EpiSouth Plus Project:
The new challenge of the EpiSouth network for enhancing the control of public health threats and other risks in the Mediterranean region and South-East Europe

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The EpiSouth network was established in 2006.

The network activities in 2006-2010 were funded by the EU DG-SANCO (EpiSouth Project) with the support of the Italian Ministry of Health (EpiMed Project).

From the initial involvement of 9 EU-countries, the network was enlarged to include also 18 non-EU-countries.

A new phase of the network activities called “EpiSouth Plus” started in October 2010 with co-funding by the EU DG-SANCO and EU DG-EuropeAid together with National Public Health Institutes and Ministries of Health.
Growth of the EpiSouth Network

9 EU countries at the Project starting (October 2006)

27 countries as per December 2010 (9 EU countries, 17 non-EU countries and 1 acceding country)
EpiSouth Activities (2006-2010)

The network worked in the past four years to enhance communicable diseases surveillance in the Mediterranean region and South-East Europe.

The network activities have focused on:
- Cross-border epidemic intelligence
- Vaccine preventable diseases and migrants
- Cross-border emerging zoonoses
- Training in field/applied epidemiology

More details are available at www@episouth.org
Lessons Learnt (2006-2010)

- The approach based on countries expectations and regional needs has facilitated interest in participation.

- The methodology adopted has enhanced co-ownership of participant countries.

- The presence of international institutions (ECDC, EC, WHO-EURO, WHO-EMRO, WHO-HQ) has allowed sharing views while avoiding overlapping.

- The web-based Network Working Area has provided a permanent communication tool and doc repository.
Added Values (2006-2010)

- Raised awareness on regional and countries cross-border issues

- Filled a geographical area with common public health problems that is not addressed, as a whole, neither by the European Union nor by WHO

- Succeeded in creating trust, cohesion and concrete collaboration among PH officers of 26 countries in the Mediterranean region and South-East Europe
EpiSouth Plus (2010-2013)

Start: 15 October 2010
Duration: 30 months
Funding: - EU DG-SANCO (EAHC)
- EU DG-EuropeAid (Instrument for Stability)
- EU Member States
- Non-EU countries
- Italian Ministry of Health
- ECDC
EU Partners in EpiSouth Plus

1. ITALY
   - Institute of Health, Rome;
   - Local Health Unit, Turin;
   - General Hospital, Padua;
   - National Institute of Infectious Diseases, Rome;
   - CINECA, Bologna;
2. FRANCE
   - Institute Pasteur, Paris;
   - Institut de Veille Sanitaire, Saint Maurice Cedex;
3. SPAIN (Istituto de Salud Carlos III, Madrid);
4. BULGARIA (National Center of Infectious and Parasitic Diseases, Sofia);
5. CROATIA (Institute of Public Health) as acceding country
6. CYPRUS (Ministry of Health, Nicosia);
7. GREECE (Hellenic Centre for Disease Control and Prevention, Athens);
8. MALTA (Ministry of Health, Valletta);
9. ROMANIA (Institute of PH, Bucharest);
10. SLOVENIA (Institute of Public Health, Ljubljana);
1. ALBANIA, Tirana (Institute of Public Health);
2. ALGERIA, Alger (National Institute of Public Health);
3. BOSNIA & HERZEGOVINA (Ministry of Civil Affairs, Sarajevo; Ministry of Health and Social Welfare, Banja Luka, Republic of Srpska; Public Health Institute, Mostar, Federation of B&H);
4. EGYPT, Cairo (Ministry of Health and Population);
5. FYROM–Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Skopje (Institute for Health Protection; Clinic of Infectious Diseases);
6. ISRAEL (Center for Disease Control, Tel Hashomer; Ministry of Health, Jerusalem);
7. JORDAN, Amman (Ministry of Health);
8. KOSOVO UNSCR 1244, Prishtina (National Institute of Public Health);
9. LEBANON, Beirut (Ministry of Public Health);
10. LIBYA, Tripoli (Infectious Diseases Department Tripoli Central Hospital)
11. MONTENEGRO, Podgorica (Institute of Public Health);
12. MOROCCO, Rabat (Ministry of Health);
13. PALESTINE, Ramallah (Ministry of Health);
14. SERBIA, Belgrade (Institute of Public Health);
15. SYRIA, Damascus (Ministry of Health);
16. TUNISIA, Tunis (Ministry of Health);
17. TURKEY, Ankara (Ministry of Health; Refik Saydam National Hygiene Center)
EpiSouth Plus (2010-2013)

General Objective

To increase the health security in the Mediterranean area and South-East Europe by enhancing and strengthening the preparedness to common health threats and bio-security risks at national and regional levels in the countries of EpiSouth Network.
EpiSouth Plus Project organisation

- General Assembly (GA)
- Country Focal Points (CFP)
- WP Steering Team (WP-ST)
- WP co-leaders
- Project Steering Committee (SC)
- Advisory Board (AB)
Apart from the three horizontal WPs (i.e., coordination, dissemination and evaluation), the project is articulated in four core WPs.

- **WP4**: Mediterranean regional laboratories network
- **WP5**: Generic preparedness plan and risk management procedures
- **WP6**: Early warning system and cross-border epidemic intelligence
- **WP7**: Data and info collection and assessments for IHR implementation
WP4 - Specific Objective

Establishment of a mediterranean regional laboratories network:

A network of regional laboratories (including P4 Lab) will be established in order to facilitate common threats detection in the countries involved.

WP leaders: French Institute Pasteur & Refik Saydam National Hygiene Center, Ministry of Health of Turkey
WP5 - Specific Objective

Promotion of common procedures in interoperable generic preparedness and risk management for the countries involved in the project:

Specific capacity building measures will address the need of interoperability and intersectoral collaboration of countries’ preparedness plans to fit the requirements of the IHR and to ensure multi-country harmonic and prompt response.

WP leaders: Spanish Instituto de Salud Carlos III & Institut National de Santé Publique of Algeria
WP6 - Specific Objective

To enhance mediterranean early warning systems (EWS) allowing alerts and epidemic intelligence information sharing among EpiSouth countries and developing inter-operability with other European early warning platforms:

Participating countries will share alerts generated by their national EWS with the EpiSouth EWS platform and inter-operability with EPIS will be developed.

WP leaders: French Institut de Veille Sanitaire & MECIDS (Middle-East Consortium for Infectious Diseases Surveillance), Israel, Palestine and Jordan
WP7 - Specific Objective

Production of a strategic document with guidelines based on assessments and surveys aimed at facilitating IHR implementation:

In order to support the implementation of IHR, specific surveys and assessments will be conducted among the EpiSouth countries to describe how national plans and legislations can interact/interfere with IHR requirements.

**WP leaders:**  
*Italian National institute of Health and WHO-LYO*
Conclusions

- The project promotes knowledge, resource and information sharing, and development of international trust

- The reinforcement of relations of trust in the region is an objective and an instrument in the scope of project’s implementation

- The large number of participating countries makes EpiSouth the biggest inter-country collaborative effort for health threats control in the mediterranean region
Acknowledgements

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