

EMBRACE Tabletop Exercise (TTX)

When: 18–19 March 2026 (full day)

Where: Austrian Red Cross HQ, Vienna

Biotoxins, whether of natural origin or deliberately used, pose a significant risk to public health and safety due to their high toxicity, slow onset of symptoms, and the difficulty of early detection. Agents such as ricin, saxitoxin, and botulinum toxin are of particular concern because they can be weaponized or accidentally released in ways that challenge traditional response mechanisms.

EMBRACE is a forward-thinking initiative under the Horizon Europe programme, addressing the critical need for enhanced crisis management strategies tailored to biotoxin incidents. EMBRACE implements a structured programme of trials and exercises, including a Tabletop Exercise (TTX) and Field Training Exercises (FTX1 and FTX2), to provide controlled evaluation environments for validating project outputs and technologies.

The TTX is designed to address the challenges associated with the detection, assessment, coordination, and decision-making processes required during biotoxin incidents by simulating a realistic biotoxin incident and assessing the operational, technical, and procedural readiness of key actors.

The EMBRACE TTX is intended for responder organisations, law enforcement and security actors, forensic and research laboratories, policy and standardisation communities, industry technology providers involved in preparedness and response to biotoxin incidents. It provides an opportunity to test inter-agency coordination, validate tools and protocols, and generate actionable insights for improving future preparedness and response. The scenario selected reflects credible threat characteristics and is tailored to expose gaps in existing systems while supporting practical learning and improvement through testing of the innovative EMBRACE technologies.



EMBRACE technologies that will be tested



Biotoxin Reference and Stakeholder Hub

The Biotoxin Reference and Stakeholder Hub (BRSH) is a federated, interoperable knowledge exchange platform, improving access to information, expertise, tools and policies for biotoxin preparedness and response. BRSH is defined through requirements and an architectural framework based on end-user consultations, then implemented in iterative platform releases integrating new data and modules.

Biothreat Risk Assessment framework

The Biothreat risk assessment framework (BioRA), accessible to clinicians, responders, and public health officials, provides up-to-date risk assessment of the incident as it unfolds. The framework consists of four main components; the Biotoxin Risk Assessment tool, the Biotoxin Escalation Pathway tool, the CBRN Toolbox and the Biotoxin Scenario Builder.

Biotoxins Escalation Pathway

The Biotoxins Escalation Pathway is an alerting mechanism and algorithm trigger that reads the data from multiple systems to output alerts to the appropriate public health officials on casualties. Information about each casualty will be interpreted through two models; one to identify potential biotoxins responsible for the casualties being intoxicated, and another to determine possible locations where the contamination occurred, increasing understanding of the scope of the incident and facilitating medical decision-making.



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