



EUROPEAN COMMISSION
HEALTH AND CONSUMERS DIRECTORATE-GENERAL

Public Health and Risk Assessment

Health threats

Workshop on Health Programme projects on Generic Preparedness planning and response in health emergencies

30 September and 1 October 2009

Luxembourg

REPORT

Introduction

Several projects on health threats topics, such as preparedness planning have been financed through the Public Health Programme 2003-2008 and the 2nd Health Programme 2008-2013. In order to facilitate synergies between projects, share methods and results and orient policies to be developed and implemented at Member States and European level, this workshop has been organized jointly by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) and Health and Consumers Directorate General (DG SANCO). An added value of the workshop is also to reinforce cooperation between Member States at European level by developing collaborations between project-related experts.

The projects chosen are those related to generic preparedness planning and response. Projects related to specific topics, such as infectious diseases have been included if they contributed to preparedness and planning.

There were two major aims of the workshop. Project managers of projects related to generic preparedness planning and response with support from the Health Programme would meet and share information and experiences identifying areas of possible cooperation and coordination and identifying possible research and planning gaps, particularly in view of planning for future areas of action. The result of the workshop would also be an important input on the identification of policy needs related to the implementation of Health Security projects.

The Health Programme¹ is the European Commission's main instrument for implementing the EU health strategy². The strategy has key areas which comprise improving citizen's health security and safety, promoting health to improve prosperity and solidarity, and finally, generating and disseminating health knowledge. The budget for the period 2008-2013 is €321.5 million.

For the Work Plan 2010 the estimated budget is almost €47 million including the possibility to use the following financial instruments: call for proposals (covering projects, conferences, joint actions by Community and Member States and operating grants (e.g. NGO and experts

¹ <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/health/health.html>;

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2007:301:0003:0013:EN:PDF>

² http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/site/en/com/2005/com2005_0115en01.pdf

networks)), call for tenders, International organisations direct grant agreements as well as supporting scientific committees.

Presentations and Outcome

In Annex 1 (LINK each website) the programme of the workshop is presented and in Annex 2 (LINK to each website) summaries of all the projects being presented are included.

In all 21 projects funded under the Health Programme were presented and so was the overview of the 7th Framework Programme (FP7) on security including CBRN(E) related projects. The projects being presented were related to chemical exposures, infectious disease control, real time mortality monitoring, decision support systems, surveillance systems, adaptation to climate change, training of health crisis management, and health security preparedness planning and management. However, all are related to generic preparedness planning and response in one way or another.

Several potential synergies between projects related to each other were identified and some are already ongoing e.g. projects related to chemicals, surveillance methods, compatibility of reporting systems with existing European Alert systems (EWRS/IHR and RASCHEM) method, training models, enlargement of the actions scope beyond the European area, by the involvement of international organisations from countries outside EU, through collaboration with other Community Programmes (Neighbourhood policy, AIDCO, etc) etc. The importance of networking between project coordinators, but also between project coordinators and EC, ECDC, JRC, WHO etc, was well recognized.

Joint concerns:

Translation - to ensure large dissemination of the project output, the translation of the key deliverables should be ensured into languages other than English, at least into the languages of participating MSs in a project, joint action, etc.

Secure communication - Some of the information dealt with by the health security projects might be considered sensitive and mechanisms should be developed to ensure secured communication systems, already from the start of the project, joint action etc. Summaries of the outputs of the actions could be produced removing the "sensitive data", and after being security cleared, be used for the awareness-raising of the target groups, including policy makers, health and security professionals, and general public, etc

Training - to ensure the replication, transferability and sustainability of the capacity building initiatives, it is proposed to host the training programmes, in a public site under the DG SANCO Health portal and/or EAHC website

Policy - Policy relevance should be considered right from the start of any action. It is important to orient the project outcomes as a contribution to the EU and national policies, to ensure the impact of the actions, the coordinators need to get the results presented to the policy levels both in Member States and in the Commission.

Sustainability of the actions, the outcomes of the projects (possibly from several different projects) should be used to foster the adoption of new public health knowledge, systems and tools at national/regional level, and to initiate possible new actions at national and European level. The new financial joint **actions** mechanism aims to ensure the transferability of the project outcomes into national policies priorities and confirms the national stakeholders' commitment to the continuation of the actions. This option of continuity should be envisaged at an early stage.

Dissemination of results to different stakeholders in the Member States, Commission, Agencies and others should be considered in an early phase. This can be ensured by the development of a dissemination plan, including a stakeholders' analysis, choice of adequate channels of communication and tools.

National authorities should be involved at an early stage during the project design, as possible stakeholders, to ensure the sustainability of the activities.

Possible future activities could be:

- Establish a platform to present the data to the policy level. The use of the existing data and to guarantee the dissemination of project results and information should be improved e.g. by disseminating project results to the Health Security Committee, National Focal contact points, Programme Committee members and to policy and governmental responsible persons in Member States. This could be done e.g. by arranging yearly conferences where the results of ongoing and finalized projects are presented to the potential stakeholders (Member State governmental policy makers, European Commission and Agencies).
- Project coordinators of "related" projects should together identify future possible activities using results from existing projects, e.g. joint actions by Community and Member States, innovative projects, etc.
- Sharing results from one project to another before the projects are finalized should be done e.g. sharing information on training material, lessons learnt, methods used, survey questionnaires, through the establishment of an email list to ensure the dissemination of the projects deliverables, consultation of experts, etc.
- A platform for exchanging training material, e-learning systems, with the support of DG SANCO and EAHC, to ensure the sustainability of the training programmes beyond the timeframe of the projects, etc.
- Many already existing results can already before the projects are finalized, orient EU policy development and other ongoing activities.
- DG SANCO /EAHC can arrange "mini workshops" between a selected number of projects related to each other, to foster exchange or to consult the expert, when health management issues arise, like the management of the H1N1 health crisis.
- Generalize outcomes from "specific" projects. Outcomes from specific projects can be "generalized" to be used also in other areas, to be able to ensure generalization, the methods, tools and project results should be publically available, on the EAHC project database.
- Better dissemination of policy. The projects are expected to contribute and to add value to EU policies, and the legal implications identified during the implementation of the actions can guide the further development of EU legal actions.

Actors and responsibilities

EAHC could be responsible for arranging (in collaboration with SANCO) suggested conferences and workshops as described above, making sure relevant information (training materials, tools, questionnaire templates, etc) is available on the EAHC database on the website with relevant links available to the project websites

COMM (SANCO) could together with EAHC arrange conferences and workshops being described above (platforms for exchanging experiences and platforms for policy makers), mini workshops), encourage (via policy officers) project coordinators to interact with other project

coordinators facilitating exchanges of experiences, identifying possible continuation activities from project results, through the proposition of joint actions, the consultation of project experts when technical inputs might be required for the management of a health crisis, etc.

Health Programme The annual health plans should be reflecting the policy needs identified during the project implementations and should highlight how the projects should contribute to the EU policies whilst at same time foster the adoption by the MS of the project outcomes by offering Joint Action opportunities.

National authorities could actively approach relevant projects for exchanging experiences, supporting the multiplier effect to ensure replicability at national level and ensure the sustainability of EU funded activities, by committing political and financial support through Joint Actions, etc

Projects could actively contact other relevant projects for exchanging experiences and results, identifying new activities, identifying EU policy needs, etc.

Conclusion

In summary it can be concluded that the aim of the workshop has been fulfilled, both regarding sharing experiences between the project coordinators, identifying areas of possible cooperation and coordination and the reinforcement of cooperation between Member States organisations and European institutions levels. Furthermore the workshop has been an important input for the Health Threats Unit on the identification of policy needs related to the implementation of health security actions. The workshop was not an end-point but rather a start to share better information, knowledge and results, with the aim of improving citizens' health security and safety in Europe.