABSA International-United States of America).



Jihene HELLAL

Professional Title: Biosafety & biosecurity officer.
 Nationality: Tunisian
 Institution: Tunisian Veterinary Research Institute
 Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management
 Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Jihene HELLA is a certified Biorisk Management Trainer and is a member of the North African Biorisk Management Trainers Network. She is professionally certified in Biorisk Management by the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA). She is also certified as a Trusted Advisor by the Global Biorisk Advisory Council in the USA. She has achieved the Bronze Certificate Level of the Global Biorisk Management Curriculum (GBRMC) Trainers' Registration & Certificate Program. She has also contributed to the revision of the GBRMC training content. Jihène has conducted national and international training in biorisk management including the training during the 2nd Middle East and North Africa (MENA) Advanced Biosafety Officer Training (ABOT) in Morocco, 3rd MENA - ABOT in Malta and Biorisk Management Training in Gabon. At the national university level, Jihène teaches the biorisk management module to master and senior students. Jihène is certified under the National Sanitation Foundation Standards (NSF49) and European Standards (EN12469) in field installation, commissioning and re-certification of Biological Biosafety Cabinets.

Jihene currently the Chair of the Regional Technical Working Group on Biosafety and Biosecurity for North Africa (2023-2025). She is also currently focal point for the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) project on operationalization of One Health and Biosafety & Biosecurity in Africa.



Kennedy K. Yatich

Professional Title: Head Biosafety & Biosecurity
 Nationality: Kenyan
 Institution: Ministry of Health - Department of Laboratory Services
 Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management
 Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2023

Kennedy Yatich is a Scientist working at the National Public Health Laboratory's Biosafety and Biosecurity Unit, Department of Laboratory Services- Ministry of Health. He holds a Bachelor's Degree in Biochemistry, a Higher National Diploma (HND) in Clinical Chemistry and a National Diploma in Medical Laboratory Sciences (MLS). He has over 10 years' experience in Biorisk Management Systems Strengthening beyond the East African Region.

Kennedy is currently the Head of the National Public Health Laboratories' Biosafety and Biosecurity Program - Ministry of Health Kenya, as well as the Head Chemical, Biological and Radioactive Nuclear (CBRN) section of the National Disaster Management Unit (NDMU). He coordinates Biosafety/Biosecurity activities among laboratories in Kenya. He also coordinates One-Health Laboratory Biosafety/Biosecurity Activities under Threat Reduction Biological Engagement Programs in Kenya. In addition, Yatich is an International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA) Biorisk Management and Biosecurity Certified Professional and certified trainer on Chemical & Biological Weapons Recognition and Countermeasures and Biorisk Management.

Kennedy is currently the chair of the East Africa Regional Biosafety & Biosecurity Technical Working Group (RBB-TWG) and a member of National Biological Weapons Convention Implementation Committee (NBWCIC) for Kenya. He also is a member of the Implementation Review Committee (IRC) for the Agreement between the Government of the United States of America and the Government of the Republic of Kenya concerning cooperation in Threat Reduction Biological Engagement Programs in Kenya.



Larbi Baassi

Professional Title: Biosafety and Biosecurity Advisor
 Nationality: Moroccan
 Institution: National Institute of Hygiene, Ministry of Health of Morocco
 Area of Expertise:
 Biorisk Management
 Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Larbi Baassi is a Biosafety advisor and Executive assistant at the National Institute of Hygiene in Rabat, Ministry of Health of Morocco where he is the laboratory focal point for International Health Regulation. He holds a PhD in Immunology from Mohamed V University in Rabat Morocco.

Larbi is an International Federation for Biosafety Association (IFBA) Certified Professional in Biorisk Management and Biosecurity. He has participated as a mentor in many Biosafety and Biosecurity (BSBS) mentorship programs. He has conducted many BSBS trainings programs, in Morocco and some other African Countries in collaboration with many international organizations like IFBA and US Sandia National Laboratories (SNL). He has coordinated many project activities pertaining to Biosafety, Biosecurity, Biorisk management and laboratory capacities assessment with US CRDF-Global and George Town University.

Baassi is currently a member of the North Africa Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Working Group (RBB-TWG) under the Africa CDC Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity Initiative. He is the President and Founder of the Biorisk Management Association of Morocco (BMAM). He is also the treasurer of the Moroccan Society of Genomics and Human Genetic (MS2GH) and a council member of the African Biological Safety Association (AfBSA).



Michael Agbaje

Professional Title: Associate Professor
 Nationality: Nigerian
 Institution: Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta
 Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management
 Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Dr Michael Agbaje is an Associate Professor in Veterinary Microbiology at the Department of Veterinary Microbiology and consultant bacteriologist at the Veterinary Teaching Hospital, College of Veterinary Medicine, Federal University of Agriculture, Abeokuta, Nigeria. He has a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine (DVM) degree from the University of Ibadan, Nigeria and a PhD in Veterinary Microbiology from the University of Nottingham, United Kingdom.

Dr Agbaje holds a professional certification (PC) in Biorisk Management from the International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA). He has received extensive training and mentorship in biorisk management from Sandia National Laboratories where he has completed the Foundational, Intermediate, Advanced and Trainer Development tracks covering diverse applications of biosafety and biosecurity. He is part of the national team of Biorisk Management Trainers in Nigeria. In March 2021, he was appointed as the Secretary of National Committee for Biorisk Curriculum tasked with integrating biorisk management into the Nigerian University Curriculum. He also serves as the secretary of the Nigerian Biorisk Management Laws Review committee from April 2022 and is a member of the 2022-23 Global Biorisk Management Curriculum (GBRMC) Trainer's Forum and the Nigerian Biosafety Association (NiBSA).



Nsawotebba Andrew

Professional Title: Bio-risk Management Mentor

Nationality: Ugandan

Institution: Central Emergency Response & Surveillance Laboratory
- Central Public Health Laboratories–Uganda

Area of Expertise: Bio-risk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2023

Andrew is a Laboratory Scientist with an MSc in International Infectious Diseases Management. He holds a Master's in Management Studies in Project Planning and Management, a Post Graduate Diploma in Project Planning and Management, an International Advanced Fellowship in Infectious Disease Research, and a BSc in Biomedical Laboratory Technology.

Andrew is a Biorisk Management Advisor for five Laboratories, a National Master Trainer, Mentor and Auditor for Biorisk Management with a focus on ONE Health. Over the past 6 years, he has worked closely with the Uganda Ministry of Health through the Department of National Health Laboratory and diagnostic services (NHLDS) and the development partners to support the establishment of strong Biorisk management systems in Uganda. He participated in the review of the National Biosafety Biosecurity Manual, the Development of the National waste management policy and implementation guidelines, the review & implementation of the Biorisk management training curriculum, the development of the National Biosafety Biosecurity and Waste management assessment tools, the development of the National Biosafety Biosecurity mentorship toolkit for Uganda and currently finalizing the development of the waste management training curriculum for Uganda in line with national and international standards like ISO 35001:2019, ISO 15190:2020 and the WHO Biosafety Manual 4th edition which emphasizes a risk-based approach to the management of biological hazards and threats

He is the Laboratory Manager & Head Biosafety Committee of the Central Emergency Response & Surveillance Laboratory, a Viral Hemorrhagic Fever Testing Laboratory.



Paul Okwalinga

Professional Title: Biorisk Management Advisor

Nationality: Uganda

Institution: Ministry of Health-Department of National Health Laboratory and Diagnostic services

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Paul holds a Masters Degree in project management, Bachelors of Science degree in Biomedical Laboratory Technology. Paul is Internationally Certified as a Biorisk Management Expert by International Federation of Biosafety Associations (IFBA) as well as international certification on Leadership, Management and Governance for Senior Policy Makers in Health.

Paul is currently a Biorisk management Advisor with the department of National Health Laboratory and Diagnostic Services. Additionally, has supported establishment of strong Biorisk management systems in the country by spearheading the development of the National One health training curriculum for Biosafety Biosecurity aligned to ISO 35001:2019, OIE, WHO Biosafety Manual 4th edition, and ISO 15190:2020. He has also contributed significantly to the development of a national assessment checklist for Biosafety and Biosecurity and a Biorisk Management mentorship toolkit/guide. He has spearheaded Biorisk Management capacity building efforts in the country by training and evaluating the competence of Biorisk Management Trainers, mentors and Auditors.



Chimwamurombe, Percy M

Professional Title: Professor of Biology

Nationality: Zimbabwean

Institution: Faculty of Health , Natural Resources and Applied Sciences, School of Natural and Applied Sciences

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2023

Percy Chimwamurombe is a biotechnologist with a BSc (Hons) Biochemistry, MSc (Biotechnology) and a PhD (Genetics). He is currently the Head of Department of Biology, Chemistry and Physics. He is a biosafety practitioner and biotechnology professional specializing in the implementation of biorisk management and legal issues dealing with Genetically Modified Organisms and implementation of the Cartagena Protocol. He has over twenty (20) years of experience in teaching and research in the areas of water microbiology, food microbiology and veterinary microbiology and conservation genetics dealing with both pathogenic and beneficial microorganisms.

He is an active member of the Regional Biosafety and Biosecurity Regional Technical Working Group for Southern Africa as well as the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Working Group for Namibia. In addition, he leads two sub-themes of the National Covid High Level technical Advisory team in Namibia. He is a member of the Zimbabwe Academy of Sciences.



Powell Choonga

Professional Title: National Biosafety and Biosecurity Focal Point Person

Nationality: Zambian

Institution: Ministry of Health

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Mr. Powell Choonga is a Biomedical Scientist and Public Health Specialist with over 17 years of work experience in laboratory program management of the PEPFAR CDC, Global Fund HIV, TB and Malaria; Clinical and Research Laboratory Quality Systems, Laboratory Commodity Management Systems, Equipment Use and Maintenance.

Mr. Powell Choonga is currently working as a Laboratory Advisor and National Focal Point Person for Biosafety and Biosecurity for the Ministry of Health Zambia where his overall responsibility is to coordinate and support Pathology and Laboratory Services for the country. He has led the establishment of the National Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Working Group and the development of the Zambia Biosafety and Biosecurity Legislative Framework. He has also been involved in the establishment of the national Biosafety Biosecurity mentorship and development of a national Biorisk Management training curriculum. Through his lobbying, he was additional support for the implementation of the National Biosafety Biosecurity Implementation Framework and establishment of a position of a Biosafety and Biosecurity advisor for the Ministry of Health. As national Focal Person, he coordinated the revision of the National Biosafety Biosecurity Manual



Sindisiwe Susan Dlamini

Professional Title: Chief Laboratory Technologist

Nationality: Swati

Institution: Ministry of Health-Eswatini Health Laboratory Services

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Sindisiwe has over 20 years of working experience and currently services as the Chief Laboratory Technologist with Ministry of Health, Eswatini Health Laboratory services where she oversees four National Reference Laboratories (National TB Reference, HIV Molecular Reference Lab, Central Laboratory and Anatomical & Histopathological Laboratory), 15 Regional and Health Centre Laboratories and 60 Mini Laboratories. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree, National Diploma in Biomedical Technology and Master of Public health in Epidemiology and Statistics. Sindisiwe received training Biorisk Management and infectious sample handling trainings with World health Organization. In 2022, she completed the Biorisk Management Trainer development Program coordinated by the National Institute of Communicable Disease and Sandia laboratories. She has led the development of the National Laboratory Strategic plan 2021-2023 with considerations of waste management, strengthening biosafety and a biosecurity, implementation of quality management system at different biosafety levels and the establishment of a high containment public health. She has successfully planned and implemented improvement projects in Biorisk management, waste management, microbiology strengthening, biosafety systems. She has worked with Environmental Health and Biomedical Department providing technical guidance in establishing Laboratory Biosafety and Biosecurity, improving healthcare waste management at Mbabane Government Hospital and the National Reference Laboratories.

Sindisiwe has over 8 years' experience in Quality Management Systems, and intense quality management training from ISO 15189 and is as a certified SANAS technical Assessor, WHO/AFRO Strengthening Laboratory Quality Improvement Process Towards Accreditation (SLIPTA) auditor and Strengthening Laboratory Management Towards Accreditation (SLMTA) Master Trainer.



Vimbai Grace Mukondiwa

Professional Title: Quality Officer,

Nationality: Zimbabwean

Institution: Central Veterinary Laboratory, Department of Veterinary Services

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2023

Vimbai holds a Master's degree in Safety, Health and Environmental Management and a BSc in Biological Sciences from the Midlands State University in Zimbabwe. She also attained a City and Guilds Quality Assurance Certificate. She has more than 12 years' experience in Quality Management Systems strengthening.

Vimbai is a certified Biorisk Management trainer under the Global Biorisk Management Curriculum (GBRMC) program. She has received specialized training in Infectious Substance Shipment. She is a member of the Eastern and Southern Africa Biosafety and Biosecurity Technical Working Group and currently chairs the Southern Africa Technical Working Group. She is an Evaluator of Regional Centres of Excellence in Biosafety and Biosecurity in Africa.

Vimbai is currently at the Central Veterinary Laboratory as a Safety Officer and Veterinary Laboratory Technologist in the Molecular Biology Unit. Currently she works as a Quality Officer in the Veterinary Laboratory Diagnostics and Research Branch. Vimbai serves the Department of Veterinary Services, as a National Inspector for Veterinary Diagnostic Testing Laboratories in Zimbabwe, assessing compliance to veterinary legal statutes.



Zibusiso M. Masuku

Professional Title: Biosafety Technical Manager

Nationality: Zimbabwean

Institution: National Institute for Communicable Diseases (NICD) a division of the National Health Laboratory Service (NHLS)

Area of Expertise: Biorisk Management

Certified as African Regional Subject Matter Expert: 2022

Zibusiso M. Masuku is an engineer with a B.ENG(HONS) degree in Industrial and Manufacturing Engineering. He is a biosafety and biosecurity professional specializing in the implementation of biorisk management and biocontainment engineering best practices in high and maximum containment facilities. He has over fourteen (14) years of experience in the global health field, particularly in the enterprising use of the limited resources for the sustainable operation of the biocontainment facilities in resource-constrained environments. He is a subject matter expert with demonstrable sound understanding and application of the design, construction, and operation and (re)certification of high and maximum containment facilities in low-resource settings. He leads the Division of Biosafety and Biosecurity and is responsible for the management of high and maximum containment laboratory facilities, and the improvement of laboratory infrastructure, and development of related policies and standards at the NICD/NHLS. He is the Chairperson of the NICD's Institutional Biosafety and Biosecurity Committee (IBBC) and is a Member of the World Health Organization's (WHO) Technical Advisory Group on Biosafety (TAG-B).