



D6.1 Workshop format & dissemination material, workshop conduction

WP6: Dissemination, knowledge transfer & good practice exchange

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List of abbreviations

AGES	Austrian Health and Food Agency (Agentur für Gesundheit und Ernährungssicherheit)
EC	European Commission
EU	European Union
ECDC	European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control
HaDEA	European Health and Digital Executive Agency
KPI	Key Performance Indicator
NGS	Next Generation Sequencing
RT-PCR	Real-time Polymerase Chain Reaction
SRIA	Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda
SWOT	Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
WP	Work Package
WGS	Whole Genome Sequencing

1 Summary

HERA 2 is adopting a funnel approach, similar to a marketing funnel, to ensure a broad but also targeted communication within the HERA 2 ecosystem of stakeholders, enable active engagement and achieve efficient dissemination of the project results. Primarily, it will focus on generating awareness by conveying key aspects and benefits of the HERA 2 project to the HERA 2 target audiences and furthermore, appeal to the consolidation and validation of the project's results to the public and establish it as a reference for research and innovation in the pandemic preparedness field.

Easy-to-understand visual materials are used to make concepts and benefits instantly recognizable to a wide audience. Customized content will be communicated to specific target audiences, aiming at creating and maintaining an active stakeholders' ecosystem. Equally, relevant information will be extracted from project deliverables, interviews with partners and collaborators, research and innovation case studies, activity reports. This information will be relayed through the HERA 2 communication channels to further support active engagement with the stakeholders.

Regarding a good practice exchange, a minimum of five exchange activities/workshops with different objectives and activities will be performed during the project. Each workshop will focus on either technical training or on strategic issues, depending on the current needs and wishes of the consortium.

HERA 2 partners will take part in local (national), EU and international level conferences, fairs and exhibitions, in order to raise awareness around the HERA 2 activities and expected results, as well as disseminate any relevant developments and outcomes. Attending related events will also be useful for HERA 2, as they provide ongoing information on specific aspects of discussion related to research and innovation, so that this information can be taken into account in HERA 2 exploitation plans.

Dissemination material will be published via the HERA 2 website, which will be updated regularly. Information on the results will be uploaded after each workshop. All workshop guidelines and workshop documentation will be provided in English.

In the course of work package 6, HERA 2 will also include the sister projects funded under the same call to distribute lessons learnt and gained knowledge throughout the broader nominated community.

2 Work package 6

This work package supports the specific objectives by maintaining a transparent, structured, and high-quality knowledge management and targeted distribution of the project results.

This is to be facilitated among others by:

- Dissemination planning
- Definition of target groups and stakeholder communities
- Updates on the HERA 2 public domain by news releases or information on the website
- Continuous exchange with relevant stakeholders and parallel initiatives
- Workshops and joint activities with external experts to grant inclusion of additional perspectives of the project work

The inclusion of flexible means of communication and exchange (e. g. use of online formats and tools, digital online tools) will grant the highest possible resilience and sustainability of knowledge transfer activities in times of highly dynamic developments due to the pandemic situation.

In accordance with the overall dissemination planning, two major streams of workshop formats are relevant for the dissemination of HERA 2: On the one hand, the content-wise distribution of knowledge as shown in the next generation sequencing (NGS) workshop series (see further description below) and on the other hand, the strategical networking and setup of continuous exchange loops.

2.1 Part A: Dissemination

The dissemination strategy and activities follow principles and best practices successfully tested by other European Commission (EC) projects and aligned with the EC guidelines for successful dissemination¹ (https://research-and-innovation.ec.europa.eu/strategy/dissemination-and-exploitation-research-results_en). Considering how the communication and dissemination activities have evolved during the last years, it is expected to have a solid digital communication and dissemination strategy as well as a balanced traditional approach with printed materials and in-person activities.

The HERA 2 overall dissemination strategy combines the identification and mapping of targeted groups (*whom to disseminate to*) and understanding of their needs and characteristics, in order to tailor clear and concise messages (*what to disseminate*) to the different target audiences. Additionally, its focus is to ensure the use of the most appropriate and efficient dissemination channels and communication tools to enable the development of adequate material per target stakeholders (*how to disseminate*). Furthermore, a defined timeline (*when to disseminate*) is included, assisting all project partners in implementing communication activities and reaching the dissemination and exploitation objectives throughout the project implementation.

¹ Communication, dissemination & exploitation what is the difference and why they all matter (document published by European Research Executive Agency on 16.06.23: https://rea.ec.europa.eu/publications/communication-dissemination-exploitation-what-difference-and-why-they-all-matter_en)

2.2 Part B: Workshop format & workshop conduction

Focusing on reaching a wider audience and stirring up a successful lasting impact of HERA 2 results beyond the key targeted stakeholders of the project, this deliverable will outline a list of proposed networking activities with other projects, initiatives and networks that will further enhance the dissemination reach and impact, encouraging interaction with the project activities.

At least five exchange activities will be planned and set up with parallel initiatives to foster fruitful exchange and mutual benefits in regards of good practice exchange. These exchange activities include workshops and online consultations, among others.

Workshops will focus on:

- a) Technical and scientific training on demand and according to current needs and wishes of the consortium:
 - A wish list was created in which every project partner may list all the topics of interest and potential needs for further education in specific fields of knowledge over the duration of the HERA 2 project.
 - Workshop documentations will be published via the HERA 2 website after the agreement of the trainers and participants.
 - Technical workshops are planned to be mainly in-person trainings if required (depending on the required equipment) and will be held in a “smaller circle” among project staff.
- b) Strategic issues, depending on the timeline and therefore requests by EU:
 - Strategic workshops will mainly deal with a pool of topics from partner organizations and potentially from sister projects, depending on their interest and will of collaboration and exchange.
 - We are in contact with organizations of sister projects for best practice exchange regarding dataflows.
 - Strategic workshops will preferably be held online, and therefore with a bigger participants range. Workshop documentations will be published via the HERA 2 website after the agreement of the trainers and participants.

3 Dissemination level

An impactful communication and dissemination approach tailors the message accordingly to the targeted groups' specific needs and expectations. Therefore, HERA 2 will present its activities and results in an appropriate, accessible, and easy-to-use format.

An internal dissemination plan is developed since the retroactive start of the project as per 01.10.2022, where concrete and far-reaching activities are defined. They describe exactly how results/activities can be made accessible to other countries in addition to the consortium so they can directly benefit and connect with the project. In the dissemination work package (WP6) several events (e. g. workshops, stakeholder dialog, publications...) are planned. The participation in the events is open to all experts and thus the results and experiences will be shared on an international level.

The HERA 2 Consortium will disseminate best practices and share experiences and knowledge from the pilots through workshops, training, meetings, and communication channels such as website, leaflets, presentations, letters, and reports. This will be facilitated by applying best practice from the

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communication sector such as strategical dissemination planning, interactive workshop design and stakeholder exchange.

Communication: Five stakeholder workshops (online and in person) will be organized with approximately 30 participants to be held to inform stakeholders about the purpose and outcome of the project. A kick-off event will mark the beginning of the project. A closing event will be organized during the last month of the project implementation in order to present the project results to the project stakeholders, most prominent among them ECDC/HaDEA/HERA 2 and EC representatives as well as parallel project initiatives to ensure sustainability of these results (WP1). During the project, partner meetings and meetings with stakeholders will be organized as part of WP1 and WP6 regularly online and in person to grant the highest possible likelihood of these events even in pandemic times.

Dissemination: The dissemination plan will be elaborated in WP6 to share information/documents with the target groups and especially with the identified stakeholder groups in pandemic management. Information of the project progress will be regularly provided by updates on the project website and preparation of exchange and information for stakeholders.

The dissemination plan will also include:

- Definition of stakeholders and target groups
- Strategic and targeted information plan
- Preparation of a project presentation, to be updated regularly according to project achievements
- A project website, hosted by AGES
- Organization of news releases/newsletters
- Publication on scientific platforms

The visibility of the project is vital for the project's success. The EU visibility criteria as defined in the agreements will be followed in the deliverables as well as in internal communication. The project management and dissemination teams will take care of the adherence to these regulations.

The outcomes produced during the HERA 2 lifespan will respect the open access policy and the participants will be encouraged to publish peer-reviewed scientific publications, for example on the Open Research Europe platform (<https://open-research-europe.ec.europa.eu/>), if feasible.

The public HERA 2 reports, summary documents, roadmaps, Strategic Research and Innovation Agenda (SRIA) will be published online via HERA 2 website and the partners' communication channels.

3.1 Dissemination objectives

The objective of the dissemination strategy is to recognize and consolidate the activities to be performed to maximize the influence/impact of the project and to ensure active communication throughout the project to promote effectively (through various exploitation routes) the key project results. To ensure the widest possible dissemination of the project and to increase its impact and outreach, HERA 2 dissemination objectives have been set around five pillars:

- i. Project website with regular updates and news to present the project and provide information about the current status and results; those will also be provided on the beneficiaries' websites or social media accounts.

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- ii. Informing of and exchange with the relevant stakeholders by a multilateral exchange of knowledge, challenges and best practices; this includes the dialogue with ECDC and HaDEA as well as with additional parallel initiatives and projects aiming to support the European dimension in public health cooperation.
- iii. Uploading of the public project results to the EU4Health Project Results platform, available through the Funding & Tenders Portal.
- iv. Actions involving scientific and stakeholder focused publications (mention the action and the European flag and funding statement on the cover or the first pages following the editor's mention).
- v. Actions involving stakeholder focused events and training activities to broaden the impact of the project's findings (display signs and posters mentioning the action and the European flag and funding statement).

HERA 2 also aims to exploit partnerships with some relevant local and international business and scientific journals to enhance the HERA 2 dissemination outcomes. The selection of these key journals will be made under the advice of the work packages representatives.

3.2 Dissemination material

Dissemination material addresses primarily public health agencies and organizations and will include stakeholder dialogues and fostered feedback loops. Additional key messages will be:

- Identified challenges for the public health sector to establishing new workflows
- State of the art surveillance support systems
- Bioinformatics databases

The pilot cases will be communicated to facilitate better workflows, enhanced capacity, and sustainable and manageable use of the provided infrastructure in the long run.

3.2.1 Project website

In the first three months of the project the website was set up by the AGES IT and launched as a subdomain of the AGES website.

The HERA 2 website contains basic information about the project and introduces the main objectives and activities of HERA 2. Relevant information about the partners and affiliates is also included as well as a dedicated section containing details about the project work packages and links to its deliverables (only public deliverables). A repository of the project's publications, reports and meetings documentation will be also included and updated in a regular manner. Additionally, a dedicated news section on the website is hosting articles, recent news items and other relevant publications. The news area is a focal point to communicate about the project's activities through easy-to-read articles to engage the target audiences.

The HERA 2 website platform is flexible. It will enable the consortium to grow content-wise and add new sections and pages when needed.

The Privacy Policy, together with the Terms and Conditions, are included in the HERA 2 website, clarifying the general rules and policies governing the visitors' use of the website.

Dissemination material like the accessible project leaflet, published on the download section of the HERA 2 website, provides information about the current status of the project and relevant outcomes and possible synergies with sister projects. The website will be updated at least every six months.

3.2.2 Project Folder

The HERA 2 project produced an accessible folder to resume the project information that will be used for ice-breaking communications with interested stakeholders, providing them with a first view on the HERA 2 project. A folder will be designed to inform relevant stakeholders about HERA 2 project. The folder will be created in line with HERA 2's visual identity in order to support the recognition of the project. The promotional material will be distributed online and, if needed, printed for in-person activities. In general, the promotional materials can also be used as an advertisement for the past and upcoming HERA 2 activities, as well as a medium to distribute the content provided by HERA 2 work packages.

Additionally, a poster template will be available to be used in internal and external presentations.

Furthermore, in case of need, different factsheets can be developed to enhance the promotion of the HERA 2 achievements, highlighting numbers and topics of interest.

3.2.3 Press releases

Press releases on the HERA 2 project activities and developments will be produced and distributed for publication among national/regional/EU press to further promote the project. Apart from specific project activities, occasionally the topics covered may include opinions/interviews of experts within and outside of the partner organizations, attracting media attention to relevant topics.

Continuous cooperation with the press and media will be promoted by all HERA 2 partners. All press releases will also be available on the HERA 2 project website as well as social media channels.

4 Technical workshop specifications

To determine the potential needs for training or further education, a "wish list" was compiled with contribution of all partners in order to create a pool of topics for potential workshops. Every project partner may append topics of interest in specific fields of knowledge over the duration of the HERA 2 project. Those topics with the highest relevance/voting scores by partners will be selected as topics for future workshops. Potential topics of interest from and for sister projects will be included after a consolidation phase.

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Input by organization	Topic	target audience	aim	level of expertise required	potential trainers	Type	Requirements
AGES	Introduction to the Linux Command Line Interface (CLI)	People that never worked on the CLI before	gain knowledge of the basic commands required to work in a CLI	none	AGES and/or external experts	hands-on	laptops for command line tools
AGES	Introduction to command line tools for bioinformatics	Biologists who want to get started in bioinformatics	gain basic knowledge about command line tools and their output	basic understanding of the CLI; basic knowledge in molecular biology (e.g. what is a genome)	AGES and/or external experts	hands-on	laptops for command line tools
AGES	Basic bioinformatic workflow from FASTQ to FASTA; some bioinformatics vocabulary (e.g. assembly, N50, coverage, alignment).	Biologists who want to gain knowledge in some basic tasks in bioinformatics	gain basic knowledge on bioinformatic workflows; allows wet lab members to get a better understanding in bioinformatics	very basic knowledge in molecular biology (e.g. what is a genome)	AGES and/or external experts	theoretical	-
AGES	Phylogenetics (optional: including IQTREE); (dis)advantages of different approaches	Biologists who want to gain knowledge in some basic tasks in bioinformatics	gain knowledge on performing phylogenetics using CLI and/or online tools	basic knowledge in molecular biology; basic understanding of the CLI	AGES + if IQTREE: external experts	theoretical and hands-on	laptops for command line tools
AGES	Metagenomics basics/differences in wetlabs compared to sequencing of single organisms	Biologists and bioinformaticians who want to get started with metagenomics	gain basic knowledge on metagenomics and how to perform it in the wetlab	basic understanding of molecular biology; lab experience	AGES/NCPHP/ external experts	theoretical	-
AGES	Metagenomics analysis	Biologists and bioinformaticians who want to get started with metagenomics	gain knowledge on different tools used in metagenomic bioinformatics; basic knowledge in interpretation of results	basic understanding of molecular biology; CLI knowledge (optional)	AGES/NCPHP/ external experts	hands on	laptops for command line tools
AGES	Hands-on nanopore sequencing	Biologists who want to get basic training in nanopore sequencing	gain first hands-on experience in nanopore sequencing	wetlab experience	AGES and/or external experts	hands on	laboratory
	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD

Figure 1: Exemplary list of identified potential workshop topics

4.1 Aim

Key priority of the HERA 2 project is to identify and consolidate international best practice and state of the art WGS and RT-PCR activities for public health. Hence, the aim of technical workshops is to ensure the sustainable use and integration of enhanced infrastructure into routine surveillance and outbreak investigation activities, in synergy with relevant ongoing work at international level and will be conducted via professional training programs with a focus on HERA 2 in- and outputs. The newly established workflows and state of the art sequencing techniques are important tools for surveillance of existing and newly emerging pathogens and antibiotic resistances.

4.2 Target audience and financial frame

Technical workshops conducted within the framework of HERA 2 address the scientific community, primarily among project partners, sister projects and public health stakeholders and will comprise technical and scientific training on demand. The setups will be according to current needs and wishes of the consortium and are planned to be in-person trainings, held for a “smaller circle” among project staff. This will address mainly bioinformaticians, laboratory experts, senior researchers, and other responsible persons. In the roster, there will be a specific area pointing out the target audience for the respective topics and trainings.

Regarding the financial frame, travel and subsistence costs for the trainers will be covered. HERA 2 staff attendants can be funded by the project budget, if applicable. External attendees can be included free of charge, but their travel costs will not be covered by the project HERA 2.

4.3 HERA 2 workshops as reach out activities

Greece, Hungary and Austria took part in the first waves of the GenEpiBiotrain program launched this year by ECDC. It is expected that the other two partners will be part of this training as well.

At the International Meeting on Pertussis, one of the pathogens of interest for this consortium, our project was promoted trying to establish synergies. One of the points of interest would be the participation in the EUPERT Study 2023-2026, which overlaps very well with the duration of HERA 2.

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Furthermore, the ECDC has been contacted by AGES to see if the content of the ECDC-AGES co-organized workshop in June at AGES can be used for the HERA 2 workshop in May, as well as the expert panel.

4.4 Frequency, range

After the first project year, findings and identified lessons learnt will be regularly exchanged. Workshops will take place in accordance with all partners to ensure the highest possible distribution level.

4.5 Already conducted workshops

The first technical workshop was conducted during the first year of the project's duration: On May 2nd and 3rd 2023, the consortium held an NGS workshop on the campus of the University of Crete in Heraklion, which was successfully delivered to 30 participants, representing the public health labs of all 4 consortium partners. The focus of this workshop was on microbial NGS sequence data analysis, providing participants with an introduction to the most commonly used analysis tools, accompanied by hands-on practical training sessions on multiple outbreak scenarios. This scientific workshop was held in association with the consortiums steering meeting, which followed on May 4th and 5th. This conjunction fostered in-depth exchange both within and outside the consortium, spanning both scientific and management topics.



Figure 2: Agenda of the NGS workshop at the University of Crete, organized by the Regional Public Health Laboratory of Crete Virology lab

4.6 Future workshops

The next workshop, "Introduction to Bioinformatics Training" will be HERA 2-internal in Vienna, May/June 2024, will give an orientation to the basics of sequence analysis for the HERA 2 consortium, intended for members with no previous bioinformatics experience.

Workshop documentations will be published via the HERA 2 website afterwards with the agreement of trainers and participants. Furthermore, this deliverable will be updated with respect to conducted and planned workshops in October 2025.

5 Strategic workshop specifications

Strategic workshops will broach strategic issues, depending on the timeline and requests by the EU. The focus will lay on a pool of topics from partner organizations and potentially from sister projects, depending

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on their interest and will of collaboration and exchange. We are already in contact with organizations of sister projects, aiming to ensure a best practice exchange of dataflows.

Further workshops and exchange activities will be planned in accordance with the needs and wishes of the project partners, including sister projects and their ability and willingness to contribute.

Workshop documentations will be published via the HERA 2 website after the agreement of trainers and participants. Furthermore, this deliverable will be updated with respect to conducted and planned workshops in October 2025.

5.1 Aim

The HERA 2 infrastructure and workflows will contribute to improved surveillance activities, outbreak responses and pandemic preparedness in Europe. The exchange with high-level stakeholders to communicate possibilities for a harmonized workflow, enhanced capacity and sustainable and manageable use of the provided infrastructure on the long run are vital for the project's success.

Counting on the support from HERA 2 consortium partners, direct and indirect access through their networks, will ensure that the dissemination activities will effectively and successfully achieve high reach and impact key performance indicators (KPIs).

For example, survey results from the previous protect HERA 1 and the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) analysis from sample providers are planned to be shared in a seminar or workshop.

An internal workshop including all HERA 2 partners is planned on data workflows in the partner countries, including descriptions of equipment and workflows and including pros and cons of each.

5.2 Target audience and financial frame

Strategic workshops will preferably be held online with a bigger participants range in comparison to technical workshops, e. g. stakeholders, EU and international organizations.

Dialogue and communication will focus on identified best practices, but also bottlenecks and emerging challenges as infrastructure key elements relevant for the partner countries of the project.

Ensuring a dynamic interaction with the HERA 2 targeted audiences is of utmost importance in order to ensure a long-term impact on the project outcomes. The engagement and participation of all stakeholders is critical to ensure sustainability.

With a focus on robust communication and effective information exchange between diverse scientific disciplines, public agencies and multiple implicated sectors of society, various engagement activities will be conducted during the HERA 2 project lifespan to create awareness of the project's actions to the scientific community, stakeholder groups, policymakers, and other European partnerships and initiatives, as shown in Figure 2. This will be addressed in task 6.3 "Good practice exchange".

Additionally, the research and innovation community will be mobilised to actively engage in the preparatory activities for the HERA 2 project. Their active engagement and interaction within the project's partnership establishment phase, with positive perceptions from the recognition of HERA 2's



Figure 3: HERA 2 project environment

public health long-term benefits, will not only work as an amplifier in the dissemination of the project out-comes but also will optimally enable the creation of HERA 2’s pool of potential future partners.

Regarding the financial frame, travel and subsistence costs for the trainers will be covered. HERA 2 staff attendants can be funded by the project budget, if applicable. External attendees can be included free of charge, but their travel costs will not be covered by the project HERA 2.

5.3 Frequency, range

After the first project year, findings and identified lessons learnt will be regularly exchanged. Workshops will take place in accordance with all partners to ensure the highest possible distribution level.

A community of users will meet online twice a year for presentation of best project results, challenges and encountered problems, and for sharing expertise and experiences with a focus on blind spots and potential future development areas.

Further workshops and exchange activities will be planned in accordance with the needs and wishes of the project partners, including sister projects and their ability and willingness to contribute.