

WP9 Kick-Off Meeting Report

Work Package 9 Kick-Off – Chemical Safety and Chemical Threats

**22nd – 23rd October, National Institute for Public Health (NIJZ), Trubarjeva cesta
2, 1000 Ljubljana, Slovenia**

Organisers: NIJZ, Slovenia and Public Health England, UK

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1. Introduction

In line with milestone 9.1 (SHARP MS30) of the SHARP Joint Action, a Kick-Off meeting for Work Package 9: Chemical Safety and Chemical Threats was held at the office of the Slovenian National Institute for Public Health, NIJZ.

The workshop was organised by NIJZ as an opportunity for WP9 partners to meet face-to-face and discuss how to take forward the activities in the WP9 proposal, which activities partners would work on and to update the WP9 work plan.

In addition, representatives from WP5, WP6 and WP8 were invited to the meeting to discuss opportunities for collaborative working, as these WPs have previously been identified as having areas of overlapping work with WP9. Unfortunately, no WP6 representatives were available to attend, but Line Vold from FHI, Norway represented WP5 and Milena Vasic from the National Public Health Institute of Serbia, represented WP8.

Topics of the Kick-Off meeting included:

- Discussion of the list of tasks and activities from the WP9 proposal
- Agreement on how to proceed with these tasks/activities
- Agreement on the different activities that each partner will work on, based on their interest and person months available
- The Stakeholders that WP9 should engage with
- Collaborative activities with other WPs (WP5, 6 and 8)
- Discussion on the Dissemination, Evaluation and Sustainability of WP9 activities

2. Participants

The meeting was attended by partners of WP9 in addition to representation from WP5 (IHR core capacity strengthening and assessment) and WP8 (Training and exercises). The full list of attendees is below.

Participant	Affiliation
Peter Otorepec Anja Jutraz Matej Ivartnik Claudia Adamic Majda Pohar Tanja Carli	WP9, NIJZ, Slovenia
Eirian Thomas Tom Gaulton	WP9, PHE, UK
Lisbeth Hall	WP9, RIVM, Netherlands
Hannu Kiviranta	WP9, THL, Finland
Line Vold	WP5, FHI, Norway
Milena Vasic	WP8, Institute of Public Health, Serbia

Proposed Meeting Objectives

- To provide an overview of Work Package 9 (Chemical safety and chemical threats) and establish mutual understanding of the proposed activities.
- Agree upon proposed activities and tasks, assign activities to each WP9 partner.
- To agree arrangements for collaborating on, and delivering, the WP9 Milestones and Deliverables.
- Discuss collaboration with other WPs (WP5, WP6 and WP8).
- Update WP9 work plan.

3. Initial Discussions

3.1 Update from One Health Conference, Helsinki (14th - 15th October 2019)

Eirian Thomas from PHE, UK provided an update of key points from the Helsinki One Health Conference, held earlier in October. The slides for this update can be found in Annex 2 at the end of this document.

Discussion points amongst WP9 partners included:

Relevant documents to consider

- ECDC strategy 2021-27 (objectives, capacities, response capabilities)
- WHO publications: IHR and Chemical Events
- IHR Joint External Evaluation Tool, Global Health Security Agenda evaluations (predecessor of JEE).
- WHO Europe: Action plan to improve public health preparedness and response in the WHO European Region 2013-2018.

Previous EU projects of relevance

- ASHT I – III (Alerting System for chemical Health Threats)
- ECHEMNET (European Chemical Emergency Network)
- CIE Toolkit (Chemical Incident Emergencies Toolkit)
- SLAM (Standardisation of Laboratory Analytical Methods)

Deliverable sign-off

There is a review process we must follow for all Joint Action Deliverables: To ensure that deliverables are of good quality, sufficient time must be allowed for the Steering Committee/technical reviewers to provide feedback in advance of the Deliverable deadline.

- Deliverables are reviewed by steering committee
- Technical reviewers then review Deliverables (e.g. WHO, SCHEER)
- Engagement with reviewers and stakeholders is essential in this Joint Action (e.g. CHAFEA, WHO Europe, WHO International, ECHA)

Next Steps

- Consider an opportunity for each of us to engage with colleagues within our own institutes (add own views/ideas), using the WP9 KO meeting notes
- Consider engagement with key stakeholders in a workshop meeting linked to a JA activity, or when key stakeholders can attend
- Share how we propose to take forward WP9

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- Refine tasks and activities
- Invite input and engagement
- Identify mechanisms to support sustainability

Input into Horizontal Work Packages

Partners were reminded that WP9 should provide input into:

- Dissemination plan (WP2)
- Evaluation plan (WP3)
- Sustainability plan (WP4)

4. WP9 Activities and tasks

The first day of the meeting was dedicated to working through all the proposed tasks and activities for WP9 according to the Grant Agreement. An overview of each activity was presented, followed by discussions among WP9 partners

4.1 Gap Analysis

A brief overview of the tasks involved in Activity 1 was presented. This was discussed in further detail on day 2, as part of and in collaboration with WP5 (which has considerable overlap with this activity).

It was agreed that a fact-finding/gap analysis on chemicals will be conducted to determine which areas require further action, with a view to strengthen chemical core capacity implementation under IHR. The results of this gap analysis will inform the training materials and SOPs which will be developed as part of WP9.

4.2 Strengthening Existing Mechanisms

The aim of this activity is to strengthen exiting mechanisms in line with IHR/Decision 1082/2013, taking forward outputs from previous EU projects and promoting their use among European countries, to strengthen chemical core capacities.

It was noted that this could promote the wider use and update of existing resources to strengthen chemical core capacities as well as support the risk assessment and response to serious cross border threat to health.

For example: RASCHEM and SCHEER tools (such as the Rapid Risk Assessment tool) were discussed as examples of useful tools which have low uptake, the

increased use of which would be beneficial improve their response to chemical incidents.

4.3 Surveillance of Chemical Events

The discussions focused on relevant available mechanisms to increase uptake and implementation of chemical event surveillance and included:

- Strengthening the link between the relevant national authorities and chemical surveillance through Poison Centres and environmental monitoring/indicator-based surveillance for more focused and effective response;
 - Consider using environmental indicators as well, not just health indicators
- Use of rapid and low-cost Event-Based Surveillance (EBS)/media scanning;
- Use of toxidromes in syndromic surveillance would allow use of existing communicable disease surveillance to include chemical incidents/exposures
 - there is also a toxidrome tool developed through ASHT/ECHEMNET projects housed by the Gottingen/GIZ-NORD poison centre. We will investigate if it is available for use;
- Partners agreed that definitions of language/acronyms for chemicals would be highly useful to provide clarity for non-chemists
 - In addition, a document which describes how chemical surveillance relates to communicable disease surveillance would also be very useful;
- Examples of good practice of surveillance should be collected and distributed to countries. For example, the Civil Protection app developed by Slovenia was demonstrated as a useful tool for detecting and mapping incidents (not limited to chemicals);
- Use existing tools and databases, such as
 - UNECE Industrial Accidents Notification System (IANS)
- Benchmarking of surveillance activities (e.g. performing EBS would be a good basic standard if nothing else exists in-country).

4.4 Training materials & Exercises

WP9 will produce training materials, to provide an opportunity for European countries to test their ability to respond to incidents, to identify the response and coordination issues that could arise during a variety of hazardous materials scenarios and make the required decisions to resolve those issues.

Proposed ideas for training materials were discussed, including:

- Workshop materials (for two workshops),
 - e.g. presentations, interactive activities, facilitator-led discussions

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- Realistic chemical incident exercise scenarios.
- Case studies of real-life chemical incidents

These materials will also be used in the training courses planned by WP8, to cover the chemical component of the IHR all-hazard approach.

WP leads will start preparing general material (IHR requirements for chemicals, overview of chemical incident response, examples of common incidents) although the more specific topics to be covered will be informed by the gap analysis and WP8 training needs assessment activities.

4.5 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

SOPs will be produced based to guide European countries on specific topics which could help to strengthen chemical requirements under IHR and assist countries in dealing with chemical incidents. The topics covered will be based on findings from the workshops, the best practices, gaps and bottlenecks identified previously, the gap analysis and training needs assessment (to be undertaken by WP8).

Suggestion from the meeting for SOP topics include:

- Detection: surveillance;
- Alerting/notification;
- Response:
 - protect; assess (PH/risk, public health advice);
- Interoperability/communication;
- Recovery;
- Follow up:
 - biomonitoring, mental health assessment/monitoring.

4.6 Other activities

Chemical Laboratory Network

The Commission has specifically requested WP9 to explore the desirability and feasibility among MSs of setting up a chemical laboratory response network.

Comments from WP9 partner discussions on this activity include:

1. The results from the gap analysis could be used to evaluate the desire/need for a chemical laboratory analytical network, in order to protect public health from chemical incidents. Certified and registered laboratories are mandatory for high quality data analysis.

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2. Examples of previously established networks and recorded good practice will be used initially to assess the feasibility of creating such a network e.g. networks such as the Organisation for the Prevention of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) laboratory network and projects such as the SLAM (Standardisation of Laboratory Analytical Methods) project.
3. Also important is the distribution of educational/guidance materials to policymakers, members of the public and other key stakeholders to expand awareness of the utility and versatility of the Chemical Laboratory Network.
4. WP9 could also engage with WP6 on this activity.

5. Other Areas of Discussion

Following the discussion of all proposed WP9 activities, we used an opportunity at the end of the day to raise issues which affected all aspects of the WP9 work, such as collaboration with others, engagement of stakeholders and others in WP9 and confirming the allocation of tasks to WP9 partners.

5.1 Collaboration and Engagement in WP9

The potential stakeholders of WP9 were discussed, with WP9 partners trying to think of additional relevant SHARP stakeholders with an interest in Chemicals.

The following list was created, adding any new stakeholders onto the original list:

- WHO International
- WHO Europe
- CHAFAEA
- DG SANTE
- DG ECHO
- European Chemicals Agency (ECHA)
- Joint Research Centre (JRC)
- EC Scientific Committee for Health, Environment and Emerging Risks (SCHEER)

5.2 Allocation of WP9 tasks to partners

The allocation of tasks to the WP9 partners was discussed. The initial allocation of tasks set out in the Grant Agreement was updated based on feedback received. The below list has been updated to reflect partners' views.

Task 9.1 Gap analysis

Lead: DH/PHE (UK);

Co-Lead: FoHM (Sweden, WP5), NIJZ (Slovenia);

Participants: HD/FHI (Norway), MFH (Malta), NAPH (Moldova)

Task 9.2 Strengthening existing mechanisms

Lead: DH/PHE (UK);

Co-Leads: RIVM (Netherlands), NIJZ (Slovenia)

Participants: MoH-FR (France), HD/FHI (Norway), THL (Finland)

Task 9.3 Surveillance of chemical incidents

Lead: DH/PHE (UK);

Co-Leads: RIVM (Netherlands), HD/FHI (Norway);

Participants: NIJZ (Slovenia), MFH (Malta), NAPH (Moldova), THL (Finland)

Task 9.4 Training program and materials

Lead: DH/PHE (UK);

Co-Leads: IPHS (Serbia, WP8) and RKI (Germany, WP8);

Participants: NIJZ (Slovenia), RIVM (Netherlands)

Task 9.5 Exercises

Lead: DH/PHE (UK);

Co-leads: IPHS (Serbia, WP8), RKI (Germany, WP8);

Participants: NIJZ (Slovenia), RIVM (Netherlands)

Task 9.6 Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)

Lead: DH/PHE (UK);

Co-leads: NIJZ (Slovenia);

Participants: MFH (Malta), NAPH (Moldova), RIVM (Netherlands)

All identified partners have now been allocated activities with the exception of the National Public Health Centre of Hungary (NNK). Separate discussions will be held with NNK contacts and partners from Malta, France and Moldova to confirm the tasks they will take forward in WP9.

6. Collaboration with Other WPs

6.1 Collaboration with WP5 (IHR core capacity strengthening and assessment)

Line Vold (FHI, Norway) presented an overview of WP5: IHR core capacity strengthening and assessment (slides in Annex 2). A summary of the discussion points following the presentation are below.

Most of the discussion focussed on the Gap analysis activities in WP5:

Initial information will be taken from JEE reports and SPAR reports (Self-Assessment Annual Reporting Tool - WHO), in addition to simulation exercise results and After-Action Reviews (AARs). Any other useful information will be included in this initial review, such as results from review of EU exercises and gaps identified by the Commission (due to happen in 2020).

The WP5 workshop held in Riga, Latvia in January 2020 will probe the gap analysis further using case studies, WP9 will provide questions on chemicals to WP5 and WP8 for their gap analysis and training needs assessment, respectively. It was suggested that a separate questionnaire could be sent out prior to the Riga workshop, for the attention of the chemical focal point. Examples of specific topics may include:

- surveillance
- lab capacity
- training

WP9 will seek further information on the chemical component of the recent gap analysis EC performed last year from (DG SANTE). It was noted that WP8 Training Needs Assessment questionnaire will be sent out prior to December 2019.

6.2 Collaboration with WP8 (Training and Exercises)

Milena Vasic (NIPH, Serbia) presented an overview of WP8: Training and Exercises (slides in Annex 2), including the proposed tasks that WP8 will deliver.

WP9 will develop training materials for use in WP8 activities (in line with our activities 4 and 5, detailed earlier in this report), wherever there is a chemical component.

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Specific tasks for WP9 to contribute to include the basic and advanced face-to-face training courses, although the material could be adapted for use in online courses.

WP8 is proposing to hold two basic training workshops, which will cover all IHR-hazards and will require some chemical input in the form of slides and case studies of real chemical events, in addition to some learning activities. These workshops will be held in the first 12 months of SHARP. Milena shared a draft timetable for these basic courses to illustrate the level of chemical input required.

WP8 will also hold 4 lots of advanced training courses, covering 4 specific topic areas, including chemicals. The advanced chemicals workshop will be delivered twice in two different locations, so as to maximise the number of people that attend it. It will require much more detailed material from WP9 as it focusses solely on chemicals and lasts for a few days. The workshops will be delivered in the second and third years of the SHARP JA. The exact content to be delivered will be suggested by WP9 but guided by the gap analysis results from WP5 and the training needs assessment results from WP8.

WP9 will also provide a chemical incident scenario and other material required to hold a chemical exercise (delivered by WP8 with WP9 input)

7. Meeting review and closure

Eirian Thomas (PHE, UK) presented a summary of the meeting discussions (see Annex 2 for slides) for agreement amongst WP9 partners.

7.1 Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the notes taken by NIJZ at the end of the meeting. The WP9 team will:

1. Support MSs to strengthen chemical capacities in response to local, regional and national events as well as serious cross border incident/events;
2. Increase uptake of/strengthen existing chemical event surveillance through several mechanisms (e.g. toxidromes, examples of good practice, clarity on vocabulary/definitions);
3. Continue to engage with relevant stakeholders (CHAFFEA, WHO Europe, WHO International, ECHA etc.);
4. Promote existing EU resources/mechanisms for sharing knowledge and information (e.g. RASCHEM, JESIP, SCHEER/Rapid Risk Assessment);
5. Collaborate with WP5 (gap analysis and tasks) and WP8 (the importance of training and exchanging of working practice) on their upcoming tasks.

7.2 Actions to take forward

	Action	Assigned to
1	Create chemical Vocabulary/list of chemical acronyms	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Hannu Kiviranta• PHE• Lisbeth Hall• NIJZ
2	Summary of past relevant projects on chemicals (for strengthening existing mechanisms activity)	PHE/Lisbeth Hall
3	Provide examples of relevant tools which already exist	PHE/NIJZ
4	Provide examples of good practice (e.g. Slovenia App)	ALL

5	<p>Surveillance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Clarity on surveillance terminology ii) Application of communicable disease surveillance to chemicals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) PHE ii) Line Vold and NIJZ
6	<p>Consider an opportunity for each of us to engage with colleagues within our own institutes, compile post-meeting notes (about 1 page) and share with others</p>	ALL
7	<p>Consider engagement with key stakeholders, either in a workshop meeting linked to a JA activity, or when key stakeholder can attend. Consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sharing how we propose to take forward WP9 • Refining our tasks and activities • Invite input and engagement from stakeholders • Identify mechanisms to support sustainability in SHARP 	ALL

8. Annexes

Annex 1 – Meeting Agenda and Slides

Agenda for the WP9 KO Meeting



Welcome and Introductions



Update from Helsinki Conference



Activity 1: Gap Analysis



Activity 2: Strengthening Existing Mechanisms



Activity 3: Surveillance of chemical incidents



Activity 4 and Activity 5: Training Materials and Exercises



Activity 6: Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)



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Other Activities



WP5 – IHR Core Capacity Strengthening and Assessment: Overview



WP8 – Training and Exercises: Overview



Summary of WP9 discussions

