

**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 PORTS

Deliverable D7.2

Version Number 01

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Work Package 7: Maritime transport

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This is Deliverable 7.2 titled “**Strengthening core capacities at ports**” developed under *Work Package 7: Maritime 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. Deliverable 7.2 was originally intended to provide: *best practices on core capacities implementation for event detection, surveillance and management and contingency planning; table top /simulation exercises; tool for contingency plan development and assessment and options for improving of detection and surveillance of public health events*. 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 maritime 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 (maritime sector)*
- 2. Training for preparedness and response to public health events at ports*
- 3. Table top/simulation exercise guidance and scenarios for implementation at port level*
- 4. Multi-sectorial tabletop exercise for all points of entry at national level*
- 5. Model for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for port local competent authorities’ agreement of cooperation for responding to public health events*
- 6. Tool for contingency plan development/assessment at ports*
- 7. Guidance for ship operators for preparedness and response to the outbreak of COVID-19*

1. Best practices for core capacities implementation (maritime 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 **ports** 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 the web-based catalogues were identified in 2018 and 2019 prior to the COVID-19 pandemic through: questionnaires disseminated to countries participating in the Joint Action; expert opinions from EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS technical working groups; 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 ports

Under the framework of Work Package 7, technical content for training materials/resources were developed for a 3-day face-to-face European level Training of the trainers' course (including online pre-course e-learning sessions) for: "*Preparedness and response to public health events at ports*" conducted in March 2019. The purpose of the course was to increase competence and capacity for managing public health events at ports and on ships including risk assessment, decision-making and crisis communication. The training course addressed issues of decision making for implementing evidence-based health measures proportionate to the health risks. A total of 64 persons attended the training course, with 44 trainees (from 19 EU MS and 6 non-European countries), 15 presenters/observers/facilitators and 5 persons providing administrative support.

Training resources developed for "*Preparedness and response to public health events at ports*" are available in a dedicated course in the e-learning platform of EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS:

<https://elearning.shipsan.eu/course/view.php?id=35>

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. Tabletop /simulation exercises at local (port) level

Under the framework of EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Milestone 7.5, a document was produced for developing tabletop/simulation exercises to test local public health emergency contingency plans at ports. In accordance with the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Grant Agreement, this document was developed to be used at a local level by countries at their designated points of entry to test applicability of contingency plans, with a focus on COVID-19 events.

This document titled "*Instructions for developing exercises for testing the local public health emergency contingency plan for ports*" is targeted to local stakeholders at the port and country level where the IHR 2005 and/or Decision No 1082/2013/EU on serious cross-border threats to health is implemented in practice.

The document describes in detail the steps required for developing the exercises (including defining the objectives, deciding on exercise type and participants, developing scenarios/relevant materials) and logistics of the exercise.

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: Example scenarios focused on local level: single agency (discussion-based orientation or small-scale tabletop exercise)
- Annex 2: Example scenario focused on local level: multi-agency at the PoE – all involved competent authorities at local level for the implementation of the plan at the PoE (tabletop exercise)
- Annex 3: Example scenario focused on local level: multi-agency at the PoE – all involved competent authorities at local level for the implementation of the plan at the PoE (functional exercises - command post exercise)
- Annex 4: Participant instructions template
- Annex 5: Master event list template
- Annex 6: Example evaluation package for exercise
- Annex 7: Exercise report template

The document "*Tabletop/simulation exercise at ports: Instructions for developing exercises for testing the local public health emergency contingency plan for ports*" (and its annexes) can be found at the following link: https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_M.7.5_Exercise_1ocal_ports.docx

4. Multi-sectorial tabletop exercise for all points of entry 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 organiser 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)

5. Model for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at local (port) level

In accordance with the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Grant Agreement, a model Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was developed in order to foster collaboration at a local (port) level. The model MoU includes the rules of cooperation among the different competent authorities at ports, at local level that need to be involved in response to public health events (among appropriate human and animal health, law enforcement, and defense personnel), as described in the World Health Organization (WHO) Tool for Joint External Evaluation (JEE).

The model MoU is intended to be used by countries in order to assess existing contingency plans or to develop ones, as required by International Health Regulations (IHR) Annex 1B. This will help countries to achieve the relevant indicators described in the WHO Tool for JEE. The model can be adapted or modified based on each countries' national context.

The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS "Model for a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) at local (port) level" can be found at the following link:
https://www.healthygateways.eu/Portals/0/plcdocs/EUHG_M7.6_Model_MoU_ports.pdf

6. Tool for contingency plan development and assessment for ports

In accordance with the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS Grant Agreement, a tool for public health emergency contingency plan (PHECP) development and assessment was to be developed. In response to the Joint Action operating in an emergency mode since January 2020, to support response of EU Member States (MS) to the COVID-19 pandemic, specific guidelines were also prepared for adapting the generic PHECP to a COVID-19-specific port public health emergency contingency plan (COVID-19-PHECP).

The purpose of this technical tool is to suggest concrete steps for developing or assessing current port-specific PHECPs and protocols, not to replace them. The tool focuses on assisting local stakeholders at the port and country level where the IHR 2005 and/or Decision No1082/2013/EU on serious cross-border threats to health is implemented in practice.

The tool provides the following:

- Annex 1: Template of a generic public health emergency contingency plan for all types of public health threats (including infectious diseases, vectors, chemical and radiological threats as per International Health Regulations (IHR 2005) Annex 1B, which must be in place at all times at designated ports)
- Annex 2: Practical guidelines specifically for restarting cruise ship operations after lifting restrictive measures enforced in response to the COVID19 pandemic, in the format of a cruise restart process map
- Annex 3: Explanatory notes for the cruise restart process map
- Annex 4: Template to adapt the generic PHECP specifically for preparedness and response to COVID-19 cases on cruise ships at a port (designated or not)

The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS “Tool for contingency plan development and assessment for ports” can be found at the following link:
<https://www.healthygateways.eu/Tool-for-contingency-plan-development-and-assessment-for-ports>

7.Guidance for ship operators for preparedness and response to the outbreak of COVID-19

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).

The first version of "Advice for ship operators for preparedness and response to the outbreak of novel Coronavirus (2019-nCoV) infection" was developed by an ad-hoc working group established from members of the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS consortium and published in late January 2020. This version of the advice considered current evidence and travel advice from the World Health Organization (WHO) about the novel 2019-nCoV infection and guidelines for the maritime transport sector that were published in response to the outbreaks of SARS-CoV and MERS-CoV.

Since January 2020, this advice document has been continuously updated by the EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS working group to consider emerging evidence and changing epidemiological situations etc.

The most recent version of the advice document (published Version 6 in April 2022) titled: "*Advice for cruise ship operators for preparedness and response to an outbreak of COVID-19*" considers: minimizing the risk for introduction of COVID-19 onto the ship; education and raising passenger and crew awareness; supplies and equipment on board; management of a possible case and contacts; increased testing frequency of crew members in response to clusters; disembarkation; other health measures; record keeping in the medical log; active surveillance (case finding); cleaning and disinfection.

The EU HEALTHY GATEWAYS "*Advice for cruise ship operators for preparedness and response to an outbreak of COVID-19 (Version 6 – April 2022)*" can be found at the following link: <https://www.healthygateways.eu/Novel-coronavirus#Interim>