

**Invitation Letter to BTSF National Contact Points seeking applications for BTSF training activities on Inter-sectoral simulation exercises
on crisis management coordination and response in the Animal Health Sector**

CONTRACT N° 2019 96 02

Phase 1

Valid as of 20/02/2024

1. Course objectives.....	2
2. Training dates and locations.....	3
3. Selection criteria for participants	3
4. Country allocations	5
5. Face-to-face logistical arrangements.....	6
6. Virtual Classrooms	6
Annex 1: Background and main topics covered in training	7
Annex 2: Legislation and guidance	8
Annex 3: Agenda.....	9
Annex 4: Training material, outcomes and dissemination activities	11
Annex 5: Contractor contact details	13

1. Course objectives

General objective

The overall objective of this programme is to prepare, hold and evaluate inter-sectorial tabletop simulation exercises on outbreak coordination and crisis response involving agri-food chain authorities, and where needed, public health authorities, as well as crisis coordinators.

Specific objectives

- To assess the effectiveness of participating countries' contingency plans and the ability to deliver a harmonised response to a serious animal health incident.
- To assess the effectiveness of the collaborative working arrangements both within and between participating countries and relevant EU bodies (i.e. European Commission, ECDC, EFSA, and relevant EURLs).
- To assess the degree to which there is a common and consistent understanding and application of key definitions and concepts, and of the existing alert systems and communication tools.
- To identify learning that can be shared and used to enhance participant's response capability, EU protocols and ways of working so as to inform future EU training and exercising initiatives.

2. Training dates and locations

The three day Face-to-Face training course will be delivered in April as per the calendar below with approximately 35 participants in each session.

An introductory session in the afternoon of the first day will be followed by 2 days of training based on the tabletop exercises. The course agenda is attached (Annex 3).

Table 1: Training dates and Location

Year	Training sessions	Course title	Locations *	Proposed dates**	Registration deadline
2024	1	Inter-sectoral simulation exercises on crisis management coordination and response in the Animal Sector	Rome, Italy	8-10 April 2024	08/03/2024

For organisational purposes, names of participants should be communicated at the latest 30 days before each workshop. A reminder will be sent to NCPs before each event.

3. Selection criteria for participants

- Participant must:
1. Fulfil the eligibility criteria
 2. Meet the minimum requirements
 3. Be selected using the evaluation criteria

1. Eligibility criteria for Course Inter-sectoral simulation exercises on crisis management coordination and response in the Animal Health Sector

Participants from the Competent Authority in animal disease crisis preparedness and management (preferably both from central and regional level) in the chosen field. When possible, each country should provide the participant from:

- a) animal health
- b) contingency planning or animal disease crisis coordinator

Only **eligible participants** should be further assessed against the minimum requirements below.

Participants must meet the minimum requirements below to ensure they can follow and fully participate in this course. Participants who do not meet the minimum requirements should not be proposed for the training.

2. Minimum requirements for Course on Inter-sectoral simulation exercises on crisis management coordination and response in the Animal Health Sector	Yes/No
<p>Participant must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have a minimum of 3 years of professional experience in official control on animal health or animal disease contingency planning and animal disease control and eradication; • Be from a Competent authority responsible for investigation and/or management of animal disease outbreaks • Be Fluent in English. 	

The evaluation criteria should be used as a tool to prioritise participation (higher score indicates higher priority), but there is no minimum score necessary.

Country allocations

A total of 35 seats will be allocated according to the tables below. Please note that the number of allocated seats for each country may vary.

Table 2: Suggested allocation for EU Member States and Candidate Countries

	Country / suggested seat allocation					
Member States	Austria	1	France	1	Malta	1
	Belgium	1	Germany	2	Netherlands	1
	Bulgaria	1	Greece	2	Poland	2
	Croatia	1	Hungary	1	Portugal	2
	Cyprus	1	Ireland	1	Romania	2
	Czechia	1	Italy	2	Slovakia	1
	Denmark	1	Latvia	1	Slovenia	1
	Estonia	1	Lithuania	2	Spain	2
	Finland	1	Luxembourg	1	Sweden	1
	Total Member States					35

You are welcome to nominate more participants for the reserve list than indicated in the table above. If seats will become available you will be informed in due time.

4. *Face-to-face logistical arrangements*

In the case of face-to-face training sessions, the European Commission will fund in full the visa, travel, accommodation, meals, and field visit costs for all training participants. No daily allowance will be paid on top of this. Any other costs are to be paid by the participants themselves.

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

OPERA team will liaise further with the nominated participants for all logistics and practical aspects.

5. *Virtual Classrooms*

N.A

Annex 1: Background and main topics covered in training

This simulation exercise is based on a scenario where African swine fever (ASF), one of the contagious animal diseases, pose outbreaks in commercial and non-commercial farms as well as escaped to the wild and start to spread in the wild boar population, making the control more difficult.

African swine fever (ASF) is a devastating hemorrhagic viral disease of pigs, affecting domestic and wild pigs of all ages and sexes. The disease is the cause of major economic losses, threatens food security and safe trade, and challenges sustained swine production in affected countries. The current African swine fever epidemic in Europe and Asia is caused by a strain belonging to genotype II. ASF was introduced into Georgia in 2007 from where the disease spread throughout the Caucasus and the Russian Federation, reaching Ukraine in 2012 and Belarus in 2013. In January 2014, ASF arrived in the eastern part of the European Union (EU) when infected wild boar population and started to spread among the European Union Member States. In 2018 ASF was detected in East Asia, where over 60 percent of global domestic pig inventories are found. The spread of the African swine virus genotype II into the Eurasiatic wild pig population was unprecedented; the increased densities in wild pig that had taken place in eastern and central Europe over the past few decades was a prime environment for the ASF virus to expand its geographical distributional range.

The European Union laid down prevention and control measures to be applied where African swine fever is suspected or confirmed either in domestic pig holdings or in wild boars. These include information measures and measures to prevent and eradicate the disease.

The background of the animal disease control legislation is Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (Animal Health Law). The overarching piece of legislation providing the tool for the control of African swine fever in the EU is Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 of 16 March 2023 laying down special disease control measures for African swine fever and repealing Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605. In this framework, the latest specific regionalisation measures that have been taken with respect to evolution of the ASF situation in the EU are included in the same Regulation. The exercise will be tabletop, inject based. The injects will be realistic and flexible enough to adapt to unexpected decisions/actions of participants. The participants will be from central to the local level animal health specialists. The timescale described in the exercise itself and in the injects will be clear and realistic. The scenario will allow for realistic assumptions of the required roles and for different degrees of national commitments. Participants will be asked to use National Contingency Plans and Standard Operational Procedures.

The injects would target improving preparedness and response planning for animal disease control situations through testing procedures in place at national (contingency plans) and EU level (e.g. the crisis general plan). Participants would be from different countries and will be forced to coordinate their actions between the local, national and EU level, ensuring interaction between Member States. In case of ASF outbreak, a very important issue will be ensuring coordination between the competent authority and other stakeholders at national level. The specific objectives of the simulation exercise will be to contribute to the implementation of existing EU legislation related to crisis management of ASF, especially in the areas of preparedness and response planning, monitoring, surveillance, crisis management, risk and crisis communication and inter-sectoral cooperation and to test the standard operating procedures in place, both with Member States and EU agencies, as well as internally in the European Commission. Participants would be allowed to identify the responsibilities and roles of all stakeholders in outbreak management and take into account the transmission of information between involved departments at national, EU and international level and to test the transmission and sharing of information, and communication processes between EU Commission, Member States and non-EU-countries.

The expected outcomes from this simulation exercise will be to evaluate the effectiveness of participating

countries' contingency plans to deliver a harmonized response and control measures, to check whether specific standard operational procedures exist and to check their effectiveness based on the ASF spread in the different environment – non-commercial and commercial domestic pig holdings and wild boar population, to assess the effectiveness of the collaborative working arrangements both within and between participating countries and relevant EU bodies; to assess the degree to which there is a common and consistent understanding and application of key definitions and concepts, and of the existing alert systems and communication tools; and to identify learning that can be shared and used to enhance participant's response capability, EU protocols and ways of working and to increase the level of preparedness, especially for countries at the high risk of ASF introduction and for all MS in the EU, because the ASF might be introduced by the human factor to any of the currently free MS.

Annex 2: Legislation and guidance

The background of the animal disease control legislation is Regulation (EU) 2016/429 of the European Parliament and of the Council of 9 March 2016 on transmissible animal diseases and amending and repealing certain acts in the area of animal health (Animal Health Law). The overarching piece of legislation providing the tool for the control of African swine fever in the EU is Commission Implementing Regulation (EU) 2023/594 of 16 March 2023 laying down special disease control measures for African swine fever and repealing Implementing Regulation (EU) 2021/605. In this framework, the latest specific regionalisation measures that have been taken with respect to evolution of the ASF situation in the EU are included in the same Regulation.

Annex 3: Agenda

Agenda

Inter-sectoral simulation exercises

on crisis management coordination and response in the Animal Health Sector

Rome, Italy

8-10 April 2024

	<i>Contents</i>	<i>Duration</i>	<i>Tutor</i>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Better Training for Safer Food: presentation of a video	10'	
Webcast (PPTs pre-recorded and available on BTSF academy)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">01. Crisis management coordination and response in the animal health sector: institutional and legal framework	25'	German CACERES GARRIDO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">02. Animal disease information system (ADIS)	25'	Tihana MIŠKIĆ
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">03. World Animal Health Information System (OIE-WAHIS)	20'	Tsviatko ALEXANDROV

DAY 1. Background, legal and Institutional framework

<i>Time</i>	<i>Topic</i>	<i>Tutor</i>
13.45	Registration of participants	
14.00	Welcome addresses	Training Coordinator
14.10	Introduction of tutors and participants	All tutors and participants
14.50	05. Simulation exercise – background, objectives and expected results: Exercise format	Training Coordinator
15.00	06.01. Simulation exercise, inject 1 <i>Inject and relevant documents provided by email, videoconferencing chat and BTSF Academy</i>	Group work
15.40	Coffee break	
16.00	Debriefing on inject 1	All tutors
16.30	06.02. Simulation exercise, inject 2 <i>Inject and relevant documents provided by email, video conferencing chat and BTSF Academy</i>	Group work
17:10	Debriefing on inject 2	All tutors
17:40	Open discussion session	
18.00	Conclusions and end of Day 1	Training Coordinator

DAY 2. Simulation exercise

09:00	Recap of the simulation exercise	Training Coordinator
09.10	06.03. Simulation exercise, inject 3 <i>Inject and relevant documents provided by email, videoconferencing chat and BTSF Academy</i>	Group work
10.00	Debriefing on inject 3	All tutors
10.30	Coffee break	
11:00	06.04. Simulation exercise, inject 4; preparation for the audio conference meeting	Group work
11.40	06.04. Simulation exercise, inject 4: audio conference meeting	
12:30	Lunch break	
13:30	06.05. Simulation exercise, inject 5 <i>Inject and relevant documents provided by email, videoconferencing chat and BTSF Academy</i>	Group work
14.20	Debriefing on inject 5	All tutors
15.00	06.06. Simulation exercise, inject 6 <i>Inject and relevant documents provided by email, videoconferencing chat and BTSF Academy</i>	Group work
15.30	Debriefing on inject 6	All tutors
16.00	End of Day 2	

DAY 3. Debriefing, lessons learned

09:00	Recap on the simulation exercise	Training Coordinator
09.10	06.07. Simulation exercise, inject 7: preparation for the TV debate	All tutors involved
10:00	06.07. Simulation exercise, inject 7: TV debate	All tutors involved
11:00	Coffee break	
11.30	07. Exercise debrief: Lessons identified, actions required to ensure lessons learned <i>Brainstorming exercise</i>	All tutors involved
12.30	Open discussion session	
12.40	Presentation on the Dissemination of the exercise	
12.50	Conclusions	
13.00	End of the training session	

Annex 4: Training material, outcomes and dissemination activities

Training material

All participants will receive the training material well in advance of the training. The material will include additional pre-recorded material for offline studies. Preparatory training materials will introduce the specific topic and provide background information to participants.

All participants will receive a Dissemination Kit electronically to enable them to actively disseminate course knowledge upon their return from BTSF training. Participants attending face-to-face courses will receive the information on the USB key.

Training material in your language

By registering for the BTSF ACADEMY all course participants will have the possibility to translate all the information and training materials in the BTSF ACADEMY, including this course, into 22 European languages. Information and training can also be viewed in additional languages using the automated translation features of common web browsers. This feature is accessible via the languages selector on the BTSF ACADEMY home page. It allows users to:

- Access the content of the BTSF ACADEMY translated to EU MS official languages
- Download documents in a translated version and the original language version to compare formatting/original meaning
- Follow the training activities more comfortably
- Improve their understanding of the topics related to their area/s of work
- Disseminate their acquired knowledge
- Use the materials to train other colleagues in their organisation
- Draft additional training material based on the available information translated into their language/s.

Whilst not perfect, the eTranslation service is continuously improving. The BTSF ACADEMY Team will keep working to ensure the maximum compatibility of the original content and to extend accessibility to a wider audience.

Those users interested in the eLearning modules in their own language in the BTSF ACADEMY and viewing the platform in additional languages to the eTranslation option, should follow the instructions in the ACADEMY home page [here](#).

Dissemination Kit

This contains the following training materials:

- All course presentations
- Study notes on field trips and group activities/discussions and conclusions thereof
- The course syllabus
- The training information sheet
- Glossary of terms and abbreviations used in the course
- Additional references for further study
- Written guidance on how to actively disseminate course knowledge to colleagues upon participants' return to their home countries, different methodologies/examples/best practice
- Other information and material delivered at the course such as quizzes, FAQs etc.

Dissemination questionnaire

Two to three months after the respective training session, participants will receive a standard questionnaire requesting information on the dissemination activities of the participant after the training, and details on differences in the approach adopted in day-to-day work following the training.

Self-assessment test

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

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

For Face to Face and Virtual Classrooms

By participating in the training, participants agree to:

- be registered in the BTSF Academy
- provide the details requested by the contractor to register in the BTSF ACADEMY (including the provision of requested Commission EU Login details including the (Unique Identifier at the Commission - uid) -instructions on how to do this will be supplied. Please note participants who do not provide details as requested will NOT be able to register in BTSF ACADEMY and **will NOT receive a certificate of participation.**
- attend a group photo of the participants and tutors at the end of the training session. Photographs will be published in the BTSF Academy in the corresponding training course section and will be visible only to registered users of the BTSF ACADEMY.
- give their permission to be filmed, should this be required. At least one session of every series of workshops/videoconferences must be recorded. Videos and photo will be published in the BTSF Academy in the corresponding training course section and will be visible only to registered users of the BTSF ACADEMY.

Please find more information regarding data protection here:

<https://btsfacademy.eu/training/mod/page/view.php?id=417>

Annex 5: Contractor contact details



The Project is managed by: **OPERA Srl**

Project Manager: **Claudio BOMPARD**

Training Coordinator: **MARIUS MASIULIS**

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

All official communication between National Contact Points and the project will be maintained through the functional e-mail address 20199602simulationexercise@btsftraining.com or by phone to +39 06 8073315.

All information on BTSF training can be found at the [BTSF Academy](#) website. The website will be regularly updated with details of forthcoming courses.