

ECDC Training resources and needs assessment visits

Presentation

The overall purpose of the country visits is to increase capacity in public health epidemiology in the Member States (MS).

In 2006, ECDC developed a training strategy that included an assessment of training needs and resources in EU MS. The training strategy is aiming at strengthening European capacity in training in field epidemiology through the EPIET training programme while strengthening MS capacity by organising in addition short modules focusing on specific training needs identified by Member States. The need expressed initially covered technical aspects of outbreak investigation and ECDC is organising 5 short courses in 2007 covering all EU MS. Additional short courses will be organized on areas identified through these consultations.

ECDC is currently developing a set of core competencies for epidemiologists working in National Surveillance Institutes. One objective of this set is to allow MS to assess which competencies are currently well covered by their training activities, and which one may benefit from a support from ECDC for strengthening.

Training assessment visits will be followed by expert meetings to further adjust the ECDC training strategy.

Objectives of the visit

The general objective of the visit is to carry out a joint review of the country's training needs and resources in the field of communicable disease surveillance and control in order to identify specific needs that ECDC could contribute to address.

Specific objective will include the identification of:

- Gaps in required epidemiological knowledge, skills and practices;
- Groups of public health professionals to be trained in epidemiology;
- Current training resources in public health epidemiology.

Organization of the visit

The support visit is a joint effort between the country's responsible person(s) for training in public health epidemiology and a visiting team of European experts. Therefore, the Member State needs to identify the senior responsible for training in public health epidemiology in the country. This person will prepare the visit with the external expert team representative and be asked to provide background information on training resources through a questionnaire, prior to the visit. He/she will act as the team leader and will be assisted by the visiting experts.

The visiting team will consist of up to three experts from:

- One or two from ECDC, including EPIET coordinators;
- One from EU training partners in public health epidemiology;

- One national expert in training from one of the EU MS national surveillance institutes.

The assessment visit will take at least 3 days. The programme will be jointly developed with the national focal point and may include:

- A general review of training in disease surveillance and control with the national competent authorities and institutions on day 1;
- Contact with key national training stakeholders: national FETP, Epiet supervisors, public health schools, universities on day 2;
- A debriefing of the visit to present preliminary recommendations and action points on day 3;

If relevant, sub national resources will be mapped, as well as the training needs to increase the capacity at the sub national level. This may involve visits by the team at this level.

A report with a list of recommended actions will be produced within 6 weeks after the visit.

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