

# [PRACTICE]

## **D6.3, D6.7, D6.8 TRAINING KIT VALIDATION EXERCISE: SCENARIO, UMEÅ/SANDÖ EXERCISE AND EVALUATION**

***PRACTICE WP6 joint deliverable***

***Dissemination level: PP, PU, PU***

***Nature: R, O, R***

**UNCLASS**

## 1. Executive Summary

The report at hand documents the preparations and the actual exercise including the results from the Swedish Training Kit validation exercise held at the Umeå Police Academy 18 March, 2014, and at the College of the Swedish Civil Contingency (MSB) in Sandö 6 May, 2014, as a part of the PRACTICE project.

The exercise was the second live event aiming to test and validate the products of project PRACTICE in a real time environment. The exercise aimed at demonstrating the usefulness of the training kits produced in work package WP7 of the project. The exercise was divided into two separate events. One in Umeå, 18/19 March, and one in Sandö, 6-8 May. The same R-scenario, a “dirty” bomb, was used on both occasions. On each event, the scenario was executed twice, once for each group of trainees. The first group of trainees were First Responder professionals, the second were students of First Responder education programmes. No specific preparations or CBRN training was undertaken for the trainees in advance of the first event. Instead, this first event was used for assessing the base line performance of the two groups. In the weeks between the two events, the trainees used components from the PRACTICE training kit for home studies. Subsequently, the main evaluation objective was to assess the training effect of the training kit on their performance.

Members of the PRACTICE Ethics Committee formed an Ethics Advisory Panel to ensure that the exercise was carried out in a manner that was ethically compliant.

The evaluation of the training effect was based on Bloom's taxonomy, which can be used to categorize different levels of learning and to specify how these are reflected both in general terms and in specific contexts such as knowledge and ability about response to an R-incident.

The training material in focus for this exercise is a web-based training kit which provides lectures on different aspects of CBRN protection with an increasing level of complexity.

In addition, a complimentary section was added to the material. It included an overview of the initial actions to be undertaken by First Responder personnel (police, rescue service and ambulance), when arriving to an incident scene involving CBRN.

The basic expectation was that the training between the two exercises will improve the trainee's performance in terms of theoretical knowledge and ability to perform relevant actions. This was expected to be expressed in higher performance within each level according to Bloom's learning taxonomy.

Data was collected in advance, during and after the exercise and included questionnaires, diagnostic tests, video-, GPS, and voice recording, observer protocols and debriefings. In addition, an After Action Review (AAR) was undertaken with representatives from the trainees in order to present preliminary results and collect additional data.

The obtained results indicated a low training effect in terms of Bloom's taxonomy. Consequently, the training package seems to have had a weak impact on participants' degree of learning. The most plausible explanation seems to be that the main training effect came from the experiences from the first exercise and the participants' subsequent in hind sight

reflections. Knowing that they were going to be subjected to executing a similar response motivated them to seek relevant knowledge. The training package which was provided to them could have been such a source, but the participants had a clear and distinct opinion on the matter. They perceived the majority of the training package content as irrelevant for their needs. Instead they searched for information from other sources. This behaviour was perhaps also increased by the fact that the material was written in English. One might assume that if they should have focused on the provided training package it seems reasonable to assume that they should have performed better at the diagnostic test.

Still and given this conclusion from the obtained result, it is important to stress a number of important issues.

First, it is important to be aware of the aim of the training package. It is intended as a being universal in character and not bound by the distinctive national characteristics. This core aim of the PRACTICE project assumes that it is possible to identify the common tasks or functions and base training on such an approach. In contrast, the results clearly indicate that the participants primarily searched for information related to their specific role, in this case in the context of a response in a mid-sized Swedish town. In any case, managing and allowing the different the national solutions within EU in the training package is a challenge.

Second, one should not underestimate the potential added value the provided training package gave to the participants. Even if it perhaps is not the primary tool for initial training of first responders, it might serve as an important body of reference, especially for first responders which are training to be CBRN specialists. The theoretical basis for first response actions is important, especially for the CBRN specialists, a resource which must be trained before achieving the expertise level

Third, even if hands on exercises are the preferred motor of learning, such exercises are expensive. Especially as the CBRN case will involve several different authorities and levels of societal resources. Consequently, the results stress the importance of low cost training facilitators which can support multi agency training and cooperation. The suggested PRACTICE toolkit seems to have the potential to fill such a function.

Finally, the evaluation of this exercise illustrates the problem of evaluating a joint EU concept applied in a national context. The approach was to map the national procedure to the generic operational functions defined by the project. Which OF's gained the most by the training package? One could for example assume that some of these are more of structural nature while others are more sensitive to level of training. A conclusion seems to be that the exercise must have a wider scope and include more societal ability resources if the OF's should form the basis of the evaluation. Another conclusion is that the list of OF's is rather a theoretical tool to evaluate and assess national level plans and resources than a tool to evaluate responses at the operative level.

Still, the approach of translating different national Standard Operation Procedures, structures, resources etc. for managing CBRN incidents into a common language is a necessary approach in order to develop a coherent European ability.