



First EU Health Task Force webinar

17/06/2024

EU HEALTH TASK FORCE

**Supporting emergency preparedness and response
in the European Union and globally**

17/06/2024

Welcome by Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit Public Health Functions

Outline

- Scope and purpose of the EUHTF
- Testimonies from assignments
- Presentation of the EUHTF process - how to request support and how to partake in assignments
- Next EUHTF events
- Q&A



Scope and purpose of the EUHTF

Extended ECDC mandate – establishment of the EU Health Task Force (EUHTF)

- **Background:** shortcomings in EU mechanisms for managing threats, lack of readily available human resources for timely deployment
→ need for a stronger EU deployable work force
- **ECDC extended mandate** establishes the EU Health Task Force to provide effective **operational response and crisis preparedness support** to EU/EEA Member States (MS) and wider global health security
- ECDC creates and coordinates the EUHTF with the support and collaboration of the European Commission, EU/EEA MS and EU partners:
 - Flexible body, mobilised in different situations and under different mechanisms
 - Remote support as well as rapid in-country field deployment

Scope of activities supported by the EUHTF

Preparedness	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development/review of preparedness and response plans or guidelines/protocols related to specific technical areas • Testing of preparedness and response plans, or plans related to specific technical areas • Review of the implementation of preparedness and response actions • Support the implementation of capacity-building activities 	<p><i>Surveillance, public health laboratories, infection prevention and control, points of entry, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Simulation exercises</i></p> <p><i>In-Action Reviews (IAR), After-Action Reviews (AAR)</i></p> <p><i>Actions identified through other activities (e.g. country assessments) or identified capacity-building needs</i></p>
Response	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Threat detection and monitoring, including during outbreaks or following disasters • Outbreak investigation and emergency response • Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) • Operational research for evidence gathering in the context of an outbreak 	<p><i>Development, strengthening or operation of surveillance systems</i></p> <p><i>Epidemiological investigations, rapid threat and risk assessment, molecular epidemiology, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Develop and implement an incident management system, maintain and develop incident management tools</i></p> <p><i>Develop protocols, cross border studies, data analysis, support for collaboration with external partners/stakeholders including relevant EU initiatives, etc.</i></p>

EUHTF governance

EUHTF Advisory Group → Supports the operation of the EUHTF

Role	Advise and assist the ECDC Coordination Team on: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational, administrative and technical decisions • Annual priorities and work plan • Opportunities for international collaboration
Members	ECDC Coordination Team, 6 selected MS, EC DGs (SANTE, ECHO, HERA, RTD), EMA, WHO-EURO, GOARN, MSF, EUPHA
Timing	From January 2024, meetings twice a year, two-year rotations

As per routine ECDC governance mechanisms, the EUHTF reports annually to:

- ECDC Advisory Forum on the EUHTF scientific work
- ECDC Management Board on EUHTF activities (workplan and budget)

Testimonies from EUHTF assignments

Testimonies from EUHTF assignments

After-Action Reviews: AAR on COVID-19 pandemic, Slovenia

ECDC National Focal Point – national authority filing request for support in June 2023, assignment completed in March 2024

Emergency response: support for Gaza in Amman, Jordan

Two ECDC experts deployed from 21 March to 9 June to support UNRWA emergency response activities (surveillance and incident management) in Gaza

Outbreak-Related Research: iGAS - risk factors and surveillance strategy, Ireland

ECDC Fellow providing remote support since July 2023

Outbreak response: Cholera in Lusaka, Zambia

ECDC expert GOARN-deployed from 24 March to 27 April to support Ministry of Health/WHO cholera outbreak response

Presentation of the EUHTF process

Composition of the EUHTF

ECDC Coordination Team

Permanent entity coordinating EUHTF activities:

- Public health experts
- Emergency Operations Centre staff
- Administrative assistants

Tasks

- Coordination, including for deployments
- Development of administrative, readiness and mobilisation procedures
- Training and capacity-building activities
- Communication and coordination with partners

EUHTF Expert Pools

Experts mobilised for specific assignments from:

- ECDC staff
- ECDC Fellows (e.g. EPIET, EUPHEM)
- External Expert Pool (Experts from EU/EEA MS, international and non-profit organisations)

Tasks

- Field deployments / missions / remote support
- Community of Practice
 - Regular meetings, trainings, sharing experience, protocols, tools

Enhanced Emergency Capacity

Large mobilisations of the EUHTF in the event of the declaration of a public health emergency, under the European Commission and ECDC coordination, for response operations in the EU

EUHTF Expert Profiles

Some expert profiles relevant for the EUTHF Expert Pools:

- Public Health Epidemiologist
- Public Health Microbiologist
- Public Health Preparedness and Response expert
- Emergency operations centre (EOC) expert
- Infection prevention and control (IPC) expert
- Points of Entry/Border Health expert
- Risk communicator
- Statistician
- Data scientist

Note: Upon specific request for support, if a further expert profile is requested, ECDC will attempt to source support



EUHTF External Expert Pool

- Work in progress – step-by-step approach 😊
- The application link will be emailed to the target groups and ultimately published on the EUHTF webpage and ECDC social media channels
- Attend the next webinars to receive fresh news!
- Community of Practice and trainings



Requesting EUHTF support

Who can request support: national health authorities, European Commission, WHO/GOARN

Geographical scope: (in order of priority) EU/EEA countries, EU candidate countries, potential candidate countries, European Neighbourhood Policy countries and other partner countries


Criteria for EUHTF mobilisation:

- related to **emergency preparedness or response** work
- associated with an **infectious disease** or an event of **unknown origin**
- during **limited time**
- with a **clear public health impact** for EU/EEA or globally

Requesting EUHTF support on the EUHTF webpage

On the EUHTF webpage on the ECDC website → instructions to request support

How to request support

Competent authorities in EU/EEA countries (national coordinators and national focal points) can request EUHTF support through [EpiPulse](#)  by following three simple steps:

1. Log in with credentials
2. Go to 'Collaborate' tab (top right on the main menu)
3. Click 'Request EU Health Task Force support'

Countries outside of the EU/EEA and international organisations are welcome to request support by emailing the EUHTF Coordination Team at euhtf@ecdc.europa.eu.



<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/about-ecdc/what-we-do/partners-and-networks/support-and-services-eueea-countries/health-task-force>

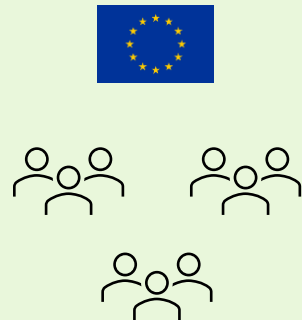
Process to mobilise EUHTF support and expertise



(a) Pre-established Expert Pools



(b) Ad Hoc communication through NFPs/NCs



Expression of interest

Expert selection process

1. ECDC Coordination Team selects experts based on competencies, availability and ToR
2. The requestor is informed of the choice and asked to endorse it

Assignment
EUHTF Response team at work

Closure

- Feedback from requestor
- Feedback from experts involved
- Debriefing with requestor, NFP/NC and EUHTF team
- Report/mission outcome
- Awareness and communication activities

Request for support

- Requestor submits a request for support (for EU/EEA MS, upon agreement with the NFP/NC)
 - Form to request support (EpiPulse)
 - Via email

Evaluate Request

- Scoping call with ECDC
- Decision to respond or not to the request
- Clarify scope, timing, location, outputs → Build ToR

Disseminating Request

- (a) Dissemination of ToR to the EUHTF Expert Pools
- (b) NFPs/NCs cascade ToR to national experts

Next EUHTF events

Upcoming events

- **Next webinar** → September 2024
- **Launch of EUHTF pools**
 - ECDC staff
 - External Expert Pool
- **2-day EUHTF training on designing SimEx** → 14-16 October 2024
- **2nd EUHTF Advisory Group meeting** → 18 November 2024
- **EUHTF stakeholders meeting** → 19 November 2024
- **ESCAIDE** → 20-22 November 2024

Topics for webinar & Questions for Stakeholder meeting



Q&A

Q&A

The floor is yours!

Contact us at EUHTF@ecdc.europa.eu

Thank you!