



**Scientific Committee on Health and Environmental and Emerging Risks
(SCHEER)
WG on Rapid Risk Assessment**

12 December 2017, Luxembourg

Minutes

1. Welcome, introductions, adoption of the agenda

Head of SANTE C2 unit welcomed the participants. He recalled that the pool of experts was set up in March 2017 and that there are currently 46 experts in the pool. He stressed the important role of the pool in supporting the Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) to provide a rapid risk assessment on events of chemical origin. 35 experts from the pool of experts and the working group on rapid risk assessment participated in the meeting.

The agenda was adopted without changes.

2. Risk management arrangements

SANTE Health Threats unit presented the EU legal framework for dealing with serious cross border threats to health (Decision 1082/2013/EU) and how the coordination under the EU health security framework is organised. She informed that there is an exercise planned in 2018 and the possible involvement of the SCHEER will be discussed (presentation attached).

3. Overview of SCHEER roles and functions

SANTE C2 Unit made a presentation on the SCHEER committee, its role functions and different activities. She explained the specificity of the rapid risk assessment, compared to the usual SCHEER activities.

4. Introduction to the SCHEER RRA working group & the pool of experts

Participants introduced themselves and shortly described their areas of expertise. The Chair of the SCHEER WG on RRA, presented the mechanism that has been put in place to respond to cross border chemical threats. She explained that the Scientific Committee on Health, Environmental and Emerging Risks (SCHEER) has been tasked with undertaking rapid risk assessments to assess public health risks from serious cross border incidents. These assessments may be requested by the European Commission or the EC Health Security Committee. She also explained that for this purpose a permanent group, the SCHEER RRA Working Group, was set up under the SCHEER to put a mechanism in place for dealing with such threats. The working group developed guidance describing how *ad hoc* rapid risk assessment of serious cross-border health threats of chemical origin is performed by the SCHEER and describes how an ad hoc working group on rapid risk assessment is put in place in case of a chemical incident.

5. Procedures & requirements for the pool of experts

The first part of the presentation focused on the procedure for activating the ad hoc working group on rapid risk assessment in case of a chemical incident and on the roles and tasks of this group. They stressed the key role of the pool of experts in creating this ad hoc working group. The second part of the presentation focused on explaining the requirements for the experts and the skills and qualifications needed for preparing rapid risk assessments. It was also explained that it is expected that the pool members participate in the training events, that they contribute to lessons learned and share the best practices with other experts in order to develop and maintain the response capacity and expertise of the pool.

6. Overview of tools and templates

The presentation showed templates of various documents that the ad hoc working group may be requested to provide: hazard statement, case definition and rapid risk assessment and also the background information that was put together by past projects funded by the EU Health Programme.

7. Case study & interactive session: An incident has occurred, notification procedures, alerting the pool of experts, incident response requirements and procedure of the pool of experts (breaking into groups)

For the case study, the participants were divided into four groups and each group carried out three activities. For the first activity, each group received a list of experts with different expertise and the task of the groups was to identify experts with relevant expertise to deal with the incident, being able to prepare hazard statement, case definition and rapid risk assessment (RRA). In addition, each expert in the group was asked to describe their own skills and then the members of the group were split into sub-groups to work on case definition, hazard statement and RRA as described below.

For the second activity, each group received a scenario and was asked to prepare a case definition and a hazard statement, using the available background documents.

As regards the third activity, each group was asked to fill in the relevant parts of the rapid risk assessment template, using the available documents.

8. Discussion and questions

After the case study, a session with questions took place. Several participants asked for more details on what information should be in the RRA template. It has been suggested to organise more exercises for the pool of experts, to train technical aspects.

9. Future activities & training

The activities for the pool of experts planned for year 2018:

- 1 training workshop / year (face-to-face)
- 1 training workshop / year (online)
- 2 exercises / year

The SCHEER WG on RRA will discuss the outcomes of the pool of experts' meeting and to plan the activities during the year.

10. Close of Meeting