

EU HEALTH TASK FORCE

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

ECDC Coordination Team of the EUHTF

Welcome and introductions

EUHTF Coordination Team

Vicky Lefevre, Head of Unit

Thomas Hofmann, Head of Section

Ettore Severi, Group leader

Adriana Romani, public health expert

Daniel Cauchi, public health expert

Despina Pampaka, public health expert

Emma Löf, public health expert

Orla Condell, public health expert

Stefania De Angelis, public health expert

Katarina Johansson, administrative support



For any queries welcome to contact us at EUHTF@ecdc.europa.eu

Establishment of the EU Health Task Force



Background: Shortcomings in EU mechanisms for managing threats, lack of readily available human resources for timely deployment → ECDC amended mandate to establish and coordinate EUHTF in collaboration EC, EU/EEA MS

Vision: EUHTF as an **EU deployable public health work force** providing effective **operational response** and **crisis preparedness support** to EU/EEA MS and contributing to wider global health security;

- Country or crisis focused
- Flexible body, mobilised in different situations and under different mechanisms
- Work closely with the European Commission, close collaboration with international partners such as WHO GOARN
- Remote support as well as rapid in-country field deployment

Scope: Timely emergency response during outbreaks and crises
Communicable disease and diseases of unknown origin
Strengthening countries emergency preparedness



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 implementation of preparedness and response actions • Support implementation of capacity building activities 	<p><i>Surveillance, public health laboratories, infection prevention and control, EOC, points of entry, etc.</i></p> <p><i>Simulation exercise</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 tool(s)</i></p> <p><i>Develop protocols, cross border studies, data analysis, support for collaboration with external partners/stakeholder including relevant EU initiatives, etc.</i></p>

Composition of the EUHTF

ECDC Coordination Team

Permanent entity coordinating EUHTF activities

Tasks

- Coordination, including for deployments
- Development of administrative, readiness and mobilisation procedures
- Training and capacity building activities
- Communications and coordination with partners, including internal and external advisory bodies

EUHTF Expert Pools

Experts mobilised for specific assignments from:

- ECDC staff
- ECDC Fellows (e.g. EPIET, EUPHEM)
- **External Expert Pool** (Experts from EU/EEA MSs)

Tasks

- Field deployments/missions
- Remote technical support
- Community of Practice
 - Regular meetings, webinar
 - Sharing experience, protocols, tools
 - Participate in trainings

Enhanced Emergency Capacity

Large mobilisations of the EUHTF in the event of the declaration of a public health emergency, under the EC and ECDC coordination

EUHTF Expert Pools - Profiles

Initial expert's profiles 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



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

EUHTF Expert Pools: Step-wise expansion

EUHTF Expert Pools

Experts mobilised for specific assignments from:

- **ECDC Staff Pool** Operational
- **ECDC Fellows Pool** Operational
(e.g. EPIET, EUPHEM, PAE)
- **External Experts Pool**
(EU/EEA experts)
 - In progress. Step-wise approach.
 - 2024: ECDC fellows graduated in 2023&2024
 - 2025: Extend to **EAN members**
 - Later: Include further MS experts

EUHTF governance – Engaging with MS and partners

	EUHTF Advisory Group
Role	<p>Advise and assist <u>ECDC Coordination Team</u> on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Operational, administrative and technical decisions • Annual work plan priorities • Opportunities for international collaboration
Members	<p>ECDC Coordination Team, 6 selected MSs, EC DGs (SANTE, ECHO, HERA, RTD), EMA, WHO-EURO, GOARN, NGO, EUPHA</p>

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

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

Activities and achievements: EUHTF assignments to date



Since 2023, the EUHTF has received **26 requests for support**

- 23 -> Accepted
 - Status - ongoing (4), completed (17) and discontinued (2)
- 3 -> decided as outside of scope of EUHTF work



Experts engaged

- 15 experts deployed internationally
- Over 30 experts engaged in-person and remotely



Location

- 15 assignments in EU/EEA countries
- 6 assignments in third countries



Main technical area/topic

- Emergency/Outbreak response - 7
- Mass gathering - 2
- Rapid risk assessment - 1
- After-action review - 4
- Capacity building - 4
- Simulation exercise - 2
- Preparedness and response plan – 2
- Outbreak related research - 1

EUHTF Assignments within the EU/EEA



EUHTF Assignments outside of the EU/EEA, in collaboration with partners

DRC: Support to **mpox response**, through GOARN, DG ECHO and DG INTPA

- Participation in surveillance working group, contribution to data management and analysis for evidence-based decision-making
- Engaged 10 experts, providing continuous support from July-Dec 2024

In country field deployments

Remote support

ECDC Staff

ECDC Fellows

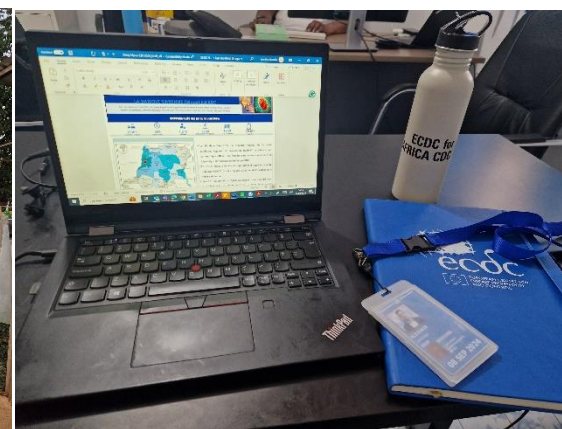
External Expert (MS)



European Union
Civil Protection and
Humanitarian Aid



Collaboration and
coordination with **other
institutions and
partners** in the field is
continuous



EUHTF Assignments outside of the EU/EEA, in collaboration with partners

Ukraine: Rapid Risk Assessment related to a flooding event

Israel and occupied Palestinian Territories: Response to infectious disease events associated with the escalation of violence, through GOARN and DG ECHO (in support of UNRWA HQ in Jordan)

Zambia: Response to cholera, through GOARN and DG INTPA to WHO

Rwanda: Response to Marburg virus disease, with DG ECHO through UCPM



Collaboration and coordination with **other institutions and partners** in the field is continuous



Synergies with other operational institutions



Collaboration and coordination
with **institutions and partners**
in the field



Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network (GOARN)


- Member of the EUHTF Advisory Group
- ECDC is member of the GOARN Steering Committee
- Support GOARN initiatives (e.g., MEAL, RRML, OR, training, Opps. call)
- Upon GOARN request for assistance, the EUHTF can rapidly identify EUHTF experts to assist WHO or other UN organisations – targeted approach
- EUHTF can arrange deployments under the leadership of WHO/GOARN or of the organisation requesting assistance
- Though self-funding or EU partners (e.g. DG ECHO, DG INTPA) EUHTF funds ECDC deployments with GOARN

DG for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid (DG ECHO)

- Member of the EUHTF Advisory Group
- Service level agreement between ECDC and DG ECHO, to extend to external experts
- Ensuring logistical support and safety & security to EUHTF deployed experts
- Deployment mechanisms include:
 - Union Civil Protection Mechanism (UCPM)
 - European Humanitarian Response Capacity (EHRC)
 - RescEU (in progress)
- Providing public health expertise to UCPM teams, European External Action Service, ECHO field offices or to other partner agencies

Requesting an assignment with the EUHTF

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>



Criteria for request for support to the EUHTF

Who?



GOARN
Global Outbreak Alert and Response Network



Other
organisations

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

Focus? One country or one crisis, emergency preparedness or response, infectious diseases or outbreaks of unknown origin

Technical support for an **ad hoc preparedness** activity that is country/setting specific and addresses a specific technical gap

OR

Technical support for an **emergency, outbreak response**, focused on investigation, prevention and control activities

Time-limited support
OR
Requiring part-time support over medium-term

+

Clear public health impact for the EU/EEA or globally

Process to mobilise EUHTF support and expertise

Receive request

How to request support

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Evaluate Request

- Scoping call ECDC/requestor



- Clear justification
- Alternative solution if available



- Build request: clarify scope, timing, location, output
- Build ToR

Building the Response Team

A. Expert pools



B. No profile identified



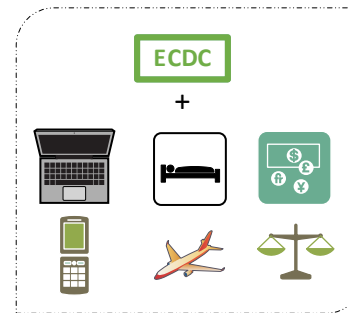
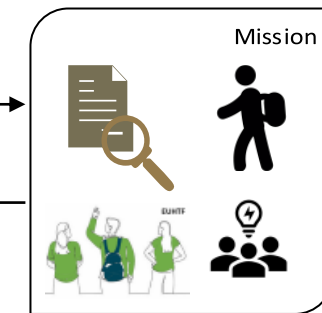
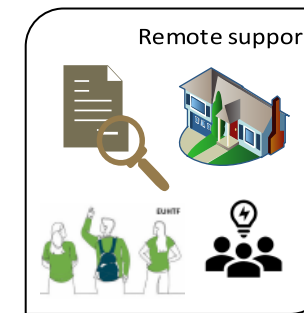
Networks

Expression of interest

Expert selection process

- ECDC Coordination Team selects experts based on competencies and ToRs
- MS requesting support is informed and endorsement is requested

Assignment



Closure of support

- Report/mission outcome
- Debriefing
- Feedback from requestor
- Feedback from expert
- Awareness and communication activities

COMPLETED

EUHTF expert pool – selection for an assignment

Based on the **specific TORs** for the assignment

- Availability at required time
- Technical expertise/competences
- Language
- Other requirements e.g. HEAT training.

Selection takes additional factors into account, to establish a balanced response team e.g. level of seniority

EUHTF expert pools – collaboration and benefits

What collaboration with experts?

- Field or remote work
- Deployments always with an ECDC staff
- Deployment **logistical support** (i.e., travel, accommodation, insurance, equipment, per diem)
- **Continuous contact** and follow up; regular calls, reports and feedback
- Supervision and **technical support**
- Debrief to learn from what went well and challenges

What benefits does participation offer?

- **Practical learning** opportunity for supporting expert
- Community of practice: **networking** with public health professions in similar fields
- Opportunity to participate in **trainings**

Note: Assignment associated costs are paid but engaged experts are not enumerated



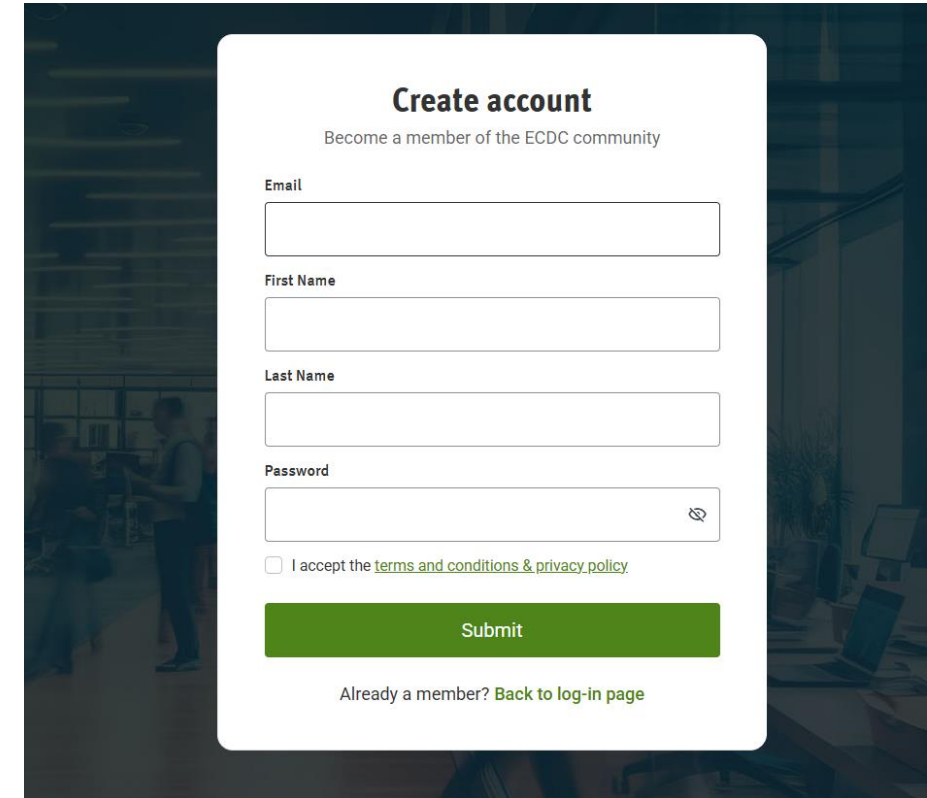
Registering in the EUHTF External Expert Pool

Registration here:

<https://expertpool.euhtf.ecdc.europa.eu/>

Necessary info

- Demographics
- Expertise
- Areas of competence
- Languages
- CV
- Consent to receive communications and information from the EUHTF

A screenshot of the 'Create account' form on the EUHTF External Expert Pool website. The form is white with a green 'Submit' button. It includes fields for Email, First Name, Last Name, and Password. Below the password field is a checkbox for accepting terms and conditions. The background of the form is a dark, blurred image of a modern office interior with people working at desks.

Create account
Become a member of the ECDC community

Email

First Name

Last Name

Password

☐ I accept the [terms and conditions & privacy policy](#)

Submit

Already a member? [Back to log-in page](#)

Upcoming trainings

GOARN Tier 2.0 Outbreak Response Scenario Training

Dates: 07-13 Sept 2025 (planned to be repeated annually)

Format: Simulation of an outbreak, three multi-disciplinary teams of eight participants

Location: Stockholm - ECDC, simulated field location

Trainees: 24 trainees from EUHTF External Exp Pool and MSs

Facilitators: 15 to cover different characters

Expression of interest: Email will be sent to EUHTF External Expert Pool next week

Seeking facilitators – MS individuals who have previously completed the Tier 2.0 training as participants or facilitators -> scenario has changed!

EUHTF training on Outbreak Investigation tools

Dates: Tentatively 7-9 October

Topic: Tools for outbreak investigations - final agenda TBD

- Data management and analysis (R)

Location: Stockholm, ECDC

Trainees: EUHTF Expert Pools and MS assigned

Q & A



**Looking forward to your participation in
the EUHTF Expert pool**

Thank you

For any question pls email us at
euhtf@ecdc.europa.eu