



National Institute for Public Health
and the Environment
Ministry of Health, Welfare and Sport

The logo for CERACI, with the word 'ceraci' in a stylized font. The letters 'ce' are green, 'ra' are red, and 'ci' are green. The letters are bold and have a slight shadow effect.

Good Practices in Preparedness and Response for Cross-border Chemical Incidents

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RIVM

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How well do we know our neighbours?

Scenario: A large chemical incident on our border

- How do our neighbours assess exposure for health risk assessment?
 - do they need help or do we?
- Who should we approach for information?
 - will they share it with us?
- Are our public health messages aligned?

**Can we answer these questions?
Possibly not!**





Cross-border Exposure characterisation for Risk Assessment in Chemical Incidents

Main objective:

- To strengthen public health risk assessment for the acute phase of a chemical incident by improving exposure assessment, **with a special focus on cross-border incidents**

Beneficiaries:

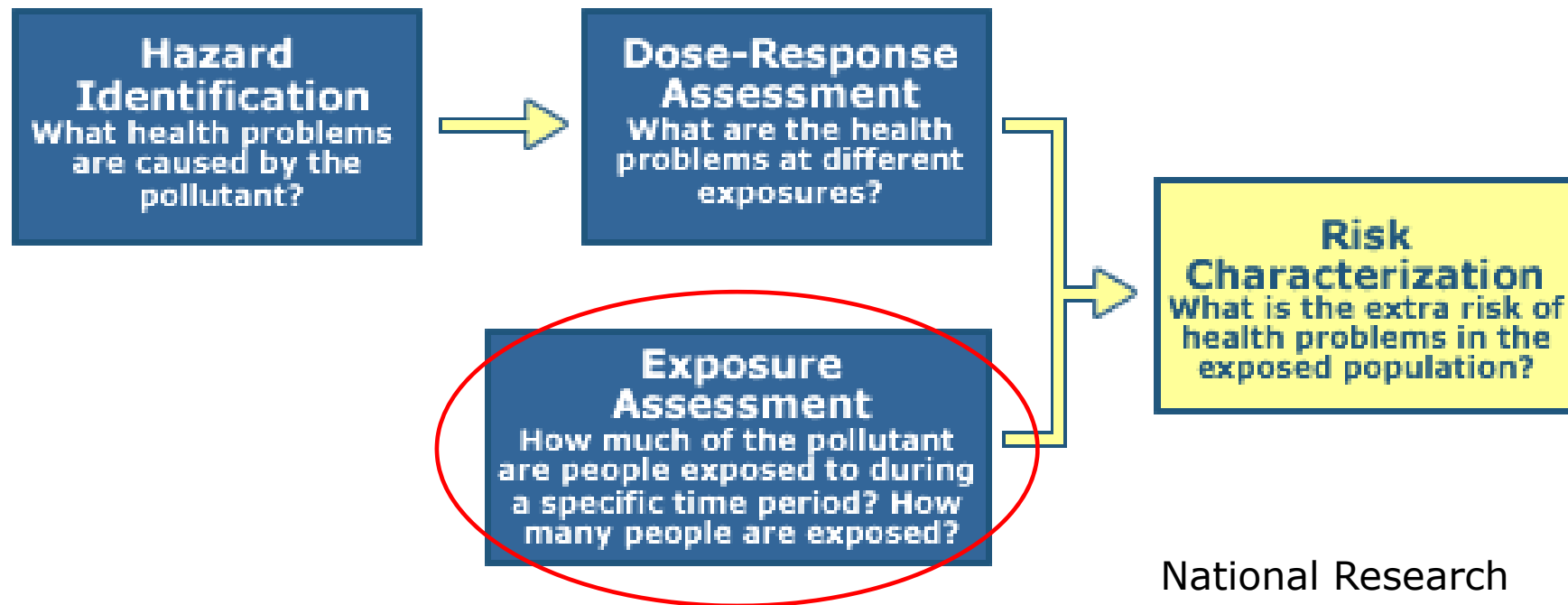
- RIVM: National Institute for Public Health and the Environment
- HPA: Health Protection Agency, UK (now Public Health England)
- NIOM: Nofer Institute for Occupational Medicine, Poland
- Subcontractors: Dutch Public Health Services

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Focus on Exposure Assessment

The 4 Step Risk Assessment Process



National Research Council; NRC, 1996



CERACI Key Questions

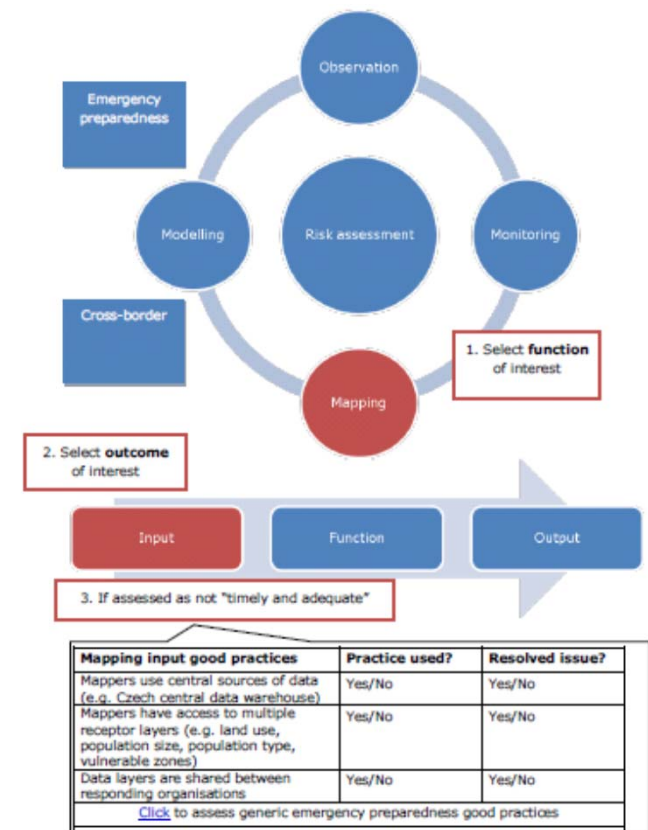
- How have Member States (MS) organised exposure assessment for health risk assessment during acute chemical incidents?
- Which MS have organised collaboration and interoperability on exposure assessment nationally and across borders?
- Which good practices - technical or organisational - are there and how can these be (further) developed?





Key CERACI Outputs

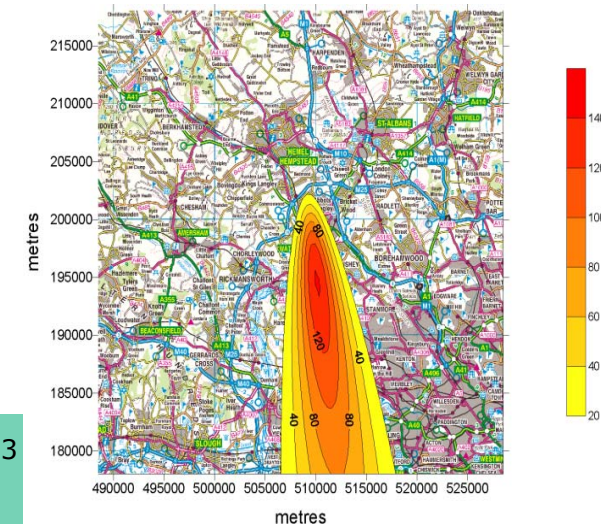
- Summarised response structures across MS
- Compiled, categorised and verified good practices in exposure assessment across MS
- Developed guidelines for exposure assessment organisation and practice
- Developed a self-assessment methodology to identify gaps in capability
- Identified treaties and agreements for collaboration, cross-border working and mutual aid





Good Practices in Cross-border Exposure and Risk Assessment

- Monitoring, modelling and mapping capabilities are available 24/7
- Outcomes promptly available and 24/7
- Comparable/harmonised outputs (minimum: compared and differences understood)
- Sharing data using web-based platforms
- National laboratory networks cooperating across border
- Mobile monitoring/lab units able to cross borders
- Cross-border HazMat teams
- Use of common approaches to risk assessment
- Harmonised reference values
 - e.g. use of Acute Exposure Guideline Levels





Good Practices in Cross-border Emergency Preparedness

- Interagency training and exercising across borders (including Public Health)
- Shared preparedness materials & response plans
- Bilateral or multilateral agreements, underpinned by detailed local/regional arrangements
- Focal points and defined points of contact
- Harmonised procedures and resources to facilitate collaboration
- Prioritise risks in cross-border planning and preparedness
- Agree consistent approaches for risk assessment, management and communication





Good Practices in Cross-border Emergency Response

- International alerting mechanisms and communication channels
- Cross-border links at both national and responder level
- Use of checklists and pre-prepared guidance
- Resources that cross borders to provide assistance, where requested
- Sharing of exposure and risk assessment information between counterparts
- Common approaches to risk assessment, management & communication: sustaining dialogue between incident managers
- Debriefing after incidents and sharing of databases and information





Key Recommendations

- Develop programmes to improve emergency preparedness and response, using self-assessment to prioritise and target work
- Establish a multidisciplinary, multisectorial European forum of exposure and risk assessors, linking to national forums and networks of experts
- Support and implement shared harmonisation initiatives
- Facilitate exchange of good practices and lessons learnt from cross-border incidents & joint training and exercising
- Use and develop legal and institutional frameworks that help responders deal with cross-border incidents
- Work with neighbouring countries to identify shared risks, and prepare and exercise a collaborative response to cross-border incidents
- Develop dedicated resources for cross-border response and raise awareness of existing support mechanisms for mutual aid



The Bigger Picture

- Obligations re International Health Regulations (WHO)
 - EC Decision on Serious Cross-border Threats to Health
 - *Covers: Monitoring, early warning and combating serious cross-border threats to health*
 - Main objectives:
 - › To provide for coordination to ensure adequate level of **preparedness planning** for serious cross-border health threats
 - › To provide for **risk assessment** and **risk management** for serious cross border health threats from **chemical, biological and environmental origin**
- NB. does not include threats of radiological or nuclear origin

The logo for ECHENNET is centered at the top of the slide. It features the word "ECHENNET" in a bold, white, sans-serif font with a black outline. The text is set against a background of three overlapping circles in orange, red, and green, with a network of blue lines and dots connecting various points across the circles. The entire logo is framed by a thin black border and is centered within a light green horizontal bar.

ECHENNET

European Chemical Emergency Network

Objectives:

- To consolidate existing **guidance documents and procedures** for coordinated risk assessment and management of cross-border chemical incidents
- To engage with end-users and stakeholders to ensure guidance documents and network are robust and fit-for-purpose
- To further develop a sustainable **network of public health risk assessors** to respond to emerging cross-border incidents
- To produce and test examples of potential chemical threats



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