



EU Initiative on Health Security

Work Programme 2023



EU Initiative on Health Security

The EU Initiative on Health Security aims to set up a competent regional workforce for the prevention and control of challenges posed by communicable diseases and to enhance regional cooperation to tackle cross-border health security threats. It focuses on three major areas:

1. Workforce-oriented capability building, to be delivered through the Mediterranean and Black Sea Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (MediPIET)
2. Capacity building in epidemic intelligence, risk assessment, preparedness and response
3. Integration with ECDC systems, knowledge sharing and networking.

To support partner countries, ECDC is proposing a comprehensive programme for 2023 that will remain responsive to the needs identified by the partner countries and ECDC through continuous dialogue and assessment of public health emergency preparedness and response capacities and capabilities.

Contents

How to participate	1
Work Package 1	2
Work Package 2	4
Work Package 3	10
Work Package 4	11
Annex 1.....	12

How to participate

The nominated ECDC National Correspondent in each partner country coordinates participation of experts in the activities of the EU Initiative on Health Security*. This person is employed either by the Ministry of Health or National Public Health Agency (or similar).

Please contact ECDC for more information:

eu-initiative-on-health-security@ecdc.europa.eu



*Due to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, restrictions and pressure on public health systems, certain activities may be organised remotely, cancelled or postponed. ECDC will be update each partner country on any changes foreseen in the implementation of the work programme.

Work Package 1

Field epidemiology workforce development through Mediterranean and Black Sea Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (MediPIET)



MediPIET is an established regional training programme in intervention epidemiology, aiming to consolidate the competence of national and sub-national workforces to enable them to carry out essential public health functions for the prevention and control of national and cross-border challenges posed by communicable diseases. The current phase of the programme, funded by DG NEAR (ENI/2020/415-420), is being implemented during the period 2021–2025.

The programme is set up so as to allow the partner countries to decide on the form of implementation, depending on the specific country needs. Components of the programme include an advanced (two-year) ‘learning-by-doing’ field epidemiology training programme (FETP), training of trainers, network strengthening activities and support for knowledge transfer and the cascading of training in partner countries.

MediPIET modules

In 2023, ECDC will deliver eight MediPIET modules and additional ‘Inject day’ activities for the benefit of MediPIET fellows (Cohort 4 - 2021–2023, Cohort 5 - 2022–2024, Cohort 6 - 2023–2025) and additional nominated participants from partner countries.

Inject Days:

Qualitative research (Cohort 4+5)

This optional two-day module aims to provide fellows and other participants with an introduction to qualitative research and some practical skills in conducting, analysing and reporting qualitative research using key informant interviews. We focus on key informant interviews since they offer a useful qualitative approach for field epidemiology and have often been used in previous fellowship projects.

Vaccinology (Cohort 4+5)

This course will provide participants with knowledge and skills so they can understand and undertake projects and routine work in the area of vaccine-preventable disease epidemiology.

Q1 Module 1: CBRN module (Cohort 4+5)

This module aims to enhance participants understanding of the principles and processes for response to threats caused by Chemical, Biological, Radiological and Nuclear (CBRN) agents to the human health. It will also enable them to define the specific requirements of effective staff risk protection and summarize the capabilities and limitations of basic personal protective equipment.

Q2 Module 2: ‘One-Health’ and vector-borne diseases (Cohort 4+5)

This module aims to improve participants’ knowledge of zoonotic and vector-borne diseases by adopting the ‘One-Health’ approach. It will present the specific interdisciplinary aspects of zoonotic and vector-borne outbreak investigations, integrated surveillance (human, animal and vector), and preparedness and response.

Module 3 - Multivariable analysis (MVA) (Cohort 5)

This module aims to provide participants with basic definitions and concepts for the different types of regression models, including linear regression, simple and multivariable logistic regression, and Poisson and Cox regressions.

Module 4 - Risk assessment and mass gatherings (RAS MG) (Cohort 5)

This module aims to prepare participants to use sampling methods adapted to a population, in order to contribute to the multidisciplinary and international response to complex emergency situations, and apply their epidemiological skills to serve public health interventions.

Q3 Module 5 (C4)/Module 5 (C5) - Project review (PRM1) (Cohort 4+5)

This module aims to provide participants with methodological knowledge on the giving and receiving of feedback related to scientific projects, and the communication of project findings to peers. The module will also prepare them to interact with multidisciplinary audiences at scientific conferences.

Module 6 - Introductory course (Cohort 6)

This module will introduce the new Cohort 6 fellows to the conceptual framework of field epidemiology, including analytical epidemiology, public health surveillance, operational research, outbreak investigation, communication, and public health microbiology.

Module 7 - Time series analysis and GIS (TSA) (Cohort 5)

This module will strengthen participants’ competencies in the areas of statistical data analysis - specifically time series analysis, spatial epidemiology, and the use of GIS software.

Q4 Module 8 - Outbreak Investigation (Cohort 6)

This module will help participants to acquire skills and competencies in the practical aspects of data management and analysis during outbreak investigations, as well as in the interpretation and communication of findings.

Additional activities within MediPIET:

Throughout the year, MediPIET fellows will be sent on international assignments and to scientific conferences to acquire the competencies necessary for a field epidemiologist.

Training Centres Forum meetings

Throughout the year, the MediPIET Training Centres Forum (TCF) will meet at regular intervals, both virtually and face-to-face. In addition, ECDC will organise a joint annual meeting of national ECDC correspondents and MediPIET National Focal Points.

Meeting of the MediPIET alumni network

The first face-to-face meeting of MediPIET alumni fellows will take place in 2023. It will focus on the specific steps necessary to operationalise the network and its activities.

Training of trainers

MediPIET supervisors will be offered the opportunity to take part in training activities delivered annually by ECDC (ECDC Summer School and Winter Workshop). In 2023, MediPIET will co-fund training for supervisors and fellows to acquire and improve their competencies in R programming. ECDC also plans to develop a supervisor-focused e-learning course to be hosted on the ECDC Virtual Academy (EVA) platform.

MediPIET annual scientific event

As in 2022, a scientific event will be organized for the MediPIET fellows. This event will showcase the results of their projects and help them develop their competencies in abstract writing and scientific communication. Submitted abstracts are subject to peer-review.

Graduation of Cohort 4

Cohort 4 fellows will be celebrated at a graduation ceremony in connection with ESCAIDE 2023.

Training site appraisals and review visits

In 2023, ECDC will continue to offer MediPIET training site appraisals to partner countries without an appraised training site. Training site review visits will be organised and scheduled bilaterally.

Work Package 2

Epidemic intelligence, risk assessment, preparedness and response



The EU Initiative on Health Security aims to address the prerequisites for efficient public health systems by helping partner countries to strengthen their capacities to assess, detect, respond and prevent threats from communicable diseases, as well as by enhancing regional cooperation.

The ongoing assessments of preparedness for public health emergencies have resulted in the development of a general programme for 2023 that will remain responsive to the needs identified through continuous dialogue between partner countries and ECDC.

Based on specific requests and the interest expressed, ECDC will be able to discuss the programme and activities both bilaterally and at regional level.

Q1 ECDC Refresher training course in Epidemic Intelligence (EI)

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	15-16 February 2023/two days
Location	ECDC, Stockholm
Description	This refresher training course is designed for experts who attended one of the previous training courses on epidemic intelligence and rapid risk assessment. It will offer an opportunity to meet the ECDC Epidemic Intelligence team and expand their skills and knowledge in this area. It will provide a thorough hands-on review of the EI methodology, tools and processes applied at ECDC. This training is a blend of presentations and practical exercises.

Objectives	After completing this course, the participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify and apply all the steps of EI • describe the reasons for implementing EI.
Target audience	Public health professionals from the European Neighbourhood Policy partner countries who attended one of the previous virtual training courses in epidemic intelligence and rapid risk assessment (in English), either in 2021 or 2022.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries.

Q1 ECDC Recovery regional workshop (EU's Southern Neighbourhood)

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	7-9 March 2023 /Two and a half days
Location	Tunisia
Description	In the context of public health preparedness, a recovery workshop aims to develop processes to strengthen the capacity and prepare participants with the knowledge, skills and support to develop action planning based on the outcomes of After-Action Reviews (AAR) and In Action Reviews (IARs). This will ensure that they can capture improvements to future response activities and embed them in practice. This training is a blend of presentations and practical exercises.
Objectives	After completing this workshop, participants will be able to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review the process of conducting AARs based on country experiences; • consider and practice the steps necessary to take lessons identified and embed them into future plans (lessons learnt); • explore the current practice of developing national action plans; • share examples of good practices from countries' own experiences in identifying and implementing lessons learnt to improve preparedness steps.
Target audience	Health professionals in public health institutes and ministries of health from EU's Southern Neighbourhood who are actively working with preparedness or response to public health emergencies.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries of the Southern Neighborhood.

Q1 ECDC West Nile virus infections workshop

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	Q1 (TBC)
Location	Rome, Italy
Description	EU and European Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries meeting to discuss next steps on how to improve surveillance, preparedness and response to West Nile virus.
Objectives	<p>After completing this course, the participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • understand/describe epidemiological trends and drivers for WNV; • enhance and promote ‘One-Health’ approaches to surveillance and early warning; • share examples from countries’ experiences (AARs) and lessons learnt, and update West Nile virus preparedness plans.
Target audience	Health professionals in public health authorities and ministries of health who are actively working with preparedness or response to WNV surveillance and control capacities across EU’s Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries.

Q2 ECDC Integrating simulation exercises (SimEx) in emergency preparedness & response plans

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	Q2 /two days
Location	ECDC, Stockholm
Description	Public health simulation exercises aim to support authorities and institutions in strengthening their capacity to respond to events involving communicable diseases, as a part of their preparedness plan and strategy. This training is designed for experts responsible for putting in place general preparedness exercise planning processes.
Objectives	The main aim of the workshop is to set out the necessary steps in conceptualising, designing, planning, coordinating, conducting and evaluating simulation exercises.

Target audience	Public health professionals in public health authorities and ministries of health who are actively working with preparedness or response across EU’s Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries.

Q2 ECDC Simulation exercise on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	TBC
Location	TBC
Description	Emergence of a pan-drug resistant bacterium and serious cross-border threats to health are two major aspects of the field of Emergency Preparedness and Response. Both will be dealt with in a simulation exercise providing an opportunity for countries to share knowledge, capabilities, experiences and best practices on how to respond individually and collectively to the challenges of such potential threats.
Objectives	<p>The aim of the exercise is to explore the response to the emergence of a novel strain of a difficult-to-treat, pan-drug-resistant bacterium in a healthcare setting, with the potential for cross-border spread.</p> <p>After completing this course, the participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identify gaps in current arrangements to detect, verify and ascertain the public health impact; • assess risks associated with serious healthcare-associated infections and antimicrobial resistance.
Target audience	Health professionals in public health authorities and ministries of health and experts who are actively working with preparedness or response to antimicrobial resistance across EU’s Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries.

Q3 ECDC Training in social and behavioural methods for disease prevention and control

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	Q3/TBC
Location	Stockholm
Description	This training course aims to provide participants with an introduction to the potential role of social and behavioural sciences in outbreak prevention and control, and information on how to develop a Behavioural and Cultural Insights (BCI) unit.
Objectives	<p>The training will provide an introduction to qualitative research, and will include practical skills in conducting, analysing, and reporting qualitative research. Following participation in this training, attendees will be able to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Understand where social and behavioural sciences fit into infectious disease control efforts more broadly. 2. Understand how behavioural and social sciences are essential to public health preparedness and response. 3. Be able to describe some of the main methods for conducting social and behavioural research relevant to emergency situations. 4. Understand how social and behavioural sciences could be implemented into the work of national centres for disease control.
Target audience	Designed for colleagues who may already be working with social and behavioural sciences in national contexts, as well as those working in ministries of health or national institutes of public health that would benefit from strengthening their background in this area.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries.

Q3/4 ECDC Bio-risk awareness and mitigation training

Format	Instructor-led (face-to-face)
Dates/duration	TBC
Location	TBC
Description	Strengthen the skills and the awareness of first responders from a multisectoral audience (key areas: public health, law enforcement, health emergency services, etc.) on biological threats and principles of protection from biological hazards during the management of an event involving accidental spill or deliberate releases of bioagents.
Objectives	<p>After completing this course, the participants will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • define the specific requirements for effective staff biological risk protection; • build capacity using available options for different scenarios; • summarise the capabilities and limitations of basic protective equipment (PPE); • develop the ability to cascade the training for a wide audience by allowing participants to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – plan a strategy to provide training in their specific national or local context; – make use of the training material provided; – model the material to a specific national or local context; – compare available options when designing exercise material for different scenarios.
Target audience	The target audience will be people with substantial professional experience and an active role in emergency preparedness and response (ideally involving biological risks) across the EU's Neighbourhood Policy (ENP) partner countries.
Participation	The participants are nominated by ECDC National Correspondents from the ENP partner countries.

Work Package 3

Integration with ECDC systems, knowledge sharing and networking



The EU Initiative on Health Security aims to progressively integrate the partner countries into the work of ECDC. To share knowledge and create networking possibilities it is proposed that partner countries participate in relevant ECDC networks and activities as observers

Joint webinars of ECDC National Focal Points for Preparedness and Response and National Focal Points (NFP) for Threat Detection, Epidemic Intelligence and International Health Regulations

Since 2020, ECDC has been organising monthly webinars for EU NFPs in Threat Detection and NFPs of Preparedness and Response. The webinars are designed for the exchange of information, best practices and lessons learnt in relation to response to public health emergencies.

Exchange of experts programme

ECDC will organise an exchange of experts programme within specific disease areas, providing an opportunity for experts from European Neighbourhood policy partner countries to learn from the experience of EU Member States, and to share their experience. The topics for exchange will include antimicrobial consumption, antimicrobial resistance, healthcare associated infections, food-borne diseases, vector-borne diseases, HIV, TB, genomics, high-consequence pathogens and many other technical topics.

Work Package 4

Project management, communication, visibility and cross-cutting actions



Annual meeting

Annual meeting of National ECDC Correspondents in European Neighborhood partner countries and MediPIET National Focal Points

Within the scope of this meeting is the consolidation of the outcomes and achievements of regional cooperation within the EU Initiative on Health Security in 2023, as well as a forward-looking overview of planned capacity building activities in 2024.

ESICAIDE

As part of the network building and knowledge sharing activities, representatives from partner countries will also be invited to ESICAIDE 2023, the European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology.

The scientific programme for ESICAIDE 2023 comprises plenaries and abstract-led sessions. During the plenary sessions, high-level speakers will discuss topics of significant importance in the field of infectious diseases and public health. Selected abstracts will describe the latest cutting-edge research from a broad spectrum of fields, including infectious disease epidemiology, microbiology, surveillance, implementation science, modelling and preparedness.

Annex 1. Work programme 2023

Work package 1

Workforce oriented capability-building - Mediterranean and Black Sea Programme for Intervention Epidemiology Training (MediPIET)

Activity	Date
Qualitative research Inject Days (Cohort 4+5)	Q1
Module 1: CBRN module (Cohort 4+5)	Q1
Vaccinology Inject Days (Cohort 4+5)	Q2
Module 2: 'One-Health' and vector-borne diseases (Cohort 4+5)	Q2
Module 3 - Multivariable analysis (MVA) (Cohort 5)	Q2
Module 4 - Risk assessment and mass gatherings (RAS MG) (Cohort 5)	Q2
Module 5 (C4)/Module 5 (C5) - Project review (PRM1) (Cohort 4+5)	Q3
Module 6 - Introductory course (Cohort 6)	Q3
Module 7 - Time series analysis and GIS (TSA) (Cohort 5)	Q4
Module 8 - Outbreak Investigation (Cohort 6)	Q4
Additional activities within MediPIET	
Training Centres Forum meetings	Q1-Q4
Meeting of the MediPIET alumni network	Q4
Training of trainers	Q2-Q4
Training site appraisals and review visits	Q2
Graduation of Cohort 4	Q4
MediPIET annual scientific event	Q4

Work Package 2

Epidemic intelligence, risk assessment, preparedness and response

Activity	Date
Refresher Training course in Epidemic Intelligence (EI)	Q1
Recovery regional workshop (EU's Southern Neighbourhood)	Q1
West Nile virus infections workshop	Q1
Integrating Simulation Exercises (SimEx) in Emergency Preparedness & Response plans	Q2
Simulation Exercise on antimicrobial resistance (AMR)	Q2
Training in social and behavioural methods for disease prevention and control	Q3
Biorisk Awareness and Mitigation training	Q4

Work Package 3

Integration into ECDC systems, knowledge-sharing and networking

Activity	Date
Joint webinars of ECDC National Focal Points for Preparedness and Response and National Focal Points (NFP) for Threat Detection, Epidemic Intelligence and International Health Regulations	Monthly
Exchange of expert's programme	Whole year

Work Package 4

Project management, communication, visibility and cross-cutting actions

Activity	Date
Steering Committee meeting	Q1
Annual Meeting of National ECDC Correspondents in European Neighbourhood partner countries and MediPIET National Focal Points	Q4
European Scientific Conference on Applied Infectious Disease Epidemiology (ESCAIDE)	Q4