



D4.30 Report on the OHEJP exercise (SimEx) – planning and conduction vs.1

WP4 – Joint integrative projects

Responsible Partner: SVA

Contributing partners: ANSES, FLI, INSA, Sciensano, SLV, SSI and UoS



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D4.30 REPORT ON THE OHEJP EXERCISE (SIMEX) – PLANNING AND CONDUCTION

This is a preliminary deliverable. The full report will be available when the SimEx scientific paper has been published.

1. Background

The One Health European Joint Programme (OHEJP) is a co-funded initiative under the EU Research and Innovation programme Horizon 2020. The consortium has the primary goal of promoting international and interinstitutional collaboration by reinforcing the transdisciplinary collaboration of the One Health sectors through education and training in the fields of Foodborne Zoonoses (FBZ), Antimicrobial Resistance (AMR) and Emerging Threats (ET). The outcomes from the different Joint Research Projects (JRP) and Joint Integrative Projects (JIP) are integrated back in partner institutes to implement changes that are aligned with the programme's objectives. The OHEJP extends across 22 European countries and has 44 partners, including the Med-Vet-Net-Association.

The OHEJP is structured into seven work packages (WP), and runs between 2018 and 2023. Each of the work packages is designed to address objectives and reach different targets. The OHEJP simulation exercise (OHEJP SimEx), was developed as a part of WP4, Joint Integrative Projects, which aims at developing common work methodologies across the three domains of the OHEJP (FBZ, AMR and ET) through capacity building within the disciplines defined by the Integrative Strategy Matrix.

The OHEJP SimEx (WP4 task 4.6) consisted of the development, planning, conduction and evaluation of a foodborne zoonosis outbreak simulation exercise, based on existing methodologies, practises and guidelines, adapted to emphase the One Health approach and to be relevant to all conducting countries. The ambition for the task was to offer a unique opportunity for participating countries to practice intersectoral communication and increase understanding between the PH, AH and FS authorities and actors regarding e.g. diagnostic laboratories, outbreak management, tracing and data sharing.

2. Aim and objectives

The overall aim of the OHEJP SimEx was to bring together and practice the One Health capability, capacity, and interoperability of authorities in PH, AH and FS. This project was developed taking into consideration objectives at OHEJP level, and thus being designed to further increase knowledge and understanding of the One Health perspective, improve communication and data sharing in an outbreak situation and explore the functionality of currently available systems. In addition, participating countries were encouraged to define



specific objectives at national level and adapt the scenario accordingly so the most could be gained from the exercise.

To facilitate the delivery of such objectives, as well as helping participating countries to easily identify any shortcomings of their national outbreak preparedness plans, the overall aims were broken down into a series of smaller objectives distributed among the different parts of the exercise.

2.1. Part one: Role and functionality

The objective was to highlight the role and functionality of relevant systems and of each sector in an outbreak investigation. Following this part of the exercise the training audience was expected to have:

1. improved their knowledge on how and when collaboration takes place at national, regional and local level in the event of a zoonotic outbreak.
2. a better understanding of their and other actors' roles and responsibilities during a zoonotic outbreak.
3. gained an increased understanding of currently available early warning systems and when they should be activated.

2.2. Part two: Data sharing

The second part of the exercise was designed to emphasize the importance of data sharing in an outbreak situation. After the conduction of part two of the exercise the training audience would have:

1. an increased understanding of the benefits of creating harmonized databases and data sharing.
2. identified possible flaws in the cohesiveness of data collection and realized its importance in allowing intersectoral data analyses for the detection of clusters and outbreaks and suggested links with potential sources.

2.3. Part three: Communication

The last part of the exercise was created with the main objective of promoting intersectoral cooperation and communication in an outbreak situation. Following this part of the exercise the training audience would have had the opportunity to:

1. increase their understanding of the benefits of a One Health perspective during a zoonotic outbreak.
2. better understand how to create common main messages and identify different perspectives.
3. improve their knowledge of how to use guidelines, tools, and practices available, with focus on those developed within the OHEJP.

3. Organization

3.1. OHEJP SimEx Project Team

The OHEJP SimEx Project Team consisted of an international team (i.e., with representatives from France, Germany, Portugal, Sweden, and United Kingdom) of nine specialists with complementary expertise in the areas of PH, AH and FS and knowledge on simulation exercises. The members of the team were recruited amongst the different OHEJP partner



institutes. The team had support from the OHEJP Communication Team throughout the project.

The team was responsible for planning, supporting the national conceptions, evaluating the outcome of the national exercises, and dissemination of the outcomes as well as fulfilling the project's deliverables and milestones. The project started in September 2021 and was completed in December 2022. The team was in close contact with all contact points at institute and national level that had announced their interest to participate in the OHEJP SimEx. Each member of the OHEJP SimEx Project Team contributed with scientific and expert knowledge and their time in accordance with the agreed engagement.

3.2. OHEJP SimEx Steering Board and OHEJP SimEx Advisory Board

The OHEJP SimEx Project was governed by the OHEJP SimEx Steering Board consisting of four representatives from the OHEJP Project Management Team (PMT) from four different European countries (Belgium, Denmark, Sweden, and United Kingdom). The OHEJP SimEx Steering Board provided the OHEJP SimEx Project Directive, was responsible for providing advice and making decisions on important matters regarding the OHEJP SimEx throughout the project and approved the policy documents created by the SimEx Project Team.

The OHEJP SimEx Advisory Board consisted of representatives from the OHEJP Programme Managers Committee (PMC), OHEJP Scientific Steering Board (SSB), OHEJP JIP, and representatives from the OHEJP Stakeholders (i.e., ECDC, EFSA, FAO, WOA, WHO and WHO-Euro). The Board was responsible for giving advice and educating the OHEJP SimEx Project Team throughout the project.

4.1 National teams

Each country and institute designated a National Exercise Leader (NEL) and Local Exercise Leaders (LEs). Each national team was composed of a NEL, LEs, Local Evaluators (LEs) and a Training Audience (TA). The role of the NEL was based upon the 'exercise director/controller' role found within the ECDC Simulation Exercise handbook (<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/simulation-exercise-manual.pdf>).

4. Planning of the OHEJP exercise

4.1. Overview

Pre-work and organization of the OHEJP SimEx Project started in January 2021 and the SimEx Project Team was ready to start in September 2021. Prior to the exercise implementation, the OHEJP SimEx Project Team was responsible for all tasks related to scenario building and exercise organization. Tasks included defining a timeline and identifying problematic areas that needed to be addressed, defining the aims and objectives for the exercise, creating, and developing a challenging scenario that met the project objectives and developing all the necessary documents and materials for the exercise implementation. Further, the OHEJP SimEx exercise was built following the ECDC guidelines on simulation exercises (<https://www.ecdc.europa.eu/sites/default/files/documents/simulation-exercise-manual.pdf>).

The LEs were invited to take part in a preparatory meeting organized by the OHEJP SimEx Project Team on the 5th of April 2022.



4.2. NEL and LEL Preparatory workshop

As part of the OHEJP SimEx Project planning a preparatory workshop was organized for the NELs and LELs. This initiative was conceived as an opportunity to introduce the participants to the OHEJP SimEx Project and to clarify their role in the implementation of the exercise at national level. The workshop took place from the 21st to the 23rd of March 2022 and covered two main topics: the exercise scenario and the evaluation process. While most of the workshop was organized as an information delivery event, it was also a great opportunity to establish an open channel of communication between the OHEJP SimEx Project Team and the NELs and LELs.

The first day of the workshop was dedicated to the introduction of the One Health approach to simulation exercises and introducing the OHEJP SimEx Project. The second and third days of the workshop were exclusively dedicated to the NELs and LELs, focusing mainly on the conduction procedure, scenario, OHEJP tools, and the responsibilities of NELs and LELs.

Detailed information regarding the workshop content can be consulted in the “*Report on the OHEJP SimEx Workshop*” (<https://zenodo.org/record/6973630#.Y5g7p3bMI2w>).

The conduction, results, and evaluation steps will be found in the full version.