

[PRACTICE]

D6.5 INDOOR FACILITY VALIDATION EXERCISE ARDEN (BIRMINGHAM, UK)

PRACTICE WP6 deliverable

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Summary Work Package 6

Field Integration and Validation

The objective of work package 6 is to integrate the PRACTICE toolbox into real environments and to validate it by the means of live exercises. Three exercises will be organized in three different countries and each with a different focus, thus covering different conditions and challenges related to CBRN threats. The exercises will be conducted by actual end users in a highly international composition and in realistic settings. The views of end users on the usefulness of the toolbox during these exercises will represent a significant added value for the project’s conclusions. Existing and new PRACTICE tools will be integrated in order to evaluate the improvement of preparedness and resilience to realistic CBRN crisis.

Detailed documentation and professional evaluation of the exercises will produce guidelines for practical implementation of the toolbox within the EU including a validated training kit.

Work Package team:

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1. Executive Summary

1.1 Overview and Objectives

Exercise ARDEN, which is reported upon in this document, was the first of three validation exercises within Project PRACTICE. It took place at the Birmingham International Convention Centre and the IET's Austin Court complex on 15th August 2013.

The objectives of Exercise ARDEN were:

1. To demonstrate preparedness and response to a CBRN incident in an enclosed space, with limited number of entrances, mazelike structure, large crowds of moving people, presence of surveillance and blocked ways of approach.
2. To provide a platform for the preliminary testing of the WP5 toolbox and to provide feedback for its future development.
3. To provide a vehicle for the development of human behaviour tools from WP8 – in particular a Human Behaviour User Manual under development by Kings College London (KCL).
4. To capture the views of end-users as these will represent significant added value to the project's conclusions.
5. To validate the tools used within the Tool Box.
6. To balance the expectations of the project participants against the realities of such an exercise bearing in mind the commercial environment, the capabilities of the public, safety, ethics and the number of stakeholders.
7. To ensure communication, management and perception are properly coordinated in the interests of the owner of the site.

This report fulfils the requirements of Deliverable D6.5 of Project PRACTICE, it

- A) shows how Objectives 3, and 4 were met - the remaining objectives are dealt with separately in D6.6 – which presents a detailed exercise evaluation - and D6.2 which presents the build-up to the exercise and in particular the extensive consultation and engagement that took place.
- B) highlights significant observations and lessons learned such that they may be taken into consideration during the planning for the second Project PRACTICE exercise in Sweden and the third in Poland in 2014.

The exercise was planned and directed by PRACTICE partner CBRNE Ltd with the support of the West Midlands emergency services (co-ordinated by the West Midlands Police), Birmingham City Council (and their Resilience Teams), the International Convention Centre staff, Austin Court Staff and the PRACTICE team among others.

The exercise simulated the effects of

- i. the deliberate release of a hazardous chemical in an enclosed lecture hall (Hall 5 of the ICC),
- ii. the ensuing evacuation to a holding area (Bay C),
- iii. attendance by the emergency services

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- iv. disrobing of potentially exposed persons
- v. decontamination of potentially exposed persons
- vi. survivor reception and police interview

Facilities were also provided for the interview of players and emergency services.

Objectives 3 and part of 4) were met by providing the opportunity for Kings College London to include two groups of volunteers into the exercise, who were provided with guidance and information that was being developed for their Human Behaviour User Manual. These volunteers, known as Groups K1 and K2, were required to go through the whole of the process highlighted above and were interviewed afterwards. Also, for Objective 4) feedback was also obtained from emergency services on the day and through a post exercise wash-up in October.

A further group of volunteers was provided by the British Red Cross and the Casualties Union, but these exited the exercise after step iii) above, through a triage style process which was executed by CBRNE Ltd and PRACTICE partners.

The detailed plan for the exercise, including the forms and processes used is presented separately in the Exercise Action Plan (EXACTPLAN) to which reference is made in the current report. The EXACTPLAN and its annexes can be found in the Project PRACTICE CAMBRO intranet site.

1.2 Lessons Learned

The key lessons learned during the planning and execution of Exercise ARDEN can be summarised as;

All potential Stakeholders should be involved as early as possible in the planning process;

Allow plenty of time immediately prior to the exercise to i) ensure that all players are registered in a controlled and efficient manner and ii) to ensure that they have fully understood their briefings and have had a chance to ask questions.

The numbers of non players (e.g. observers and mentors) should be kept to an absolute minimum consistent with meeting the Exercise's objectives.

Prior training, qualification and expertise ensures that unforeseen risks will be appropriately managed.

Early engagement of media and the use of professional media relations experts is essential to a successful exercise.

A detailed programme of events for all activities leading up to and following the exercise itself is a useful tool.

As much of the planning as possible should be undertaken at or with easy access to the proposed exercise site so that issues can be resolved as quickly as possible. A more detailed listing of Lessons Learnt can be found in Section 6 of this document.