



SHARP

Strengthened International HeAlth
Regulations & Preparedness in the EU

Midterm External Evaluation Report

**This report was prepared by a subcontractor
as requested by the SHARP Joint Action and in
accordance with a Terms of Reference (ToR).**

M1-M24

Subcontractor:

University of Thessaly, School of Health Sciences, Faculty of Medicine,
Laboratory of Hygiene and Epidemiology, Larissa, Greece

External Evaluation team

University of Thessaly, School of Health Sciences,
Faculty of Medicine, Laboratory of Hygiene and Epidemiology,
Larissa, Greece

Dimitra Kafetsouli

Elina Kostara

Eva Gravani

Eleni Hatzivasiliou

Nikos Bitsolas

Babara Mouchtouti

Christos Hadjichristodoulou

Table of Contents

1. Executive summary: overview and main findings	4
2. Scope and objectives of midterm external evaluation	7
3. Evaluation Methodology and Methods	9
3.1 Overview	9
3.2 Evaluation tools and resources	10
3.2.1 Review of deliverables, milestones and indicators	10
3.2.2 Internal Evaluation questionnaires (target group representatives)	13
3.2.3 In-depth interview with all WP leaders	14
3.2.4 Participation in selected meetings	14
3.2.5 Development of a tool to monitor results and outcomes.	15
4. External Evaluation Findings	18
4.1 Milestones/Deliverables/Indicators	18
4.2 Interviews with WP leaders and/or co-leaders results	40
5. Discussion: critical analysis of findings against evaluation questions	49
6. Recommendations based on evaluation findings	53
ANNEX 1	54
ANNEX 2	56

1. Executive summary: overview and main findings

Objectives

This report is deliverable D3.4 from Work Package 3 (WP3), Evaluation of the action. It was conducted by the Laboratory of Hygiene and Epidemiology, University of Thessaly, Greece, subcontractors to WP3 leader-NPHO/EODY.

The purpose of the midterm external evaluation is to ensure the objectiveness in the evaluation process, determine the relevance, effectiveness, outcome and impact (limited at this phase) of the JA, assess the completeness of the JA activities, examine whether the stated objectives and related indicators have been achieved and to provide proposals supporting the sustainability plan of the JA.

This report includes the findings and conclusions as a response to the questions related to the external evaluation objectives, in addition to recommendations for improvement in some aspects of the ongoing JA as necessary. The period under evaluation in this report is M1-M24 of the JA.

Methodology

Documents produced by the JA were primarily used to monitor and assess the deliverables and milestones completeness and time schedule compliance as well as the progress of WPs specific indicators. The evaluation surveys (target groups representatives) conducted for events, were used to examine the relevance and effect of workshops and training in practice.

Seven interviews were organised during which all WPs were represented by at least one leader or co-leader. The participants were asked to provide their view on challenges faced up to M24 of the JA, collaboration with other WPs, support expectations from coordination for the remainder of the JA and recommendations on

the sustainability of the JA deliverables. The External Evaluation team has also participated in selected meetings.

Results

All deliverables have been produced, the expected milestones have been achieved and the specific indicators (process/output) for each WP are met or are under progress in the time expected according to Amendment 3 of the Grand agreement. Any delays on the above were justified primarily either by the COVID 19 related circumstances or the delayed start of the JA.

The relevance and effect of workshops and training in practice were evaluated as very good overall. The participants' expectations in these events were met and the participation was high. The events' material and organisation were also scored as very good overall with some difficulties noted mostly related to technical issues at online events. There was an apparent compromise on group meetings, networking and plenary discussions during online events compared to face-to-face ones.

All interviewees identified challenges related to the COVID 19 pandemic in unprecedented circumstances. These included, limited staff availability both in terms of time and numbers and the subsequent involvement of new people. Also, the pandemic waves reached different countries at different times which complicated coordination between partners involved in common projects. The travel restrictions imposed had a direct effect on the transport of sensitive biological materials and demanded all workshops, activities, training and meetings to be conducted remotely. Challenges not related to the COVID 19 pandemic were also identified. Several participants considered the JA very large with a wide scope of work and a large number of partners and affiliated entities from different sectors. Some of the tasks were described as complicated and not entirely clear for partners not directly involved in them. Collaboration between WPs was described as "very good" by most

interviewees despite the delays and staff shortage. The SHARP website and Steering committee meetings were identified as the most preferred method of communication between partners. All interviewees agreed that the administrative support by THL has been excellent despite the volume of correspondence and the size of the JA. A number of participants commented on the lack of sufficient scientific/technical support especially because of the changes imposed to the JA original plan due to COVID 19 pandemic. The SHARP JA's overall progress and performance were considered satisfactory (mean score of 3/5 on a scale of 1 to 5).

Conclusions

Months 1 to 24 of the SHARP JA, were greatly impacted by the COVID 19 pandemic related circumstances. Most of the people involved in the JA tasks assigned are heavily involved in their regional/national COVID 19 response. As a consequence, a lot of the events and tasks originally scheduled up to M24 had to be postponed to later dates. Despite the ongoing challenges, including the ones unrelated to COVID 19 pandemic, more actions and events have taken place beyond M24, indicating that the JA has absorbed the initial shock of the pandemic and all tasks and teams have readjusted and are proceeding in an effective and complementary way.

Recommendations for the remaining of the project based on the External Evaluation findings, include support for WPs mostly affected by the pandemic, regular newsletters, forums with common topics of concern, smaller meetings between partners with similar scope of work and further involvement and support on a technical/scientific level of administration.

2. Scope and objectives of midterm external evaluation

This report is deliverable D3.4 from Work Package 3 (WP3), Evaluation of the action.

It is conducted by the Laboratory of Hygiene and Epidemiology, University of Thessaly, Greece, subcontractors to WP3 leader -NPHO/EODY.

The period under evaluation in the current report is M1-M24 (April 2019- March 2021) of the SHARP joint action (JA) implementation.

The external evaluation will focus on topics not covered by the internal evaluation which is led by NPHO/EODY.

The purpose of the external evaluation is to:

- Ensure the objectiveness in the evaluation process
- Determine the relevance, effectiveness, outcome and impact of the JA activities results in relation to the pre-defined JA objectives.
- Assess the implementation of JA activities in terms of completeness
- Examine whether the stated objectives and related indicators have been achieved, measuring the level of the target groups satisfaction through quantitative and qualitative methods.
- Provide proposals supporting the sustainability plan of the JA and possible expansion

The current external evaluation also serves as a checking point through midterm and final external evaluation and ensures adequate background for the final evaluation in all domains including also efficiency, utility, coherence, complementarity, coordination and additionality.

Only limited evaluation of the impact of the joint action is possible during this phase and this will be assessed in more depth during the final external evaluation cycle. However, it is quite likely that real impact can be realised one or more years after the project ends.

This report includes the findings and conclusions as a response to the questions related to the objectives above in addition to recommendations for improvement in some aspects of the ongoing JA as necessary.

The report is comprised of the following sections:

1. Executive summary: overview of main findings
2. Objectives of the SHARP external evaluation
3. Evaluation Methodology and Methods
4. Evaluation findings
5. Discussion: critical analysis of findings against evaluation questions
6. Recommendations based on evaluation findings.

3. Evaluation Methodology and Methods

3.1 Overview

The external evaluation process consists of two individual cycles:

- A: M26 (May 2021)- M32 (November 2021) (Midterm external evaluation)
- B: 6 months before the end of the joint action (Final external evaluation)

Cycle (A) dates are according to amendment 3 of the JA agreement.

Each cycle includes the following phases:

Phase 1: Desk phase

During this phase, the logic of the project was analyzed. The objectives achieved in the revised period of the JA were examined. A meeting with the Steering committee took place in September 2021 during which the external evaluation plan was presented and the expected date of the midterm report was agreed. The finalized work plan was also presented during the Administrative meeting of the 3rd Partnership Forum meeting on the 23rd of November 2021 (Annex 1)

Phase 2: Field phase

The work plan was implemented. Data relating to the qualitative and quantitative evaluation (Surveys) for actions during the revised period were collected and analyzed. Interviews were conducted with representatives (leaders and/or co-leaders) from all Work Packages. The deliverables were collected and reviewed. The milestones were discussed and evaluated in terms of completeness and it was determined whether the relevant indicators were met.

Phase 3: Synthesis

The midterm external evaluation report (Deliverable 3.4) is prepared. It includes the findings and conclusions as a response to the questions asked, as well as an overall

assessment of the project. It also includes recommendations for improvement in some aspects of the JA. A draft of the report has been agreed to be sent to the Steering committee of the JA four weeks before the finalized report. Any comments or recommendations from the Steering committee will be included where applicable, after which it will be finalized and communicated.

Phase 4: Dissemination and follow up

The finalized report will be disseminated to the relevant project stakeholders.

External evaluation deliverables and milestones

The external evaluation team was mobilized during M26 as per Milestone 11(MS11) of WP3.

The expected deliverable is the current report (D3.4) and it covers the first 24 months of the joint action. It has been agreed with the WP3 leaders and the Steering committee to be finalized and disseminated by the end of M34.

3.2 Evaluation tools and resources

3.2.1 Review of deliverables, milestones and indicators

The deliverables and milestones for each WP up to M24, were assessed and evaluated in terms of completeness and compliance with the time schedule instructed by the 3rd amendment of the Grand agreement. During the assessment, it was also determined whether the related indicators were met.

Resources used to verify if milestones and deliverables of each WP were completed included documents produced by the project: Work packages individual internal progress Reports, Periodic Technical Report, Meeting Minutes, Presentations and the finalised deliverables. Due to the COVID 19 ongoing circumstances, the Midterm Internal Evaluation report was not available and therefore was not used as a

resource. However, all evaluation activities conducted by WP3, including pre-post survey/evaluation results, were shared with the External Evaluation team and were taken into consideration when drafting this document.

WP	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
MS	1,2,3,4	6,7,8	9,10,11	13	16,18	22	24	27	30,31	
D	1.1	2.1, 2.2	3.1, 3.2	4.1,	5.1	6.1		8.1	9.1	

Table of expected deliverables and milestones up to M24 for each WP

List of deliverables:

Deliverable 1.1: Interim report

Deliverable 2.1: Leaflet

Deliverable 2.2: Website

Deliverable 3.1: Evaluation plan

Deliverable 4.1: Guidance on Sustainability

Deliverable 5.1: WP5 work plan

Deliverable 6.1: Review of planning and evaluation tools: Literature review

Deliverable 8.1: Report on training needs

Deliverable 9.1: Fact-finding report

List of Milestones:

Milestone 1: Kick-off meeting

Milestone 2: Establishment of Steering Committee and Advisory Board

Milestone 3: Consortium agreement

- Milestone 4: Partnership Forums
- Milestone 6: Stakeholder analysis
- Milestone 7: Communications plan
- Milestone 8: Communication channel strategy
- Milestone 9: Planning meetings with WP leads
- Milestone 10: Evaluation plan
- Milestone 11: External evaluation mobilised
- Milestone 13: Workshop on guidance tool
- Milestone 16: WP5 workshop 1
- Milestone 18: WP5 workshop 2
- Milestone 22: WP6 workshops conducted
- Milestone 24: Implementation of EQAEs
- Milestone 27: Basic and advanced training conducted
- Milestone 30: WP9 joint meeting with partners and other WPs
- Milestone 31: Stakeholder consultation

List of Indicators:

During the evaluation, it was determined whether the agreed indicators relating to the first 24 months of the JA (according to amendment 3 of the Grant Agreement, Annex 1) have been achieved. This included process and output indicators. Indicators' progress is presented in detail under each Work Package in section 4. External Evaluation Findings.

3.2.2 Internal Evaluation questionnaires (target group representatives)

During the first 24 months of the JA, the following events were completed:

WP1:

Thematic meeting on preparedness and IHR: One Health Security Conference (October 2019, Helsinki)

WP5:

Workshop 1: IHR Core Capacity Strengthening and Assessment (January 2020, Riga)

Workshop 2: Risk Communication (March 2021, online)

WP6:

Multisectoral collaboration (April 2020, Digital)

WP8:

1st module of Basic training (June and July 2020, online)

Evaluation surveys have been conducted for all the events. (Annex 2)

3.2.3 In-depth interview with all WP leaders

In depth online interviews have been organized and conducted with WP leads and co-leads representatives. The interviews took place between November and December 2021. All leads and co-leads were invited to participate and whilst it was not possible for everyone to attend at the preferred dates and times, all WP were represented by at least 1 lead or co-lead. Prior to the arranged interview meetings, an invitation was disseminated (Annex 1), which also included the main topics of discussion during the interview as discussed and agreed during the 11th Steering Committee meeting on the 27th of September 2021.

3.2.4 Participation in selected meetings

The External Evaluation team participated in the 11th Steering committee meeting in September 2021. During the meeting, the External evaluation team was presented and the External Evaluation plan was discussed.

The External evaluation plan was also presented in more detail during the Administrative meeting of the 3rd Partnership Forum in November 2021. The External Evaluation team was also invited and attended the main 3rd Partnership Forum meeting.

3.2.5 Development of a tool to monitor results and outcomes.

The following tables were developed and updated in collaboration with the Internal Evaluation team

Deliverables

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	WP Number	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date
D1.1	Interim report	WP1	1-THL	Report	Public	18	18	15/JAN/2021	04/MAR/2021
D2.1	Leaflet	WP2	24-DH	Report	Public	3	3	22/JAN/2020	25/NOV/2020
D2.2	Website	WP2	24-DH	Websites Patent filing etc.	Public	4	4	19/DEC/2019	25/NOV/2020
D3.1	Evaluation plan	WP3	11-EODY	Report	Public	3	3	26/NOV/2019	25/NOV/2020
D4.1	Guidance on sustainability	WP4	10-MOH-FR	Report	Public	7	7	05/FEB/2020	25/NOV/2020
D5.1	WP5 work plan	WP5	23-FOHM	Report	Public	5	5	29/OCT/2019	25/NOV/2020 (accepted by CHAFEA)
D6.1	Review of planning and evaluation tools	WP6	16-RIVM	Report	Public	21	21	04/JAN/2021	
D8.1	Report on training needs	WP8	20-IPHS	Report	Public	21	21	28/MAY/2021	
D9.1	Fact-finding report	WP9	24-DHS	Report	Public	16	16	29/JUN/2021	

Milestones

Milestone Number	Milestone Title	WP Number	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status
MS1	Kick-off meeting	WP1	1-THL	2	2	Kick-off meeting of the Joint action for all partners	Achieved: 03/JUL/2019
MS2	Establishment of Steering Committee and Advisory Board	WP1	1-THL	2	2	The SC and AB will be officially established	Achieved: 03/JUL/2019
MS3	Consortium agreement	WP1	1-THL	4	4	Consortium agreement between all partners of the Joint action	Achieved: 27/APR/2020
MS4	Partnership Forums	WP1	1-THL	24	31	Two Partnership forums will be organised: 1 st in M12 and 2 nd M31	Achieved 10/JUN/2020 and 22-23/NOV/2021
MS6	Stakeholder analysis	WP2	24-DH	4	4	Stakeholder analysis for targeting the dissemination activities	Achieved: 05/JUL/2021 9
MS7	Communications plan	WP2	24-DH	9	9	Communications plan including key messages	Achieved: 11/NOV/2019
MS8	Communication channel strategy	WP2	24-DH	9	9	Channel strategy prepared including social media	Achieved: 11/NOV/2019
MS9	Planning meetings with WP leads	WP3	11-EODY	2	2	Meeting with all WP leads to plan evaluation (in connection with the kick-off meeting)	Achieved: 04/JUL/2019
MS10	Evaluation plan	WP3	11-EODY	3	3	Evaluation plan ready and evaluation tool available	Achieved: 25/NOV/2019
MS11	External evaluation mobilised	WP3	11-EODY	24	24	External evaluation procured and the external evaluation team is mobilized	Achieved: 3/MAY/2021
MS13	Workshop on guidance tool	WP4	10-MOH-FR	7	7	A workshop will be organized with the SC members to draft the guidance on sustainability	Achieved: 16/OCT/2019
MS16	WP5 workshop 1	WP5	23-FOHM	10	10	WP5 workshop1 organised	Achieved: 30/JAN/2020
MS18	WP5 workshop2	WP5	23-FOHM	22	22	WP5 workshop 2 organised	Achieved: 22/MAR/2021
MS22	WP6 workshops conducted	WP6	16-RIVM	27	45	4 workshops conducted	Under progress

MS24	Implementat ion of EQAEs	WP7	2-RKI	35	46	Country-specific all hazards multisectoral preparedness and response plans tested	Under progress
MS27	Training conducted Basic and advanced training conducted	WP8	2-IPHS	35	47	2 basic and 3 advanced workshops plus several laboratory workshops organised	Under progress
MS30	WP9 joint meeting with partners and other WPs	WP9	24-DH	2	2	Joint meeting with all partners and other relevant WPs	Achieved: 23/OCT/2019
MS31	Stakeholder consultation	WP9	24-DH	13	13	Stakeholder consultation and gap- analysis	Achieved: 25/MAR/2021

4. External Evaluation Findings

4.1 Milestones/Deliverables/Indicators

4.1.1 WP1: Coordination

Objectives: To coordinate the Joint Action through well-functioning management which includes timely reporting, budget control and support for successful implementation.

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	WP Number	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D1.1	Interim report	WP1	1-THL	Report	Public	18	18	15/JAN/2021	04/MAR/2021	Deadline extension to M21 agreed with CHAFEA

D1.1: Interim Report: An extensive Periodic Technical Report, encompassing M1-M18, has been produced by the Finnish Institute for Health and Welfare (THL). It includes a detailed description of the activities carried out by the beneficiaries and an overview of the progress as well as project results compared to the objectives of the action in line with the structure of Annex 1 to the Grant Agreement. The Report was received in M22 in agreement with CHAFEA for an extension of the deadline to the 15th of January 2021.

Expected Milestones

Milestone number	Milestone Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS1	Kick-off meeting	1-THL	2	2	Kick-off meeting of the Joint action for all partners	Achieved: 03/JUL/2019 M4	Delay due to project start date delayed
MS2	Establishment of Steering Committee and Advisory Board	1-THL	2	2	The SC and AB will be officially established	Achieved: 03/JUL/2019 M4	Delay due to project start date delayed
MS3	Consortium agreement	1-THL	4	4	Consortium agreement between all partners of the Joint action	Achieved: 27/APR/2020 M13	Delay due to project start date delayed and COVID 19
MS4	Partnership Forums	1-THL	24	31	Two Partnership forums will be organised: 1 st in M12 and 2 nd M31	Achieved 10/JUN/2020M15 and 22-23/NOV 2021	As scheduled

MS1: The Kick-off meeting was organized on the 2nd and 3rd of July 2019 (M4) in Vilnius, Lithuania. The agenda included ECDC and WHO EURO presentations as well as presentations of the 10 work packages. The kick-off meeting was attended by 68 participants and the administrative meeting by 48 participants.

MS2: The 1st Steering committee meeting was organized on the 27th and the 28th of June 2019 (M3) in Luxembourg. The meeting included presentations from DG SANTE and ECDC. All WPs presented their plans and WP1 presented draft Terms of Reference for the SC and the Advisory Board. This meeting represents the active start of the project.

The 1st Advisory Board meeting was organized in Vilnius, Lithuania on the 3rd of July 2019 (M4). The meeting was attended by twenty-two participants (one of them over the phone).

MS3: The initial draft of the consortium agreement was sent to the Steering committee on the 2nd of October 2019 (M7) and the final version was approved in April 2020 (M13).

MS4: The project includes four Partnership Forums: 1st Kick-off, 2nd Forum, 3rd Forum and the Closing conference as the 4th. This milestone refers to the 2nd and 3rd Partnership Forum. The 2nd Partnership Forum was organized as an online, half-day session on the 10th of June 2020 (M15). The 3rd Partnership Forum was organized on 22-23 November 2021 online: General meeting on the 1st day and the Administrative meeting on the 2nd day.

In addition, WP1 has also organized the following meetings and events:

Thematic meeting on preparedness and IHR: One Health Security Conference: The event was organized on the 15th and 16th of October 2019 in Helsinki, Finland. It was attended by 106 participants. A feedback survey was conducted revealing a high overall satisfaction from the event. 97% of the participants reported that they learned something new (Annex 2)

2nd Advisory Board meeting (in connection with the One Health Security Conference): The meeting was organized on the 16th of October 2019 in Helsinki, Finland. It was attended by 20 participants.

2nd Steering Committee meeting: Luxembourg, 27-28 June 2019. Attended by 27 participants.

3rd Steering Committee meeting (in conjunction with the 2nd Advisory Board meeting): Helsinki, 16 October 2019. Attended by 20 participants.

4th Steering Committee meeting: Skype meeting, 9 December 2019. Attended by 25 participants.

5th Steering Committee meeting: Skype meeting, 9 March 2020. Attended by 24 participants.

6th Steering Committee meeting: Online meeting, 20 May 2020. Attended by 25 participants.

7th Steering Committee meeting: Skype meeting, 29 September 2020. Attended by 23 participants.

8th Steering Committee meeting: Online meeting, 20 January 2021. Attended by 31 participants.

4.1.2 WP2: Communication and dissemination

Objectives: To achieve efficient and effective visibility, awareness and acceptance of the project to internal and external stakeholders.

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D2.1	Leaflet	24-DH	Report	Public	3	3	22/JAN/2020 M11	25/NOV/2020	Delay due to WP2 source capacity
D2.2	Website	24-DH	Websites Patent filing, etc.	Public	4	4	19/DEC/2019 M9	25/NOV/2020	

D2.1: Leaflet: A leaflet has been designed and submitted in January 2020 (M10). It includes an overview of the SHARP JA, its objectives and the participating entities. The delay in D2.1 progress was due to WP2 source capacity.

D2.2: Website: A SHARP JA dedicated website has been designed and published originally in October 2019 (M7) and the related deliverable was submitted in December 2019 (M9). It provides information about any former or upcoming activities related to the project. The content of the website will be updated continuously as and when required.

Expected Milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS6	Stakeholder analysis	24-DH	4	4	Stakeholder analysis for targeting the dissemination activities	Achieved 05/JUL/2019 M4	Discussion at 2 nd AB meeting
MS7	Communications plan	24-DH	9	9	Communications plan including key messages	Achieved 11/NOV/2019 M8	As scheduled
MS8	Communication channel strategy	24-DH	9	9	Channel strategy prepared including social media	Achieved 11/NOV/2019 M8	As scheduled

MS6: Stakeholder Analysis was implemented on the 5th of July 2019 (M4). The stakeholder mapping was completed in July 2019 as part of the communication planning workshop in Vilnius.

MS7: The Communication plan was completed and shared with relevant partners in November 2019 (M8)

MS8: Communication channel strategy completed and submitted in November 2019 (M8).

It was agreed that no evaluation surveys will be conducted during the kick-off meeting, including the communication planning workshop (Vilnius, July 2019).

WP2 has collaborated with WP3 to include the following questions on Communication and Dissemination in the WP5 Workshop 1 post survey:

- Which of the following channels is most useful to the key audiences for receiving information about the Joint Action?
- What do you think could be done to improve the offering of WP2-Communication and Dissemination-to the rest of the Joint Action?

The vast majority (66.67%) identified conferences and SHARP JA website for the 1st question.

A wish to provide examples of good practices for relevant crisis/risk communication was expressed for the 2nd question.

The full results can be found in post-survey WP5 Workshop1, Annex 2.

4.1.3 WP3: Evaluation of the action

Objectives: To perform a systematic and objective assessment of the relevance, efficiency, effectiveness, impact, economic and financial viability, as well as sustainability of the project in the context of its objectives.

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D3.1	Evaluation plan	11-EODY	Report	Public	3	3	26/NOV/2019 M8	25/NOV/2020	Delay due to project start date delayed

D3.1: Evaluation plan: A detailed plan has been completed and submitted in November 2019 (M8). The D3.1 submission date was postponed due to delay in the JA initiation.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	Milestone Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS9	Planning meetings with WP leads	11-EODY	2	2	Meeting with all WP leads to plan evaluation (in connection with the kick-off meeting)	Achieved: 04/JUL/2019 M4	Delay due to project start date delayed
MS10	Evaluation plan	11-EODY	3	3	Evaluation plan ready and evaluation tool available	Achieved: 25/NOV/2019 M8	Delay due to project start date delayed
MS11	External evaluation mobilised	11-EODY	24	24	External evaluation procured and the external evaluation team is mobilized	Achieved: MAY/2021 M26	Delay due to Covid 19

MS9: Implemented in M4. Interviews with most WP leaders were conducted in connection with the kick-off meeting in Vilnius (July 2019). The remaining interviews were conducted through Skype at a later date.

MS10: Initially discussed at the 3rd Steering Committee meeting in October 2019 in Helsinki (M7). Finalised and implemented in M8.

MS11: The external evaluation team (University of Thessaly) was mobilized in May 2021 (M26)

4.1.4 WP4: Integration in National Policies and Sustainability

Objectives: The specific objective of this WP is to integrate best practices on IHR and preparedness in national policies and improve cooperation mechanisms between EU Member states.

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D4.1	Guidance on sustainability	10-MOH-FR	Report	Public	7	7	05/FEB/2020 M11	25/NOV/2020	Delay?

D4.1: A 'Guidance on sustainability' tool has been produced and submitted in February 2020 (M11). The draft guidance tool was originally presented during the 2nd Advisory Board meeting (16 of October, Helsinki). It had been agreed that the upgraded tool would be sent to WP5 in order to be field used and test its adequacy and usefulness. However, the plan was interrupted by the COVID 19 pandemic. This document is expected to be revised and updated during the whole duration of the JA.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS13	Workshop on guidance tool	10-MOH-FR	7	7	A workshop will be organized with the SC members to draft the guidance on sustainability	Achieved: 16/OCT/2019 M7	As scheduled. Discussion at the 2 nd AB meeting

MS13: Instead of a workshop, the guidance tool was presented and discussed at the 2nd Advisory Board meeting in Helsinki on the 16th of October 2019 (M7).

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Priority outcomes and recommendations of the JA are selected	Minimum 3 priority outcomes and recommendations are selected and reported (M39)	
Output Indicator(s)	Target	
SHARP sustainability plan is developed	One generic sustainability plan is presented to the Steering Committee and Advisory Board for validation (M46)	
Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)	Target	
Evidence-based best outcomes and recommendations on IHR implementation are integrated into EU/ national /regional policies and mechanisms	Minimum 2 priority outcomes and recommendations are integrated into national policies (M47)	

4.1.5 WP5: IHR core capacity strengthening and assessment

Objectives: Specific objective of the work package is to improve core capacity in EU Member States as required by IHR and Decision 1082/2013/ EU.

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D5.1	WP5 work plan	23-FOHM	Report	Public	5	5	29/OCT/2019	25/NOV/2020	Delay due to project start date delayed

D5.1: WP5 work plan: A table with planned workshops and reports has been produced and approved by the Steering committee in October 2019 (M7). Due to the COVID 19 pandemic's unprecedented circumstances, the work plan and the planned workshops had to be changed and adjusted to current needs.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS16	WP5 workshop 1	23-FOHM	10	10	WP5 workshop1 organised	Achieved: 30/JAN/2020 M11	Delay due to project start date delayed
MS18	WP5 workshop2	23-FOHM	22	22	WP5 workshop 2 organised	Achieved: 22/MAR/2021 M24	Delay due to COVID 19

MS16: Evaluation pre and post-survey was conducted by WP3 for Workshop 1: IHR Core Capacity Strengthening and Assessment (January 2020, Riga) (M10)

Pre-survey: 22 participants, 7 questions. Quantitative and qualitative data have been collected with the main focus on existing knowledge of participants on JEE and strengthening IHR core capacities.

Post- survey: 18 participants, 12 questions. Participants were asked to evaluate the overall quality and usefulness of the workshop.

Overall, WS1 was considered successful and useful with a score of 4.38 out of 5(best), with an evident increase in IHR core capacities strengthening and knowledge of JEE procedures. The organisation and planning were rated high. Some further attention might be necessary regarding the pre-workshop material. It is important to note that this WS was the only one during the first 24 months that was conducted in-person which contributed to a high rating of the group and plenary discussions.

During the same survey, the participants were asked to state the most useful channels for receiving information about the JA, concluding that the SHARP website and Conferences are the most preferred.

MS18: Evaluation post-survey was conducted by WP3 for Workshop 2: Risk Communication (March 2021, online) (M12)

Post-survey: 22 participants, 5 questions. Quantitative and qualitative data have been collected. The WS was rated overall useful and informative, with some comments mainly focusing on risk communication related to COVID 19. According to the responses, some further attention might be necessary to the duration of break sessions and group composition. The WS and the subsequent survey were conducted online and the topic was changed to Risk communication focusing on the health sector, due to the COVID 19 pandemic demands.

See Annex 2, for the complete Evaluation survey reports.

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Analysis of common gaps in IHR implementation in countries that have conducted a JEE and selection of gaps to address in workshops.	One agreed work plan including selected challenges agreed with participating countries,	Completed. Background paper presented in WP5 partner meeting, October 2019 (M6) in Helsinki
International workshops focused on low-GNI countries Annual workshops jointly aimed to assist both countries that have conducted a JEE and those that have not. One part introducing and preparing for JEE and one part working on identified gaps after JEE.	3 workshops (with up to 12 low GNI countries participating) by month 38	In progress. 2 workshops conducted in M11 and M24. Target achieved for both.
International workshop on cross border collaboration open for all member states	1 workshop (up to 50 participants) by M38	
Feasibility of using information from national and international exercises and after-action reviews in assessing state of public health preparedness in the EU: study protocol adopted	1 feasibility study performed by M43	
Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Number of countries participating in training in the JEE process	5 countries out of 15 low GNI countries	Achieved for 2 Workshops
Reports from the workshops (1. on external evaluation processes; 2. on strengthening of IHR core capacities and 3. on international collaboration between authorities during crisis)	3 workshop reports by M42	Two Workshop reports submitted 1. IHR core capacity strengthening and assessment. 2. Risk Communication
Report on the feasibility study of using information from national and international exercises and after-action reviews in assessing state of public health preparedness in the EU	1 feasibility report by M46	

Outcome/Impact Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
<p>Participating countries have increased their knowledge of the JEE process and best practices for preparing and performing a JEE as measured by pre and post workshop evaluations.</p> <p>Participating countries have greater understanding and are in a better position to reduce weaknesses in selected core capacities and have developed a draft action plan how to address the specified gaps.</p>	<p>5 countries</p> <p>5 draft action plans (1 per country addressing three challenges)</p>	<p>Workshop 1 (See Evaluation report)</p> <p>One Health Security conference (OCT 2019, Helsinki) selected countries shared their experience conducting a JEE</p>
<p>Key challenges and possible solutions in national and international collaboration between government authorities and relevant national authorities, European Commission (DG ECHO, DG SANTE) and WHO identified.</p>	<p>Gaps identified and development of policy recommendations</p>	
<p>Better use of data from exercises and AAR to assess status of preparedness in the EU</p> <p>More comprehensive picture of challenges in health preparedness in EU</p>	<p>Input to report on the state of preparedness in the EU under Decision 1082/2013/EU</p>	

4.1.6 WP6: Preparedness and Response planning

Objectives: The specific objective of WP6 is to support EU MS and JA partner countries in developing operational inter-sectoral preparedness and response plans for serious cross-border health threats with an integrated all hazards approach

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D6.1	Review of planning and evaluation tools	16-RIVM	Report	Public	21	21	04/JAN/2021 M22		As scheduled

D6.1: A literature review on Multisectoral collaborations during public health emergencies has been produced and submitted in January 2021 (M22). The report identifies sectors that are considered most important, present and /or visible during collaboration. It also presents a variety of international and national tools and instruments that can be used to facilitate multisectoral collaboration during preparedness and response.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS22	WP6 workshops conducted	16-RIVM	27	45	4 workshops conducted	Under progress	As scheduled 1 st workshop conducted. 29/APR/2020 M13

MS22: Evaluation post-survey was conducted by WP3 for WP6 Workshop: Multisectoral collaboration (April 2020, Digital) (M13)

Post-survey: 17 participants, 9 questions. Qualitative and quantitative information was selected. The survey evaluated the overall quality and usefulness of the workshop format (digital compared to in-person) and the literature review and tools that can be applied to promote multisectoral collaboration, presentations by WP6. The planning, organisation and duration of the WS were scored as 4 or 5 (5 being the best) by 15 participants. Most participants seemed to be satisfied with the digital format of the event. More than half of the participants thought that the WP6 literature review was presented adequately and that there was an adequate discussion on tools that can be applied to promote multisectoral collaboration. The complete Evaluation report can be found in Annex 2.

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
<p>Consultations</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Achieving consensus among countries on the core elements of a multisectoral Preparedness & Response plan decision making process: the example of COVID-19 and testing strategies understanding the citizen's role in multisectoral collaboration during the COVID-19 protocol development all hazard e-learning and tabletop exercises 	Four consultations by M45	<p>In progress</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Ongoing discussion with Malta for organising expert consultation in M30 Decision making process: COVID 19 and testing strategies: 11 interviews with 12 participants from 6 countries. Completed M24 Understanding the citizen's role in multisectoral collaboration: Focus groups in M25
<p>Workshops (cooperation with WP8)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> on multisectoral collaboration on lessons learned from COVID-19 development of e-learning and tabletop exercise translation of outcomes of WP6 into best practices and guidelines for continuous (improvement of) multisectoral collaboration in (all hazard) (cross border) threats 	Four workshops by M45	1st Workshop on multisectoral collaboration completed (M13)
<p>E-learning and tabletop exercises</p> <p>developed and/or piloted (in cooperation with WP7, WP9 and WP10), evaluated and disseminated</p>	At least 1 e-learning tool and/or 2 tabletop exercise by M46	
Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
<p>Literature reviews</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> Review of literature on international and/or national tools and planning instruments for preparedness and response focused on multisectoral integration for the following sectors: public health laboratory services, clinical and chemical sectors Review of selected recent threats with emphasis on preparedness and response methods used, success and fail factors. 	2 reviews by month 33	1st review completed and submitted (M22)
<p>Checklist</p> <p>For e-learning and tabletop exercise development.</p>	Checklist by month 41	

<p>Databases on core elements of multi-sectoral collaboration during Public Health Emergencies</p>	<p>Database by month 24</p>	<p>In progress</p>
<p>Protocols</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. literature review on international and/or national tools and instruments for Preparedness and Response with a focus on multi-sectoral collaboration 2. decision making process: the example of test strategies in COVID-19 3. understanding the citizen's role in multisectoral collaboration in COVID-19 	<p>Three protocols by month 19</p>	<p>3 protocols completed</p>
<p>Catalogues and guidelines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Catalogue of best practices on integrated multisectoral preparedness and response plan implementation 2. Guidelines of best practices on integrated multisectoral preparedness and response plan implementation 	<p>Both by month 46</p>	

4.1.7 WP7: Laboratory preparedness and responsiveness

Objectives: Strengthened laboratory preparedness and responsiveness to detect highly pathogenic infectious agents of Risk Group 3 (RG3) bacteria / Risk Group 4 (RG4) viruses with quality assured methods in laboratories of MS and SHARP JA partner countries, and evaluating new diagnostic approaches and improving biosafety procedures.

Specific objectives 1. To ensure the application of best practices and quality assured methods in detection and analyses of highly pathogenic infectious agents in laboratories of SHARP JA partner countries. 2. To improve and consolidate the biorisk management in laboratories of SHARP JA partner countries dedicated to the diagnostics of highly pathogenic infectious agents.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS24	Implementation of EQAEs	2-RKI	35	46	Country-specific all hazards multisectoral preparedness and response plans tested	Under progress	As scheduled 1st bacterial and viral EQAEs: MAR/APR 2020 M12, M13

MS24: The 1st round of bacterial and viral EQUAEs was conducted. The bacterial samples were sent out on the 24th of February 2020 and the online entry data mask was closed on the 23rd of March 2020. The viral EQUAE was sent out on the 9th of March 2020 and the data entry mask for the viral exercise was closed on the 10th of April 2020. The 2nd round of EQUAEs was being prepared by M24 with a view to starting on the 7th of July 2021 with a total of 31 laboratories participating.

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Number of rounds of EQAEs for viral and bacterial specimens reaching a majority of partners	3 rounds of EQAE, reaching at least 25 laboratories, Mo 46	In progress 1st round of EQAEs completed
Number of participants assessing and implementing basic and advanced diagnostic approaches	At least 20 laboratories will be interested to participate, Mo 42	Achieved for 1st round
Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Detailed report on EQAEs	3 reports, Mo 20, 36, and 46	In progress Detailed report for 1st round of EQAEs has been delivered
Report on assessment / evaluation of diagnostic capabilities and approaches, integration of these data sets with WP6	2 reports, Mo 18 and 46	In progress

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Number of participants working on consolidation and improvement of laboratory biorisk management especially with lower resources	At least 20 laboratories confirmed, M 42	Achieved Several laboratories confirmed participation
Number and quality of sample inactivation methods defined for handling under lower level of biosafety containment	At least 2 methods have been evaluated for risk group 3 bacteria and risk group 4 viruses, Mo 42	Achieved
Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Number of laboratories that have applied the revised and newly developed biorisk management recommendations	At least 5 reports by partners on implementation of the biorisk management recommendations, Mo 42	In progress Could not be estimated yet
Compendium of best practice on sample inactivation procedures considering applicability and effectiveness of procedures and reagents	2 compendiums, one each for bacteria and for viruses reports, Mo 46	

4.1.8 WP8: Training and local exercises, exchange of working practices

Objectives: The specific objective of the WP8 is strengthening IHR implementation for serious cross-border health threats in the JA partner countries through cross-sectoral basic and advanced training.

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D8.1	Report on training needs	20-IPHS	Report	Public	21	21	28/MAY/2021		Delay due to project start date delayed and meetings postponed due to COVID 19

D8.1: A report on training needs has been produced. The report aims to improve the capacity of professionals in regard to IHR implementation and preparedness for serious cross-border health threats in the Member states and JA partner countries.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS27	Basic and advanced trainings conducted	2-IPHS	35	47	2 basic and 3 advanced workshops plus several laboratory workshops organised	Under progress	As scheduled 1 st basic on-line training 30/JUN and 02/JUL 2020 M15, M16

MS27: Evaluation post survey was conducted by WP3 for the 1st module (Introduction to the IHR, IHR core capacities and functions) of “IHR (2005) Basic Online Training”. The module was provided initially on the 30th of June (2 hours duration) and was repeated on the 2nd of July 2020 (2 hours duration) (M15, M16). Both times it was administered online.

Post-survey: 22 participants, 12 questions. Qualitative and quantitative information has been selected during the survey. The overall quality of the training format and the individual activities has been rated between 4.00 for group discussions/exercises and 4.82 for planning and organisation. Almost all participants agreed/strongly agreed that their expectations were met and everyone agreed/strongly agreed that they would recommend this training to others. Participants rated 1.90 on their knowledge of the International Health Regulations before the training and 2.95 after the training. Knowledge in the International Health Regulations (2005) Core Capacities for infectious Diseases was rated 1.75 before the training and 2.81 after the training (5 being the best in all ratings). The complete Evaluation survey report can be found in Annex 2.

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
International training and meetings organized	10 workshops/ training (2X IHR basic and 4 X advanced including chemical trainings, 2X field exercises, 2 X laboratory and), 2 meetings	In progress W8 kick-off meeting and 1st module on Basic IHR on-line training conducted
Assessment of the cross-sectoral training needs performed	1 by M21	Achieved See D8.1
Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Report on assessment of the cross-sectoral training needs across countries	Training needs of (at least) 15 low GNI countries	Achieved D8.1
Training materials for WP8 developed	by M46	In progress
Report on the trainings provided	by M48	

4.1.9 WP9: Chemical safety and chemical threats

Objectives: The specific objective of WP9 is to improve the implementation of IHR chemical core capacities, strengthening preparedness and response to cross-border chemical health threats within MSs and across the EU

Expected deliverables:

Deliverable Number	Deliverable Title	Lead beneficiary	Type	Dissemination Level	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Receipt date	Accepted date	Comments
D9.1	Fact-finding report	24-DHS	Report	Public	16	16	29/JUN/2021 M27		Delay due to COVID 19. Agreed deadline extension with CHAFAEA

D9.1: A fact-finding report on Chemical Safety and chemical threats has been conducted and received in January 2021 (M22). The extension on the due date of the deliverable was

agreed by email with CHAFAEA on the 9th of December 2019. The objectives of the report are to: Determine areas within chemicals requiring further action, with a view to strengthen chemical core capacity implementation under IHR. To ascertain the

strengths and gaps of responding countries in their preparedness for chemical incidents. To identify priorities for the training materials which will be developed and to gauge the desirability of respondents to join a chemical laboratory analytical network. The report results were based on background information and a chemical gap-analysis questionnaire consisting of 49 questions, sent to representatives from all European countries.

Expected milestones:

MS Number	MS Title	Lead Beneficiary	Due date (Original)	Due date (Amendment 3)	Means of verification	Status	Comments
MS30	WP9 joint meeting with partners and other WPs	24-DH	2	2	Joint meeting with all partners and other relevant WPs	Achieved: 23/OCT/2019 M7	Delay due to project start date delayed
MS31	Stakeholder consultation	24-DH	13	13	Stakeholder consultation and gap analysis	Achieved D9.1 25/MAR/2021 M24	Delay due to project start date delayed and COVID 19

MS30: Joint meetings with all partners and other relevant Work packages were completed in October 2019 (M7).

MS31: Carried out as part of the gap-analysis activities. See fact-finding report (D9.1)

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
<p>Gap analysis of country IHR chemical capacity implementation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consult with relevant organisations, EC, MS authorities and external stakeholders to determine current capacities with respect to chemical incident response. - Review of existing health protection mechanisms in the area of cross-border chemical incidents and lessons learnt from previous incidents. 	All MSs invited to undertake gap analysis by month 5	In progress Achieved M27
<p>EU-level workshops organised</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultations and meetings throughout the project to engage with project partner and relevant stakeholders/authorities to develop material that is used in workshops. 	2 workshops (with 1-2 representatives from each MS e.g. 60-80) by M42	In progress
<p>Training materials, guidance documents and SOPs to be produced</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Agreement at the project level of guidance documents and resources tested during workshops and exercises. 	Training materials (including slides, case studies and exercise scenarios), guidance documents and SOPs to be distributed amongst all JA partner countries by M46	In progress
Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Reports detailing progress on: achieving gap-analysis of chemical capacity implementation; surveillance strategy for EUMSs; outcomes of the workshops and exercise, to be disseminated by the end of the Joint Action. - Training materials on improving preparedness to cross-border chemical health threats will be developed (reports, toolkit,), tested in the workshops and disseminated by the end of the action. - Guidance and SOPs on improving implementation of IHR core capacities (such as surveillance and reporting of chemical events) based on the country's assessment of IHR capacities. 	<p>3 reports (to be delivered M12, M24, M48).</p> <p>A set of lectures (4-8), case studies (3-5) and questions and activities to promote discussion among participants (to be delivered M40).</p> <p>SOP compendium (to be delivered M48).</p>	<p>1 report delivered in M21</p> <p>Training materials drafted. WP in progress</p>

4.1.10 WP10: Case management and infection prevention and control preparedness

Objectives: The specific objective of this WP is to improve clinical and biorisk management, hospital preparedness and response to high-consequence infectious diseases (HCID).

This WP aims to strengthen IHR, through the enhancement of preparedness and response within Europe to possible cross-border health threats due to the HCID, and to assure cooperation, communication, and exchange of information among clinicians and public health officers.

Process Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
<p>Four workshops organised:</p> <p>Workshop 10.1 – Presentation of the Map (Mapping and assessing the existing facilities and country clinical preparedness); Definition of methodology and recommendation for assessment</p> <p>Workshop 10.2 – Dissemination and discussion of the assessment results</p> <p>- Workshop 10.3 – Identification of the list of HCID , case definition of each HCID; systematic identification of major disease drivers and threats; evaluation of validated severity scores (involving all SHARP partners)</p> <p>Workshop 10.4 – Dissemination and discussion of the obtained results from the Task 4.</p>	<p>4 workshops</p> <p>(minimum one participant for each country of the JA) by month 42</p>	<p>1st workshop conducted in Frankfurt (WP partner meeting) M22</p>
Map and survey of clinical capacities, including high isolation clinical units available	Map covering least 80% existing units	Delayed
Assessment of clinical and biorisk management capacities, including high isolation clinical units	90% of countries assessed by M33	
Syndrome based clinical protocol implemented at country level in selected clinics	Implemented in at least one clinic in 3 countries of the JA by M42	

Output Indicator(s)	Target	Progress
Map (existing hospital preparedness for HCID, including high isolation/clinical facilities)	1 Map including 20 countries	In progress
Feasibility study for an expert clinical support service for high-consequence infectious diseases	1 report by M42	In progress
Protocol for syndrome-based approach for prompt and early clinical management of high-consequence infectious diseases	1 protocol for each of the three involved pilot countries by M38	In progress

4.2 Interviews with WP leaders and/or co leaders results

Twenty participants were interviewed in total and all work packages were represented by at least 1 lead or co-lead. All interviews took place between the 24th of November and the 10th of December 2021. Originally it was scheduled for Work Packages to be interviewed in the following pairs: WP1 & WP2, WP4 & WP5, WP7 & WP8, WP9 & WP10 and WP6 individually. However, due to restricted participants' availability, WP7, WP8, WP9 and WP10 were also interviewed individually. The discussion agenda was included in the original invitation letter to all participants.

	WP1	WP2	WP4	WP5	WP6	WP7	WP8	WP9	WP10
Date of interview	26/NOV/21	26/NOV/21	24/NOV/21	24/NOV/21	25/NOV/21	02/DEC/21	25/NOV/21	26/NOV/21	10/DEC/21
Number of representatives	2	1	2	1	6	4	1	2	1

The summary of the interviewees' responses is presented below under each point of discussion:

4.2.1 Progress of WP Milestones, Deliverables and related process and output indicators

Answers and comments related to this point of discussion have been used to verify the information collected and presented in detail under each WP in section 4.1.

Most delays in deliverables and milestones are due to the delayed start of the project and the COVID 19 pandemic. However, the 3rd amendment has alleviated most delays by extending the expected end dates.

4.2.2. Challenges/issues/difficulties faced during the process up to M24 COVID-19 related challenges

All interviewees have identified the COVID 19 pandemic as the main cause of delays and challenges. All Work Packages have been affected by the circumstances that arose because of the pandemic in different ways. Most interviewees identified as a challenge limited staff availability, as most of them are heavily involved in key positions in their COVID 19 national response organisations. As a consequence, there has been limited time for them to respond to anything else apart from urgent tasks in their WP and scope of work but also to respond to activities in other Work Packages when that was necessary.

Some of the people involved had to leave SHARP JA in order to concentrate on their national demands and it has not been easy to find replacements during the pandemic. In some cases, the people replacing the ones who have left might have different understanding or different views of the project which makes collaboration between teams challenging. Also, the pandemic waves have reached different countries at different times which made it even harder for partners to coordinate their activities. The travel restrictions imposed, had a direct consequence on all training

and workshops organised. All activities had to be changed to take place online. This created new challenges in terms of organisation and planning (e.g. technical support, training materials). Also, the content of workshops had to be adjusted to the COVID-19 pandemic demands which meant changes to the original work plan and material. Travel restrictions have also created difficulties in transport, especially for sensitive samples which specifically affected the tasks of WP7.

Changes in tasks and outcomes after COVID-19, were identified as another challenge by some interviewees. That, in combination with staff members' changes, was also another reason for delays in collaboration.

Challenges and issues unrelated to the COVID 19 pandemic

Challenges and issues unrelated to the COVID 19 pandemic were also identified.

During the interviews, it was apparent that some interviewees consider SHARP JA a large joint action with a wide scope composed of a large number of partners and affiliated entities. As a consequence, it has been challenging for participants with different areas of expertise (clinical, regulatory, laboratories etc) to familiarise themselves with each other scope of work. For example, people with a clinical background might not be entirely familiar with regulatory expertise and vice versa. However, during the progress of the JA this has improved. It was also mentioned that it was easier for partners involved in previous joint actions to understand and proceed with their tasks in SHARP JA.

The JA concepts were characterised as “big”, some tasks as complicated and the original goals as ambitious and not concrete enough.

Other challenges, noted individually, included:

- communication materials are uploaded to different platforms making a single view of these outputs difficult to see
- low uptake of WP2 SHARP JA- Communications and Dissemination toolkit (outlining the support/tactics available from WP2)
- legal boundaries between MS for export licenses or data protection,
- possible IHR revision,
- involvement of national competent authorities,
- not enough partners from the veterinary and food sector,
- retrospective change of the M1 original date.

4.2.3. Collaboration and communication with other WP

Collaboration between Work Packages in shared tasks or activities was described as very good by most of the WP representatives despite the delays and staff shortage due to COVID 19 pandemic. Some interviewees identified the change of people involved in Work Packages or specific tasks as a challenge as that affected common goals and views of the shared tasks. There have been comments regarding confusion in specific role share (who is doing what) and some overlaps but this has improved during the JA progress. SHARP website/project page and Steering committee meetings were identified as the most preferred methods of communication and awareness of other WP activities. A number of interviewees acknowledged that it is not entirely clear to them what is the exact scope and goals of some other Work Packages. In the same way, there were comments from interviewees about the rest of the partners not being aware of their actions. It was also mentioned that there are Work Packages with very different topics and activities and subsequently Work Packages with no common goals are working in parallel without any interaction.

All WP have been affected by the COVID 19 pandemic but it was acknowledged that some, were affected more than others. Thus, partners' engagement in the JA was a challenge. One partner was identified as not engaged in any activity and not responding to any form of communication.

A few interviewees identified as a challenge in collaboration and good understanding of each other's work, the heterogeneity between Work Packages' content and people. The same fact was considered a benefit by one interviewee as it gives partners the opportunity to open their thinking and get a wider perspective.

4.2.4 Support expectations from the coordination team on WP activities to complete tasks in the remaining period of the JA

All interviewees agreed that the THL administrative coordination has been excellent and has exceeded all expectations despite the volume of correspondence and the size of the JA. All comments were highly positive and reflected the opinion that THL has been extremely supportive and has done an admirable job, especially during the challenging circumstances due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

One WP expressed the desire for the coordination team to be more involved in the decision-making process, however, another WP identified this as a positive finding as THL does not intervene and trusts WP leaders.

A number of interviewees commented on the lack of sufficient scientific/technical coordination especially during the COVID 19 pandemic period. It was apparent that a number of representatives feel there is a need for someone to provide a scientific overview, give direction and "realign" everyone especially because of the changes to the original idea due to the COVID 19 pandemic.

Representatives from four Work Packages reported that there is no need for any scientific/technical intervention or guidance in their WP tasks and work.

In terms of expectations and support from coordination going forward, communication between WP and further awareness of each other's activities and actions was one of the topics a lot of interviewees identified.

Suggestions and comments included:

- Organisation of Forums on which partners can exchange experiences on urgent issues (COVID 19 related) and subsequently exchange information about SHARP issues.
- Exchange of practices and ideas and increased communication for the pandemic which subsequently will increase collaboration for other issues.
- Three work packages recommended additional smaller meetings between WPs that are more related in terms of tasks and activities. The topics of the meetings should be about “burning issues” on a more practical level.
- One WP proposed the need for the coordination team to raise the enthusiasm for sharing activities with others and promote participation.
- One interviewee recommended the organisation of webinars on a regular bases (6-8 weeks) with topics relevant to almost everyone.
- One interviewee suggested the initiative from the coordination technical team for organising smaller meetings to bring people together.
- A mixture of online (convenience) and face to face meetings (familiarity and network building), if allowed, was also proposed.
- The need for issuing regularly internal newsletters regarding progress and activities has also been identified.
- In addition to the internal newsletter being issued continuously, it was suggested that it should be made more efficient by making a version available to external audiences.

- Regular communication with WP2 in order to facilitate the dissemination of deliverables.
- One interviewee raised the need for their WP to engage/hire more members of staff as most of the existing ones are heavily involved in the pandemic national needs. Also, the need for regular meetings within each WP to keep people motivated and engaged was raised by one interviewee.

Comments on these recommendations included the fact that smaller meetings will improve familiarity, exchange of ideas and promote brainstorming, as existing meetings are very big and not easy to interact.

There was also one comment about making decisions and providing solutions for Work Packages that haven't had any engagement so far.

4.2.5 Recommendations/proposals on sustainability of JA deliverables

Recommendations on what could be sustainable included:

- Tabletop exercises and e-learning applied at organisational level (cross-sectoral collaboration)
- Material and presentations produced from online training and workshops
- There was an effort to build a network through online events. That included pictures, phone numbers and information for participants
- Different SOPs on local and international level
- Surveillance strategy
- WP7 lab network
- WP10 could provide a document on how to improve rather than assess and institutionalise something that is already done on a national level
- WP6 reports and deliverables (Integrative review on Multisectoral collaboration during public health emergencies) serving as bases.

- Proposal for new regulation, Article 15: Proposal for a REGULATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT AND OF THE COUNCIL on serious cross-border threats to health and repealing Decision No 1082/2013/EU, Article 15 EU reference laboratories

Further comments on sustainability included:

- The need to promote awareness of previous material (deliverables) from previous joint actions.
- One interviewee proposed that once priority outcomes have been selected, the right level of sustainability should be examined for each deliverable/WP (national? Cross border? Regional? EU?).
- The need for an easy and understandable guidance tool and sustainability plan to be integrated into everyday work has also been discussed.
- The concept of sustainability should be explained through interviews which would mean more discussions with all Work Packages.
- An internal challenge is understanding sustainability and choosing what is sustainable in each WP.
- An external challenge would be the evolution of the EU health security legal framework and reframing of SHARP outcomes with the new regulatory framework.

4.2.6 SHARP JA Score

During the interviews, the participants were asked to score the SHARP JA overall performance and progress to date between 1-5 (5 being the best). Twelve out of the twenty interviewees responded. Three interviewees scored SHARP JA as 2, five interviewees scored 3, two interviewees scored 3.5 and two interviewees scored 4. The mean score was 3/5.

5. Discussion: critical analysis of findings against evaluation questions

The general objective of the SHARP Joint Action is to strengthen IHR implementation and preparedness, support capacity building and contribute to a high level of protection of health and security in the EU Member States in line with the EU health security framework. This is reflected through two overall objectives:

1. To support the implementation of Decision 1082/2013/EU on serious cross-border threats to health
2. To strengthen the resilience and response capacities of health systems, and to ensure coherence and interoperability for preparedness and response planning to health threats at national, EU and regional level.

Through the Joint Action, the member and partner states and the Union's common ability to prevent, detect and respond to biological outbreaks, chemical contamination and environmental and unknown threats to human health will be strengthened.

It consists of 10 Work Packages covering core Public Health capacities according to the IHR (2005). All Work Packages are described in detail in part A, Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement.

The partnership of SHARP JA consists of 26 Associated Partners, 35 Affiliated Entities and 10 Collaborating Partners. Totally 30 countries (24 EU members, 3 EEA/EFTA members and 3 European neighbour countries) participate in the Joint Action.

The main purpose of the external evaluation and its subsequent midterm report is to ensure objectiveness in the evaluation process as it is conducted by an independent team subcontracted by WP3, Evaluation of the action. This document provides an

overview of the JA during the initial 24 months of the project and includes the findings, conclusions and recommendations for improvement in some aspects of the JA.

The relevance of SHARP JA is explained in detail in section 2.4 Part B, Annex 1 of the Grant Agreement. Through the Joint Action, the member and partner states and the Union's common ability to prevent, detect and respond to biological outbreaks, chemical contamination and environmental and unknown threats to human health will be strengthened. The unprecedented circumstances during the COVID-19 pandemic, are the best example of the JA's relevance and purpose.

Most of the people and entities involved in SHARP JA come from the Public Health sector and therefore are heavily involved in their regional/national COVID-19 pandemic response. This has affected all Work Package activities, especially the ones involved in clinical sectors. As a consequence, a lot of the SHARP activities and goals had to be paused or postponed for a considerable amount of time. These delays were mostly alleviated by the 3rd amendment which provided the flexibility for deliverables and milestones to be completed in a more realistic time frame. Despite the challenging circumstances, partner meeting participation remained high suggesting ongoing dedication and interest in the JA.

Most of the COVID-19 pandemic related demands appeared in the first 2 months of 2020, which corresponds to M10 and M11 of the JA. Hence, M10-M24 was not very productive in terms of actions or events. Another issue raised by the pandemic was the need to change some of the tasks originally planned so that they are more relevant to the current situation. This has caused some initial confusion and further delays which seem to be resolved during the process. In some Work Packages, key people or teams had to move away from SHARP activities and replaced with new ones. This was another challenge as teams had to realign.

Despite the COVID 19 challenges, the SHARP activities, deliverables and training were considered effective, successful in terms of organisation and content and were

conducted within the time frame agreed. During online training and workshops, it was apparent that networking, plenary discussions and ideas exchange was less effective than face to face meetings. All Work Packages have responded well during the pandemic and dealt with changes and restrictions in a remarkable way. WP10 was affected considerably more than other work packages after the pandemic outbreak, as the nature of it indicated heavy involvement in National level responses. Certain tools produced were not used during those months as the pandemic circumstances did not allow it. As a consequence, it has not been easy to evaluate their efficacy or impact so far. It also has not been possible to determine SHARP website usage and downloads or visits.

Work packages that share activities or tasks, seem to have a good understanding of each other's scope of work. However, it has been apparent that there isn't a clear idea of all work packages' scope of work which was attributed to the size of the JA (very large) and the diverse topics covered (clinical, regulatory, chemical etc).

The JA's original planning was considered very ambitious with a challenging collection of ideas. It also involved many entities with different expertise and scope of work and also different mindsets. Some work packages had very clear targets and tasks or had already been involved in previous Joint actions and subsequently, it was easier to function independently without external guidance. However, some work packages felt that there was a need for guidance and scientific intervention and support especially because of the fluidity caused by the pandemic. As one of the interviewees commented, "The coordination should give the vision".

The need for an emergency mode of operations was also discussed during the WP leaders and co-leaders interviews, however it is understood that this was not considered necessary by the stakeholders.

Despite the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, it seems that more actions and events have taken place beyond M24. This probably indicates that the JA has absorbed the

initial shock of the pandemic and all tasks and teams have managed to readjust and are proceeding in a very effective and complementary way.

6. Recommendations based on evaluation findings.

In view of the findings above, recommendations for the remainder of the project include:

- Support and understanding of needs for WPs affected by the pandemic.
- Regular meetings between WPs with a similar scope of work with topics decided each time depending on their needs.
- Emphasis on the importance of implementing sustainability at an early stage. More time and meetings with WP representatives to understand and decide the best sustainability plans and tools.
- More usage of the SHARP website as a means of communication and source of information. Record deliverables downloads and users mapping.
- Newsletters on a regular basis
- Forums with common topics of concern
- Further involvement and support on technical/scientific level of coordination
- A meeting about SHARP vision and targets and how it has changed due to the pandemic so everyone has a clear overview of the SHARP journey.

ANNEX 1

-Invitation Letter to WP leaders and co-leaders for External Evaluation

Interviews

Dear WP and WP leads and co-leads,

As part of the external evaluation process, we would like to invite you to an interview with the external evaluation team. The interview will be held online via Zoom and it is expected to last up to 1h.

The main topics of discussion during this interview will be:

1. Progress of WP Milestones, Deliverables and related process and output indicators
2. Challenges/issues/difficulties faced during the process up to M24
3. Collaboration and communication with other WP
4. Support expectations from the coordination team on WP activities to complete tasks in the remaining period of the JA
5. Recommendations/proposals on sustainability of JA deliverables

Please mark your availability/preferred date and time in the following doodle link.

Whether you have any questions or you need further information, please do not hesitate to contact us.

We thank you in advance and are looking forward communicating with you.

Best Regards,

The External Evaluation Team,

University of Thessaly

-Presentation of the External Evaluation plan and activities (3rd Partnership Forum, Administrative meeting. 23rd November 2021)

Please contact sharp@thl.fi for pdfs.



PPPDF SHARP
external evaluation 2:

ANNEX 2

Please contact sharp@thl.fi for pdfs.

WP5, Workshop 1, Pre-survey



WP5WS1
presurvey.pdf

WP5, Workshop 1, Post-survey



WP5 Workshop1
postsurvey.pdf

WP5, Workshop 2, Evaluation survey



SHARP JA WP5
Annual Workshop 2 c

WP6, Digital Workshop, Evaluation survey



WP6 Workshop1
DRS1 pdf.pdf

WP8, Basic training sessions Evaluation survey



WP8 Basic training
sessions post survey

WP1, One Health Security Conference, Feedback Survey



Feedback_One
Health Security Confe

The content of this document represents the views of the author only and is his/her sole responsibility; it cannot be considered to reflect the views of the European Commission and/or the Health and Digital Executive Agency or any other body of the European Union. The European Commission and the Agency do not accept any responsibility for use that may be made of the information it contains.