



Community
of Democracies

Roadmap on Countering FIMI

Study on Russia's FIMI in the Global South

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Community of Democracies

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This report provides a practical operational roadmap for identifying, assessing, and responding to Russian foreign information manipulation and interference in Global South contexts.

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Section 1. Executive Summary and Roadmap at a Glance

Governments, diplomatic services, missions, regional bodies, and civil society actors need a working method for identifying, assessing, and responding to Russian foreign information manipulation and interference in Global South contexts. This report is built for that use. It helps institutions see how Russian-aligned lines enter credible local circulation, judge what the public record can support with confidence, and respond before a distorted account settles into ordinary domestic discourse.^{[1][2][3][4]}

At the center of the report is one recurring operational problem: the credibility handoff. The first hostile message is often not the decisive moment. Greater danger appears when a Russian-aligned line is repeated through a carrier that local audiences see as familiar, respectable, civic, professional, diplomatic, or procedurally legitimate. Once that happens, the line no longer looks foreign. It begins to move as ordinary domestic discourse, which makes later correction harder.^{[5][6][7]}

Six anchors are used to test that problem across different operating conditions: Mali, Niger, Burkina Faso, the Central African Republic, African Initiative, and a Latin America comparator. Transferability, not geographic completeness, drives that choice. The point is not to force every case into one pathway. The point is to show that the same operational danger appears under different conditions, including acute trigger events, standing relay infrastructure, diplomatic-media insertion, weakened verification environments, grievance capture, and longer-term normalization.^{[5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12]}

Three recurring features matter most. First, an opening creates urgent demand for interpretation, and a foreign-aligned line either enters early or is already in place to circulate. Second, that line is adapted to local political language, grievance, or symbolic vocabulary. Third, the line becomes more dangerous when a credible local carrier, or one that appears locally normal, gives it procedural legitimacy. The record shows different routes into that handoff, including fast crisis relay, mainstream quote pickup, embassy placement, republication chains, journalist-facing infrastructure, partnerships, civic-looking wrappers, and normalized downstream reuse. Routes change by environment, but the need for a credible local relay does not.^{[1][2][3]}

No claim is made here about a single universal pathway, full network visibility, total coordination, or measurable persuasion effects across all cases. Attribution remains conservative. The value of the report is narrower and more useful: it helps institutions see when operational risk is rising, what the public record can establish with confidence, and what they can still do before a distorted line hardens into routine domestic circulation.^{[1][2][3]}

Roadmap at a glance

Three action lanes organize the roadmap: situational awareness, international cooperation, and strategic communications. Two support lanes reinforce them: capacity building and monitoring and evaluation. Together, they give institutions a common method for preserving chronology, identifying the first credible relay, setting evidence boundaries, and choosing a proportional response.^{[1][2][3][4][21]}

The response sequence is intentionally short. Secure the record. Fix chronology. Identify the first credible relay. Set confidence and evidence boundaries. Decide whether the case stays internal, moves to trusted partner coordination, or supports bounded public clarification. Then record what was missed, what mattered most, and what should improve before the next opening.^{[1][2][3]}

Any institution using this roadmap should be able to produce a minimum first-response package within 72 hours. That package should include the core worksheet, a bounded handling judgment, and, where the threshold is met, one outward product: either a Controlled Partner Brief or a Clarification Note. Those outputs are deliberately compact so they can be used under time pressure by ministries, missions, regional bodies, civil society partners, fact-checking networks, and independent media that need a practical instrument rather than an expansive theory of every Russian influence pathway.^{[1][2][3][5][6][7][14][21]}

Handling thresholds should stay clear. Internal handling is appropriate when chronology is still unstable, the relay sequence is still unclear, or the evidence does not support outward use. Partner handling is appropriate when trusted counterparts need a common chronology, a shared evidence boundary, or a narrow coordination request. Public clarification is appropriate only when the factual core is stable, the distortion is already moving through a defined channel or carrier family, and correction can still restore context in that same information environment.^{[1][2][3][14][21]}

Partner democracies do not need perfect visibility to act earlier and more carefully. What they need is a shared way to identify key patterns, preserve the record, recognize the first credible relay, keep claims inside the evidence boundary, and respond in a way that is operational, rights-safe, and adaptable across settings. A workable response system depends on discipline: protect chronology, identify the first credible relay, classify the case without overreach, coordinate when necessary, and restore context before a distorted line acquires durable local authority.^{[1][2][3][4][14][21]}

The figure below consolidates the report's operating structure: the institutional lanes, the short response sequence, the minimum first-response package, and the handling thresholds that determine whether a case stays internal, moves to trusted partner coordination, or supports bounded public clarification.^{[1][2][3][4][14][21]}

Roadmap at a Glance

Response sequence, first-response package, and handling thresholds



Figure 1. Roadmap at a Glance: Institutional lanes, response sequence, minimum first-response package, and handling thresholds.^{[1][2][3][4][14][21]}

Section 2. Main Findings

The cases support five findings that should guide monitoring, partner coordination, and clarification.

The decisive breakpoint is usually the first credible relay. Across the core cases, the most consequential step is usually the point at which a foreign-aligned frame enters a carrier that audiences can treat as familiar, respectable, civic, professional, or locally authoritative. In Niger, that meant movement from upstream foreign-aligned framing into domestic civic and national-media language during the opening coup cycle. In the Latin America comparator, that meant ambassadorial and state-aligned Russian lines entering major newspapers, interviews, commentary, and republication chains. The central monitoring question is therefore not only who spoke first, but who made the line look local. Early warning should focus on the first relay that confers local plausibility.^{[5][7]}

Professionalized source identity can function as infrastructure rather than mere packaging. The African Initiative case shows that a polished public-facing identity can do more than distribute content. It can build relay capacity through multilingual output, journalist-facing functions, partnerships, recruitment, and normalized downstream reuse. Branding, access, and relationships do not by themselves prove persuasion or command, but they can lower the cost of later pickup by downstream actors who no longer need to foreground a foreign origin. Apparently legitimate source identity and partnership structures should therefore be treated as objects of monitoring in their own right, not as neutral background.^{[6][13]}

Official language can be repurposed before chronology settles. Niger shows the pattern in acute form. African Union and ECOWAS statements established an early institutional record, yet ECOWAS language about constitutional order, ultimatum, and possible force was quickly simplified and recoded in domestic relay as proof of external control. The danger is not limited to fabricated content. Real institutional language can become raw material for hostile or opportunistic reframing once detached from context during a fast interpretation struggle. Institutions should protect full-text context and watch for clipped, sloganized, or emotionally simplified reuse of official language in the first response cycle.^{[11][12][5]}

The main defensive failure point is usually procedural before it is rhetorical. In the first response window, the central weakness is commonly weak chronology, loss of source context, degraded plural information supply, delay to correction, or failure to identify the first relay that matters. Niger illustrates this in acute form, while African Initiative shows it in slower infrastructural form, where authoritative public exposure came after relay structures were already operating. First response should prioritize chronology protection, source preservation, relay mapping, and channel-matched correction before generic counter-messaging.^{[5][6][13]}

The logic travels across regions, but the relay path remains local. The report does not claim one universal pathway. It shows a shared strategic logic whose carriers differ by setting. Niger shows a compressed coup-window sequence with domestic civic and national-media relay. African Initiative shows infrastructural relay through training, partnerships, and journalist-facing activity. Latin America shows direct insertion into procedurally legitimate domestic carriers through embassy placement, mainstream interviews, and republication chains. Institutions should use one shared framework for sequence and evidence discipline while customizing watchpoints to local channels, trusted messengers, and republication pathways.^{[5][13][7]}

The summary below condenses the five main findings into their clearest operational implications for monitoring, coordination, and clarification.

Five Main Findings and Operational Implications		
<i>What the cases show most clearly and what institutions should do with that evidence</i>		
Finding	What the evidence shows	Operational Implication
1 The decisive breakpoint is usually the first credible relay	Operational risk rises when a foreign-aligned frame enters a carrier that local audiences treat as familiar, respectable, civic, professional, or authoritative.	Early warning should focus on the first relay that makes the line look local.
2 Professionalized source identity can function as infrastructure	A polished public-facing identity can build relay capacity through multilingual output, journalist-facing functions, partnerships, recruitment, and normalized downstream reuse.	Branding, access, and partnership structures should be monitored as infrastructure, not treated as "packaging."
3 Official language can be repurposed before chronology sets	Real institutional language can be clipped, simplified, and recoded into hostile or opportunistic framing during a fast interpretation struggle.	Institutions should protect full-text context and watch for clipped or sloganized reuse early.
4 The main defensive failure point is procedural before it is	The central weakness is often weak chronology, loss of source context, delayed correction, or failure to identify the relay that matters.	First response should prioritize chronology protection, source preservation, relay mapping, and channel-matched correction.
5 The relay path changes by environment, but the logic remains shared	Acute crises, infrastructure cases, and diplomatic-media insertion follow <i>different visible routes</i> , but all depend on local legitimacy.	Use one common framework for sequence and evidence discipline, but <i>customize watchpoints to local carriers and channels.</i>

Figure 2. Five Main Findings and Their Operational Implications.^{[5][6][7][11][12][13][14][21]}

Section 3. Scope, Method, and Limits

Open-source evidence can show how Russian FIMI moves through selected Global South contexts during contested openings. It cannot map every affiliated network or provide a comprehensive regional history. The question this report answers is narrower and more useful: how lines enter, how they are adapted to local political language, how they pass into locally credible carriers, and what institutions can still do once that process begins.^[1]

^{[2][3]}

The six-anchor set is used for operational comparison, not geographic representation. The anchors are meant to compare sequence, relay, and response under different conditions while keeping the evidence base defensible. That is why the six-anchor architecture remains visible even though not every anchor carries the same analytical weight in every section. It is also why the report can support a practical roadmap rather than a descriptive survey. The case set is designed to test whether the same operational problem recurs across different environments, and whether the same response instrument can remain useful when the route into local circulation changes.^{[1][4][14]}

Case-selection criteria

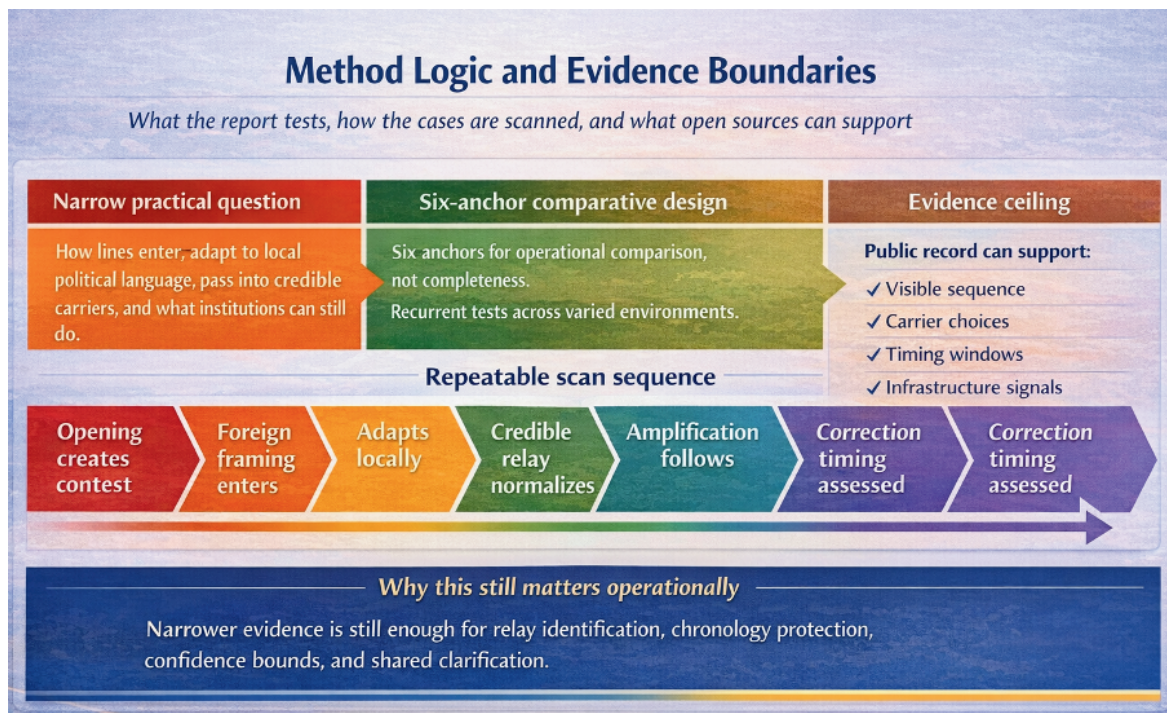
Each anchor must illuminate a transferable mechanism rather than merely add geographic coverage. The public record must be strong enough to support bounded findings. The set must capture meaningful variation, including acute trigger-event exploitation, standing infrastructure, diplomatic-media relay, weakened verification conditions, grievance capture, and long-duration entrenchment. It must also allow comparison without forcing a false claim that all cases share one identical path. The result is not a complete map of Russian activity. It is a structured evidence base strong enough to show where the danger rises, what the public record can establish with confidence, and which response steps remain defensible under pressure.^{[1][4][14]}

The report uses a common case sequence. For each anchor, it asks the same questions. What opening created the contest over meaning, or what standing structure made such a contest easier to exploit? What foreign-aligned framing entered early or was already positioned to circulate? How was that framing adapted to local political language? Which channels or messengers made it locally plausible? What visible amplification markers followed? Where available, what is known about correction timing or delayed public exposure? A mission or ministry can apply the same sequence to a new event without changing the evidence rules. That repeatable structure is one of the report's main strengths because it allows institutions to use the same disciplined scan across acute crises, slower infrastructure cases, and settings where verification is weaker.^{[3][14]}

The evidence rules are intentionally strict. The report distinguishes between what the evidence shows directly and what can only be inferred cautiously from pattern. It can support claims about visible sequence, carrier choice, republication, timing windows, and public markers of infrastructure or amplification. It cannot, on the basis of the public record alone, establish full command over every local actor, measure persuasion effects across cases, or prove one universal coordination model. Similar lines across settings may indicate structured adaptation. They do not by themselves prove coordination. Large output volumes or repost counts may indicate reach conditions or relay capacity. They do not, on their own, prove effect.^{[2][3][14]}

The method is strongest where the public record provides official texts, named carriers, public technical reporting, republication patterns, or measurable amplification signals. It is weaker where the most consequential activity may have occurred in closed groups, private coordination, offline brokerage, financing relationships, or undocumented local facilitation. Those limits shape what the report can safely say and what it must leave unresolved. They also explain why the roadmap proposed here is credible. It does not promise total attribution from incomplete material. It is built around the point where the evidence is strongest and the operational value is highest: chronology, relay, correction timing, and the moment when a Russian-aligned line begins to acquire local authority^{[2][3]}
[14]

That narrower foundation is sufficient for the report's purpose. Ministries, missions, regional bodies, and partner institutions do not need complete network visibility before they can act. They need a disciplined way to preserve the record, identify the first credible relay, distinguish observation from inference, and decide whether the case should remain internal, move to controlled partner sharing, or support bounded public clarification. Open sources are strong enough to support that level of action.^{[1][2][3][14]}



Section 4. Threat Model and Operating Logic

Russian FIMI becomes operationally dangerous when a foreign-aligned line acquires local procedural legitimacy before chronology hardens. A line may begin in a clearly external setting and remain containable if it stays there. The practical difficulty rises when it passes into a channel, messenger, or format that local audiences already recognize as normal, credible, professional, civic, diplomatic, or worth repeating. At that point, the line begins to circulate as ordinary local discourse.^{[3][14]}

Actors and evidentiary categories are kept separate because attribution restraint is part of the operating logic. The first category is documented influence architecture, with African Initiative serving as the clearest case of organized infrastructure in the current evidence base. The second is platform-observed network behavior, which helps show observable coordination, linked assets, and adaptive methods within the limits of platform visibility. The third is broader continuity and adaptation context, used only to support narrow conclusions about persistence and reconfiguration, not case-specific attribution. This separation preserves the line between directly observed evidence, analytical inference, and claims the public record cannot settle.^{[6][14][16]}

Across cases, the sequence stays recognizable even when the relay path changes. A trigger event or standing structural opening creates a contest over meaning. Foreign-aligned framing enters quickly or is already positioned to circulate. That framing is then adapted to local grievance, symbolic language, or political demand. The decisive step is the credibility handoff, when the frame is reissued through a carrier that makes it look locally plausible. Amplification becomes easier after that step because downstream actors can repeat the line without foregrounding its foreign origin. Correction then works at a disadvantage if it arrives late, too narrowly, or in the wrong channel.^{[5][6][7]}

Credibility handoff is the point at which a foreign-aligned line is repeated through a locally credible carrier. A line that began as state-media output, diplomatic messaging, institutional-language reuse, or branded-front content becomes harder to contain once it is repeated through domestic-seeming validators, mainstream outlets, civic-looking structures, or routine republication chains. That transfer is what institutions should watch first, because it is the point at which a foreign-aligned frame begins to acquire local authority by default.^{[5][6][7]}

Institutions should monitor six early watchpoints. They should watch the opening that creates urgent demand for interpretation, the first foreign-aligned framing that compresses the event into a politically useful line, the first shift into locally resonant grievance language, the first clipped reuse of official or institutional text, the first domestic-seeming quote pickup, embassy placement, civic-looking relay, mainstream interview, or same-day republication that gives the line local plausibility, and whether channel-matched clarification reaches the same channel quickly enough to influence chronology.^{[2][5][6][7][11][12][18][19][20][21]}

The public record cannot show full visibility into closed channels, complete command relationships with every relay actor, or measurable persuasion effects across the cases. It does not justify treating every repeated line as coordinated activity, and it does not collapse lawful political speech into foreign interference by default. Its value is narrower and more useful: it identifies the operational breakpoint, describes credibility handoff as the transfer point institutions must recognize, and specifies what should be monitored before a foreign-aligned frame hardens into routine domestic understanding.^{[1][2][3]}

The strip below condenses the early watchpoints institutions should monitor before a foreign-aligned line acquires local procedural legitimacy.^{[2][3][5][6][7][11][12][18][19][20][21]}

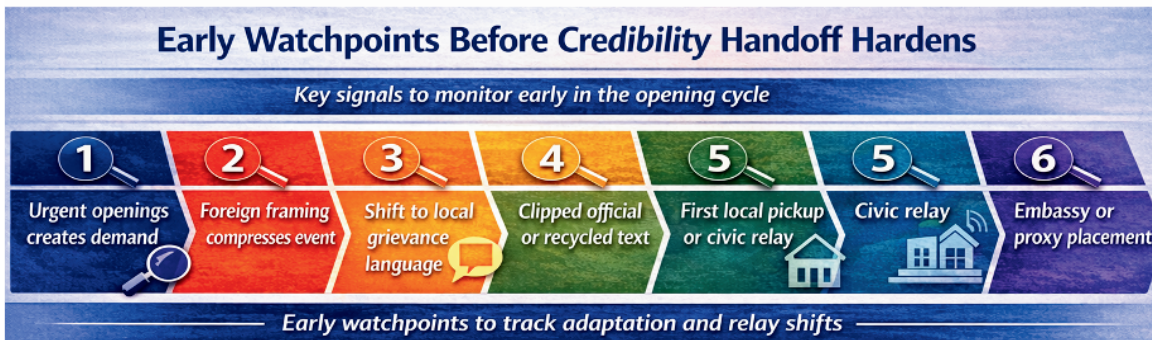


Figure 4. Early Watchpoints Before Credibility Handoff Hardens.

Section 5. Six Anchor Case Snapshots

Six anchors are used here to test transferability across different operating conditions, not to provide geographic completeness. The cases do not all look the same, and they do not carry equal evidentiary weight. That variation is useful because it shows the same operational problem across acute crises, longer-running infrastructure, weakened verification environments, grievance-heavy settings, and mainstream diplomatic-media pathways. Each snapshot is short because its purpose is not to tell a full country story. Its purpose is to show why the instrument travels.^{[1][4][14]}

5.1 Mali, verification-loss anchor

Mali is included because it shows what happens when independent observation capacity weakens and the information environment becomes harder to verify in real time. It shows how weakened independent observation widens the verification gap and complicates chronology. Its main evidentiary limit is that the public record can show a degraded verification environment more clearly than it can show every relay step inside it. The practical lesson is procedural: where independent observation weakens, institutions should place more weight on source preservation, confidence assessment, and disciplined partner sharing.^{[8][9]}

5.2 Niger, 2023 coup

Niger is included because it is the clearest acute-crisis anchor in the set. Its main mechanism is fast credibility handoff during a compressed legitimacy contest in which foreign-aligned framing entered domestic civic and national-media language before chronology settled. Its main evidentiary limit is that the public record does not fix one definitive first relay artifact across all channels. The practical lesson is clear: in acute crises, the first credible relay matters more than the first hostile message.^{[5][11][12][17]}

5.3 Burkina Faso, grievance-redirection anchor

Burkina Faso is included because it shows how external narratives can attach to real local grievance. Its main mechanism is grievance redirection through publicly visible partnership activity, media-facing engagement, and respectable-seeming local formats that can make later relay easier. Its main evidentiary limit is that public event coverage and partnership activity do not, by themselves, prove grievance capture, foreign tasking, or persuasion effect. The practical lesson is to monitor when existing grievance is redirected toward foreign-policy ends through locally familiar carriers.^{[18][19][20]}

5.4 Central African Republic, normalization anchor

The Central African Republic is included because it shows how long-duration entrenchment changes the operating environment. Its main mechanism is standing local circulation and normalization over time in a setting where Russian-aligned influence has had time to become embedded in recurring public and political life, making foreign-aligned lines less dependent on one acute trigger event. Its main evidentiary limit is that a long-running environment does not always reveal a clean first handoff moment in the public record. The practical lesson is that institutions should not wait for a single viral opening in environments where normalization is already advanced. They should monitor recurring carriers, standing validators, and correction lag as ongoing conditions, not only as crisis indicators.^[10]

5.5 African Initiative, infrastructure anchor

African Initiative is included because it is the clearest infrastructure case in the current evidence base. Its main mechanism is documented relay infrastructure that appears to increase relay capacity over time through multilingual output, journalist-facing functions, partnerships, and recruitment. Its main evidentiary limit is that public branding, relationships, and output show infrastructure more clearly than they show downstream effect or closed coordination. The practical lesson is that polished source identity and partnership structures should be treated as operational infrastructure, not merely as media packaging.^{[6][13]}

5.6 Latin America comparator, diplomatic-media insertion anchor

The Latin America comparator is included because it shows direct insertion into procedurally legitimate domestic carriers. Its main mechanism is overt Russian diplomatic or state-aligned messaging entering mainstream newspapers, interviews, commentary, and republication chains, then gaining local authority through ordinary media formats. Its main evidentiary limit is that visible placement and pickup do not, by themselves, measure persuasion effect across audiences. The practical lesson is to monitor embassy messaging, mainstream quote pickup, and republication chains as early handoff candidates.^[7]

Taken together, the six anchors justify a transferable instrument rather than a country-by-country study. Mali shows why chronology becomes fragile when verification capacity weakens. Niger shows the danger of acute relay before chronology settles. Burkina Faso shows grievance capture. The Central African Republic shows normalization over time. African Initiative shows standing relay infrastructure. Latin America shows procedurally legitimate domestic circulation through diplomatic-media placement. That is enough variation to support a compact method that can be reused without pretending that every environment follows one identical path.^{[5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][17][18][19][20]}

Section 6. Cross-Case Findings

Across the six anchors, the repeated features are clear enough to support a common operating rule without forcing the cases into one universal pathway. What repeats is the movement from foreign-aligned framing into locally credible circulation. That transfer can take shape through acute crisis relay, standing infrastructure, grievance adaptation, mainstream pickup, or diplomatic-media insertion, but the operational question stays the same: when does a line begin to acquire local plausibility and become harder to correct?^{[5][6][7][13][18][19][20]}

Local conditions still matter. Niger shows a compressed opening in which chronology and relay move quickly. African Initiative shows how infrastructure, branding, and partnerships can lower the cost of later pickup. Latin America shows direct insertion into mainstream domestic carriers through embassy placement, interviews, and republication chains. Mali, Burkina Faso, and the Central African Republic show why weakened verification, grievance redirection, and long-duration normalization change what can be seen clearly and how quickly institutions need to act.^{[5][6][7][8][9][10][11][12][13][17][18][19][20]}

Two practical consequences follow. First, procedural weakness is often more dangerous than rhetorical weakness in the opening cycle. When chronology is weak, source context is lost, correction is delayed, or the first credible relay is missed, a distorted line becomes harder to dislodge. Second, evidence ceilings are part of the operating rule, not a disclaimer added at the end. Open sources are strongest on visible sequence, relay, carrier choice, and correction lag. They are weaker on hidden coordination, covert financing, full network scope, and persuasion effects.^{[3][14][15][17]}

Those repeated features justify a compact tool rather than a larger theory. Institutions do not need full network visibility before they act. They need a disciplined way to preserve chronology, identify the first credible relay, separate direct observation from inference, and decide whether a case should remain internal, move to trusted partner coordination, or support bounded public clarification. Chronology and case control come first. Assessment and handling come second. Coordination or clarification come third. That is why the report uses a single opening-cycle worksheet rather than a larger stack of tools.^{[1][2][3][5][6][7][13][14][15][17][21]}

Cross-Case Findings and Operational Implications			
CROSS-CASE FINDING	WHAT TO WATCH FOR	IMMEDIATE HANDLING IMPLICATION	PRIMARY TOOL(S)
Credibility handoff is the decisive breakpoint.	A foreign-aligned line enters a carrier seen as plausible, familiar, respectable, or procedurally normal.	Identify the first <i>credible relay</i> fast and preserve the sequence.	Credibility-Handoff Note, Relay Map
Paths vary, but local legitimacy remains vital.	Crisis relay, branded infrastructure, partnerships, republication.	Map the route and isolate <i>local legitimacy</i> points.	Relay Map, Event & Claims Record
Local adaptation and normalization recur.	Foreign lines recast through local vocabulary and formats.	Focus on local validators and adapted lines.	Credibility-Handoff Note, Confidence Assessment Note, Relay Map
Procedural gaps matter in the opening cycle.	Weak sourcing, lost context, slow corrections.	Prioritize chronology and source protection.	First-72-Hour Checklist, Event & Claims Record, Relay Map
Evidence boundaries shape the response.	Strong public sequence, limited covert evidence.	Bound claims and set evidence limits.	Confidence Assessment Note, Source-Boundary Note, Controlled Partner Brief, Clarification Note

Figure 5. Cross-case findings converge on a limited operational rule set. The recurring decision problem is not total attribution. It is how to act before a hostile or misleading line hardens through credible local circulation.

Section 7. Operational Toolkit

This report uses one core operational tool: the First-72-Hour Credibility-Handoff Case Worksheet.

The decision to keep the toolkit to one integrated worksheet is deliberate. The report's purpose is not to create a large annex system or a long menu of separate templates. Its purpose is to give ministries, missions, regional bodies, civil society actors, and other trusted partners a compact instrument they can use under pressure in the period when the public record is still strongest and early action still matters.

The worksheet is designed for the opening cycle of a live case. It helps users secure the record, fix chronology, identify the first credible relay, separate direct observation from inference, decide whether the case stays internal or moves outward, and record the next review point. In practical terms, it brings the report's full method into one working instrument that can be used within the first 24 to 72 hours of a trigger event, relay surge, or contested claim.

This is why the toolkit remains intentionally small. In this report, usability matters more than tool volume. A short, disciplined worksheet is more valuable than a larger stack of forms that duplicate each other, slow handling, or force teams to move across multiple templates during the most time-sensitive stage of the case. The worksheet is meant to reduce procedural disorder, not add to it.

7.1 What the worksheet is for

The worksheet is the report's primary field-use instrument. It is meant to support five immediate tasks.

First, it preserves the record before material is clipped, deleted, reframed, or repackaged.

Second, it fixes chronology by separating the opening event, the first claims in circulation, the source texts preserved, and what remains unverified.

Third, it identifies the relay path and the best current first credible relay candidate, while allowing ranked candidates where the sequence is still incomplete.

Fourth, it sets confidence by separating what is directly observed from what is strongly inferred, plausible but weak, or still unknown.

Fifth, it supports a handling decision by helping users determine whether the case should remain in internal handling, move to trusted partner handling, or support bounded public clarification.

Those five functions are the report's minimum operational requirement. If they are performed early and in order, institutions can act with more discipline even when visibility is partial and pressure is high.

7.2 How the worksheet should be used

The worksheet should be used in a fixed order.

Users should begin by securing the record. That means preserving full texts, screenshots, links, timestamps, statements, media, and source context before interpretation outruns documentation.

They should then fix chronology. That means recording the opening event in plain sequence, capturing the first claims moving through the information environment, and marking what is verified and what is still unresolved.

They should then identify the first credible relay. This is the key operational breakpoint in the report. The central question is not only who spoke first. It is which visible carrier made the line look local, familiar, respectable, civic, diplomatic, mainstream, or procedurally legitimate enough to circulate more easily.

They should then set confidence and evidence boundaries. The worksheet is designed to keep direct observation separate from strong inference, weak judgment, and unknowns. It is also designed to record what should not be claimed from the available public record.

Only after those steps should users decide on handling. That decision should remain bounded. Internal handling is appropriate when chronology is unstable, the relay sequence is still unclear, or the evidence does not yet support outward use. Partner handling is appropriate when trusted counterparts need a common chronology, a shared evidence ceiling, or a narrow coordination request. Public clarification is appropriate only when the factual core is stable, the target channel or carrier family is defined, and correction can still matter in that same information environment.

The worksheet closes with next action and review/reset fields so the case does not end with the first judgment. It preserves what was missed, what mattered most, and what threshold, rule, or contact path should improve before the next opening.

7.3 What the worksheet can produce

The worksheet is not only a recordkeeping form. It is also the basis for the report's immediate outputs.

In many cases, the worksheet will support no outward product yet. That is a valid outcome when the record is still incomplete.

Where the threshold is met, however, the worksheet can support one of two bounded outward products.

The first is a Controlled Partner Brief. This is used when trusted counterparts need a common chronology, a shared relay judgment, a confidence tier, and a narrow coordination request.

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The first is a Controlled Partner Brief. This is used when trusted counterparts need a common chronology, a shared relay judgment, a confidence tier, and a narrow coordination request.

The second is a Clarification Note. This is used only when the factual core is stable, the target channel or carrier family is clear, and correction can still help restore chronology, source context, or procedural meaning in that same environment.

This means the report no longer depends on a larger tool stack. One worksheet can support the opening-cycle method, the initial handling decision, and the first outward product where the threshold is met.

7.4 Why the toolkit is limited to one worksheet

A larger toolkit would create more complexity than this brief requires. The report is designed as a concise operational roadmap, not as a broad manual or a training binder. For that reason, the default tool layer should remain limited to one integrated worksheet reproduced in Section 9.

That choice also improves alignment across the report. Section 7 explains what the worksheet is for and how it should be used. Section 8 assigns responsibility for using it across institutional lanes. Section 9 provides the full field-ready version for live use. This creates one controlled instrument rather than a series of partially overlapping tools.

The worksheet is therefore the report’s core operational device. It is small enough to use under pressure, structured enough to preserve discipline, and flexible enough to travel across acute crises, infrastructure cases, weakened-verification environments, grievance-heavy settings, and diplomatic-media insertion cases without claiming more than the evidence can support.

Used properly, it helps institutions do the minimum that matters most: preserve chronology, identify the first credible relay, keep claims within the evidence ceiling, choose a proportional handling route, and act before a distorted line hardens through credible local circulation.

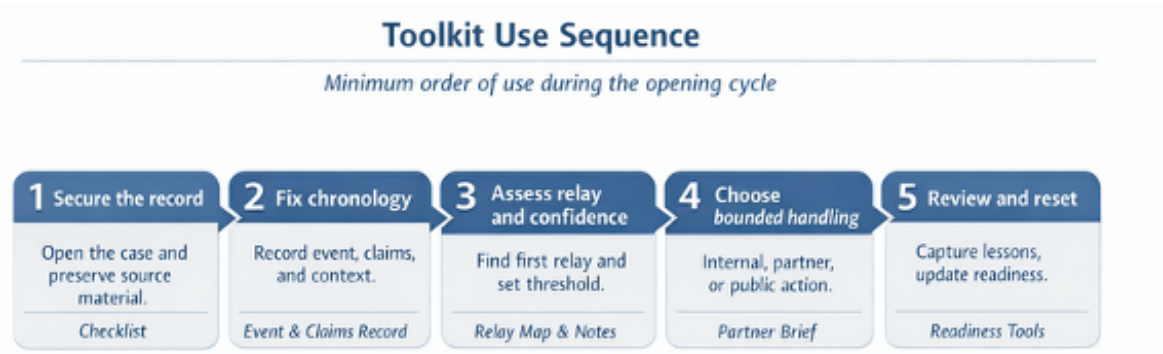


Figure 6. Toolkit use sequence during the opening cycle.

Section 8. Implementation Roadmap and Matrix

8.1 Implementation Matrix

Section 7 explains how the worksheet is used. Section 8 assigns responsibility once a case has been opened. At that stage, the central issue is no longer only how to identify a credibility handoff. The issue is who acts, on what threshold, with which output, and under which safeguard.^{[1][2][3][4][21]}

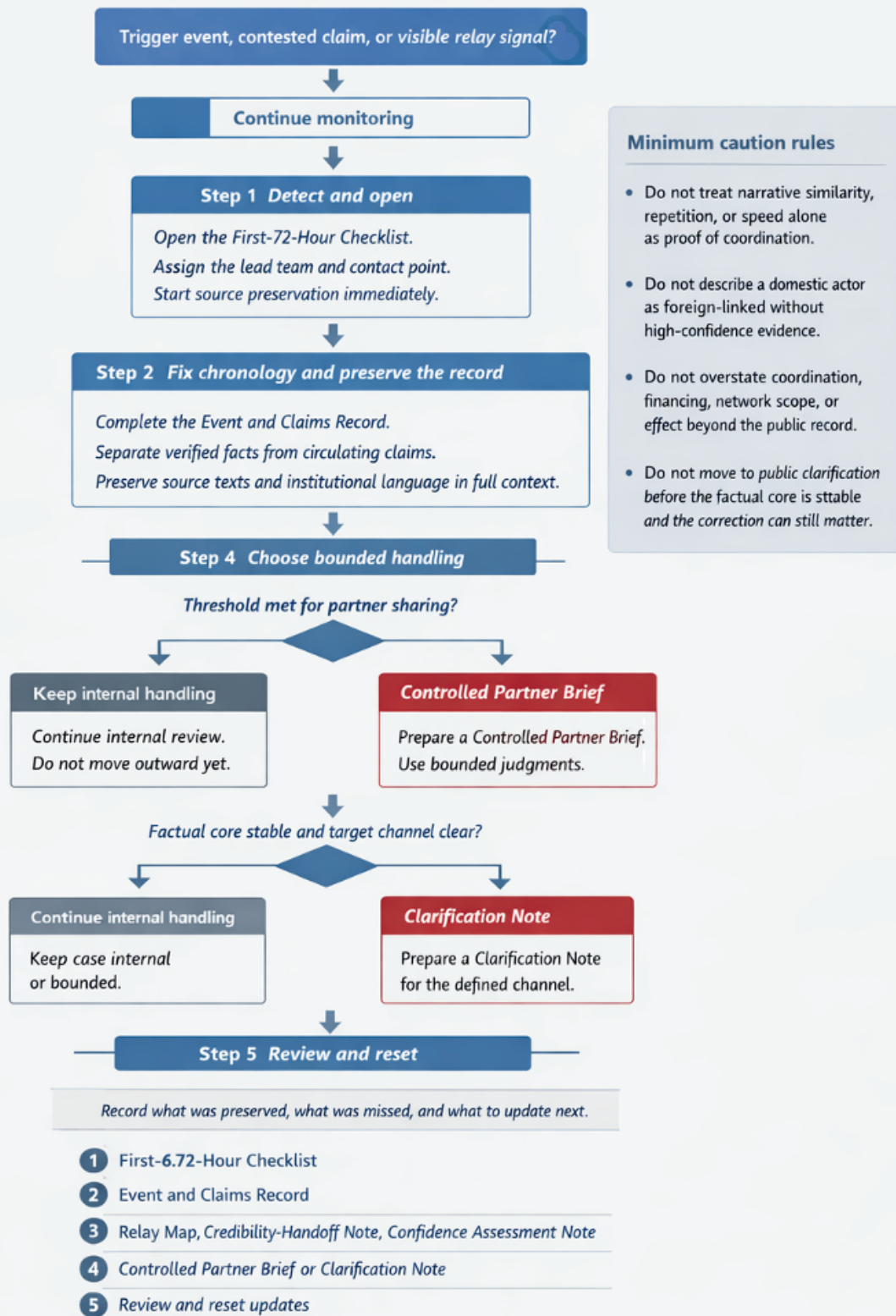
Chronology still comes first. Before institutions explain the event, coordinate outward, or attempt clarification, they need to secure the record and establish what can actually be said with confidence. That order matters because the risk identified in this report becomes harder to contain once a foreign-aligned line is repeated through a carrier that local audiences already treat as familiar, credible, or procedurally legitimate. After that point, the task is no longer to shape the opening record. It is to recover lost ground.^{[1][2][3]}
[4]

For that reason, the matrix is organized by institutional lane rather than by tool type. Situational awareness carries most of the chronology and case-control burden. International cooperation carries bounded partner coordination. Strategic communications carries clarification, but only when the factual core is stable and the relevant channel is clear. Capacity building and monitoring and evaluation support repeat use, review, and institutional learning across cases.^{[1][2][3][4][21]}

Different users will have different mandates, capacities, and political constraints. Nothing here assumes identical behavior across all settings. Instead, the matrix gives ministries, missions, regional bodies, and partner actors a common sequence, compatible outputs, and clear minimum action thresholds. A workable implementation scheme should reduce confusion under pressure, keep claims inside the evidence boundary, and make roles visible at a glance.^{[1][2][3][4][14][21]}

Figure 8.1A: Minimum Action Path

A conservative flow for opening a case, fixing chronology, assessing relay, choosing bounded handling, and resetting after the acute phase.



Minimum caution rules

- Do not treat narrative similarity, repetition, or speed alone as proof of coordination.
- Do not describe a domestic actor as foreign-linked without high-confidence evidence.
- Do not overstate coordination, financing, network scope, or effect beyond the public record.
- Do not move to public clarification before the factual core is stable and the correction can still matter.

Figure 8.1A. Minimum action path for opening-cycle response: secure the record, fix chronology, identify the first credible relay, set confidence and evidence boundaries, choose the handling route, and produce a bounded output under clear rights-safe and attribution-safe thresholds.^{[1][2][3][4][21]}

8.1B Matrix of Action

Field	Description
Objective	Detect the opening, fix chronology, and identify the operational breakpoint.
Leads	Ministries, missions, analytical units.
Support	Regional bodies, civil society monitors, researchers.
First 72 hours	Open the First-72-Hour Checklist, start the Event and Claims Record, preserve source texts, and open the Relay Map if more than 1 carrier is visible.
30 days	Standardize event logging, relay tagging, source retention, and confidence review.
90 days and onward	Maintain watch lists, carrier taxonomy, trigger protocols, and a small reference library of worked cases.
Minimum evidence threshold	Trigger event, contested claim, or visible relay signal. This is a minimum action threshold, not proof of coordination.
Rights-safe / attribution-safe caution	Do not treat similarity, speed, or repetition alone as proof of coordination.

International cooperation

Field	Description
Objective	Share bounded judgments and align partner handling rules.
Leads	Foreign ministries, missions, regional bodies.
Support	Partner governments, coalitions, trusted civil society partners.
First 72 hours	Issue a Controlled Partner Brief when the threshold is met and attach Source-Boundary language where needed.
30 days	Define partner-sharing thresholds, evidence tiers, confidentiality rules, and safe channels.
90 days and onward	Run recurring coordination drills, refresh contact pathways, and update partner-handling rules after relevant cases.
Minimum evidence threshold	Event and Claims Record plus Credibility-Handoff Note plus Confidence Assessment Note. This is enough for bounded coordination, not maximal attribution.
Rights-safe / attribution-safe caution	Do not overstate coordination, financing, network scope, or effect beyond the public record.

Strategic communications

Field	Description
Objective	Restore chronology and context in the same information environment where relay is occurring.
Leads	Ministries, missions, regional bodies.
Support	Trusted validators, independent media, fact-checking partners.
First 72 hours	Prepare and issue a Clarification Note matched to the relevant channel or carrier family when correction can still matter.
30 days	Pre-draft clarification formats, translation pathways, validator lists, and approval routes for high-risk channels.
90 days and onward	Maintain rapid clarification routines, update channel lists by environment, and review correction lag after major cases.
Minimum evidence threshold	Stable factual core, preserved source context, and a defined target channel or carrier family. This is a minimum clarification threshold, not a claim of full visibility.
Rights-safe / attribution-safe caution	Do not label domestic actors as foreign-linked without high-confidence evidence.

Capacity building

Field	Description
Objective	Ensure small teams can execute the minimum first-72-hour package and use the toolkit in a consistent order.
Leads	Ministries, missions.
Support	Donors, training partners, regional bodies.
First 72 hours	Assign minimum roles for recordkeeping, relay mapping, confidence review, partner coordination, and clarification approval.
30 days	Train staff on chronology and case-control tools, assessment tools, and coordination and clarification tools.
90 days and onward	Refresh training, maintain contact lists, and adapt templates by carrier type and setting.
Minimum evidence threshold	Institutional commitment and minimum designated staff. This is a minimum readiness threshold, not a claim of full institutional capacity.
Rights-safe / attribution-safe caution	Do not build procedures that force premature public attribution or unsupported escalation.

Capacity building

Field	Description
Objective	Ensure small teams can execute the minimum first-72-hour package and use the toolkit in a consistent order.
Leads	Ministries, missions.
Support	Donors, training partners, regional bodies.
First 72 hours	Assign minimum roles for recordkeeping, relay mapping, confidence review, partner coordination, and clarification approval.
30 days	Train staff on chronology and case-control tools, assessment tools, and coordination and clarification tools.
90 days and onward	Refresh training, maintain contact lists, and adapt templates by carrier type and setting.
Minimum evidence threshold	Institutional commitment and minimum designated staff. This is a minimum readiness threshold, not a claim of full institutional capacity.
Rights-safe / attribution-safe caution	Do not build procedures that force premature public attribution or unsupported escalation.

Monitoring and evaluation

Field	Description
Objective	Learn from events without changing the core method.
Leads	Ministries, regional bodies.
Support	Missions, researchers, civil society partners.
First 72 hours	Record what was preserved early, what was missed, which carriers mattered most, and where correction lagged.
30 days	Run short after-action reviews using the chronology, assessment, coordination, and clarification outputs produced in live cases or exercises.
90 days and onward	Update watchpoints, threshold rules, templates, and training priorities after relevant events.
Minimum evidence threshold	Completed toolkit outputs from at least 1 live or exercise case. This is enough to review performance, not to prove hidden coordination after the fact.
Rights-safe / attribution-safe caution	Do not treat post-event pattern review as retroactive proof of hidden coordination.

Figure 8.1B. Matrix of action by institutional lane: objectives, lead and support actors, first 72 hours, 30-day and 90-day actions, minimum evidence thresholds, and rights-safe and attribution-safe cautions for situational awareness, international cooperation, strategic communications, capacity building, and monitoring and evaluation.[1][2][3][4][14][21]

8.2 Capability tiers

Minimum capability means one small team can open the checklist, fix chronology, map early relay, assign a confidence tier, and support one bounded outward product. That may be one Controlled Partner Brief or one Clarification Note, depending on role and evidence.

Intermediate capability means a ministry or mission network can do the same work more routinely, maintain channel-specific clarification formats, keep standing watchpoints up to date, and run confidence review across more than one case type.

Advanced capability means coalition partners can coordinate across borders, support local verification capacity, maintain shared case libraries, review cases by carrier type and environment, and use the toolkit as a standing preparedness instrument rather than only as an emergency response package.

Across all three tiers, the operating logic stays the same. What changes is the depth of coverage, the speed of coordination, and the range of channels and partners that can still be reached in time.^{[1][2][4]}

8.3 Time horizon

Immediate action means the first 24 to 72 hours after a trigger event or relay surge. During that window, the priority is record control, relay identification, confidence discipline, and a first handling decision.

Thirty-day action means building routines, thresholds, contact pathways, pre-cleared formats, and local adaptation rules so the same mistakes are less likely to recur in the next case.

Ninety-day and ongoing action mean turning those routines into standing practice. That includes maintaining watch lists, carrier typologies, translation pathways, validator lists, training routines, and short after-action review cycles that improve performance without changing the report's bounded evidence standard.^{[1][2][4]}

8.4 Success standard

A workable implementation system does not need full visibility into every actor, channel, or effect. Enough discipline is required to preserve chronology, identify the first credible relay, keep attribution proportional to the evidence, and place clarification into the same information environment before procedural legitimacy hardens around a distorted line. That is the standard this roadmap is designed to support.^{[1][2][3][4]}

Implementation Horizon, Capability Tiers, and Success Standard

What institutions build, when they build it, and what counts as a workable system.

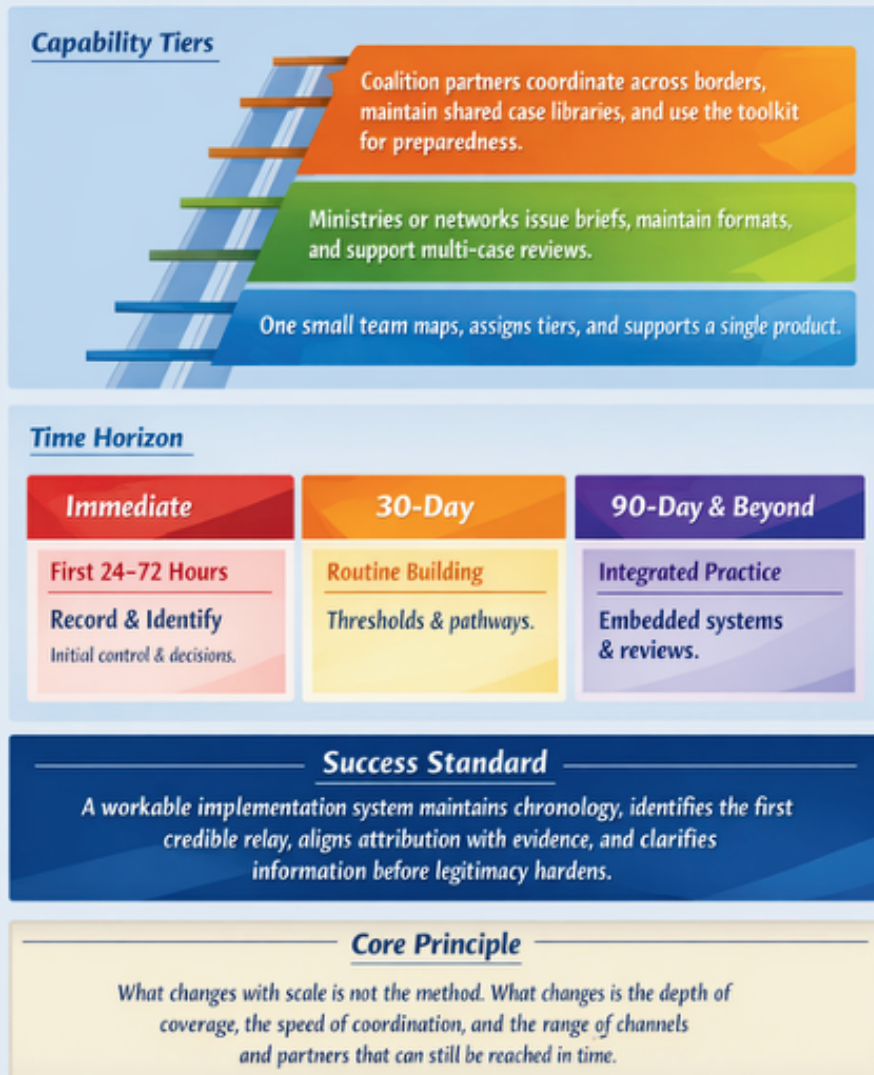


Figure 8.2. Implementation horizon, capability tiers, and success standard under bounded evidence conditions.^{[1][2][3][4]}

Section 9. Annex Tool

This annex tool gives users one integrated worksheet for the first 24 to 72 hours of a live case.

It is written so a reader can use it without first reading the rest of the report.

Use it in this order: secure the record, fix chronology, identify the first credible relay, set confidence, choose the handling route, then review and reset.

Its purpose is practical and narrow: help institutions act before a distorted line hardens through credible local circulation.

9.1 First-72-Hour Credibility-Handoff Case Worksheet

Use when: A trigger event, structural opening, contested claim, or visible relay surge creates a live case.

Who fills this out: Case lead, small response team, mission focal point, ministry desk, regional body focal point, or trusted observer supporting an institutional response.

Time needed: 15 to 20 minutes.

What this worksheet gives you: One compact first-response record that captures chronology, relay, confidence, handling, and next steps in one place.

Share with: Internal response team.

If thresholds are met, parts of this worksheet can support a Controlled Partner Brief or a Clarification Note.

Purpose:

Preserve chronology, identify the first credible relay, keep the evidence ceiling intact, and decide whether the case remains in internal handling, moves to partner handling, or supports public clarification.

Read this first:

Complete the worksheet in order. Mark unknown where needed. Do not guess.

Do not force one definitive relay if the record supports ranked candidates only.

Keep direct observation separate from strong inference, plausible but weak judgment, and unknowns.

Do not move outward before the relevant handling threshold is met.

Short sequence:

1. Secure the record.
2. Fix chronology.
3. Identify the first credible relay.
4. Set confidence and choose handling.
5. Review and reset.

Worked example, illustrative only:

An international observer in Niamey sees a clipped institutional quote spreading through local radio, messaging apps, and a civic-looking account as supposed proof of foreign control.

The observer preserves the full original statement, the clipped excerpt, screenshots, links, timestamps, and the first visible relay points.

The observer records what is directly observed, lists the first claims in circulation, and marks what remains unverified.

Because the chronology and relay sequence are still incomplete, the case remains in internal handling.

Later, if a mission, ministry, or regional body needs the same chronology and evidence ceiling for a narrow coordination request, the case can move to partner handling.

Only if the factual core stabilizes and correction can still matter in that same radio, messaging, or civic environment should the team consider public clarification.

Handling routes:

Internal handling means the case stays inside the team while chronology is still unstable, the relay sequence is still unclear, or the evidence does not yet support outward use.

This does not mean doing nothing.

It means continue source preservation, chronology repair, relay mapping, confidence review, and boundary setting inside the team.

Partner handling means bounded sharing with trusted counterparts only.

Use it when those counterparts need a common chronology, a shared evidence ceiling, or a narrow coordination request.

The normal outward product for this route is a Controlled Partner Brief.

Public clarification means a bounded corrective product aimed at restoring chronology, source context, or procedural meaning in the same information environment where the distortion is circulating.

Use it only when the factual core is stable, the target channel or carrier family is defined, and correction can still matter there.

The normal outward product for this route is a Clarification Note.

Key terms used in this worksheet:

Credibility handoff means the point at which a foreign-aligned line is repeated through a carrier that local audiences treat as familiar, respectable, civic, diplomatic, or procedurally legitimate.

First credible relay means the earliest visible carrier that gives a foreign-aligned line local plausibility and makes it easier to circulate.

Direct observation means what the public record shows clearly through preserved texts, timestamps, named carriers, visible republication, official statements, platform evidence, or other verifiable material.

Evidence ceiling means the outer limit of what can responsibly be claimed from the available record.

Target channel or carrier family means the communication environment in which the distortion is circulating, or the closest available equivalent for correction.

Trigger event or relay signal:

Note:

Record the event, contested claim, structural opening, or visible relay surge that created a live need to open the case.

Example only:

Coup statement, viral clipped quote, embassy claim, civic-looking repost, mainstream pickup, or same-day republication.

Case opened:

Date _____ Time _____ Time zone _____

Lead team:

Contact point:

Source preservation started:

☐ Opened

☐ In progress

☐ Not opened

Materials preserved:

☐ Full texts

☐ Screenshots

☐ Links

☐ Timestamps

☐ Statements

☐ Media

☐ Source context

Other preserved materials:

B. Event and claims chronology

Opening event:

Note:

Record the opening event in plain chronology, not a later interpretation.

Time window:

From _____

To _____

What is verified:

Note:

Record only the factual core supported by preserved texts, timestamps, named carriers, official statements, platform evidence, or other verifiable material.

First claims in circulation:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Note:

Record the first visible claims moving through the information environment, even when they remain disputed or unverified.

Primary source texts preserved:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

What remains unverified:

Note:

Record what still requires verification or remains unresolved in the public record.

C. Relay path and first credible relay

Origin channel or first visible appearance:

Note:

Record the earliest visible appearance in the public record, not a hidden-origin claim the evidence cannot support.

Visible carriers:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

Domestic-seeming carriers or validators:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Note:

Record carriers local audiences could reasonably treat as familiar, civic, mainstream, professional, diplomatic, or procedurally legitimate, regardless of actual origin.

Known republication routes:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Known correction points:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Best current first credible relay candidate:

Note:

Name the earliest visible carrier that made the line look local, familiar, respectable, or procedurally legitimate enough to circulate more easily.

Example only:

Mainstream interview, civic statement, embassy placement in a local newspaper, or clipped institutional reuse carried by a familiar local outlet.

Why it matters:

If sequence is unclear, ranked first credible relay candidates:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Note:

Rank candidates rather than forcing one definitive relay when the visible sequence is incomplete or contested.

Visibility gaps:

Note:

Record where the public record is incomplete so later readers do not mistake absence of evidence for evidence of absence.

D. Confidence and evidence boundary

What is directly observed:

Note:

Record only what the public record shows clearly through preserved texts, timestamps, named carriers, visible republication, official statements, platform evidence, or other verifiable material.

Example only:

Ministry statement posted at 09:14, local radio quote at 10:02, embassy repost at 10:18, newspaper republication at 11:05.

What is strongly inferred:

Note:

Record judgments well supported by visible sequence or pattern, but not fully shown by the public record.

What is plausible but weak:

Note:

Record lines that may be true but remain too weak for handling beyond bounded internal use.

What is unknown from public evidence:

Note:

Record what the public record cannot currently settle, including hidden coordination, tasking, financing, full network scope, or effect.

What should not be claimed:

Note:

State explicitly which stronger conclusions the current record does not support.

Example only:

No current basis to claim covert coordination, foreign tasking, foreign financing, full network control, or persuasive effect.

Current confidence tier:

☐ Low

☐ Moderate

☐ High

Evidence-ceiling note:

Note:

Use this line to restate the evidence ceiling in one short sentence if there is pressure to overstate.

E. Handling decision

Current handling state:

☐ Internal handling

☐ Partner handling under review

☐ Partner handling approved

☐ Public clarification under review

☐ Public clarification approved

Partner handling threshold met:

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unclear

Note:

Mark yes only when trusted counterparts need shared chronology, a common evidence ceiling, or a narrow coordination request.

This route is bounded sharing, not public communication.

Example only:

Shared relay tracking, common watchpoint, source-preservation support, or quiet factual alignment.

What can move to trusted partners now:

Note:

Record only the bounded chronology, relay judgment, confidence tier, known unknowns, and narrow request that trusted counterparts need now.

Narrow coordination request:

Note:

State one bounded request, not a broad theory of the case.

Public clarification threshold met:

☐ Yes

☐ No

☐ Unclear

Note:

Mark yes only when the factual core is stable, the target channel or carrier family is defined, and correction can still matter there.

Example only:

Same-day clarification into the same radio, messaging, civic, media, or diplomatic environment where the distorted line is gaining traction.

What stays in internal handling:

Note:

Use this line to state what still requires internal verification, relay mapping, chronology repair, confidence review, or boundary setting before any outward use.

What may justify public clarification:

Note:

Record only the bounded factual point, lost source context, or stripped chronology that may justify correction in the relevant environment.

Target channel or carrier family for clarification:

Note:

Name the same communication environment in which the distortion is circulating, or the closest available equivalent.

Example only:

Messaging apps, national media, civic channels, elite discussion, diplomatic discussion, or a specific republication chain.

Rights-safe or attribution-safe caution:

Note:

Record any reason to keep wording bounded, especially where domestic actors could be mislabeled or the evidence could be overstated.

Outputs now authorized:

☐ No outward product yet

☐ Controlled Partner Brief

☐ Clarification Note

F. Next action and review/reset

Recommended next step:

Next-step owner:

Next review:

Date _____ Time _____ Time zone _____

Review and reset notes:

Note:

Record what was preserved early, what was missed, which carriers mattered most, where correction lagged, and what rule, contact path, or template should improve before the next opening.

Red lines:

- Do not treat narrative similarity, repetition, or speed alone as proof of coordination.
- Do not treat grievance alignment as proof of foreign tasking.
- Do not describe a domestic actor as foreign-linked without high-confidence evidence.
- Do not overstate coordination, financing, network scope, or effect beyond the public record.
- Do not force one definitive relay if the record supports ranked candidates only.
- Do not confuse amplification with persuasion.
- Do not move to public clarification before the factual core is stable and the target channel or carrier family is clear.
- If the distortion is moving through messaging apps, a website post alone is unlikely to be enough.
- If the distortion is moving through national media, civic language, or diplomatic discussion, correction should reach that same type of environment when feasible.
- The aim is to restore chronology where credibility is being transferred.

Section 10. Glossary and Working Vocabulary

Amplification means the further spread of a line after it enters circulation. It can occur through reposting, quotation, republication, endorsement, pickup by public figures or mainstream outlets, and repetition across platforms or languages. It does not by itself prove coordination or persuasion.

Bounded public clarification means a public response that stays within what the evidence supports. Its purpose is to restore chronology, context, or procedural meaning without overstating attribution, intent, coordination, or effect. It explains what is known, what has been distorted, and what remains uncertain.

Carrier means the outlet, channel, messenger, institution, account, or other public-facing vehicle through which a line moves from one setting to another. In this report, the key question is not only where a line began, but which carrier made it easier to treat as normal, familiar, or credible.

Channel-matched clarification means a corrective response placed in the same communication environment in which the distortion is circulating, or the closest available equivalent. If a line spreads through messaging apps, a correction issued only on a website may not be enough.

Correction lag means the gap between the first meaningful circulation of a misleading or distorted line and the first effective attempt to restore chronology or context. The longer that gap, the greater the risk that the line hardens into ordinary understanding before correction reaches the relevant audience.

Credibility handoff means the point at which a foreign-aligned line is repeated through a carrier that local audiences treat as familiar, respectable, civic, diplomatic, or procedurally legitimate. This is the main operational breakpoint in the report.

Direct observation means what the public record shows clearly through preserved texts, timestamps, named carriers, visible republication, official statements, platform evidence, or other verifiable material. It is the strongest category of support in this report and should be kept separate from interpretation, inference, and assumption.

Evidence ceiling means the outer limit of what can responsibly be claimed from the available record. In practice, the report may support claims about chronology, visible relay, carrier choice, and public sequence more strongly than claims about hidden coordination, tasking, financing, or effect.

First credible relay means the earliest visible carrier that gives a foreign-aligned line local plausibility. It is the first point where the line begins to look domestic, familiar, respectable, or procedurally legitimate enough to circulate more easily.

Foreign-aligned line means a message, frame, narrative, or interpretation that advances a Russian-aligned understanding of events. It may begin in overt state messaging, diplomatic messaging, proxy or affiliated channels, or later local reuse. The term identifies alignment, not a complete command relationship.

Foreign information manipulation and interference (FIMI) means coordinated or structured information activity intended to distort public understanding, political judgment, or institutional decision-making across borders. In this report, the term is used operationally to assess when foreign-aligned lines enter credible local circulation in ways that may distort domestic discourse or decision-making.

Handling threshold means the evidentiary point at which a case should remain internal, move to trusted partner coordination, or support bounded public clarification. It is the point at which the record is strong enough to justify a specific next step.

Local adaptation means the recoding of a line into local grievance, symbolic language, procedural vocabulary, historical memory, or familiar political shorthand. A line often gains traction by being expressed in terms that fit local political language and public concerns.

Opening means the event, shock, dispute, crisis, or standing vulnerability that creates urgent demand for interpretation. It can be sudden, such as a coup attempt, protest surge, or violent incident, or structural, such as a weak verification environment or long-running grievance.

Procedural legitimacy means the appearance of normality, credibility, or institutional acceptability that makes a line easier to repeat in public discourse. A line may gain it when it appears through a mainstream outlet, civic-looking structure, official-sounding messenger, familiar public figure, or clipped reuse of real institutional language.

Relay means the movement of a line from its visible origin into additional carriers, audiences, or layers of circulation. A relay may involve reposting, republication, quotation, adaptation, endorsement, or visible transfer from one communication environment to another.

Source preservation means the early capture and retention of full texts, screenshots, links, timestamps, statements, media, and surrounding context before material is deleted, clipped, edited, or repackaged. Without it, chronology is harder to reconstruct and later analysis is less reliable.

Strong inference means a judgment well supported by pattern and evidence but not fully shown by the public record. It is not speculation, but it is weaker than direct observation and should not be treated as settled fact.

Visibility gap means a part of the sequence, network, or communication environment that cannot be seen clearly from the available record. It may result from private channels, deleted content, offline activity, weak monitoring, or missing source capture. It should be recorded explicitly as a limit on what can be concluded.

Section 11. Conclusion

This report does not prove one universal pathway of Russian influence across the Global South. It does not provide full network visibility. It does not establish command over every local actor who repeats a Russian-aligned line. It does not measure persuasion effects across all cases. Open sources do not support that level of certainty, and the report is stronger because it does not pretend otherwise.^{[14][18][28]}

What the evidence supports is narrower and more useful. Across different environments, the public record repeatedly shows contested openings, early foreign-aligned framing, local adaptation, and movement into carriers that make those lines easier to repeat as ordinary local discourse. That is the operational problem this report is designed to help institutions recognize earlier and handle more carefully.^{[2][17][25][26][27]}

This report therefore supports a bounded operational judgment rather than a broad theory. The desk-research record is strongest on chronology, visible relay, public carrier choice, and evidence limits. It is weaker on hidden coordination, covert financing, closed-channel brokerage, and effect. For that reason, the report is structured as a practical roadmap and methodological template for early handling, not as a claim to full attribution across cases.^{[11][13][14][36][42][45]}

The report proposes a narrow minimum standard for action under pressure: preserve chronology, identify the first credible relay, separate direct observation from inference, decide whether the case stays internal or moves to partner coordination or bounded public clarification, and produce a compact first-response package within 24 to 72 hours where institutional capacity allows. That is the level at which the instrument is intended to be transferable across settings without exceeding what the public record can bear.^[29]
^{[30][31][32][33][34][35][36][42][45]}

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