



# Union Civil Protection Mechanism

## Technical guide for UCPM full-scale exercises

Design, implementation and utilisation of a UCPM full-scale exercise project

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1.0	14.02.2019	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Initial version</li></ul>	
2.0	27.02.2020	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• New structure of the guide following the workflow of a project</li><li>• Simplified text</li><li>• Guidelines for the milestones</li><li>• A template for the exercise manual</li></ul>	



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## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This manual is addressed to all the people and organizations involved in the preparation, development and implementation of civil protection exercise projects framed in the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) and presented to the different call for proposals that the European Commission, more specifically DG ECHO, announces on an annual basis (<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>).

This document is not intended to provide all available information about how to design and manage exercises. For this, it is advisable to consult the documents indicated in the bibliography. Rather, it aims to provide practical advice and common terminology about the particulars of exercising under the UCPM framework to facilitate the process of applying for a call for proposals.

Therefore, this guideline provides advice for applicants to:

- Analyse the needs for an exercise
- Design one or more exercises and create an exercise project in a way to be presented in the call for proposals and can be co-financed by the European Commission.
- Formulate the proposal according to the requirements of the call
- Implement the activities included in the exercise project
- Evaluate the whole project including the exercises
- Give visibility and publicity to the project



## 2. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this practical guide is to provide technical guidance for full-scale exercise projects funded in the context of the Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM) exercises<sup>1</sup>.

This document is intended to be used as a complement for the following documents:

- The call for proposals document outlines the:
  - objectives, themes and priorities, proposals that can be funded
  - timetable and available budget
  - eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria
  - evaluation procedure.
- The guide for applicants outlines the:
  - procedures to register and submit proposals online via the [EU Funding & Tenders Portal](#) ('Portal')
  - recommendations for the preparation of the proposal
  - explanation on the application form (Proposal Template (Part A and B)), which describes the project
  - overview of the cost eligibility criteria.

The aforementioned call for proposals supports exercise projects aiming to design, plan, prepare, implement, conduct and self-evaluate different civil protection activities including a full-scale exercise in a multi-national scenario as main event of the project. The scenario can simulate the situation and conditions of all types of disasters calling for the activation of the Mechanism.

A full-scale exercise is a civil protection exercise where a real major emergency is simulated involving multiple agencies, organizations and jurisdictions with a multi-level response structures. A UCPM full-scale exercise must include an international response.

The present guide targets not only staff in Member States/Participating States wishing to design an UCPM full-scale exercise project for the first time, but also experienced emergency preparedness planners who can use it as a checklist or as a refresher on the terminology used in the UCPM exercise projects.

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<sup>1</sup> Action 2.6 of the Annual Work Programme 2020 in the framework of Decision No 1313/2013/EU of the European Parliament and of the Council on a Union Civil Protection Mechanism.



This guidance is a living document: changes and updates will be made continuously and published on an annual basis prior to the publication of the call for proposals on DG ECHO's website.



### 3. NOTES ABOUT EXERCISING

Civil protection exercises are defined as activities that consider or simulate a real life emergency so that an agency or a group of them is able to review or test procedures and allow participants to practice in defined roles.

An exercise project is not the same than an exercise and tends to be confused many times. An exercise project can contain one or more exercises besides other civil protection activities. Therefore, the exercises are a part of the project and the main activities of it. The project includes preparatory actions, exercises and after actions.

Exercise projects are an integral part of the emergency planning process. They provide the basis for developing, establishing and ultimately building confidence in response arrangements. As such, they are vital tools of any emergency response preparedness programme.

There are several classifications of exercises. In this manual, the classification of the Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP) of the United States department is followed. This classification includes the following groups and exercises:

#### Types of exercises

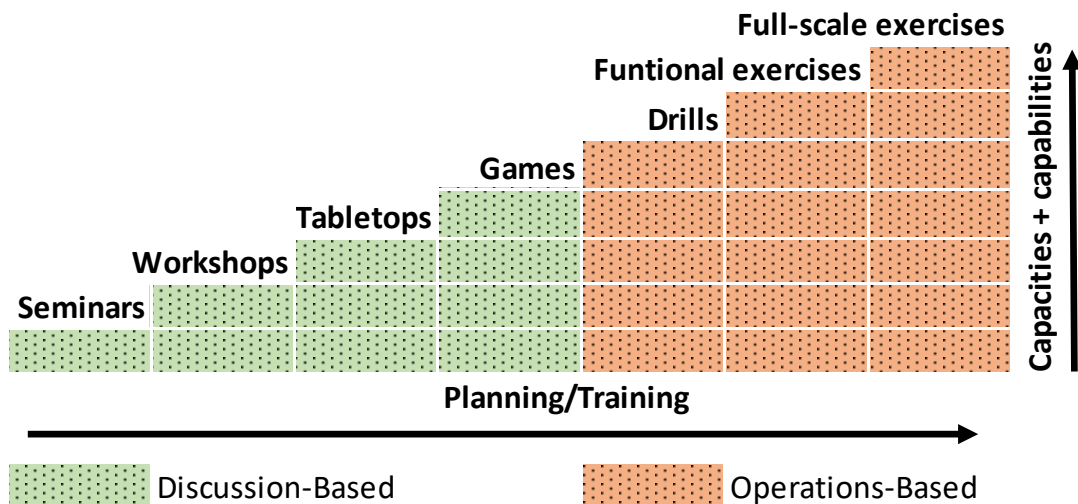


Figure 1: Types of exercises. Source: compilation based on HSEEP

### 4. OBJECTIVE AND STRUCTURE

#### 4.1. Objectives of this guide

- To promote the use of full-scale exercises as an integral part of UCPM preparedness activities.





- To propose a common methodology for UCPM full-scale exercises.
- To increase consistency and comparability between different UCPM full-scale exercises.
- To provide a platform for sharing practical and hands-on guidance.
- To introduce a common terminology to be used in UCPM exercises.

#### 4.2. Structure of this guide

The chapters of this guide follow the different phases of the UCPM exercises programme, which are:



*Figure 2: Phases of a UCPM full-scale project*

- 1) **Design** – This phase involves all decisions and activities to be taken prior to the start of the exercise project. It is when the fundamentals of the exercise project are designed: needs analysis, aim, objectives, activities, etc.
- 2) **Call for proposals** – This phase includes the actions required to apply for funding under the UCPM Exercise Programme: filling in the application in accordance with the call for proposals, providing clarifications if needed, signing the grant agreement etc. This phase helps ensuring that the exercise project design is sound.
- 3) **Implementation** – This phase covers the period from the start of the exercise project, launched by a kick-off meeting with the Commission, until its termination. The activities planned will be implemented during this phase.
- 4) **Reflection** – At this stage the exercise project itself is over and focus is instead placed on further utilising the deliverables of the exercise project and implement the lessons learned of the project.

#### 5. DESIGN PHASE

The design phase covers the period when the idea for developing an exercise project emerges and the fundamentals are set: analysis of needs, aim and objectives, scenario, forming a consortium, timeline, budget, exercises to be conducted, locations, participants and management and control structures. This phase should ideally start 6-8 months prior to the publication of the call for proposals.



### 5.1. Analysis of needs

Before initiating the development of the project, an analysis of needs should be conducted. The needs may be identified from the results of risk and vulnerability studies, capability studies, capacity assessments, lessons learnt, trend analysis, previous exercise evaluations and recommendations, etc.

A good need analysis will help answering the following key questions:

- What will be the consequences of an overwhelming disaster?
- Does our country have the capacities/capabilities to respond?
- Does our country need the assistance from UCPM for this type of disaster?
- What should be tested, explored or validated to respond adequately?
- Who should be involved in the exercise project? Who would naturally be involved in a real disaster?
- Which exercise types should be utilised?
- Which resources are available?

Projects must clearly demonstrate that they are complementary to the preparedness efforts already made in their countries. Therefore, they shall include in their analysis the link with the national risk assessments.

### 5.2. Aim and objectives

Applicants for UCPM full-scale exercises need to define an aim and subordinates objectives for the exercise project.

The aim or overall objective is the most significant foundation of the whole exercise project and provide a picture of the expected “end-state” of the project. The aim helps answering the question: what should we have achieved by the end of the exercise project? The aim should be as precise, clear and explicit as possible and formulated in a single sentence or short paragraph.

The aim is followed by a number of objectives that together help fulfil the aim. The aim and objectives of an exercise project focus on:

- **Establishing/Exploring:** procedures, plans, policies and/or inter-agency agreements that do not exist and need to be established.
- **Improving:** on procedures, plans, policies and/or inter-agency agreements that do exist but have a considerable potential for improvement or development.
- **Validating/ensuring:** procedures, plans, policies and/or inter-agency agreements that exist, have been developed or improved but require validation to ensure their adequacy.



The objectives of the exercise project as well as the exercise(s) conducted need to be SMART:

- *Specific* - target a specific area for improvement.
- *Measurable* - quantify or at least suggest an indicator of progress.
- *Assignable* – specify who will do it.
- *Realistic* - state what results can realistically be achieved, given available resources.
- *Time-related* - specify when the result (s) can be achieved.

It is highly advised to introduce indicators to measure the potential achievements during the project. Indicators help to assess whether an objective has been met or not.

### **Example of an objective and indicators:**

*The objective:*

- The exercise participants are capable to receive alarms and initiate procedures in accordance with each emergency responder's SOPs.

*Indicators (depending on the specifics of the SOPs referred to in the objective above):*

- Initiation of emergency arrangements implemented within 20 minutes (SOS).
- Exercise participants receive and acknowledge the alarm within 5 minutes.
- First coordination meeting held in accordance with the emergency arrangement within 40 minutes.
- Exercise participants initiate appropriate emergency management response system within 60 minutes.
- ...

Drafting the objectives of an exercise project should not be taken lightly. It is a major undertaking that requires time and broad consultation. Aim and objectives should have a direct link to each element of the scenario of an exercise conducted.

### **5.3. Scenario**

All kind of civil protection scenarios can be depicted in an UCPM full-scale exercise. However, it should be consistent with the analysis of needs and the national risk assessments.

The scenario should as far as possible recreate challenging realistic conditions of the international environment of Mechanism interventions, including the interactions of teams and modules, TAST, EUCP Team, UNDAC and also the broader emergency response community including humanitarian and other relevant international actors as



appropriate. It must also depict a disaster that overwhelms the response capacity of at least one country.

The scenario proposed shall include the players that would naturally be involved in a real emergency, namely:

- Multi-sectorial elements (horizontal strand): involvement of various government sectors, i.e. civil protection, police, health, consular authorities, humanitarian aid, etc.
- Multi-level scenario elements (vertical strand): involvement of local, regional, national, EU/international actors and teams.

A scenario refers to a story or situation that unfolds and helps stimulate the exercise participants to react in accordance with their understanding of procedures, plans and response processes.

The scenario:

- Should be a tool to achieve the aim and objectives of the exercises
- Should form a chain of events and have a realistic time scale
- Needs to be flexible enough to provide for unforeseen changes during the conduct of the exercise
- Will have assumptions and artificialities but should keep the realistic feeling.

#### **5.4. Forming a consortium**

The UCPM full-scale projects are funded by a grant agreement with the European Commission; therefore, the regulations and rules for the grants are applied. The application to the call for proposals must be in the form of a consortium of a minimum of three entities (see call for proposals document) called beneficiaries<sup>2</sup>. The beneficiaries are organisations that contribute technically to the exercise project and hence are responsible for the implementation of at least one project activity.

One of the entities will act as coordinator of the consortium leading the exercise project.

<b>Consortium structure</b>
<b>Coordinator beneficiary</b>
<b>Beneficiary 2</b>

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<sup>2</sup> 'Beneficiary' means any natural or legal person with whom a grant agreement has been signed or to whom a grant decision has been notified. Article 2(g) of the Financial Regulation

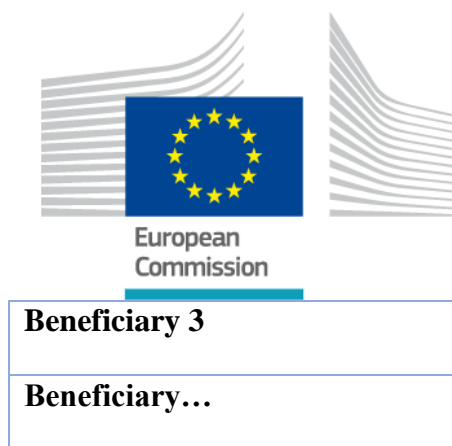


Figure 3: Consortium structure in a UCPM full-scale project

Therefore, one of the tasks in the early stages of a project is looking for partners according to analysis of needs and objectives of the project.

The involvement of the civil protection entities is key in a successful UCPM full-scale project. In any case, the national civil protection authority must sign a letter of involvement in the activities with the ensuring at minimum the participation of the declared 24/7 national operational contact point.

### 5.5. Timeline

The maximum project duration is 24 months.

When designing the project duration, the following questions should be raised:

- Is the proposed exercise project timeline realistic given the available resources?
- Are the various meetings and conferences properly spaced and aligned with the exercise conduct given the deliverables from each one of them?
- Have the reporting obligations to the Commission been included?

It is of paramount importance to develop an exercise realistic timeline including key meeting, deadlines and milestones. Gantt diagrams are useful tools for it. The timeline will need to be continuously updated and adjusted.

### 5.6. Activities in the project

The exercises are the core activities of the project but it includes other different activities that need to be planned in advance.

The different activities that can be part of an exercise project can be grouped into 1) preparatory actions, 2) exercises and 3) after-actions activities. These actions may vary from different exercises but some of them are crucial for the development of the project and are mandatory. UCPM full-scale exercise projects must comprise the following activities (unless specified as optional):



Figure 4: Activities in a UCPM full-scale project

#### 5.6.1. Preparatory actions

This category includes all the activities that are carried out before the exercises and contribute to their preparation to a different extent. Not only planning meetings are possible here but also seminars, workshops or information and dissemination activities. A minimum of planning activities are mandatory for every project but other type of activities can fit into the project as long as they help to fulfil the objectives. In any case, these activities have to be meaningful.

Guidelines for the preparatory actions:

- i. **Kick-off meeting:** Officially, the project starting date is specified in the grant agreement. As a general rule, the starting day generally is the first working day of the upcoming year, but other options can be considered.

	<b>Kick-off meeting</b>
<b>Objectives of the meeting</b>	<p>To present the basics of the project to the European Commission.</p> <p>To brief the beneficiaries on grant management and the</p>



	financial and legal implementation rules.
<b>When</b>	Normally, it takes place in the first two months after the beginning of the project. Between January and February are the most common dates. Usually, the meeting lasts one morning (09:00 – 13:00 maximum).
<b>Where</b>	In Brussels, it can be either in the Permanent Representation of the country as coordinator beneficiary or in DG ECHO.
<b>Who</b>	The attendees for this meeting should be: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• On behalf of the consortium: one representative together with one financial/legal responsible from the coordinating beneficiary and one representative from each associate beneficiary. The coordinator will draft the agenda in agreement with the Commission.</li> <li>• On behalf of DG ECHO: Desk officer along with administrative support.</li> </ul>

ii. 1<sup>st</sup> planning conference:

	<b>1<sup>st</sup> planning conference</b>
<b>Objective of the meeting</b>	To present the scenario, the places for the exercise, the capacities involved and the project management structure to the people involved in the exercise.
<b>When</b>	It depends on every project although it should take place minimum six months in advance of the exercises so as not jeopardize the quality or the outputs.
<b>Where</b>	Usually, this meeting takes place close to the exercises sites so the beneficiaries could visit them.
<b>Who</b>	This meeting is organised by the coordinating beneficiary who prepares the agenda and the venue. In order to make this meeting fruitful it is recommended to organise this meeting in three steps: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First a steering committee meeting where the strategic decisions are taken.</li> <li>• Second a planning conference with members of all the teams and organisations involved in the exercises where the different aspects of the exercise are presented and discussed. Some working groups can be also organised to make the operational decisions.</li> <li>• Visits to the exercise sites.</li> </ul> The overall duration of the three-step meeting can be 2-3 days.

iii. 2<sup>nd</sup> planning conference:



	<b>2<sup>nd</sup> planning conference</b>
<b>Objective of the meeting</b>	To present the details regarding the UCPM and the EUCP Team together with the main events list for the exercise.
<b>When</b>	It depends on every project although it should take place around 3 months in advance of the exercises to not jeopardize the quality or the outputs.
<b>Where</b>	The place is decided by the consortium and depends on the project.
<b>Who</b>	<p>This meeting is organised by the coordinating beneficiary who prepares the agenda and the venue. In order to make this meeting fruitful it is recommended to organise this meeting in 2-3 steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First a steering committee meeting where the strategic decisions are taken.</li> <li>• Second a planning conference with members of all the teams and organisations involved in the exercises where the different aspects of the exercise are presented and discussed. Some working groups can be also organised to make the operational decisions.</li> <li>• Visits to the exercise sites if still needed.</li> </ul> <p>The overall duration of the three-step meeting can be 2-3 days.</p>

- iv. 3<sup>rd</sup> planning conference: For projects really advanced in the planning and when all the major decisions have been agreed within the consortium, this final planning activity can be merged with the second one.

	<b>3<sup>rd</sup> planning conference (optional)</b>
<b>Objective of the meeting</b>	To present the main injects list for the exercise together with the final details for logistics, security and the different programs inside the exercise.
<b>When</b>	It depends on every project although it should take place at least 1 month in advance of the exercises.
<b>Where</b>	The place is decided by the consortium.
<b>Who</b>	<p>This meeting is organised by the coordinating beneficiary who prepares the agenda and the venue. In order to make this meeting fruitful it is recommended to organise this meeting in 2 steps:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• First a steering committee meeting where the strategic decisions are taken.</li> <li>• Second a planning conference with members of all the teams and organisations involved in the exercises where the different aspects of the exercise are presented and discussed. Some working groups can be also organised</li> </ul>





	to make the operational decisions. The overall duration of the two-step meeting can be 2-3 days.
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### 5.6.2. Exercises

The exercises are the main activities of the project. In a UCPM full-scale exercises the following exercises can be considered in a progressive approach:

- Tabletop exercises
- Command-post exercises
- Full-scale exercises

The full-scale exercise is the pinnacle of the project, therefore is mandatory. To arrive there in a progressive approach the following combinations are allowed:

Tabletop + Command post + Full-scale	Tabletop + Full-scale	Command post + Full-scale
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All the exercises in the project must be related and the full-scale exercise must be built upon the results archived in the tabletop and/or the command post. The exercises can be played back to back, although if the project is considering the three possible exercises this option is discouraged.

The choice of exercise type is important. The exercises should provide the way of achieving the aim and objectives of the exercise project.

**Tabletop exercise (TTX):** A discussion-based exercise where you simulate emergency and generate discussions around it. TTX are designed to put crisis response managers and practitioners in a situation to use existing plans and procedures and to take decisions according to a proposed scenario. Participants are presented with a situation or problem that they are required to discuss and formulate the appropriate response or solution. Normally, the exercise requires no simulation other than a scenario and prewritten exercise injects. This type of exercise is used to practice problem solving and coordination of services with or without time pressures. There is no deployment or actual use of equipment or resources. In an UCPM exercise project a TTX requires having a minimum duration of 8 hours.

**Command post exercise (CPX):** A Command Post Exercise (CPX) is a functional exercise in which the field response and deployment is simulated, involving the headquarters and/or coordination centres that would normally intervene in an emergency. All plans, procedures, communications and activities that would be performed during a



real response would be conducted except the field activities. A CPX in a UCPM exercise project must have a minimum duration of 8 hours.

**Full-scale exercises (FSX):** The most complex and resource-intensive operations-based exercise. They involve multiple agencies, organizations, and jurisdictions and validate many facets of preparedness (HSEEP definition). Full-scale exercises often include many international players operating under the host nation command system and the umbrella of the UCPM. In a full-scale exercise, events are projected through an exercise scenario with event updates that drive activity at every level of the civil protection system. The exercise incorporates political, strategic, operational and/or tactical aspects and includes the local, regional, national, European or international response. Full-Scale exercises are conducted in a real-time, stressful environment that is intended to mirror a real major emergency. Many activities occur simultaneously. Therefore, the preparatory actions and planning needed to conduct a full-scale exercise are greater than for other types of exercises. It is required to have a minimum duration of 36 hours. The exercise conduct timing for the FSX could be in the form of two full days including one night or three full days.

The alert and request phase prior to a field deployment should be conducted in the TTX or CPX.



*Figure 5: Elements in a full-scale exercise.*

**Building block approach:** The term building block approach is often used to describe an exercise project that plans to conduct a number of exercises which will together help developing or "building" on each other. Commonly a TTX is conducted prior to a FSX where the TTX would fine-tune the response upon which the FSX would finally test with a full-on response.



When designing the exercises, it is key to keep in mind the minimum requirements they must have:

- The minimum duration for TTX and CPX is 8 h. For FSX a minimum duration of 36 h is required.
- All exercises must consider the activation of the UCPM.
- The exercises must include an international emergency environment including the deployment of a EUCP Team and international teams or European Civil protection Pool modules.
- They must foresee communication and information exchange in international environment and the Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS) must be used.
- The relevant national operational structures must be involved.
- The EU Host National Support Guidelines must be implemented.

In addition, the following elements will be evaluated according to the award criteria:

- The UCPM component of the exercises.
- The EUCP Team's terms of reference.
- The EUCP Team composition.
- The EUCP Team role during the exercise.
- How the EUCP Team fits into the national civil protection system.
- Role of the ERCC in the exercise foreseen.
- Way of implementing the EU Host nation Support guidelines.

### 5.6.3. *After-action activities*

This category include all the activities that are carried out after the exercises and contribute to their outputs to a different extent. Not only lessons learned meetings are possible here but also seminars, workshops or information and dissemination activities. In any case, these activities have to be meaningful.

Guidelines for the way forward meeting:

	<b>Way forward meeting</b>
<b>Objective of the meeting</b>	To present the evaluation of the project, the way forward established and the lessons learned.
<b>When</b>	It is advisable to take place no later than 2 months after the exercises.
<b>Where</b>	The place is decided by the consortium.
<b>Who</b>	This meeting is organised by the consortium who prepares the agenda and the venue.



### 5.7. Participants in the exercise

Participants in the exercise might not only come from the beneficiaries. Moreover, it is expected to have the participation in the exercises of all the entities that would naturally be involved in a real major emergency. Hence, the participants in the exercise are wider than the beneficiaries. This is applicable in a national and international level and there might be other international teams coming from different organisations than the ones in the consortium.

The scope of the exercise, the UCPM elements and the UE dimension will be evaluated in the award criteria.

### 5.8. Management and control structures

In order to design the exercise project, management teams will have to be set-up. In UCPM full-scale exercise project, there are two basics structures that have to be drafted in advance. The size and composition of both structures will vary depending on the complexity of the exercise:

- Project management organisation
- Exercise conduct organisation

The suitability of the project management and exercises organisation will be evaluated with the award criteria.

#### 5.8.1. *Project management organisation*

This organigram may vary from different projects depending on the scope and objective and the different tasks distributed to the members of the consortium.

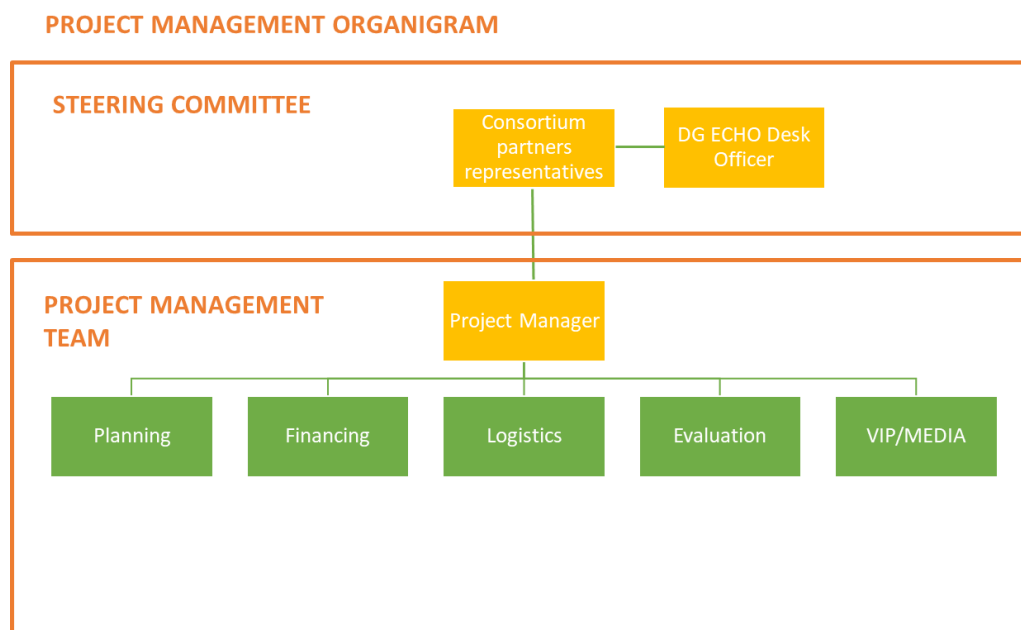
All projects will need to appoint a Project Manager, a Steering Committee and a Project Management Team during the design phase in anticipation of submitting an application to the call for proposals.

- i. The **Project Manager** is the person ultimately in charge of implementing the exercise project. This person is the link and continuity between the Steering Committee, the Project Management Team and the rest of the Project Management Organisation and Exercise Conduct Organisation. The Project Manager is the highest hands-on responsible person in the exercise project. He/she leads and facilitates the planning conferences and is in charge of the Project Management Team (PMT). The Project Manager is also responsible for drafting the exercise manual, progress report and final technical report of the exercise project.



- ii. The **Steering Committee** consists of representatives from the beneficiaries including the coordinator. Its role is to provide a holistic approach to all aspects of the exercise project.
- iii. The **Project Management Team (PMT)** consists of the team leaders of each task specific team mentioned in the Project Management Organisation illustrated below together with the Project Manager. Occasionally, exercise projects would have the same people in the Steering Group as in the PMT. Together they would have the full view and responsibility of the hands-on activities of each team and the main driving force during the implementation of the project. While most of the team leaders would need to take part in the PMT meetings when the exercise project starts prior to the exercise conduct, after the exercise is conducted, many team leaders would not need to attend the meetings.

An example of a basic project management organigram can be found in figure 6.



*Figure 6: example of project management organigram*

The PMT consists also of different teams assigned with different responsibilities lead by the main groups of the PMT shown in figure 6. Below you can find examples of different teams that will be subordinate to the PMT:

- **Project support team:** Their advice and activities will serve as the backbone of the exercise project management. They are responsible for managing financial, legal, administrative and logistic support for the management.



- **Scenario, inject & exercise control team:** This team is responsible to design the emergency situation in which the participants are supposed to exercise. Their task will be to break down each objective of the exercise conduct into sub-objectives and further into indicators from which events and finally injects can be developed. They will draft the mail events list and the main injects list (see point 8.1).
- **Role players team:** This team is responsible to find the role players required in the exercises. During the exercise conduct, they are to care for and direct the role players in accordance with the needs of EXCON. The team is also responsible to provide costumes, makeup and any other related requirements to ensure realism.
- **Logistics, technical assistance & site preparation team:** This team will be responsible for all logistical, information and communication technology and site preparatory activities for and during the exercise conduct.
- **Safety and security team:** This team is often a very small team which intervenes during planning and is only increased during the exercise conduct itself. Their task is to develop the safety and security instructions for exercise participants and all other groups attending the exercise.
- **Evaluation team:** The Evaluation Team is responsible for developing the evaluation plan, method and instructions for evaluating the project as a whole including the preparatory actions, the performance of the exercise participants during the exercise conduct as well as the performance of the exercise conduction organisation. This team must be active from the very start of the exercise project and not just prior to the exercise conduct itself. This team is compulsory in a UCPM full-scale exercise.
- **Way forward team:** The task for this team is to ensure that the findings of the exercise are utilised and disseminated as most beneficial as possible. Their primary role is to develop recommendation based on the findings of the evaluation report and together with the relevant stakeholders develop an Improvement Plan which specifies which corrective actions corresponding to which procedures, plans, structures should be implemented by whom and when.
- **Communications, visibility and media team:** This team is responsible for the exercise project's visibility profile, real media relation and any communication with the public. This also includes the documents developed by the EPMT.



- **Visitors, EU Observers and VIP team:** This team will be responsible for planning and organising the programs for visitors, EU Observers and VIP. While the term "visitors" refers to whoever the exercise project invites to observe the exercise conduct, the EU Observers program refers to a specific obligation of UCPM exercise projects. Every UFSX is obliged to conduct an EU Observers programme within the full-scale exercise conduct.
- **Workshops & seminars team:** This group is responsible for the organisation of workshops, seminars, training and any fair deemed necessary to fulfil the aim of the exercise project.

As a final recommendation, the project management organisation should be different from the exercise conduct organisation and it is recommended to have different people involved.

#### 5.8.2. Exercise conduct organisation

This organigram must reflect all the necessary structure to conduct and control the exercises in the project including the specifications and particularities needed in UFSX. An example to be used as reference can be found in figure 7.

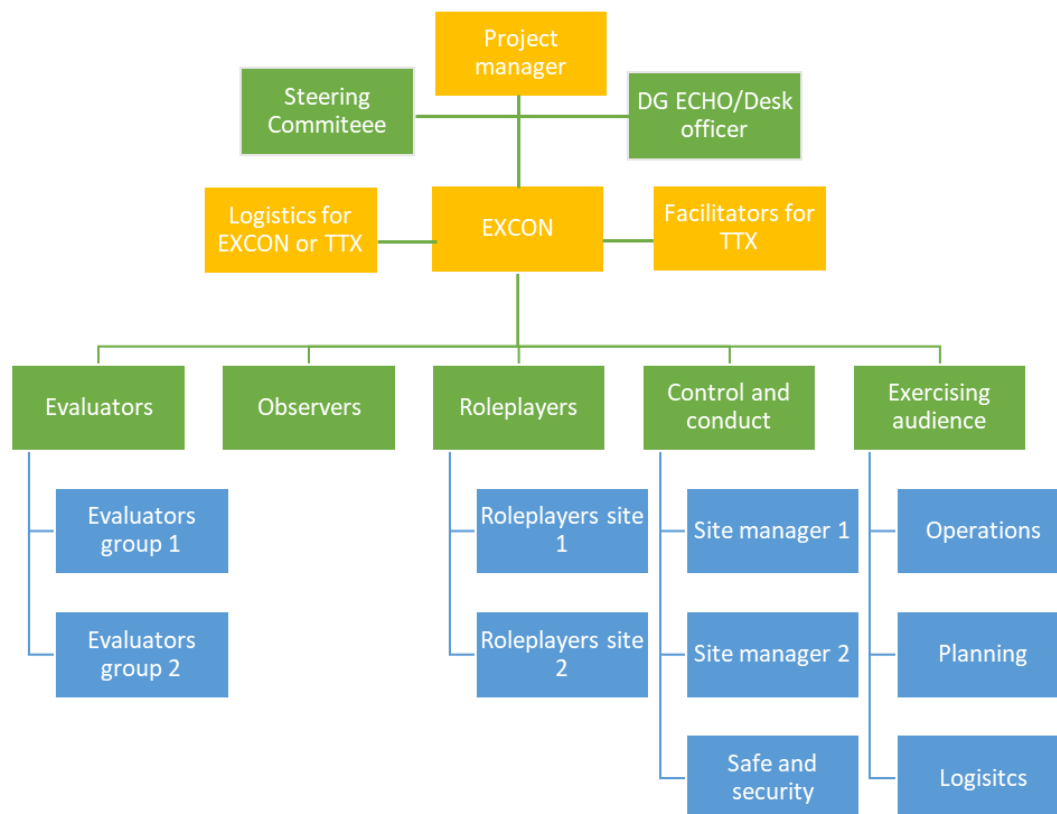






Figure 7: Exercise conduct organigram example

The exercise conduct organisation is a transformation of the project management organisation for the duration of the exercise conduct. The role and responsibilities of each team will be similar to that which they had as part of the project management organisation. The major difference is that during the exercise conduct they will implement the tasks they planned.

## 5.9. Minimum requirements for a project

The minimum requirements to be included in every project in order to be admissible are specified in the call for proposals document (point 3.3). All should be clearly stated in the proposal, therefore we strongly encourage to read them carefully. Here you have an outline of them:

### 5.9.1. Activation of the Mechanism.

The Union Civil Protection Mechanism must be activated. That implies that an official request for assistance from the national civil protection authority should be sent to the ERCC (in exercise mode). The content of this request and expected replies from the countries involved in the exercises should be decided during the TTX or CPX exercises.

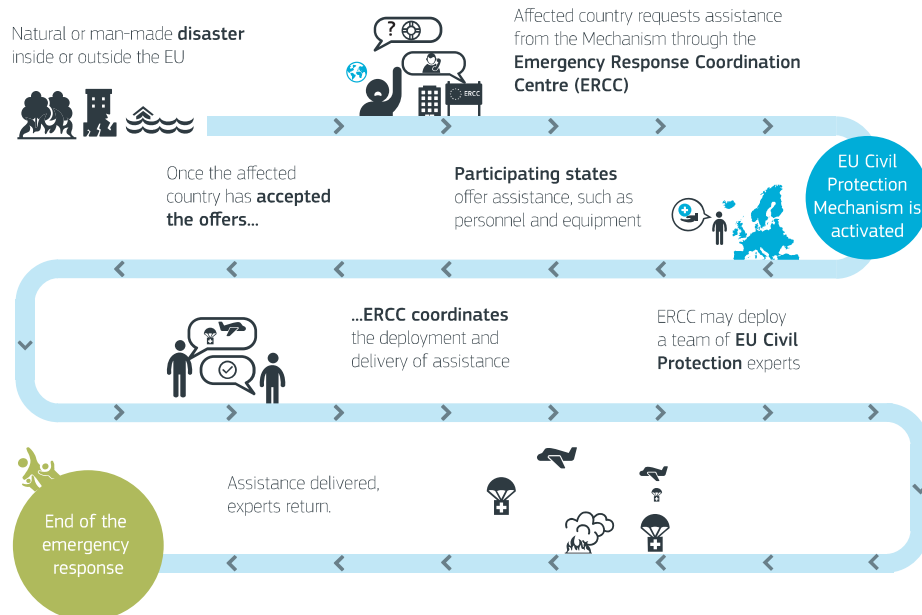


Figure 8: UCPM in a nutshell.

### 5.9.2. EU Civil Protection Team

During the full-scale exercise, a full EUCP Team must be put together and deployed to play as part of the UCPM response. The process for invitation, nomination and selection





is linked with the EU Observers Programme and normally it is processed at the same time. The process outlines as follows:

1. The consortium in charge draft the terms of reference of the EUCP Team according to the specifications of the exercise and send it to the desk officer from the European Commission assigned to the project. The final version of the terms of reference will be agreed between them.
2. An invitation to nominate experts for the EUCP Team will be sent from the European Commission to the Member States/Participating States, ideally three months prior to the exercise. A recipient email form the consortium will be included in the invitation to receive all the nominations.
3. The European Commission will do the final selection of the candidates conforming the EUCP Team and will inform the Member States/Participating States.
4. The consortium will contact the members of the team and start preparing the logistics and arrangements for the deployment.

The travel and subsistence of all the team members, except the ERCC LO, need to be included in the project budget and will be covered by the organisers.

#### *5.9.3. CECIS or CECIS Marine Pollution*

The Common Emergency Communication and Information System (CECIS<sup>3</sup>) shall be used, as a minimum, during the request, offer and acceptance of assistance by the Member States. For external countries or special situations where CECIS is not available, an alternative way of communication shall be specified. During marine pollution related exercise, CECIS Marine Pollution shall be used.

#### *5.9.4. National operational structures*

The participation in the exercise of the national operational structures of the beneficiaries in the exercise is necessary. As a minimum, the involvement must be in the form of participation by the 24/7 national contact point in the exercise. The involvement of the decision making bodies (e.g. for declaring national emergency / disaster and activating the Mechanism) as exercise audience is highly encouraged.

#### *5.9.5. EU Host Nation Support Guidelines*

During the exercises the EU Host Nation support guidelines shall be implemented and tested. The document can be found in this link:

[https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/COMM\\_PDF\\_SWD%2020120169\\_F\\_EN\\_.pdf](https://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/about/COMM_PDF_SWD%2020120169_F_EN_.pdf)

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<sup>10</sup> OJ L 347 20.12.2013, p. 924



Guidance and templates about request and offers for assistance can be found in the document along with standards to provide the host nation support.

#### *5.9.6. EU Observers programme*

The term EU Observers refers to a specific group of 10 visitors as specified in the call for proposals. The consortium must take into consideration this group when drafting the proposal and the budget. Notwithstanding that the consortium may include other observers in the exercise according to its commitments and bilateral agreements.

The EU Observers program should be at least two days long and should provide the observers with the opportunity to observe the response of the exercise participants, how EXCON and the exercise is structured as well as insight into the planning, preparations and operations for the exercise.

Observers should be engaged in the exercise rather than acting only as merely observers. In this regard, observers can be split in several groups assigning to each group small roles (such as representing a third country, etc.) or interacting with exercise participants. The consortium will provide to the observers a form to fill to standardize the information and views of the observers.

The EU Observers programme shall include in its agenda a final workshop prior to the hot wash-up session for exercise participants. In this workshop, the observers' views on the exercise will be gathered and common conclusions will be made. These conclusions are to be presented during the hot wash-up session by a spokesperson designated by the group.

The nominations and selection of observers are handled directly by the consortium, although to reach the official national focal points, support will be offered by the European Commission through the desk officer for the project.

The process outlines as follows:

1. The consortium in charge draft the invitation and the schedule of the EU Observers programme and send it to the desk officer from the European Commission assigned to the project. The final version of the documents will be agreed between them.
2. An invitation to nominate observers will be sent to the focal points of the Member States/Participating States, ideally three months prior to the exercise. A recipient email form the consortium will be included in the invitation to receive all the nominations.
3. The consortium will do the final selection of the observers according to the selection criteria specified in the call.
4. The consortium will contact them and start preparing the logistics and arrangements for the group.



#### 5.9.7. Evaluation Programme

The greater benefit of a project for the civil protection community rests on the evaluation report as well as the Way Forward.

The evaluation should cover the whole project from the very beginning; it is not exclusive for the exercises.

The evaluation report should be well structured and concise so that it is easily understood and readily used. The report should cover the aim and objectives of the project and the exercises, outline the capacities and capabilities highlighted, scenario, scope, the planning process and both positive and negative observations from the exercise conduct and resulted findings. The analysis, methodology and work done to produce these findings should be also presented.

The expected outcome of each inject would also be used as a benchmark by the evaluation team to provide them the ability to measure and compare. The evaluation should take root in the plans, procedures, structures and agreements of response aligned with the indicators of each inject and the expected outcome by comparing it to the performance of the exercise participants as a whole.

#### 5.10. Visibility of the exercise project

The co-financing of the EU must be stressed in every meeting, deliverable or product produced in the exercise project showing the logo in figure 9.



Funded by  
European Union  
Civil Protection

*Figure 9: Logo to be used in visibility materials.*

The visual identity and rules to follow can be found here: [www.echo-visibility.eu/standard-visibility/visual-identity/](http://www.echo-visibility.eu/standard-visibility/visual-identity/)

#### 5.1. Budget

The EU co-funding rate amounts to 85% of total eligible costs with a maximum EU contribution of EUR 1 000 000 per exercise project. Therefore, the consortium must guarantee that the remaining 15% of its eligible costs are funded from sources other than



the Union budget. The applicants are thus encouraged to look for other possible local, national or international, private and public sources other than the Union.

It is only after the basic design of the exercise project is set that a financial estimation can be developed. Many factors will need to be taken into consideration in order to develop the estimated budget for the exercise project. The expense will depend on the type, location, timing, duration and scope of the exercise project.

## 5.2. Timeline

In order to have a successful project, a tentative timeline including all the activities foreseen shall be done from the beginning.

It is of paramount importance to develop a realistic timeline including key meetings, deadlines and milestones. An example of a timeline for a 24-month exercise project can be found in figure 10. Gantt diagrams are useful tools for effective timelines.



Figure 10: Timeline



## 6. APPLICATION TO THE CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Once the design phase is finished, then the proposal is ready to be submitted. The call for proposals is opened on a yearly basis during February-May on the official platform: <https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

### 6.1. Work packages (WPs)

The proposal needs to be organised in six work packages (WPs) plus an optional seventh one (see application form document). These WPs help grouping and structuring the exercise project in a more manageable manner. In every package, the activities and deliverables of the project are stated (see figure 11).

WP A	Project Management
WP B	Planning
WP C	Exercise Conduct
WP D	Dissemination and publicity
WP E	Evaluation
WP F	Way Forward
WP G	Workshop & seminars (optional)

*Figure 11: Work packages*

#### 6.1.1. WP A – Project management

This package relates to all activities and deliverables necessary to manage the project. This WP ensures, encourages and provides the necessary interfaces among interlocutors, beneficiaries and the European Commission. The WP also entails:

- a) managing and steering the project throughout project time period;
- b) ensuring sound cooperation and coordination between all stakeholders and teams entrusted with different tasks;
- c) maintaining overall control and monitoring in regards to budget and legal issues;
- d) ensuring the project is in line with envisaged timeline and milestones;
- e) ensuring that constraints and assumptions are continuously reassessed and corrective actions are in place;
- f) keeping the steering committee informed of the progress and state of play as well as ensuring the project is aligned with their collective vision;
- g) providing project management supporting tools
- h) maintaining a systematic and sound documentation structure.



#### *6.1.2. WP B – Planning*

This package relates to all activities and deliverables necessary to plan and prepare for all aspects required to ensure that successful exercises are conducted.

#### *6.1.3. WP C - Exercises conduct*

This package relates to all activities and deliverables necessary to be produced during the actual conduct of the exercises. The exercises conduct could also entail the period just before, during and just after the actual exercise is held. The sum of the objectives of the different exercises conducted should relate directly to the aim and objectives of the exercise project.

#### *6.1.4. WP D - Dissemination and publicity*

This package refers to all activities that help disseminating and publicising the planned activities and deliverables of the project. This could be the use of letters, web-pages, brochures, banners, videos, media items, presentation during conferences and forums, etc.

The following deliverables are to be produced:

- An exercise logo to be used along with the EU logo showed in figure 9.
- A layman report.
- A dedicated website for the project.
- Brochures.
- A video of the exercises and the activities of the project in general.

#### *6.1.5. WP E - Evaluation*

This package relates to all activities and deliverables necessary to evaluate the planning activities for the project and the performance of the exercise participants during the conduct of the exercise. The main objective is to gather the lessons identified or learnt. This Work Package will also evaluate the technical implementation of the exercise conduct, i.e. how the exercise was conducted by the Exercise Control Organisation. This Work Package will also include lessons learned meetings, hot wash or post-exercise discussion.

#### *6.1.6. WP F - Way Forward*

This package relates to all activities and deliverables necessary to develop recommendations so as to improve the targeted emergency system and scope (improvement plan).



#### *6.1.7. WP G - Workshops and seminars*

This work package is optional since it is not necessary for all exercise projects. It refers to all necessary activities and deliverables in cases where workshops, fairs, seminars and training activities have to be implemented to better fulfil the project aim and objectives.

### **6.2. Workflow of a proposal**

At this point, the call for proposals has been published and the basics of the exercise project have been designed and the information organised according to the WPs. The budget has been also drafted. Then, the administrative procedure for submission begins:

#### *6.2.1. Submission of the proposal*

Proposals must be submitted electronically through the official platform:

<https://ec.europa.eu/info/funding-tenders/opportunities/portal/screen/home>

There, the information and documents to be filled can be found. The proposal's documents itself can help fine-tuning the design and drafting of the exercise project by identifying the gaps and elements missed.

#### *6.2.2. Appraisal and clarification*

Submitted proposals are viewed and evaluated by a committee within the European Commission. The evaluation committee might need clarifications and request them before final appraisal.

Please refer to the guide for applicants for the admissibility, eligibility, exclusion, selection and award criteria.

#### *6.2.3. Awarding or rejection*

The European Commission will notify to all the proposals submitted their awarding or rejection in the call.

## **7. GRANT AGREEMENT**

The projects awarded need to be formalized in a grant agreement according to the existing procedure of the European Commission on the official web platform. The coordinator should sign the grant agreement on behalf the consortium.

## **8. IMPLEMENTATION PHASE**

The implementation phase will further develop and implement the activities defined during the design phase, agreed upon and incorporated into the Grant Agreement.



The Project Director, Project Manager, Steering Group and Project Management Team start preparing for the kick-off meeting, the first planning conference, etc. During this implementation phase, the details of the exercises need to be decided. In the following points some additional considerations are stated to achieve it.

### **8.1. The exercise manual**

The exercise manual in a UCPM full-scale project is intended to be a live document to be completed throughout the whole project duration. This manual provide a standard to record, describe and analyse the exercise, including the evaluation findings, debriefs and observations.

The exercise manual is also the way to keep memory of the activities achieved, the statistics and the lessons learnt during the project. The report should include all relevant information, including exercise description; type; scenario; outcomes; participating organizations; and recommendations to assist in the design of future exercises.

After each milestone of the project, the main outcome shall be the update of the exercise manual accordingly. At the end of the project duration, the manual will be complete and can be used as final technical report. It is a way to standardise and simplify the deliverables.

A template for the exercise manual can be found in the annex 1.

### **8.2. Events and injects**

An inject is a scripted information provided by exercise control staff into an exercise in order to drive exercise play towards the achievement of objectives (HSEEP definition). Injects can be oral, written or transmitted by any means (email, radio, television, phone, etc.)

An event is a cluster of injects that relate either geographically or thematically with each other.<sup>4</sup>

During the planning of a full-scale exercise, events should be gathered in a main events list (MEL) and subordinates injects can be grouped in a main injects list (MIL).

Recommendations for the MEL and MIL:

- MEL should be a diagram that allows having an overview of the exercise at a glance.
- MIL should contain all the details required to be played by exercise control staff as a stand-alone document.

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<sup>4</sup> For more complex exercises with events that are too large, the events might be broken down into incidents that are then broken down into injects.





- A MIL should contain contextual and contingency injects.

### **8.3. Exercise Conduct**

An example of an organisation structure for an exercise can be found in figure 8. There you can find the different groups involved in an exercise.

The exercise control organisation (EXCON) manages the exercise conduct and sets the limits of the exercise from the start of the exercise (startex) until the end of it (endex).

Performing wrap-up sessions after the exercise is essential to support an effective evaluation and improvement planning. After the TTX and FSX it is recommended to perform a player hot wash session which provides an opportunity for exercise participants to discuss exercise strengths and areas for improvement immediately following the conduct of an exercise.

### **8.4. Involvement of the ERCC**

The activation of the UCPM require the involvement of the Emergency Response Coordination Center (ERCC). There are two ways to involve the ERCC in the exercise:

- The Organiser takes full responsibility and role-play the ERCC.
- The Organiser requires the ERCC to facilitate some of the UCPM activity.

In addition, for the exercises' sake, the Organiser might need specific products. Indeed, The ERCC and DG ECHO produce a number of products, which are often used to support either the background of an exercise or the evolution of a situation civil protection message, flash reports, Copernicus mapping, etc.).

Considering the specific nature of the ERCC (24/7 emergency center), the involvement of the ERCC in the exercises should be addressed as quickly as possible, preferably during the kick-off meeting.

### **8.5. Way forward**

After the exercises have been conducted, then the period for gathering lessons learned and conducting other conclusion activities is opened. A minimum of a way forward meeting should be organized (see point 3.7.3).

## **9. REFLECTION**

Once the period of the project is ended, then it is the moment to analyse the results, gather all the lessons learned produced in this and in previous ones and consider them for the next project. At this stage the exercise project itself is over and focus is instead placed on further utilising the deliverables of the exercise project.



The evaluation and the improvement planning together constitute the main legacy of each exercise project that in turn must feed into future preparedness activities in order to ensure a cycle of continuous improvement in response to all hazards.

## 10. REFERENCES

This is a non-exhaustive list of useful handbooks, which have been consulted to draft this guide.

1. Homeland Security Exercise and Evaluation Program (HSEEP). The Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). <https://www.fema.gov/hseep>
2. Australian Disaster Resilience, Handbook Collection, Managing Exercises, Handbook 3. <https://knowledge.aidr.org.au/media/3547/handbook-3-managing-exercises.pdf>
3. A Framework for Major Emergency Management Guidance Document 4, National Directorate for Fire and Emergency Management, Department of the Environment, Heritage and Local Government, Custom House, Dublin. <http://mem.ie/wp-content/uploads/2015/05/A-Guide-to-Planning-and-Staging-Exercises.pdf>
4. NATO/EAPC Guidelines for Planning, Conduct and Assessment of International EAPC Exercises, EAPC(SCEPC)N(2009)0032-REV <http://www.msb.gov.ba/PDF/docEN30102015.pdf>
5. Civil Defence Emergency Management Exercises Director's Guideline [DGL 10/19]. National Emergency Management Agency, New Zealand. <https://www.civildefence.govt.nz/assets/Uploads/publications/exercises-dgl/DGL-10-19-CDEM-exercises.pdf>
6. World Health Organisation Simulation exercise manual and exercise tool box. <https://www.who.int/ihr/publications/WHO-WHE-CPI-2017.10/en/>



## ANNEX 1: TEMPLATE FOR THE EXERCISE MANUAL

### 1. Executive summary of the project

#### 1.1. Basic data

*Name and acronym of the exercise*

*Period of the project*

*Estimated eligible costs*

*EU contribution*

*Reimbursement rate*

#### 1.2. Members of the consortium

#### 1.3. Overview of the project

*1.3.1. Scenario overview*

*1.3.2. General aim of the exercise*

*1.3.3. Objectives*

*1.3.4. Expected results*

*1.3.5. Timeline of the project*

*1.3.6. Project management organisation*

*1.3.7. Programs foreseen*

*1.3.8. Evaluation and dissemination*

*1.3.9. Basic statistics*

Training audience (number of people)	TTX			
	FSX			
Number of operational teams involved	TTX	EERC modules	Skeleton teams	
			Full teams	
			Others	
		Other teams	Skeleton teams	
			Full teams	
			Others	
	FSX	EERC modules	Skeleton teams	
			Full team	
			Others	
		Other teams	Skeleton teams	
			Full team	
			Others	
EXCON (number of people)				
Role-players (number of people)				
Observers (number of people)	EU			
	Third countries			



Evaluators (number of people)	
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## **2. Scenario**

### **2.1. Country profile and maps**

### **2.2. Background information**

### **2.3. Scenario design**

### **2.4. Exercise locations**

### **2.5. Exercise objects**

### **2.6. Stakeholders involved**

*2.6.1. National*

*2.6.2. International*

### **2.7. Capacities involved**

*2.7.1. Overview*

*2.7.2. Fact sheets and Standards of Procedures*

### **2.8. EUCPM**

*2.8.1. Request for assistance*

*2.8.2. Plan for HNS*

### **2.9. EUCP Team**

*2.9.1. Composition*

*2.9.2. Terms of References*

### **2.10. ERCC role in the exercise**

## **3. Exercise**

### **3.1. Exercise conduct organisation**

*3.1.1. Table-top exercise*

*3.1.2. Field exercise*

### **3.2. Table-top exercise**

*3.2.1. Main events list*

*3.2.2. Main injects list*

### **3.3. Field exercise**

*3.3.1. Main events list*

*3.3.2. Main injects list*

### **3.4. Role-players profiles**

### **3.5. Communications/ITC**

### **3.6. Logistics**

### **3.7. Safety and security**



- 3.8. Host Nation Support**
- 3.9. Observers Program**
- 3.10. VIP Programme**
- 3.11. Evaluation program**
  - 3.11.1. Guidelines*
  - 3.11.2. Templates*
  - 3.11.3. Report*
- 4. Way forward**
  - 4.1. Way ahead action plan**
  - 4.2. Lessons learnt**
    - 4.2.1. Hot wash workshop*
    - 4.2.2. Lessons learnt*
- 5. Dissemination and publicity**
  - 5.1. Visibility**
  - 5.2. Information and media campaigns**
  - 5.3. Website**
  - 5.4. Dissemination of results**