

The preparation of a Biosecurity toolbox to strengthen European Biosecurity



RfS 13_HOME/2014/ISFP/PR/CBRN/0025



Background

As knowledge diffuses rapidly to different parts of the world, through the globalization of information and communications technology, a growing concern emerges that biological agents could be easily used as weapons by non-state actors in the future. Moreover, certain emerging technologies and scientific advances of biotechnology are altering the risk landscape for bioweapons use in a variety of ways (for example regarding 'dual use' concepts). The malicious use of synthetic or edited pathogens could possibly enable hostile actors to develop weapons that are cheaper, more powerful and easier to use. As it is highly unlikely that societies could ever completely eliminate vulnerability to biological agents, the main purpose of this EU funded project is to reduce accessibility to CBRN materials, with a special focus on biological agents that are used or are stored in laboratories.

Project scope

The project aims to create understanding by the Commission and EU Member States on current policies of Member States in relation to biosecurity, to evaluate the policies European Member States should address to mitigate proliferation risks regarding biological materials and to assess a spectrum of measures that could restrict the access to materials that represent biological proliferation risks, i.e. the biosecurity toolbox. Thus, this project will directly support development of the European Commission's DG Home affairs CBRN-E agenda, including development of a variety of policies and activities jointly contributing to the enhancement of common security within the EU.

Consortium

The project will be executed by a consortium consisting of RIVM (National Institute for Public Health and the Environment, Netherlands), ENEA (Italian National Agency for New Technologies, Energy and Sustainable Economic Development) and ENCO (consultancy providing specialized services on nuclear power and CBRN topics to both government and industry). Additional in-kind support is confirmed by members of the European Biosecurity Regulatory Forum (EBRF).

Tasks & Deliverables

Phase 1: Current policies of EU Member States on biosecurity

1. Inventory of agencies responsible for biosecurity
2. Requirements to comply with international instruments
3. Overview of current policies of EU Member states

Phase 2: Development of a Biosecurity Resource Toolbox

4. Matrix of available resources and their applicability for the EU
5. Development of the biosecurity resource toolbox

Phase 3: Presentation of Biosecurity Resources to Member States

6. Brief to inform EC and Member States on the outcomes and preparation of a workshop



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This project is funded by
the European Union