

BTSF – CRISIS AND FOODBORNE OUTBREAKS MANAGEMENT

Notification to NCPs

Organisation and implementation of training activities on preparedness and management of food-borne outbreaks in the EU under the "Better Training for Safer Food" initiative

Objectives of the proposed training and goals to be reached

A food crisis can have severe impacts on health, it may also cause social alarm and generate a negative impact on economic operators. It is therefore vital that, before it occurs, agreed procedures are in place to ensure optimal management, guarantee minimal damage and provide adequate and clear information to consumers and other stakeholders.

Experience has been gained from a number of multinational foodborne outbreaks, such as the 2011 STEC outbreak in sprouts. As pointed out by the lessons learned from this outbreak ("Commission Staff Working Document SANCO/13004/2011"), a crisis can have a high economic impact and, in order to reduce such impact, prevention plays an important role. Therefore, taking into account the Commission's priority on growth and employment, further to improve procedures for crisis management, more focus should also be given to outbreak preparedness, which would enable preventing or limiting the extent of an outbreak. Preparedness and response planning are essential elements for effective monitoring, early warning of and combating serious cross-border threats to health.

The present training will address issues listed above through the adoption of a practical approach, aimed to increase knowledge of Competent Authorities and field inspectors on preparedness and management on foodborne outbreaks, in order to increase the level of expertise and harmonisation.

It should further be considered that food-borne outbreak management, investigation and reporting require a multidisciplinary approach at local, national and, if multinational, European and international level and between public and veterinary/food safety authorities. The inter-sectoral approach includes food, feed and human health aspects and it is important to ensure the interoperability between human health and veterinary sectors for preparedness and response planning. **To facilitate this multidisciplinary collaboration, invited countries will be requested to select on the specific training sessions two officials coming respectively from the public health authorities and the veterinary/food safety authorities.**

General training objective

The training program will aim at disseminating best practices for the multidisciplinary management, investigation and reporting of food-borne outbreaks, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the Union.

Specific objectives:

- to stress the importance of preparedness for foodborne outbreaks and to improve outbreak preparedness;
- to further improve procedures for crisis management;
- to improve knowledge on tools and initiatives allowing to identify a risk more rapidly, to enable a faster and reliable exchange of data and information, to find the source more quickly and to facilitate the traceability investigation;
- to present experiences at national level concerning the improvement of preparedness and management of foodborne outbreaks, so as to facilitate the identification of best practices;
- to promote exchange of experience in order to increase the level of expertise and harmonisation in the management of foodborne outbreaks;
- to promote the establishment of effective surveillance systems for the early detection and prompt recognition of foodborne outbreaks;
- to strengthen investigation and reporting of national and multinational food-borne outbreaks;
- to disseminate best practices for communication in case of crisis.

The training will be addressed both to officials from public health authorities and veterinary/food safety authorities of the Member States, EEA/EFTA countries and European Union candidate and potential candidate countries involved in food-borne outbreak investigation.

Main topics that will be addressed:

- Foodborne outbreaks and crisis management: institutional and legal framework
- Lessons learned from previous outbreaks
- Elements of food- and waterborne disease (FWD) outbreaks
- Reporting: use of EWRS, RASFF and similar alert and reporting systems at national level
- ECDC - EFSA rapid outbreak assessments (ROA)
- Outbreak preparedness:
 - competent authorities and crisis networks, organisation of intersectoral preparedness exercises
 - contingency plans, development of outbreak management plan and risk communication plan
 - surveillance and early detection
- Outbreak investigation:
 - Identification, confirmation, diagnosis, rapid assessment and case-definition

- Develop hypothesis and analytical studies
- Tracing back/forward
- Molecular typing methods for FWD surveillance and outbreaks investigation
- Outbreak and crisis management, standard operational procedures, coordination
- Crisis and risk communication
- Awareness on outbreaks related to bio-terrorism: preparedness and action plans
- Awareness on fraudulent practices in the food sector: basic elements

Beside group works, simulation exercises and case studies that will be included for each topic, a complex case study on preparedness, management and communication in case of a food outbreak will be organised.

An assessment test will be carried out by all participants at the beginning and at the end of each workshop.

Training agenda

The training will be organised over 4 days and it will be designed in the following way: opening introductory session in the afternoon on the day of arrival, two full day sessions and a session in the morning on the final day.

The final agenda will be circulated in due course.

Courses, locations and allocations of seats

Ten four-day training courses will be delivered between December 2019 and June 2021.

The dates and locations of the training sessions are the following:

Training sessions: dates and locations

<i>Year</i>	<i>Training session</i>	<i>Dates</i>	<i>City</i>
2019	1	Tuesday 3 - Friday 6 December 2019	BARCELONA
2020	2	Tuesday 3 - Friday 6 March 2020	VOORSCHOTEN
	3	Tuesday 12 - Friday 15 May 2020	BOLOGNA
	4	Tuesday 16 - Friday 19 June 2020	VILNIUS
	5	Tuesday 15 - Friday 18 September 2020	VOORSCHOTEN
	6	Tuesday 6 - Friday 9 October 2020	BOLOGNA
2021	7	Tuesday 16 - Friday 19 February 2021	BARCELONA
	8	Tuesday 23 - Friday 26 March 2021	VOORSCHOTEN
	9	Tuesday 11 - Friday 14 May 2021	BOLOGNA
	10	Tuesday 15 - Friday 18 June 2021	VILNIUS

The attendance will be approximately 30 people for each session. As specified, the courses will be offered to officials from public health authorities and veterinary/food safety authorities of the Member States, EEA/EFTA countries and European Union candidate and potential candidate countries. **It's again highlighted that each invited country on the different training sessions will be requested to select two officials coming respectively from each of the above-mentioned authority.**

Quotas of allocated seats will be according to table below:

	Country	Suggested Allocation	Country	Suggested Allocation
Member States	Austria	8	Italy	20
	Belgium	8	Latvia	8
	Bulgaria	6	Lithuania	6
	Croatia	6	Luxembourg	2
	Cyprus	4	Malta	4
	Czech Republic	8	Netherlands	10
	Denmark	8	Poland	10
	Estonia	6	Portugal	8
	Finland	6	Romania	8
	France	20	Slovakia	6
	Germany	20	Slovenia	6
	Greece	8	Spain	20
	Hungary	8	Sweden	8
	Ireland	8	United Kingdom	20
	Total MS			260
Candidate Countries	Albania		2	
	Republic of North Macedonia		6	
	Montenegro		2	
	Serbia		6	
	Turkey		4	
Total Candidate			20	
Global participation Member States and Candidate Countries				280
EFTA Countries	Iceland		4	
	Norway		4	
	Switzerland		4	
	Liechtenstein		2	
Total EFTA			14	
Potential Candidate Countries	Bosnia and Herzegovina		4	
	Kosovo		2	
Total Potential			6	
TOTAL NUMBER OF PARTICIPANTS				300

In addition to the numbers indicated above, each country will be requested to indicate additional participants for a reserve list to be used should one or more countries not meet the proposed quota.

For logistic organisational reasons, it is kindly requested that names of participants shall be communicated at the latest within 30 days from each workshop. A reminder will be sent to NCPs before each event.

Participants will arrive at the training venues on Tuesday morning and training will commence on Tuesday afternoon (depending on travel connections, participants may be requested to arrive at the training venues on Monday evening). Return travel will be on Friday afternoon or Saturday morning according to flight connections.

Participants' profile

The proposal of OPERA will aim at disseminating best practices for the multidisciplinary management, investigation and reporting of food-borne outbreaks, improving knowledge of this complex area of work and ensuring consistent and high implementation standards across the Union. To ensure a properly targeted selection of participants, relevant selection criteria are enclosed here below.

Selection criteria for regular participants

Minimum requirements (participants who do not meet the minimum requirements should not be proposed for the training and should not be evaluated according to the selection criteria listed below)		
Minimum 3 years of professional experience in public health sector or official control on food safety		Yes/No
Competent authority responsible for investigation and/or management of foodborne outbreaks		Yes/No
Evaluation criteria		Max. score
1)	Professional experience in public health or official control on food safety <i>Scoring</i> less than 3 years = 0 points; ≥ 3 years = 5 points; 5 - 10 years = 10 points; > 10 years = 12.5 points	12.5
2)	Experience in foodborne outbreak investigation and/or management <i>Scoring</i> no experience = 0 points; < 2 years = 5 points; 2-5 years = 10 points; > 5 years = 12.5 points	12.5
3)	Experience in surveillance systems to early detect foodborne outbreaks <i>Scoring</i> no experience = 0 points; < 3 years = 5 points; 3-6 years = 10 points; > 6 years = 12.5 points)	12.5
4)	Experience in traceability investigation <i>Scoring</i> no experience = 0 points; < 2 years = 5 points; 2-4 years = 10 points; > 4 years = 12.5 points	12.5
Maximum total score		50

As concerns the Evaluation Criteria, these should be used as a tool to rank participants according to priority (where higher scoring indicates higher priority) but there is no expected minimum scoring to be met with.

Participants will be requested to commit themselves to disseminate the knowledge received via different dissemination methods, i.e. informing colleagues about the information received at the training, distributing (photocopying or sending via electronic way) the training materials among their colleagues, preparing informative articles in the professional national journals or preparing presentations based on the training materials for the staff of national Competent Authorities or other disseminating methods which could be appropriate to share the information received via the BTSF training. During the course participants will be provided with a training package to be used as supporting dissemination material.

Dissemination questionnaire

Between two to three months after the respective training session, participants will receive a standard questionnaire requesting information of dissemination activities performed by the participant after the workshop and details on differences in the approach adopted in day-to-day work after having undergone the training.

Self-assessment test

Furthermore, selected participants should be informed that the program will include an anonymous knowledge test to be carried out at the beginning and at the end of each training session in order to measure the impact of the training on the understanding of the taught subjects by participants.

Participants are expected to agree to carry out the above tests and to reply to the questionnaire.

Project Management

The project is managed by OPERA Srl.

Project Manager is Claudio BOMPARD.

Training Coordinator is Alberto MANCUSO.

Separate notifications will be sent to NCPs for each course and will contain the names and contact details of the Event Manager and Assistant Event Manager as also logistical details on the event.

All official communication between NCPs and the project will be maintained through the functional e-mail 20169609foodborneoutbreaks@btsftraining.com or phone to + 39 06 96042652.

Booking of flights and other logistical arrangements will be handled by OPERA staff. Contacts of relevant staff members involved will be supplied to the participants.

The project website is www.btsftraining.com/btsf-foodborne-outbreaks-management and will be regularly updated with details of forthcoming courses.