FEMA Office of Emerging Threats

Introduction

Emerging threats such as cyber-attacks, climate change, new weapons of mass destruction technologies, etc., bring new challenges to FEMA's response and recovery mission. Such threats require closer and proactive linkages between intelligence, data analytics, and assessed risk to drive FEMA and mission partner response and recovery capability development, planning, and operations. Considering these challenges, the FEMA Administrator directed the Office of Response and Recovery to examine how existing resources in the FEMA Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) could be realigned to provide enhanced capability to respond to and recover from a broader spectrum of emerging threats. This effort provided the analytical baseline for development of a new Office of Emerging Threats and Capabilities (OET).

For more than a decade, ORR's CBRN Office has successfully built, deployed, and sustained a series of capabilities, a comprehensive relationship network, and a multi-component risk management framework that have helped guide FEMA and its mission partners in preparing for, responding to, and recovering from CBRN incidents. The new OET will maintain existing CBRN Office capabilities while applying a similar benchmarked approach to identify, assess, and address the challenges posed by the highly dynamic and novel emerging threat environment.

OET Vision

The vision of OET is to help FEMA and its mission partners understand and address a wide array of novel emerging threats. OET represents the "bridge" needed to fill the gap between emerging threats identified by the Intelligence Community or other information sources, and the risk-informed development, management, and delivery of FEMA and mission partner operational capabilities.

OET Mission

The mission of OET is to identify, assess, and inform FEMA and its mission partners of emerging threats that may significantly challenge the Nation's core capabilities for incident response and recovery. This mission is consistent with the Administrator's 2022 Annual Planning Guidance and Objective 3.2 ("Posture FEMA to meet current and emerging threats") of the 2022-2026 FEMA Strategic Plan. It is also aligned with FEMA Threat and Hazard Identification and Risk Assessment (THIRA) doctrine.
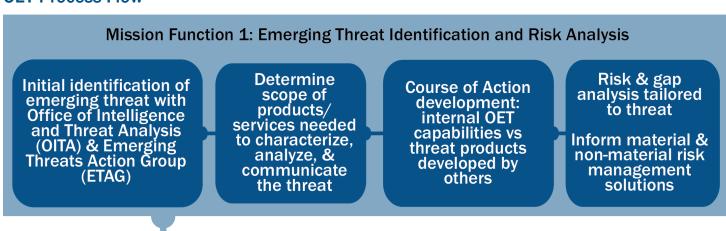
FEMA

OET Goals

Emerging Threat Identification & Risk Analysis	Risk Management	Response and Recovery Support	Strategic Communication & Partnership
Goal 1: Develop a collaborative focal point within FEMA to work with multiple entities internal and external to the agency to identify and assess emerging threats and corresponding risks to inform and enable FEMA's and mission partners' response to and recovery from such threats.	**Goal 2:** Using a collaborative approach, translate analysis of threats and related risks into actionable guidance and inform the development of specialized plans, resources, and capabilities to address gaps related to specific emerging threats.	**Goal 3:** Enhance FEMA's capabilities to effectively and efficiently respond to and recover from emerging threats, once such threats are actualized.	**Goal 4:** Strengthen partnerships and information sharing between FEMA and mission partners, the private sector, academia, and the R&D community to further enhance awareness and understanding of emerging threats and drive corresponding risk management approaches.

OET Organizational Structure

OET will be organized into three primary components each aligned directly with a key OET mission function: 1) Threat Identification & Risk Analysis Branch, 2) Risk Management Branch, and 3) Response & Recovery Support Branch.

OET Process Flow

Mission Function 1: Emerging Threat Identification and Risk Analysis

- Initial identification of emerging threat with Office of Intelligence and Threat Analysis (OITA) & Emerging Threats Action Group (ETAG)
- Determine scope of products/ services needed to characterize, analyze, & communicate the threat
- Course of Action development: internal OET capabilities vs threat products developed by others
- Risk & gap analysis tailored to threat
- Inform material & non-material risk management solutions

Mission Function 2: Risk Management

- Product/services development/ procurement: policy/plans; subject matter expert support; guidance documents; specialized tools; training/exercise activities, etc.

Mission Function 3: Response & Recovery Support

- Provision/ mobilization of products and services
- Lessons learned & assessment of new capabilities required