

EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS JOINT ACTION
GRANT AGREEMENT NUMBER: 801493

PREPAREDNESS AND ACTION AT POINTS OF ENTRY
(PORTS, AIRPORTS, GROUND CROSSINGS)

EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS: STRENGTHENING CORE CAPACITIES AT GROUND CROSSINGS

Deliverable D5.2

Version Number 01

April 2022

Work Package 5: Ground crossings transport

Work Package Leaders:

National Institute of Public Health - National Institute of Hygiene (NIPH-NIH), Poland

National Public Health Center (NVSC), Lithuania

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is Deliverable 5.2 titled “**Strengthening core capacities at ground crossings**” developed under *Work Package 5: Ground crossings transport* of the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Joint Action (Grant Agreement Nr. 801493). The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Joint Action has received funding from the European Union, in the framework of the Third Health Programme (2014-2020).

This deliverable was slightly modified from the initial work plan of the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Joint Action in response to the COVID-19 pandemic through a Grant Agreement amendment. Due to the emergence of COVID-19 and the Joint Action’s operation in emergency mode as of January 2020, the deliverable was modified to prioritize supporting Member States’ responses in the context of COVID-19 and the ground crossings transport sector.

This deliverable consists of several components, which are briefly described in the following sections, including information for how each component can be viewed/accessed.

This deliverable consists of the following components developed under the framework of EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS:

1. *Best practices for core capacities implementation (ground crossings sector)*
2. *Training for preparedness and response to public health events at ground crossings*
3. *Multi-sectorial tabletop exercise for all points of entry at national level*
4. *Model Memorandums of Understanding (MoUs) for:*
 - a. *Personal data exchange for the purpose of contact tracing in the field of public health*
 - b. *Coordination of response to public health events of mutual interest (ground crossings)*
5. *Regional workshop on challenges and exchange of practices in relation to public health measures at ground crossings*
6. *Case study related to COVID-19 and ground crossings*
7. *Guidance for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 (buses/bus stations and trains/rail stations)*

1. Best practices for core capacities implementation (ground crossings sector)

Under the framework of the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Joint Action, **web-based catalogues of best practices for points of entry** have been developed and address all types of health threats, public health emergency contingency planning, risk communication and advice for public health event management at points of entry.

Specific practices on core capacities implementation at **ground crossings** related to event detection, surveillance, management and contingency planning have been identified and included in the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS catalogue of best practices.

Best practices for ground crossings were identified in 2018 and 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic through: a questionnaire disseminated to countries participating in the Joint Action on preparedness and response to biological/chemical threats, a scoping literature review on public health events related to ground crossings; expert opinions from EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS technical working groups; and reviews of previous project results.

The primary aim of the catalogues is to facilitate the promotion and sharing of practices that Member States identify as working well (good practice) in their country. The practices identified and included in the catalogues are not meant to be considered a gold standard; however, many of the practices collected are evidence-based and fulfill specific evaluation criteria developed to determine what are considered “best practices”. The grade/level of evidence behind each practice is identified based on the following four criteria:

1. *Practice implemented according to International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005) requirements for core capacities*
2. *Practice documented and legislated/formalized, e.g. through Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)*
3. *Staff trained in implementing the documented practices (e.g. training on SOPs)*
4. *Practices tested with tabletop/simulation exercises or have been applied during real life event(s)*

The catalogues are searchable through keywords associated with each practice. Moreover, practices are categorized based on the area they relate to under the International Health Regulations (IHR, 2005). The structure of the catalogue template provided allows countries to present and describe their “best practices” in a way that is useful to other Member States.

For further information about requesting access to the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS catalogues of best practices, please contact: info@healthygateways.eu

2. Training for preparedness and response to public health events at ground crossings

Under the framework of Work Package 5, technical content for training materials/resources were developed for a web-based European level Training of the trainers' course: *"Preparedness and response to public health events at ground crossings"* conducted in May 2021. The purpose of the training was to increase competence and capacity for managing public health events in ground transport including risk assessment, decision-making and crisis communication. A total of 60 people participated in the course from 19 European region countries (14 EUMS and 5 non-EU countries).

Training specifically addressed:

- *Preparedness planning and communication at ground crossings*
- *Event detection, verification, risk assessment, decision making*
- *Experiences and lessons learned for management of a public health event*
- *Management of public health event due to chemical agents*

Training resources developed for *"Preparedness and response to public health events at ground crossings"* are available in a dedicated course in the e-learning platform of EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS: <https://elearning.shipsan.eu/course/view.php?id=41>

Access to the e-learning platform can be provided by contacting: info@healthygateways.eu

Furthermore, under the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS framework, an online asynchronous self-paced course titled *"Preparedness and response at points of entry in the European Union (EU)/EEA Member States (MS) in the context of COVID-19"* was developed, to support personnel of competent authorities at points of entry to respond to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Training resources developed for *"Preparedness and response at points of entry in the European Union (EU)/EEA Member States (MS) in the context of COVID-19"* are available in the e-learning platform of EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS:

<https://elearning.shipsan.eu/course/view.php?id=44>

Access to the e-learning platform can be provided by contacting: info@healthygateways.eu

3. Multi-sectorial tabletop exercise for all points of entry (including ground crossings) at national level

Under the framework of EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Milestone 9.6, a document was produced titled "*Multi-sectorial tabletop exercise for all points of entry at national level: Instructions for organisers*", for the development of a multi-sectorial tabletop exercise to be conducted involving all types of points of entry and response measures at local and national level, as well as existing structures including the IHR NFP, EWRS NFP and laboratories of the country. Countries can use this document and the suggested scenario package included in order to implement an exercise at a national level.

The working group responsible for the exercise development concluded to develop a package focusing on contact tracing procedures for COVID-19. The scenario and the instructions document can be amended as appropriate by the exercise organizer in accordance with the local context, rules, regulations and practices.

This document describes in detail the design of an exercise, suggested participants and scenario packages, example time schedules for the exercise and considerations for evaluation.

Additionally, the document provides in annexes other relevant materials and templates that can be used and adapted by countries to reflect their needs/context when developing exercises. The document includes the following as annexes:

- Annex 1: EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS guidance document for "Organising a tabletop/simulation exercise"
- Annex 2: Participant instructions template
- Annex 3: Suggested scenarios package for facilitators/controllers
- Annex 4: Exercise evaluation package
- Annex 5: Exercise report template

The document "*Multi-sectorial tabletop exercise for all points of entry at national level*" (and its annexes) can be found at the following link:

[https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG M.9.6. Exercise national PoE.docx](https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_M.9.6_Exercise_national_PoE.docx)

4. Model for Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) related to ground crossings

Under the framework of Work Package 5 (Ground crossings), two model Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) were developed as follows:

A. Model MoU - *on personal data exchange, for the purpose of contact tracing in the field of public health*

Based on a decision of the Joint Action's 1st General Assembly (13-14 June 2019), this model MoU was proposed as one short-term solution to reduce possible delays in the timely exchange of data for public health purposes. The concept of this MoU is a result of thorough analysis on the legal bases for possible public health action at points of entry. This document presents the model for an MoU which could be signed between public health authorities responsible for contact tracing in a given country and conveyance operators from this country.

B. Model MoU - *on the Coordination of response to Public Health Events of Mutual Interest, to be used at ground crossings or in relation to a ground crossing, between [country 1] and [country 2]*

According to the Joint Action Grant Agreement (Nr. 801493), in order to foster collaboration among EU Member States (EU MS) and non-EU MS, a model MoU has been developed to describe cooperation between EU MS and neighboring non-EU MS that share land borders. This document provides a model for an MoU which could be adopted by MS in their bilateral cooperation for preparedness and response to cross-border health threats.

The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS model MoUs related to ground crossings can be found at the following link:
https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_M5.9_MoUs_Ground_Crossings.pdf

5. Regional workshop on challenges and exchange of practices in relation to public health measures at ground crossings

In accordance with the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Grant Agreement, a regional workshop on challenges and exchange of practices in relation to public health measures at ground crossings was developed and conducted in November 2021 in Marijampole district of Lithuania, with participation of competent authorities responsible for responding to public health events and implementing health measures at ground crossings (from Poland and Lithuania as countries that share a land border). Participants represented different levels (national and local) and different sectors. Presentations from the World Health Organization (WHO), European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) and HEALTHY GATEWAYS were also provided during the workshop.

In the context of emergency mode operation for COVID-19, the workshop was intended to focus on issues regarding exit/entry screening and contact tracing of passengers related to communicable diseases, especially COVID-19.

The main aim of the regional workshop was to create an opportunity to meet and discuss challenges faced during the COVID-19 pandemic in relation to ground crossings, from the perspective of both sides of the border. This contributed to supporting cross-border collaboration and exchange of good practice in the context of COVID-19.

The report describing conclusions and lessons learned from the workshop can be found at the following link:

https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_M5.11-M5.12_Workshop_Ground_.pdf

6. Case study related to COVID-19 and ground crossings

In the context of COVID-19, Work Package 5 developed a case study related to COVID-19 at ground crossings titled: “*The first case of COVID-19 in Poland*”. This case study was based on a real COVID-19 event but was slightly modified for training purposes; this case study provides an example of how local events can be used as a training resource.

The purpose of the case study was to familiarize experts working in points of entry with:

- *the public health environment of ground crossings*
- *the importance of contact tracing (what, when and to whom relevant data for public health use should be reported, e.g. including travel history data)*
- *EU dPLF for ground transport sector*
- *Memorandum of Understanding developed within HEALTHY GATEWAYS, on exchange of relevant information for public health use between MS, if needed*

The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS case study titled “*The first case of COVID-19 in Poland*” can be found at the following link:
[https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG M.12 Case study Ground](https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_M.12_Case_study_Ground)

7.Guidance for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 (buses/bus stations and trains/rail stations)

In response to the COVID-19 pandemic, EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Joint Action developed several interim advice documents after a request from the European Commission's Directorate-General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), related to preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at points of entry in the European Union (EU)/EEA Member States (MS).

In this context, an ad-hoc working group established from members of the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS consortium developed and published the following advice documents related to ground crossings:

- *Preliminary advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at ground crossings (**buses and bus stations**) in the European Union (EU)/ European Economic Area (EEA) Member States (MS) – Version 1 published on 4/3/2020 (available in English and Greek)*
- *Preliminary advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at ground crossings (**trains and rail stations**) in the European Union (EU)/European Economic Area (EEA) Member States (MS) – Version 1 published on 4/3/2020*

The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS "*Preliminary advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at ground crossings (buses and bus stations) in EU/EEA MS*" and "*Preliminary advice for preparedness and response to cases of COVID-19 at ground crossings (trains and rail stations) in EU/EEA MS*" can be found at the following link:
<https://www.healthygateways.eu/Novel-coronavirus#Interim>