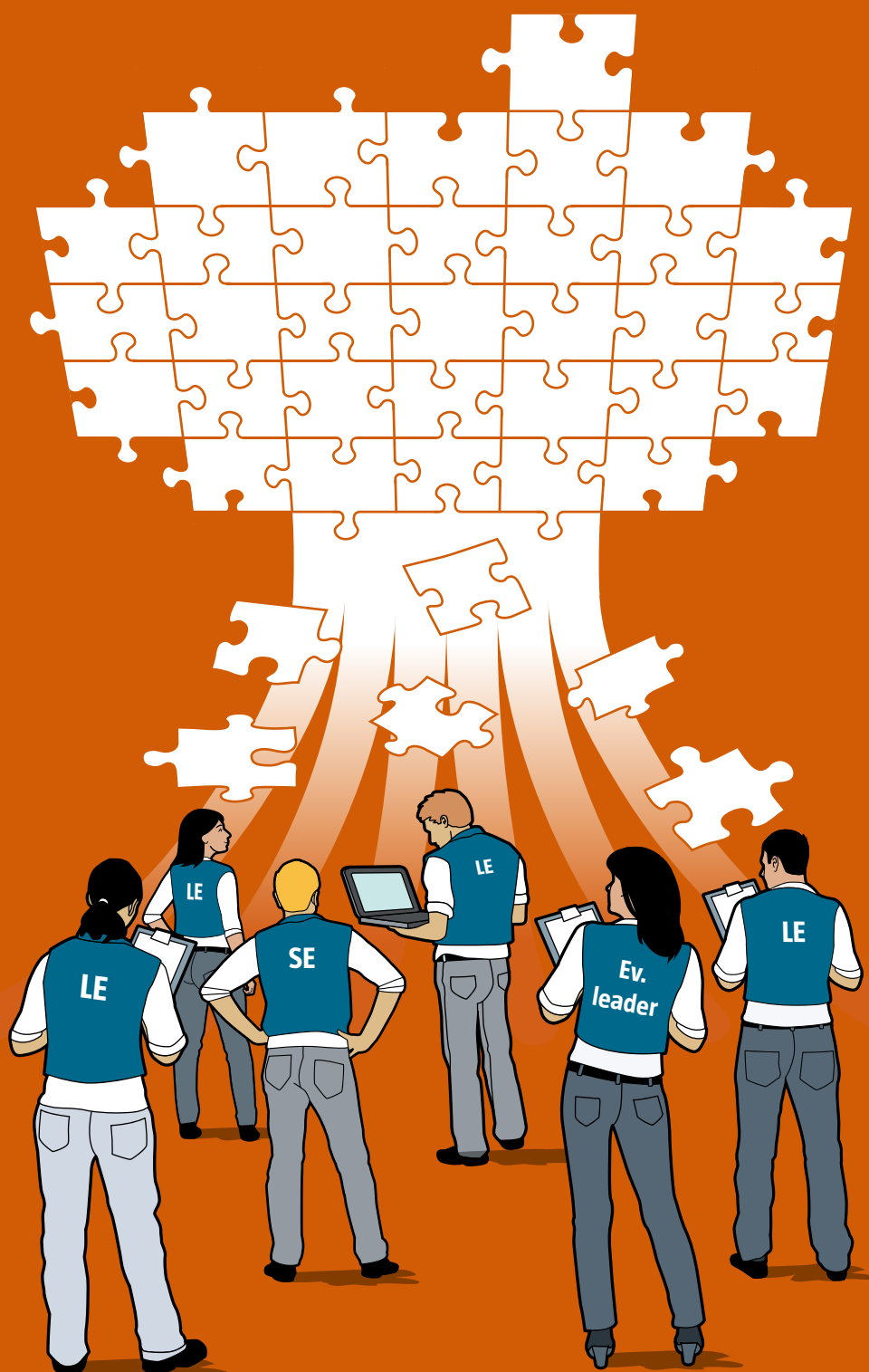


Exercise Guidance

Method Booklet – Exercise Evaluation



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Exercise Guidance
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Foreword

Conducting exercises is one of our most important tools for strengthening our capacity to manage accidents and crises. Together, in the safe environment provided by exercises, actors have the opportunity to test their plans, their actions and their organisations in an imaginary crisis situation, without the risk that any missteps lead to anyone's being injured, or to any other serious societal consequences.

Experience from major events of recent years shows the need to develop collaboration. Looking to the future, we see that exercises will increasingly focus on civil defence and heightened preparedness, thereby providing support in the revival of planning total defence. Deriving the benefit of the lessons provided by collaboration exercises, especially those that are cross-sectoral, is going to be even more necessary.

Conducting an exercise is important, but if the exercise is not evaluated and the lessons learned are not applied, then there is little meaning in committing months of work and sometimes years of preparations, or large sums of money and personnel resources, in conducting it. The purpose of the evaluation is precisely to increase our understanding of strengths and weaknesses, so that one knows what needs to be developed and improved (or to be kept, if it already works). An evaluation of high quality, both in its analysis and conclusions, is a central part of an exercise's lessons learned activities. By systematically finding out how an exercise went, and why it become so, the transition from exercise to operational development to practical actions is ensured.

The purpose of this Method Booklet is exactly that, to describe how an exercise evaluation can be carried out, for providing the best possible conditions for carrying out the exercise's lessons learned activities.

Our hope is that this Method Booklet will contribute support in knowing how an evaluation can be planned and conducted so that it is an integral part of the exercise before, during, and afterwards, a part of an exercise's lessons learned activities and that we, by providing them both in Swedish and English, also support effective international collaboration when conducting exercises.

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Introduction

1. Introduction

1.1 Why evaluate exercises?

The purpose of evaluating exercises is learning, and involves generating the knowledge about strengths and weaknesses that is needed for systematic development (or maintenance) of the capacity to deal with accidents and crises. Exercise evaluations are therefore strongly associated with learning that can contribute utility and influence practice.

An evaluation that provides high quality analysis and conclusions makes it possible to elaborate development areas that concretise what measures are required to strengthen capacity, both within and between organisations, and in the system as a whole. Concrete development areas that build on knowledge of why the identified weaknesses have arisen can be directly translated into measures that bridge the transition from exercise to operational development.

1.2 Evaluation – a part of lessons learned activities

An exercise's lessons learned activities require that experiences and lessons regarding strengths and weaknesses in handling accidents and crises are first identified in a structured manner, all the way from the planning process and the conduct of the exercise, to the evaluation's conclusions. The development areas identified are then translated into action plans that are to be implemented and used to develop the operations of the exercise's actors, with the purpose of developing the capacity to manage accidents and crises.

Even if several strengths and weaknesses can often already be identified in the planning process and during the conduct of the exercise (and some weaknesses can perhaps be addressed even before the start of the exercise, for example courses in WIS – web-based information system¹ – or in updating plans), it is primarily the evaluation result that contributes the largest part of the knowledge that forms the foundation for action and development. The evaluation therefore becomes a central part of an exercise's lessons learned activities. To ensure that the identified strengths, weaknesses, development areas and actions have an impact on the exercise actors' operational development, the actors need to work systematically with their exercise activities, where their multi-year exercise plans become an essential tool.



Suggested reading

Read more, in Swedish, about multi-year exercise plans, at www.msb.se

1. WIS is a national, internet-based information system created to facilitate information-sharing between entities in the Swedish emergency management structure before, during, and after emergencies.

1.3 Purpose

The purpose of this exercise guidance is to provide support for making decisions about planning, conduct and evaluation of a crisis management exercise, as well as support in the choice of method. The guidance is comprehensive and is intended to be easy to follow.

The purpose of the guidance (the Basic Manual and the Method Booklets) is to:

- Be a source of inspiration and support for those who will **make decisions** about a crisis management exercise.
- Be a source of inspiration and support for those who will **plan, conduct, and evaluate** a crisis management exercise.
- Be normative regarding **nomenclature and methodology** in crisis management exercises.

This Method Booklet's purpose is to describe how an exercise evaluation can be achieved to create the best possible basis for the success of the exercise's lessons learned activities.

1.4 Reading instructions and boundaries

This publication, *Method Booklet 6: Exercise Evaluation*, is an English translation of the sixth booklet in a series of MSB publications, in Swedish, on exercise planning. It accompanies the publication, *Basic Manual: An Introduction to the Fundamentals of Exercise Planning*, which is an English translation of the original manual, *Grundbok: Introduktion till och grunder i övningsplanering*. The series, including the two English translations, is as follows:

Grundbok: Introduktion till och grunder i övningsplanering. Translated and published as, *Basic Manual: An Introduction to the Fundamentals of Exercise Planning*.
Metodhäfte 1: Simuleringsövning med motspel [Method Booklet 1: Command Post Exercises].
Metodhäfte 2: Övning med fältenheter [Method Booklet 2: Field Training Exercises].
Metodhäfte 3: Seminarieövning [Method Booklet 3: Table-Top Exercises].
Metodhäfte 4: Lokal övningsledare [Method Booklet 4: Local Exercise Leader].
Metodhäfte 5: Funktionsövningar [Method Booklet 5: Functional Exercises].
Metodhäfte 6: Utvärdering av övning. Translated and published as, **Method Booklet 6: Exercise Evaluation. This is the present publication.**

The Basic Manual primarily addresses more general aspects, while the Method Booklets delve into specific events connected to each format and topic.

The Basic Manual should be read first, to attain a more comprehensive understanding of the exercise process as well as the purpose, objective, and choice of the exercise format. The intention is that after one has chosen the exercise format, the Method Booklets can serve as guidance and as a checklist for the ensuing work. The Method Booklet: Exercise Evaluation can, however, be used irrespective of the choice of exercise format.

The Method Booklet does not have to be read from cover to cover, but is intended as a reference work.

The target group for Method Booklet: Exercise Evaluation is above all those evaluators who will participate in the planning and conduct of an exercise's evaluation, that is, the evaluation leader, the local evaluators, and the system evaluators. The Method Booklet can to advantage be read by other central functions that are involved in the work of commissioning and leading the planning and conduct of

an exercise, that is, the actual commissioning actor, exercise leader, and the local exercise leaders. The extent and complexity of an exercise has less significance, since the process can be scaled either upwards or downwards.

The Method Booklet does not deal with the planning and conduct of an evaluation of the exercise as method (that is, what in an exercise context is usually called “process evaluation”). Neither does the Method Booklet address implementation of measures after the exercise has been conducted.

The Method Booklet is written with the command post exercise format in mind, but the reasoning and a sizable portion of the procedure can be adapted to other exercise formats. Differences are noted where applicable. Reading suggestions for the Exercise Guidance’s Basic Manual and the other Method Booklets make it easier for the reader.

The structure for this Method Booklet follows an intended chronological order, wherein evaluation is integrated in the planning process and is described in Parts I, II, and III, corresponding to before, during, and after the conduct of the exercise. The sections are intended to be followed step-by-step, as much as possible.



The role of evaluator

2. The role of evaluator

The evaluators are perhaps the most important persons in the entire exercise. It is they who will deliver the results of the exercise and be able to report how the exercise went and why. The result that they arrive at will become a part of the lessons learned activities that will lead to development and improvement, both in their own organisations and in the crisis management system as a whole. It is when one understands the extent of this role that one understands that the evaluators are the ones who should be invested in! This chapter provides a description of the different evaluator roles in an exercise and how one chooses evaluators so that, as a local exercise leader (LEL), or as part of the exercise management, one doesn't just choose "anybody at all."



2.1 Roles and responsibilities in the evaluation work

2.1.1 The evaluation leader



The evaluation leader has the overall responsibility for planning and conducting the *actors' joint evaluation* of the exercise, that is, the evaluation of the actors' collective capacity. Compare this to the local evaluators' task of conducting *actor-specific evaluations*). This difference in evaluator roles may need to be explained and reminded of continuously during the planning process.

The evaluation leader works closely with the exercise leader and has a central role in the exercise management. The evaluation leader needs to be appointed early, to be able to participate in the exercise's planning from the beginning. The evaluation leader's areas of responsibility and tasks are described in the different parts corresponding to before, during and after the conduct of the exercise.

2.1.2 The local evaluators (LE)



The local evaluators (LE) plan and conduct the exercise actors' evaluations of the exercise (*the actor-specific evaluations*). LE has, on the other hand, a double mission. One is to plan and conduct an actor's own evaluation of the exercise. The other mission is to be the exercise management's eyes and ears out in the organisation, and to contribute evaluation material to the *actors' joint evaluation* that the evaluation leader is responsible for.

As the name local evaluator implies, the function has an evaluative, that is, an assessment role. The LE is selected by and works close to the actor's local exercise leader (LEL). Someone who is LE cannot be LEL simultaneously, since holding both roles is a heavy workload, and these are difficult to combine.

LE's role is central for the exercise actor. Support in selecting LE is provided in Section 2.2, in this chapter. LE's areas of responsibility and tasks before, during, and after the conduct of the exercise are described in the corresponding parts of this methods booklet.

2.1.3 System evaluators (SE)



System evaluators (SE) contribute to the *actors' joint evaluation* on the basis of a specific area of expertise or evaluation area. SE is an evaluation function that is appointed and recruited by the exercise management (the exercise leader). SE contributes by assessing and valuating what occurs in "the system," that is, what is common to the actors and constitutes an overview perspective that is not possible for the LE to observe and assess during the exercise. SE is thus a complement to the LE.

SE can be placed with actors that have a central role during the exercise and that need to be especially observed from the perspective of collaboration (county boards, for example). Alternatively, SE can work from the exercise management during the exercise and observe those actors' joint actions that do not require the physical presence of any actor (for example, collaboration conferences, WIS, The Exercise Web², and press conferences). Depending on the orientation of the assignment, SE need to have various backgrounds and competence. Read more about how to select an SE in Section 2.2.

SE otherwise works similarly to the LE, with largely similar tasks during and after the exercise. The difference is that their evaluation tasks may have different orientations, and that they work for different commissioning actors.

2.1.4 The observers

During exercises, there may be observers who visit the exercise with a specific purpose (for example, research). The observer does not have any assessment role, but is nevertheless often in a position where, entirely practically, they could assist the LE with data collection. The simplest way to do this is to have the observer deliver a written briefing of his or her observations to the LE. Observers often have expertise in the exercise's area. When that is the case, LE can request the observer's assistance in interpreting the observer's contribution of collected data. The evaluation leader, in consultation with those LE who are affected, choose to what extent any observers present during an exercise can be engaged in assisting an evaluation, as well as, if that is the case, in what way one will make use of their assistance.

It is nevertheless the evaluators (the evaluation leader, LE, and SE) who are the central functions in the evaluation process. This means that the observer function can

2. "The Exercise Web" is a web page – in Swedish – developed by MSB, where the crisis communication during the exercise takes place.

be toned down. It is not needed to the same extent in an exercise where the LE and SE have the roles of both observer and evaluator.

2.1.5 The exercise participants

The exercise actors comprise the actual object of evaluation, but they will also indirectly be both recipients and users of the evaluation's results. To make the best use of what they know about how the exercise proceeded, and why, it can even be advantageous to use them as a valuable source of information for data-gathering during and after the exercise, and they can also provide support in the quality assurance work.



Suggested reading

Chapter 4 and Section 6.1.1 provide more details about how the exercise participants can contribute with more information for the evaluation.

2.2 How to select one's evaluators?

In the text below, the concept of evaluator refers to both LE and SE. The differences in the roles are pointed out if, and when, they need highlighting. The reasoning in this section can also be followed in the choice of the evaluation leader (which occurs much earlier in the process).

The information described in this chapter, about what the actors can consider when choosing their LE, is distributed by the evaluation leader during the inception meeting (read more in Section 5.1). Section 5.1 also describes when the LE should be selected and the dialogue between the commissioner and the evaluators that needs to take place even before the assignment has started. It is also central that the evaluators receive training in what they need for their assignment. Read about this in Section 6.2.

2.2.1 Internal or external evaluators?

The first aspect in selecting an evaluator deals with the degree of impartiality or independence from the organisation participating in the exercise that the evaluator has been assigned to evaluate. The evaluator should come from another actor than the one to be evaluated. The reason for this, in addition to impartiality, is that the evaluator should also be able to see the activity with other eyes. One can, for example, cooperate and exchange evaluation services (LE, in this case) between governmental organisations as well as across municipal and county borders.

If an exercise actor has chosen to have several LE, they can be a combination of both internal and external. This makes an objective evaluation more likely. This can reduce the risk of eventual conflicts that the internal evaluator might sense, and the information gathering that the external evaluator needs to perform can be facilitated by having an internal evaluator to work with.

Another perspective to consider, since LE are appointed so early in the planning process, is the time one requests that they set aside. It is going to be a long journey for a person from "outside," whose most heavy work will be required after the actual exercise, but it will nevertheless provide valuable experience to take back to their organisations, which perhaps did not participate in the exercise. From the perspective of time, there are advantages in having internal evaluators.

The persons in question can more easily set aside time during a longer period if they work within the same organisation that will participate in the exercise. LE can more easily be a sounding board for the LEL if they are available “in house”; it may be easier for them to engage in the work of producing objectives and assessment criteria, since they perhaps already know which questions the exercise needs to illuminate from the perspective of their own organisations. It is perhaps even easier for internal LE to communicate the evaluation’s results in a way that suits their own organisations, based on their knowledge of the organisation.

The description above indicates that it is not easy to give a clear recommendation in the question of whether the evaluator should be internal or external. It is thus best to choose a combination of the two. As LEL and commissioning actor, there is a need to try to be self-critical and dare to look beyond ones’ own organisation. If it still seems impossible to bring in an external evaluator, one’s own reference group, or other available experts, become even more important for quality assurance of the evaluation outcome.

2.2.2 Background and competence

The other aspect one must consider when choosing LE and SE is their backgrounds and qualifications. A good suggestion for an evaluator is one who is experienced and well-acquainted with the operations or activities that are to be evaluated. For example, the evaluator should have competence in crisis management and exercise methodology, and be able, not least, instil confidence in the participating actors. Other qualities include being well-versed in the “field,” and able to talk with people. The latter quality will be rather important, since the evaluator is recommended to be active and curious during the exercise, and not just “a fly on the wall” (of course, there may nevertheless be moments during the exercise when the evaluator will need to adopt a low profile and be just that, “a fly on the wall”).



Suggested reading

Read more, about the evaluator’s mode of working during the exercise, in Chapter 9.

Working as an exercise evaluator places great demands upon the person in question. Being able to carry out every step in the evaluation process in the best way possible requires routine and experience of exercises, as well as knowledge of staff and decision processes directed at crisis management. The ability to communicate the result in a user-friendly manner, both written and orally, is also central. In other words, the evaluator should be very knowledgeable, but it is unreasonable to expect that just one person can simultaneously be an exercise expert, educator, lawyer, behavioural scientist, political scientist, crisis management expert, psychologist, journalist, communicator, and so on, and therefore collaboration is required when one is going to create, conduct, and evaluate exercises. The evaluation leader, or the LEL, needs to make sure that, when interpreting the result, the evaluator receives the support of others with the skills and knowledge that complements his or her own. Obtain the help of persons with diverse types of necessary qualifications, from both within and outside the organisation, who can support the evaluation function by providing the expertise that the evaluator may not already have. Perhaps some of these persons may even be included in the evaluation working group?

A competence profile that may be inspiring during the choice of LE and SE follows:

- **Exercises:** experience of collaboration exercises at municipal, regional, or national level in the area of accidents and crises;
 - Has been trained, or participated, in the planning of collaboration exercises.
- **Evaluation:** experience in working with evaluation;
 - Has most preferably participated in evaluations of exercises, but other evaluation work may suffice (if the person is familiar with exercises).
 - Analytical, structured, and meticulous.
 - Can present results both orally and in written form.
- **Competence:** generally, and specifically:
 - Generally knowledgeable in the field of civil security and preparedness and especially in some of the areas or capacities that the exercise to be evaluated deals with.
 - Knowledge of how the crisis management systems works.
 - Is knowledgeable and has an understanding of working with RVA (risk and vulnerability analysis/assessment) or other similar analytical work related to accidents and crises.
 - Is knowledgeable about the focus that the exercise scenario deals with.

2.2.3 How many evaluators are needed?

Conducting a high-quality evaluation is labour intensive. How much time being LE or SE will require, and how many evaluators will be needed, will vary from exercise to exercise, and can depend on the exercise's extent, complexity, and duration. An exercise that lasts longer than a day will not only test the participating organisations' perseverance, but will also make demands on the endurance of the evaluation organisation.

The number of LE is also determined by the actor's location and the complexity of the actor's ambitions with regard to the actor-specific evaluation. Complexity, here, means that having only one LE may not provide enough capacity to conduct the evaluation, since some part may require a special expertise. One can otherwise assume that one LE is required per geographic location where the actor is situated on, if it is not easy to move between them. It may even be that the actor has activities in several locations, which may make it difficult for the LE to have an overview of the exercise, and thus several evaluators are needed. It is important to point out, though, that an exercise site should not be flooded with evaluators, since it may put at risk the dynamic that the exercise is intended to produce. A balance is required, so that the participants are not disturbed, at the same time as the evaluators have the appropriate conditions for collecting essential information.

2.2.4 Evaluator network

There are good examples of how, in association with exercises, networks have been built. These may be networks of colleagues from several municipalities, counties, or government organisations, or with another background, but who wish to participate as LE in a specific exercise. Such an evaluator network can be used in several exercises and, in that way, one preserves the experience and competence that has been accumulated by the evaluators. The experience that the evaluators acquire by participating in the evaluation of different exercises can then be taken back to their own organisations, which means that its usefulness is mutual. An evaluator network also comprises a support for those participating actors that have difficulty in appointing their own LE, or for those actors that wish to complement an internal LE with an external one from the network.

PART I
BEFORE THE EXERCISE

3. The basics

3.1 The planning process from an evaluation perspective

The planning of the exercise’s evaluation is a central part of the planning process. The planning of the evaluation should be part of the process from the very beginning, to create the best possible conditions for the anticipated evaluation result (the lessons that the exercise is expected to provide) and then run like a common thread throughout the entire planning process.

The overall planning process for an exercise is thoroughly described in the Exercise Guidance’s Basic Manual. The planning process is illustrated by two arrows that are used to describe the work that the exercise management and the exercise actors are pursuing in parallel. The planning process builds on participation, anchoring, and communication between the exercise management and the exercise actors, as well as between the exercise management, steering committee and reference group, for regular feedback. This especially involves the parts that touch on evaluation. Between the various joint planning conferences, much work is done, including extensive communication, both between the exercise management and the exercise actors, and internally for each actor. How the evaluation is integrated into the different parts is described in the sections below.

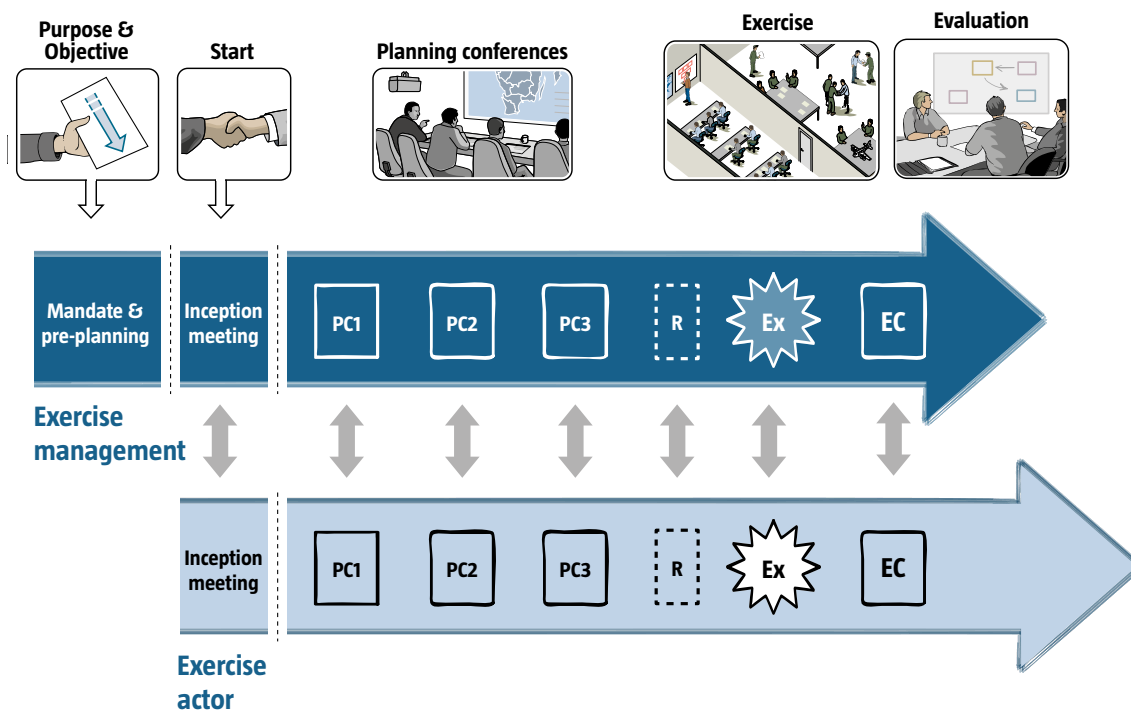
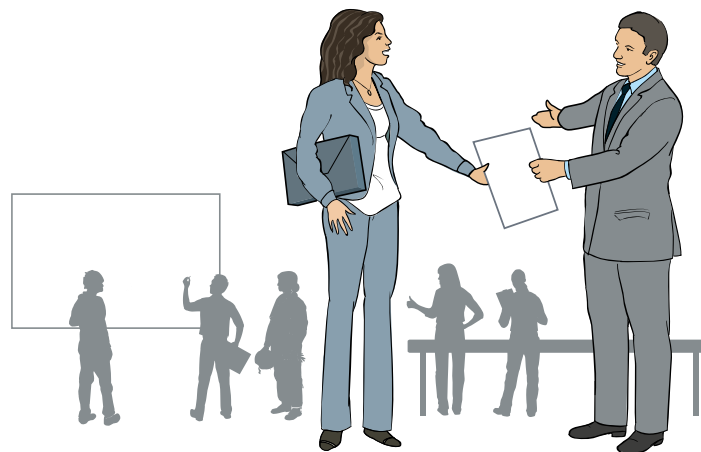


Figure 1: The planning arrows. The lower arrow is longer, to illustrate that the work of each participating actor continues in the organisations after the exercise.

3.2 Mandate and pre-planning

3.2.1 The mandate dialogue

An exercise has certain central parameters that need to be established before the process of planning together with the actors can start, that is, prior to the inception meeting. This occurs in the so-called mandate dialogue, which has the objective of providing the exercise leader with a clearer picture and direction for what the commissioning actor has in mind, and what this means for the exercise management, which has to plan, conduct, and evaluate the exercise. The mandate dialogue is most often conducted between the commissioning actor (the organisation that commissioned the exercise), usually represented by its most senior executive) and the exercise leader. If an evaluation leader for the exercise has been appointed, it is an advantage if that person participates, along with the exercise leader, in the mandate dialogue. If no evaluation leader has been appointed, the questions that touch on evaluation are handled by the exercise leader.



During the mandate dialogue, the exercise leader, evaluation leader – if already appointed – and the commissioning actor discuss the overall purpose of the exercise. If a clear idea about the purpose of the exercise is missing, the exercise leader can ask the commissioning actor questions about why the exercise is being conducted. The evaluation leader can participate in that work, but it is the exercise leader who is nevertheless responsible for producing a proposal for an overall purpose. It should then be anchored with the exercise actors at the inception meeting.

It is preferable that the commissioning actor already has an idea about what the desired outcome of the exercise is, so that a dialogue about it can be held during the mandate dialogue. The exercise leader and the evaluation leader therefore need to discuss with the commissioning actor what the exercise and its evaluation will be used for, and what its usefulness will be (the evaluation's function), as well as which concrete products (for example an evaluation report) will be delivered (i.e., the evaluation's product). These aspects also need to be anchored, at the inception meeting, with the exercise actors.



Suggested reading

See the Exercise Guidance Basic Manual for a list of parameters to discuss during the mandate dialogue.

The mandate dialogue should also clarify the division of responsibility in the ensuing lessons learned activities; for example, which function, normally a senior executive, who will have the responsibility for ensuring that the action plan is created and implemented once the exercise's evaluation is concluded.

Depending on which government organisation is responsible, and the direction of the exercise, it can also be relevant to discuss any questions of information security and secrecy (this can apply, for example, for exercises in civil and total defence).



Suggested reading

Mandate dialogues also occur among other constellations later in the planning process, when, for example, the evaluators are to receive their assignments. Read more in Section 5.1.2.

3.2.2 Pre-planning

During pre-planning, the preparatory planning activities that need to happen in the organisation responsible for the exercise, before the invitation to the inception meeting is sent to potential exercise participants, are conducted; and the planning process, following the planning arrows, begins. During pre-planning, the exercise planning organisation that needs to be in place is established, its various responsibilities and roles are defined, and an overall time-plan is produced. The planning organisation is described in general in the Exercise Guidance's Basic Manual and, from an evaluation perspective, in the next section of this Method Booklet.

When the organisation is established, it is time to begin preparing the material that is needed for the inception meeting. At the first meeting with the exercise actors, the overall planning and design of the exercise is presented, along with the proposal's overall purpose, and the evaluation is presented in more depth; the latter thus needs to be prepared before the inception meeting. The effort to produce the material that involves the exercise evaluation is led by the evaluation leader, with support from the exercise leader.

3.3 Organisation from an evaluation perspective

The first parts of this section on organisation describe how the actor that is responsible for the exercise can organise itself. The last section describes what may apply to the participating organisations.

3.3.1 The exercise management

Planning, conducting, and evaluating an exercise is an extensive job that requires a planned organisation that can work for a long period of time. The time from when the planning and evaluation of the exercise begins, to the time when the evaluation report is finalised and the results communicated may take up to two years (with subsequent time for dealing with the weaknesses that have been identified, but the responsibility normally rests outside the exercise management). Organising and staffing this in a structured and long-term way is therefore essential.



Suggested reading

In the Exercise Guidance Basic Manual, you can read about the advantages of running the planning process in a project organisation.

The exercise management is responsible for the planning and conduct of the exercise and its evaluation, and thus the evaluation leader also needs to be part of the exercise management. As a suggestion, the deputy exercise leader/project leader (if there is one) can be the evaluation leader, but the role can also be held by another person. The important thing is that the evaluation process has a place in the exercise management, so that the needs of the evaluation are clear.

3.3.2 The exercise management's working groups

The exercise leader fills other functions in the exercise management. These can comprise working groups, areas of responsibility, or sub-projects, for example for evaluation, scenario, conduct, and logistics. Depending on the resources and staffing, the working groups may vary; for example, scenario and evaluation can be the same working group.



To think about:

Don't forget to staff for the phase following the exercise, so that the evaluator doesn't stand alone when the exercise has been conducted and needs to be evaluated.

In staffing the organisation, one also needs to plan to staff the phase following the conclusion of the exercise. This is when the evaluation leader will need reinforcements in doing the extensive work that will produce the evaluation outcome. Therefore, do not dismantle the working groups until the exercise is evaluated and finished. Various functions in the exercise management, for example, the scenario working group, have valuable knowledge that is needed in the analysis.

It is important that at the beginning the exercise management work together with the objectives and the planning of the evaluation, since the exercise scenario and conduct need to relate to it. Therefore, do not directly divide the exercise management into working groups/functions during the initial pre-planning phase. It is important that the persons identified gather and work together with the overall parameters that need to be produced at the beginning. Alternatively, a core group consisting of the exercise leader, the evaluation leader, and leaders of the scenario and conduct working groups can be formed. This collaboration then lays the foundation for the entire group to strive in the same direction and have a common view of what will be done, no matter which working group one belongs to. According to the process described in the following section, it can be appropriate to wait to divide the working groups/functions until after the inception meeting.

When the working groups have been formed and the work with the different areas of responsibility is underway, they will still need a regular dialogue between them. The exercise leader needs to encourage dialogue and create the conditions for it.

3.3.3 Steering committee

A function or group with one or more senior executives should be attached to the exercise management, either solely from the organisation responsible for the exercise, or even more preferably, with representatives from several of the organisations participating in the exercise. Whether the exercise is planned in project form, and they are called a steering committee, is of less significance. The important thing is that there is a function or group that comprises the anchoring level upwards in the organisations. The function can participate, from the beginning, in decisions and in anchoring during the pre-planning. Through regular consultation, the function can subsequently be updated on the planning and conduct of the exercise and its evaluation, and thus ensure that the result and experiences

penetrate the organisation and are implemented. It is advantageous if the steering committee feel a special responsibility for planning how the lessons learned activities will be carried out when the exercise has been evaluated and finished.



Suggested reading

Read more about the role in the evaluation of the steering committee and the reference group, in Section 15.6.

3.3.4 Reference group

There should also be a reference group, or one or more experts attached with the exercise management, with the purpose of providing quality assurance for the work performed. A reference group can be attached to the exercise management as a whole, or to specific parts, or working groups, in the planning, for example, evaluation. The extent of the group can vary, but the quality assurance function applies regardless of whether it is attached to the exercise management or the local exercise management.

3.3.5 Exercise actors organise internally

Internally, the LEL for each exercise actor leads the planning work, and this work can also be performed in the form of a limited group, or in project form. There may be different areas of responsibility, for example scenario, evaluation, etc, but it may be sufficient to divide the responsibility among different persons, in case there are not enough resources for staffing working groups or sub-projects. LE, as well as the evaluation leader in the exercise management, needs to join early and take on a central role in the planning organisation. Likewise, LEL and eventual other functions in the planning organisation need to be accessible and to participate in the evaluation work together with LE after the exercise.

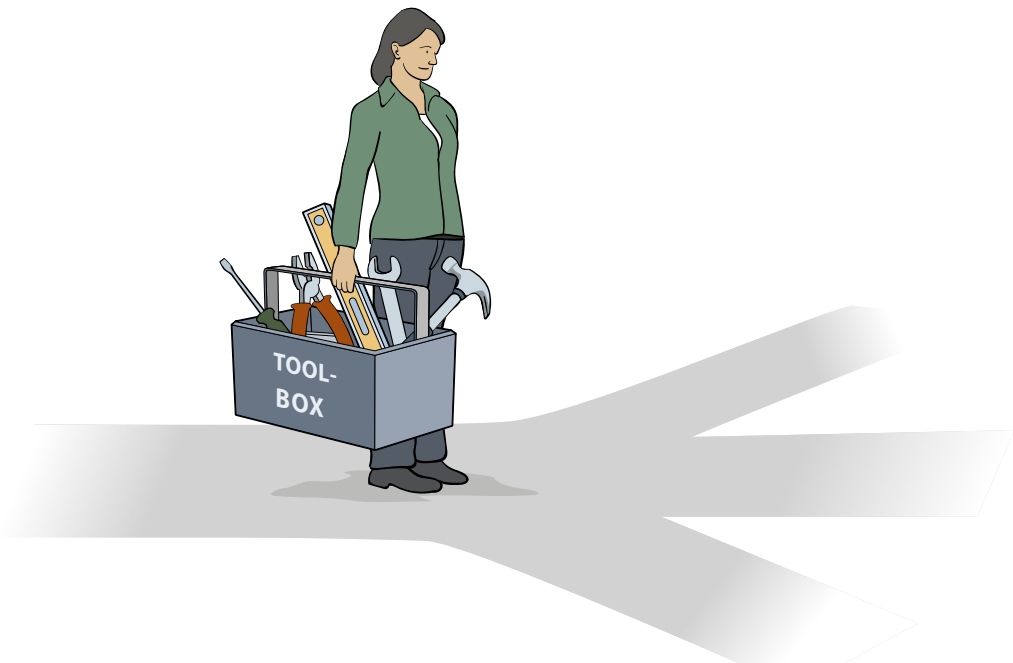


To think about:

If possible, attach some form of steering committee, or the decision-maker, to the exercise actor's internal planning, as well as a reference group/expert function for quality assurance purposes.

4. Overall planning of how the evaluation will be conducted

Planning for how the evaluation will be conducted takes its point of departure in the direction that was provided in the mandate dialogue. In order to arrive at correct expectations of what kind of result the exercise can provide, it is important, as mentioned above, that the exercise management has insight into and can participate in the work. Those persons who will eventually work with constructing the scenario and planning the conduct of the exercise need to be familiar with the planning of the evaluation, so that their work continues to be harmonized with it.



Suggested reading

How the evaluation is to be conducted also needs to be presented and discussed with the actors, so that their expectations are appropriate. This is done in planning conference 2. Read more in Section 5.5.

The conduct of the evaluation is based on what one wants to use the exercise and its evaluation for, and what the evaluation should deliver. The evaluation always has its point of departure in the same baseline values as the exercise itself; for example, the exercise's purpose and objectives will affect how the evaluation will be conducted, as well as the exercise's scenario and format.

With a starting point in the mandate dialogue with the commissioning actor, the evaluation leader must quite simply meet the requirements, on an overall level, of what the commissioning actor wants to know, and plan the conduct so that this is delivered in the best way.

Taking one or several turns through the series of steps depicted in the figure below can assist the evaluation leader in planning how the exercise will be conducted. The figure can also be used by the LEL and LE in the participating organisations when they are going to plan how the evaluation should be conducted in the respective organisations.

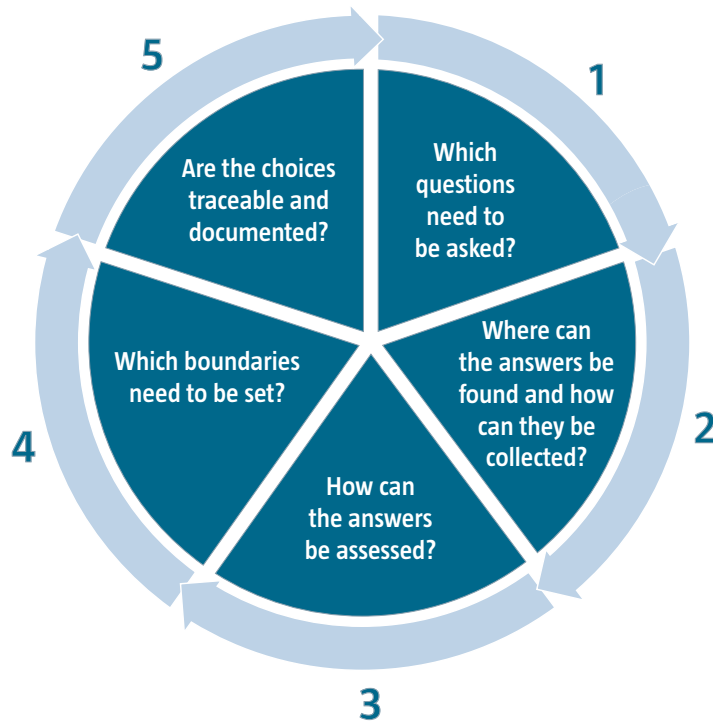


Figure 2: Points of support that can be used to plan how the evaluation will be conducted.

1. Which questions does the evaluation need to ask?

On an overall level, an exercise evaluation is about asking the questions “How did it go?” and “Why did it become so?”. To approach the answers to those questions, the evaluator needs to consider both the pre-existing conditions, the process, and the result (see Figure 3).



Figure 3: The evaluator needs to consider both the pre-existing conditions, the process, and the result, to acquire a picture of how it went and why.

What were the pre-existing conditions?

The activities of the participants need to be assessed against the pre-conditions of the exercise. How it went will depend on the challenges that the exercise actors faced. A challenging and complex scenario, for example rapid sequences of events that change the situation, will influence how the exercise actors act and, thus, how the exercise proceeds. To reach a fair evaluation, the evaluators should pay attention to these and other limiting factors in an exercise, since it is often not possible, nor necessary, to reflect reality entirely.

What was done and what was the result?

Depending on what the exercise and its evaluation are going to be used for, the evaluator places more emphasis either in evaluating the actual result (how it went), or the way leading to the result, the process (why it became so). See the example and the figure below.

Example

A commissioning actor wishes, by conducting a command post exercise, to exercise crisis communication, and find out if the work of the exercise actors leaves the general public with the impression that the information that reaches them is coordinated. The commissioning actor wishes to use the evaluation results to develop the collaboration on the coordination of communication. The exercise's overall purpose is testing, to test and see how it works, in order to identify whatever needs to be improved. The exercise thus needs to be conducted to produce just this kind of knowledge, that is: What needs to be developed (or retained) so that the actors' work with communications leads to coordination? The evaluator needs to focus his or her questions on the process, which should provide explanations of how it went, based on the general public's experience (see Figure 4).

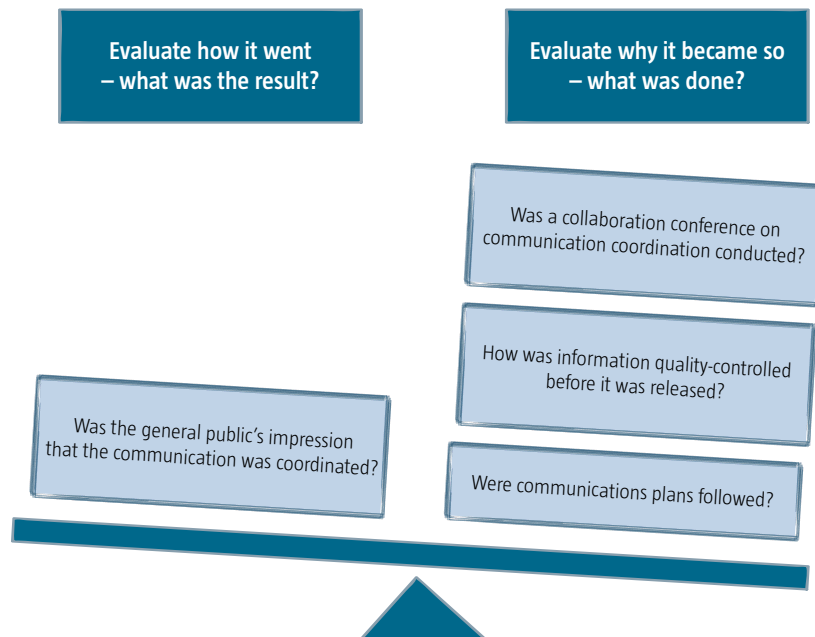


Figure 4: In the example above, the evaluator needs to put more emphasis on evaluating the way towards the result, the process, which will provide explanations for the result.

2. Where can the answers to the questions be found and how can they be collected? Is there any way to receive an answer to the evaluation's questions? Or does the evaluation leader already, here, need to adjust the procedure? In the above example, the objective is that the general public experiences the communication as coordinated. Will it be possible to capture the general public's impression during the exercise? Will there be a general public network, with the actual public represented, or do other solutions need to be found, by using crisis communications experts, for example, to play the role of the public during the exercise? Here, as an evaluator, one needs to reflect on who is best suited to answer the questions. Who is an expert in this question? In an exercise, there can be various groups who may be suitable for answering questions with the aid of an evaluation questionnaire:

- The exercise participants.
- The DISTAFF, e.g., those who play the role of media and the general public.
- Observers.
- Experts.
- General public network.



Suggested reading

In Section 14.8, read about whose voice has the greatest weight.

3. How can the answers be assessed? That is, what determines what is a strength and what is a weakness?

To assess what the strengths and weaknesses in capacity are, the work on discussing and agreeing about what to base the assessment on already needs to be undertaken during the planning process that precedes the exercise. What, essentially, is good crisis management? Is it a strength or a weakness if 70%, for example, of the general public who are questioned in the example above considered that the government organisations' communications were coordinated? It is vital, therefore, that so-called assessment criteria are produced, as a transparent and traceable basis that the collected material, the answers, can be assessed against. In many cases, there is no simple, obvious way to assess what the strengths and weaknesses are, which means that this work will need to be done to a different extent in every separate exercise.

Producing assessment criteria

The work with assessment criteria is a collaboration between the exercise leader, the reference group or other experts, and representatives of the exercise actors (LEL and or LE). The work proceeds as a part of the work with objectives, indicators, and evaluation questions, and needs to be ready by planning conference 3, when the evaluation instructions will be presented. The evaluation leader leads the work. The participation of the exercise actors can be ensured by working together with LEL and or LE, at a workshop or writing circle (edit-a-thon), to assist with the foundations of the assessment.

There are often regulations that specify the criteria that can be used, and which government agency and specific function is responsible, as well as how decisions shall be made and implemented. The assessment criteria can also be produced

based on input values known by the actors, such as guiding standards, best practice, or other normative documentation. This provides a baseline, for how to analyse and evaluate the actions of the participants. Be ready for the fact that these are often abstract and thus need to be operationalised and concretised. This is where previous experience and exercises can be of help.

When no documented assessment criteria are available, or it is not possible to apply them, which is not seldom the case in the area of crisis management, some other way of assessing the responses must be used. One way is to create exercise assessment criteria that can proceed from well-proven praxis (informal standard) – for example, the crisis management plans of a particular county, or other geographic area, or sector – in how organisations should act in societal disruptions. There may also be general guidelines from comparable sectors that may be useful. Criteria can also be formulated on the basis of information that can be found in background documents produced for the exercise, or through interviews in the participating organisations. A question to ask oneself here is what is needed for the assessment criteria to be sufficiently accepted and relevant?

Yet another way, if the creation of assessment criteria meets resistance and if there are different opinions about what applies, is simply to let the evaluation have a more investigative character. The evaluator can then describe the result and pass it on to decision-makers to assess its value. The evaluator can also adopt the role, when there are different perspectives on the assessment, to be more of a coordinating resource, who compiles what various parties think, and eventually delivers the resulting assessment alongside the other perspectives, as “one voice in the choir.” A final alternative is to leave it to different users of the evaluation (which is then more of an enquiry) to perform the integrative value judgement.



One proceeds as far as one can with the assessment criteria before the exercise. After the exercise, there are further ways to receive support. One way is to ask various groups to reply to evaluation questions in an evaluation questionnaire (or interview) following the exercise, and to embed an assessment in their answers, to perform an assessment from their perspective. In that event, there are no documented assessment criteria, except that the evaluation leader needs to report how the integration of the answers was done. There are different groups that can be asked. One group consists of those whom the exercise was designed for, for example affected companies, or the general public. The basis for assessment here can be simple, “the customer is always right.”

Another group that can help with the assessment is the one that deals with crises, that is, the exercise participants. They possess both the tools of peer review and self-assessment, where the valuation criteria are derived from the participants’ understanding of what good crisis management is, both in relation to their own actions (self-assessment) and that of other actors (peer review). Another group that can help with assessment includes experts within the field of crisis management. This may involve the experts in the reference group, or other experts.

In practice, regarding exercises, it is likely that the assessment criteria will be based as much on documented requirements and praxis as on collected opinions. Whatever they focus on – legal requirements/standards, attitudes/expectations – it is important to account for what the basis of being able to assess strengths and weaknesses is.

4. Which boundaries need to be set, given the available resources?

This is about making sure that the planned conduct of the exercise holds, based on the available resources. If the intended conduct does not coincide with the available resources, this needs to be communicated in the exercise management, and possibly with the commissioning actor and the exercise actors, as well.

Depending on which resources are available, the conduct of the exercise may need to be adjusted, and different parts up- or down-scaled, that is, the answers to questions 1–3 may need to be revised. Downscaling may entail further boundaries about which questions can be asked, to whom which questions can be posed, and the depth that can be demanded of the answers, as well as how extensively the assessment criteria can be worked on. The work on the evaluation’s boundaries proceeds during the entire evaluation process, and therefore may need several of the rounds depicted in Figure 2.

It is also important to attempt to delimit one’s data collecting, and avoid planning to collect it for its own sake, just because it may be “good to have,” or “just to be on the safe side.”

5. Documenting and communicating how the evaluation will be conducted

It is important to document carefully how one chooses, as an evaluator, to evaluate the exercise, and also to be able to justify the reasons for the choice. The evaluation leader does this in the evaluation instructions. In the evaluation plans, which are an appendix to the evaluation instructions, the procedure is documented in detail and, eventually, parts of it that describe the conduct are also moved into the evaluation report. The assessment criteria are also documented in the evaluation instructions and in the evaluation report.

5. Integrating the evaluation into the respective steps of the planning process

This chapter primarily describes the evaluation leader's tasks during the planning process. However, the steps that LE, SE, or other functions may be affected by in the planning process, are also described.

5.1 Inception meeting

The inception meeting is the first joint meeting between the exercise management and the designated representatives of the exercise actors (unless there has been an earlier information meeting). The principal purpose of the inception meeting is to present the intention of the exercise, and to motivate the invited actors to want to be part of the planning work. The LEL, or, if they have not yet been designated, other representatives from the exercise actors, participates in the inception meeting.

At the meeting, proposals for the overall purpose of the exercise, the direction for the evaluation and the lessons learned activities, as well as the personnel and the various roles that will be needed to plan, conduct, and evaluate the exercise, are presented and discussed. The exercise leader presents the more general parts and the evaluation leader provides more in-depth information about the exercise evaluation, the level of the result, and questions about secrecy, as well as about how and when the actors should choose their LE.



Suggested reading

Read more about the inception meeting in the *Exercise Guidance Basic Manual*. At www.msb.se, examples of detailed agendas for the inception meeting are available, in Swedish.

5.1.1 When should LE be chosen?

At the inception meeting, the evaluation leader provides the actors with more information and details for creating the conditions for being able to select their LE. The actual concept and role of LE is briefly introduced by the exercise leader during the first agenda item, and more detail about the LE is provided by the evaluation leader. LEL needs to know the answers to the questions below, which have been described above (Sections 2.1 and 2.2):

- Why it is such an important function for the actors to commit to.
- What the function LE entails.
- Which tasks the LE receives.
- Approximately how much time being LE requires.
- What the LEL can consider when they choose their LE.
- How and when the LE should be chosen and reported to the evaluation leader.

Contact details for both LE and LEL are provided by each exercise actor's decision-maker, in the so-called ambition document. Read about the ambition document in the *Exercise Guidance Basic Manual*. If it is not possible to appoint LE before

the ambition document is submitted, the details can be complemented later. LE needs to be appointed, however, so that he or she can participate in planning conference 1.

5.1.2 The evaluator assignment

Once LEL, at the inception meeting, has received more information about the LE function, it is time for them to find and select their LE. It is also time for the evaluation leader to begin to reflect on the choice of SE, but this is not as pressing, since the latter have a more limited assignment than the LE and can begin later.

In choosing LE and SE, one also needs to conduct an assignment dialogue, to clarify the extent and limits of the assignment, so that the evaluation mandate is clear and expectations land at the right level, from respective directions. This assignment dialogue is held, for each actor, between the LEL and LE, and, in the exercise management, between the evaluation leader and SE.

Proposals for discussion questions:

1. Who is the evaluator working for in the organisation? (Who is the commissioning actor? Who does the evaluator report to?)
2. Are there any dependencies between the evaluator and the commissioning actor that may need to be discussed?
3. Do you have a shared picture of the assignment, based on what the evaluation is to be used for and what it is to deliver? (Is the assignment written down? About how much time is intended for the assignment? How does the assignment relate to the exercise management and the actors' joint evaluation, compared to the actor-specific evaluation in the participating organisation? Does the assignment description include resources, time-plan, mandate, and boundaries? Who will have the final say if you disagree about the text in the evaluation result?)
4. Which evaluation result will the evaluation deliver? (Is there a thought-out level for the result? What is the level of ambition? Is there an idea about criticism and secrecy? Has the means of delivery, for example, of the evaluation report, already been imagined?)
5. Who are the evaluation report's target groups?
6. Is there any resistance to accepting the evaluation's results? Or anything else of possibly sensitive character that the evaluator needs to know about?

5.2 Between the inception meeting and planning conference 1

After the inception meeting, the joint effort to produce the objectives begins. The exercise management may already have begun the work earlier, but it is now that it speeds up in a serious way. Producing the exercise's objectives is extensive work that takes time. Both the exercise management and the participating actors must allocate resources for this work (LE and LEL). The joint effort to produce the objectives is the foundation for the continuing planning and for the actors' efforts with their own objectives.



Suggested reading

In the Exercise Guidance Basic Manual, the basics of working on the objectives are described. This Method Booklet repeats certain parts, and more details and examples of how the work can proceed are provided. The work takes its point of departure in the objectives structure that is described in the Basic Manual. The objectives structure is briefly repeated in the section below.

5.2.1 Working with objectives – the objectives structure

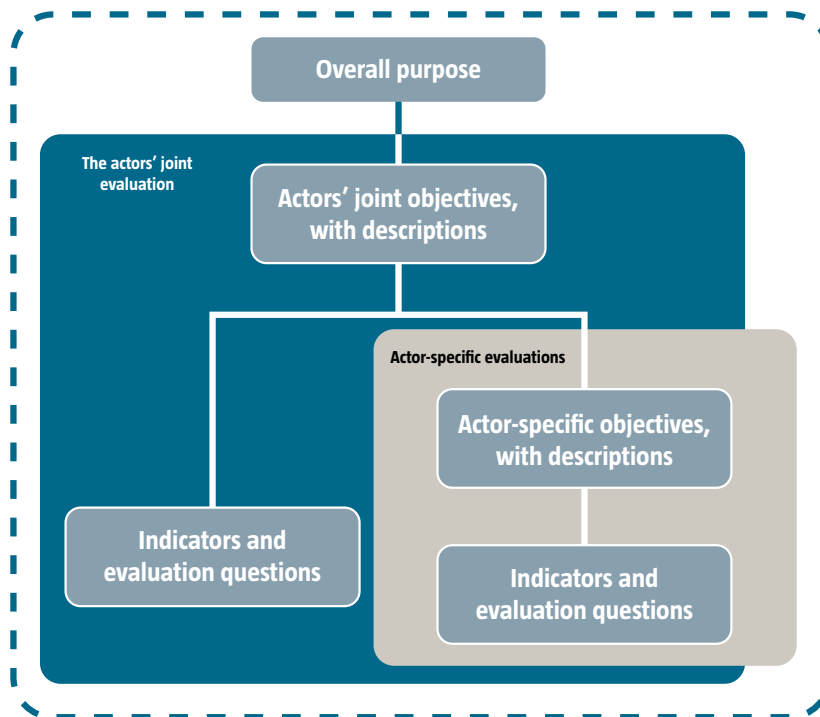


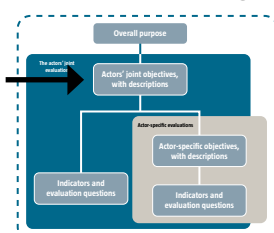
Figure 5: An example of an objectives structure, with illustration of the boundaries between the actors' joint evaluation and the actor-specific evaluations.

At the top of the objectives structure is the overall purpose. An overall purpose in exercises usually addresses strengthening the capacity to manage accidents and crises, that is, the crisis management capacity. The evaluation therefore needs to be conducted so that strengths and weaknesses are identified. The proposal for the overall purpose is produced early in the planning process, right after the mandate dialogue, and presented at the inception meeting.

The objectives of the exercise indicate what one needs to find out, with the help of the exercise and its evaluation, so as to achieve the overall purpose. The first level is the so-called actors' joint objectives, with attached objectives descriptions. Then come the indicators and evaluation questions. Indicators have the purpose of comparability between actors over time, and evaluation questions of directing observations towards being able to answer how it went and why; of being able to understand both the process and the result, and explain "How did it go?" and "Why did it become so?" It is not necessary to produce indicators in an exercise; one can instead proceed directly from objectives to evaluation questions.

The distinction between the actors' joint evaluation (the left side of the structure) and the actor-specific evaluations (the right side of the structure) is important to highlight when the objectives structure is presented to the actors at planning conference 1 (PC 1).

5.2.2 Working with objectives – actors' joint objectives and their descriptions



When the overall purpose of the exercise has been anchored with the actors, it is time to work oneself further down in the objectives structure. The next step is the objectives that pertain to all the actors, and they are therefore called the actors' joint objectives. At this level, the exercise management produces proposals, which it then anchors with the actors at PC 1. For every actors' joint objective, the exercise management also produces a proposal for an accompanying objectives description.



Producing actors' joint objectives

It is the exercise management that produces proposals for the actors' joint objectives and objectives descriptions. The work is led by the evaluation leader, but it is the exercise management that “owns” the objectives and has the responsibility for having them produced. It is important that an anchoring of the meaning and the content of the actors' joint objectives occurs, both within the entire exercise management and with the actors. Leading up to PC 1, the exercise management therefore needs to work first with the proposal for both the objectives and the objectives descriptions, so that, internally, there is a shared understanding of their significance. This understanding will be essential when proceeding to work with both the scenario and conduct of the exercise, and for communicating with the actors in a coordinated way.

Producing actors' joint objectives is not simple. The actors' joint objectives denote what is to be found out, that is, what the actors' joint capacity is within certain directed areas. The challenge lies in its inclusive aspect, that all the actors need to recognize themselves in the objectives. No matter whether it might be a municipality, a private company, or a central government organisation, the same objectives apply at this level. This is the entire meaning of the concept of actors' joint objectives. The anchoring process that is described below, in the section on PC 1, has the precise purpose of creating the understanding that the actors' joint objectives affect each of the actors, while striving for quality assurance from the actors that this is actually the case, to the extent possible.

The actual production of the proposal for actors' joint objectives and objectives descriptions has its basis in the exercise's input values (in the Swedish case, in MSB's exercise directive³) and the selection of capacities that the exercise is directed towards, also the overall purpose of the exercise, and the direction for the evaluation. Work needs to be done to be able to describe how the capacities and actions are intended to proceed, that is, to allow one to gain an understanding of what will be evaluated. A thorough literature review may need to be performed. What regulatory system and principles must be taken into account? Are there any other kinds of steering or normative documents that describe the process that is going to happen during the exercise? What processes and actions are required so that the actors can reach what they wish to attain? Is there experience from previous exercises, collected risk and vulnerability analyses, and the like, that can be inspiring? MSB's exercise directive can be used to advantage as an inspiration, based on its descriptions of various capacities (aspects of managing events) that require exercises. It is in this process that it can be advantageous if the exercise management can receive assistance and help from the reference group or other experts. The work of moving from direction to proposals for objectives needs,

Examples of actors' joint objectives

- The exercise actors have the capacity to collaborate in accordance with the “Strategy for collaboration during major accidents and crises in the county.”
- The exercise actors have the capacity to use aggregated operational pictures as supporting material for coordination and direction of measures.
- The exercise actors have the capacity to coordinate the available resources so that their use is resilient and purposeful.
- The exercise actors have the capacity to coordinate their information so that communication with the those affected, the general public, and media is clear and relevant.
- The exercise actors have the capacity to receive and disseminate information to others with the support of the technology that is used for command and collaboration during societal disruptions.

3. A joint directive specifying which capacities government agencies should be focusing on in exercises in coming years.

in addition to the anchoring process described above, to be documented and made traceable by, for example, documenting critical decisions and choices involving boundaries via minutes of meetings, and so on.

Objectives descriptions

For every actors' joint objective, an objectives description is produced. The objectives description has the purpose of describing what the actors' joint objective entails, and includes the boundary-setting and clarifications that need to be done. The objectives descriptions lighten the actors' work with describing their own objectives, and together with the objectives they comprise a prerequisite for being able to write the scenario and plan the conduct of the exercise.

Models for objectives formulation

Objectives can be formulated with or without a specified demand about the level of capacity (models for objectives formulation), for example, "basic, good, or very good capacity to . . ." or simply, "capacity to . . ." Actors' joint objectives do not need to express any specific level of requirement, since it is difficult to indicate what it would be for all the actors in common. A specific actor, though, may have defined requirements about the capacity level, and then of course the actor may use those for its own goals.



To think about:

Setting a capacity level in the objectives requires consideration of how these levels will be evaluated. Are there defined levels, or will the implications of respective levels for a specific actor be clarified? Do the levels mean the same thing for various actors?

How to formulate the objectives

The language that can be used in formulating the objectives is described in the Exercise Guidance Basic Manual. The most important thing isn't that the language used to formulate the objectives, per se, is perfect, but that objectives are produced that include what one wants to find out from the exercise.



To think about:

- Words that indicate change, for example, "improve" and "strengthen," if used in the objectives, may be difficult to evaluate if the baseline is not clear, and it usually isn't.
- Objectives that include such formulations as, for example:

<i>"at the right time"</i>	<i>"as effectively as possible"</i>
<i>"in the right channels"</i>	<i>"demonstrate good knowledge"</i>
<i>"with the right receiver"</i>	<i>"make the decisions that are required"</i>
<i>"in an effective way"</i>	<i>"act so that"</i>
<i>"relevant information"</i>	<i>"work for"</i>
<i>"relevant forums/channels"</i>	<i>"are careful to"</i>
<i>"effective crisis management"</i>	<i>"in due time"</i>
<i>"prioritise resources in a good way"</i>	<i>"actively contribute"</i>

can make them difficult to evaluate if the objectives descriptions, or the indicators, do not specify just what can be meant, concretely, by expressions such as, "leave at the right time," or "actively contribute."



Suggested reading

The next step in the work on the objectives deals with how the actors use the actors' joint objectives to produce their own objectives, so-called actor-specific objectives. Read about this in Section 5.4.5.

5.2.3 How the work on objectives relates to the work on scenarios and conduct

The work to produce the exercise scenario and plan the conduct of the exercise depends, as Figure 6 shows, on the exercise's overall purpose and objectives. The relation between evaluation, scenario, and conduct needs to be clear both in the exercise management, between the various working groups, and in the communication with the local exercise leader and the local evaluator.

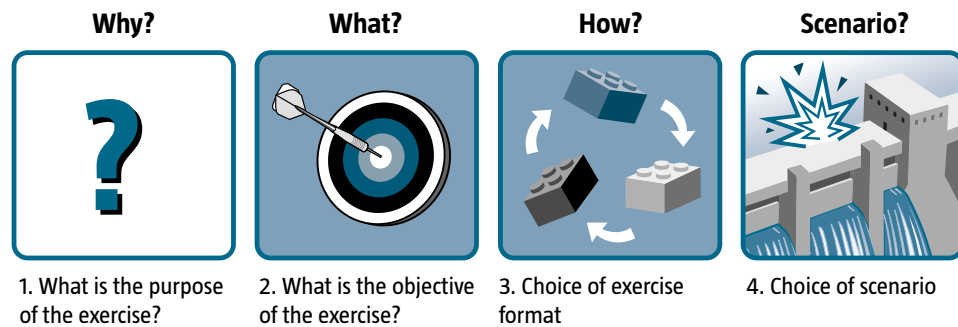


Figure 6: How the exercise's format and scenario relate to its overall purpose and objectives.

When considering the connection between the work with objectives and scenario, the objectives need to have been produced before the work with writing the incident descriptions and before planning the details of the exercise's conduct. Since both the exercise's scenario and conduct need to relate to the exercise's objectives, the work on incident descriptions should not be started until the actors' joint objectives and the objectives descriptions have been established and communicated, and the actor-specific objectives and their descriptions produced.



Suggested reading

Read more, in Swedish, about the scenario work in the Exercise Guidance Basic Manual.

5.3 Planning conference 1 – from an evaluation perspective

Prior to PC 1, it is important that extensive preparatory work is done on home ground, both in the exercise management and among the actors. At PC 1, the theme is the work on the objectives. Both LEL and LE are invited, since the direction of the exercise is to be clarified and discussed as part of PC 1's joint work on the objectives. The following issues need to be presented:

- The intended objectives structure and the difference between the actors' joint and the actor-specific evaluations.
- Proposals for actors' joint objectives and their descriptions (group activity).
- How the work on the objectives relates to that on the scenario and conduct.
- Actor-specific objectives.
- The next step in the work on objectives – breaking them down into activities (group activity).



5.3.1 Group activity on actors' joint objectives and their descriptions

At PC 1, the exercise leader or the evaluation leader present the intended objectives structure, as well as the actors' joint objectives and accompanying descriptions. Following that, there should be an opportunity for discussion with the actors, so that they can gain an understanding of the objectives. Calling them joint objectives means that all the actors need to recognize themselves and their own part in the objectives. Thus, create an opportunity to discuss and provide viewpoints, with a group activity in PC 1.

At the same time, in order to proceed further in the process of understanding what the objectives mean for the actions taken during the exercise, the group activity can have an additional purpose: breaking down the objectives into activities that the actors do together. This will become a first step in the work of defining what the evaluation is going to focus on. Since the participants discuss in groups, an opportunity is provided both for increased understanding of what the objectives entail and contributing reflections about them. The group activity also makes it possible for the evaluation leader to proceed further with the objectives structure, since the actors, together, identify the activities to go further with. A bonus effect of the group activity is that LEL from the various organisations are provided an opportunity to talk, get to know each other, and network. The group activities are planned and led by the evaluation leader, with support from other persons in the exercise management.



To think about:

If one doesn't manage (perhaps due to lack of time) to hold a group activity during PC 1, it should be possible to do so in a workshop at a later opportunity. In that case, send the proposal for actors' joint objectives and their descriptions to the actors as a simple referral that allows them the chance to give feedback.

Conducting the group activity

The participants can either be divided into so-called miniature wholes, which means that local, regional, national, and private levels are represented in all the groups, or else they can sit together with the corresponding actors. The municipal representatives are placed in one group, private actors in another group, and so on. Approximately 6–8 participants per groups is adequate. Each group is assigned a documenter, who takes notes on the group's discussion. The documenters are persons from the exercise management, and it is an advantage if they are the exercise leader and persons who work with the exercise scenario and conduct. The reason is that, by being a documenter, they gain valuable insight into the discussions about the objectives.

Half the time (about 30 minutes), is used to discuss the proposal for actors' joint objectives and descriptions. The question under discussion is: "Do you see your actor's role in the actors' joint objective?" The proposals for the objective are then discussed consecutively, in the groups, while the documenters take notes. The documenters also play a kind of moderator role in the groups, and should help the discussion get underway if it doesn't do so spontaneously.



To think about:

Capture the broader discussions, but steer away for questions of detail and those that touch on one's own organisation. Avoid becoming mired in discussions that are likely based on insufficient knowledge, but make note of them and raise them in the exercise management afterwards.

The other half of the time (about 30 minutes) is used to break down the objectives into activities that the actors do together, to fulfil the objectives. The question to discuss it: “What should we do, together, to reach the actors’ joint objective?” The group discusses one objective at a time, while the documenter takes notes and leads the group, if needed.

The notes from the group activity are cleaned up and delivered to the evaluation leader.

5.4 Between planning conferences 1 and 2

5.4.1 Revising, establishing, and communicating the actors’ joint objectives

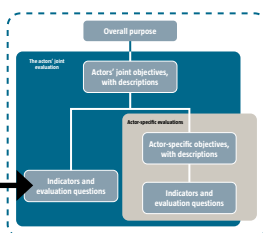
After PC 1, the evaluation leader has hopefully received substantial documentation from the first part of the group activity. Then begins the work to revise the proposals for the actors’ joint objectives and their descriptions. The content of the objectives may need to be adjusted if the actors didn’t see their own role in them. Sometimes, simple adjustments in the content or the language may be enough to clarify what is meant by the objectives. The revision of the objectives is done by the evaluation leader, but it needs to be discussed by the entire exercise management. Hopefully, several of the members of the exercise management were also documenters during the group activity, and are thus already familiar with how the discussions went. Before the actors’ joint objectives and their descriptions are conclusively established, it can be good to have one or more consultations with the reference group and possibly with the steering committee.

When the objectives have been revised, they can be finalised, either by the steering committee, or the exercise leader, depending on what has previously been agreed. Then, the established objectives are communicated to all the LEL by, for example, e-mail. Communicate the objectives as quickly as possible, without waiting until PC 2. LEL and the LE need to receive the established objectives to write their own actor-specific objectives, which they do between PC 1 and 2.

5.4.2 Planning the conduct of the evaluation

After PC 1, if not earlier, it is time to begin to think a little more about how the evaluation will be conducted. This work is described above, in Chapter 4, and is headed by the evaluation leader. Dialogue is held with the exercise leader and others in the exercise management. The chosen conduct, or how far one has come in the work, is presented for the exercise actors during PC 2. Once the LEL have been presented with how the actors’ joint evaluation is to be conducted, they can be inspired by that and, together with LE, plan the conduct of the actor-specific evaluation.

5.4.3 Indicators and evaluation questions



The evaluation leader has hopefully received solid material from the PC 1 group activities about the activities that the exercise actors have said they will do together to reach the actors’ joint objectives. This material needs to be further processed to be able to create boundaries, together with the exercise actors, and decide what the most important focus of the exercise is. These boundaries are going to be necessary, not only for the evaluation, but also for the work on the scenario and conduct of the exercise.

One way to delimit the material is to let the actors vote and prioritise the most important actors’ joint activities. It can be beneficial to do this in a group activity in PC 2. If this is not managed in PC 2, the boundaries can be fixed by the exercise

management, for example together with the experts in the reference group, followed by subsequent anchoring with the LEL and LE.

When the delimiting has been done, some of the activities can be developed into actors' joint indicators (those that are measurable and comparable over time) and the bulk of them become evaluation questions. We thus arrive further down in our example of an objectives structure (Figure 5).

Indicators

Indicators show (indicate) that a certain capacity has been demonstrated during the exercise, for example via activities, the time they take, and/or their outcome. Indicators are used to gain observable data (yes/no answers), or quantitative data that can be measured in terms of time, number, or per cent. By observing or measuring, or both, in a well-delimited and reproducible manner, indicators can provide support in comparing between actors and following-up over time. Indicators are often tied to objectives, and they then provide support in assessing the achievement of objectives. It is not necessary to produce indicators in an exercise, since one can also proceed directly from objectives to evaluation questions.

Examples of indicators

- **Percentage of** successful attempts to establish connections between local and regional level via RAKEL* [XX%].
- **Time elapsed**, from receiving briefing material to production of an actors' joint direction [XX minutes].
- The aggregated regional operational picture was updated **at least two times** during the exercise [yes/no].

* Raket is the Swedish national digital communications system used by the emergency services and others in the fields of civil protection, public safety and security, emergency medical services, and healthcare.

In the above example, support for assessing what is a strength or a weakness in capacity (that is, what is good or less good action in the three examples) is either directly built-in to the indicator ("at least two times"), or needs to be discussed, decided and documented before the exercise, as a part of the planning process. (In this exercise, we have ascertained that if 70% of the attempts to establish contact with RAKEL succeed, this is approved/good).

Evaluation questions

The answers that the indicators provide are not enough to capture, describe, or explain action on the basis of the objectives, or to discover weaknesses and explanations for why they arose. Instead of (or as a complement to) indicators, evaluation questions can be used. Evaluation questions can be answered by, for example, "yes/no," or "to greater/lesser extent," and then they are reminiscent of indicators. Evaluation questions can also be more open. Open questions capture the action from the perspective of the objective and are used in the evaluation to describe and explain how it went, and why. The question of how it went will then not be one of measurement, as it is for indicators, but, rather, a story, or a picture. The evaluation questions can be about what happened, why, in which way, and by whom, and so on. The evaluation questions direct the observations during the exercise in precisely the same way as the indicators. The work of assessing what was good, or less good, about the actions, needs to be done no matter what.

In the example box below, an example is provided of how an actors' joint objective, regarding the *capacity for information-sharing between actors*, as a part of the

planning process work with objectives, can be broken down and concretized, according to the objectives structure, the entire way.

Actors' joint objective

The exercise actors have the capacity to share information that is of actors' joint interest.

Objectives description

The objective of this exercise deals with establishing contact channels between actors to enable information-sharing. Information-sharing, for this objective, is seen as a way to make information accessible to others, and for receiving and requesting information. The objective neither involves the internal communication that occurs within the respective organisations of each of the actors, nor the relevance nor quality of the information that is shared between the actors. For the objective, information-sharing can occur just as much via both informal contacts and meetings between various actors, as via more structured forms of collaboration, such as collaboration conferences.

Actors' joint indicators

- The percentage of an actor's attempts at information-sharing that succeeded in establishing a contact with the desired function of another actor.

Evaluation questions intended to be addressed by LE to find out more about how it went and why, from the perspective of the objective

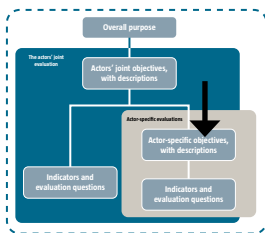
- How were other actors contacted?
- How did other actors share information with the actor you are evaluating?
- In those cases where it turned out that it wasn't known which actor, or other actor's contact point, should be contacted, how was this dealt with?
- Were there areas, or issues, where the knowledge within the organisation, about which actor or actors should be contacted, was revealed to be inadequate?
- In those cases where the contact points were known, were there occasions when the actor did not succeed in sharing information with other actors?
- An inject marked with "X" occurs at 11:32 h, to trigger a need for information-sharing between several actors. Follow it! From the perspective of the actors you are evaluating, how did the information-sharing go, and why?

In the example above, with an indicator on "percentage of contacts," one way to measure that would be that LE follows 10 attempted contacts, for example, and then observes how many of them are actually established. The answer may be that contact was established in 7 of 10, that is, 70%, of the attempts. As in the previous example, of an indicator, as a part of the planning work prior to the exercise, one needs to have reached agreement about what is considered good/ approved for this exercise. Is 70% good, or can it be better?

5.4.4 LE enters the planning process

By now, hopefully, LE has participated, or received LEL reports from, PC 1. It is thus time for LEL and LE to sit down together to stake out the continuing planning arrow, and discuss how they intend to organise the planning work not only leading up to the exercise, but after it; as well as discuss when joint and internal activities will occur. To be given the opportunity to participate in parts of the exercise's planning process provides a deeper understanding of the exercise, which eases LE's evaluation task. LE can be a sounding board and support for LEL in those portions that touch on the exercise evaluation, and be given an opportunity to influence the approaching evaluation work, when the foundations are being put in place. Probably the first task that LEL and LE work together on involves the actor-specific objectives that are described in the next section.

5.4.5 Working on the objectives – actor-specific objectives and their descriptions



Based on the actors' joint objectives, the actors produce their own objectives, so-called actor-specific objectives and their descriptions: objectives descriptions. The actors' own goals need to be coupled to the actors' joint objectives, which makes this an opportunity for each of the actors to specify what the actors' joint objectives entail for their own organisations. The actors can produce additional free-standing objectives, beyond the actors' joint objectives, if they wish. If an actor produces such objectives, it is important that the objectives avoid influencing in any way the actor's possibilities to focus on the actors' joint objectives for the exercise; for example, the actor-specific objective requires much time and energy that then detracts from the action based on the actors' joint objectives. The actors cannot opt-out of any of the actors' joint objectives, but they can adapt their level of ambition by specifying action coupled to each of the actors' joint objectives when they write their own.

The actor-specific objectives can involve both collaboration with other actors and the actor's own activities, as illustrated in the example above. This means that one of the actors' joint objectives can result in several actor-specific objectives.

Examples of actor-specific objectives that concern collaboration with other actors

- Government organisation "Name" has good capacity for cross-sector collaboration with the government organisations concerned, as well as within the sector of the actors concerned.
- The county council has the capacity to submit aggregated operational reports, as supporting material for the actors' joint, collected, aggregated operational pictures and directions.
- The county administrative board has very good capacity to collate and analyse aggregated operational reports from the county's actors to produce a regional aggregated operational picture that is disseminated within the county.
- Private company "Name" supports, as needed, actors with geographic area responsibility in their coordination assignment.
- The municipality makes information available to the actors concerned, and requests information that is needed for our own operation from relevant actors.

Examples of actor-specific objectives that concern internal activity

- We make our information accessible for the actors concerned.
- The municipality's information is anchored and verified internally, before it is shared with other actors.
- Our crisis management organisation compiles internal aggregated operational pictures and uses them as supporting documentation for the direction of the organisation's work.

The subject of each objective is written in different ways in the above examples – "we," "the municipality," "municipality's name," "has capacity to submit," and so on – to demonstrate the way they can look.



Suggested reading

Read more about how objectives can be formulated, in Section 5.2.2, on the actors' joint objectives.

The purpose of the accompanying objectives descriptions, in the same manner as for the actors' joint objectives, is to describe what is entailed by the objectives and which boundaries need to be set and clarifications made.

The work with the actor-specific objectives and their descriptions occurs after PC 1, when the actors' joint objectives have been presented. One's own work can begin, even if the actors' joint objectives and their descriptions have not yet been established (see Section 5.4.1).

LEL is responsible for producing the actor-specific objectives and their descriptions. One proposal for a procedure is that the LEL collects representatives of those functions that are going to participate in the exercise, and discusses and works together with them to produce the objectives. That way, the LEL ensures that the objectives are also anchored internally. Decision-makers can readily be invited to participate in one's own work with the objectives. LE may participate in the work with objectives to gain a greater understanding of the meaning of the objectives and begin to think, at an early stage, about how they will be evaluated.

When the actor-specific objectives and their descriptions have been established, the evaluation leader collects them. By collecting the objectives, it becomes possible for the exercise leader to ensure that they are within the frame of the exercise, regarding scenario and conduct. The very collecting also becomes a way to speed up the work on the actor-specific objectives, so that they are ready in time to begin the next step in the planning process, namely, the continued scenario work, with incident descriptions.

The exercise management can produce a template where the actors can fill in their objectives. The structure of the template can make it easier for the actors to connect their objectives to the actors' joint ones.

When the work with the objectives is finished, the overall purpose, the actors' joint objectives and their descriptions, as well as the actors' purposes, actor-specific objectives and their descriptions, are published in the Exercise Instructions. The actors' purposes and objectives take much space, so it is appropriate to present them in an annex.

5.5 Planning conference 2 – from an evaluation perspective

The emphasis at PC 2 is on the scenario and possibly the conduct; then the actors' objectives need, in principle, to be established. At PC 2, the evaluation leader presents the intended evaluation procedure. LEL participates in PC 2, but it is beneficial if the exercise management also invites LE, if possible.

Proposals for PC 2 agenda points:

- The project management presents any updates since PC 1.
- Established actors' joint objectives and their descriptions.
- If ready, established actor-specific objectives.
- The evaluation leader presents the intended evaluation procedure on an overall level.
- The work on the scenario.
- The result from the PC 1 group activity – the breaking down of the objectives into activities is presented and, eventually, a vote on how to restrict them (see Section 5.4.3).
- The work in planning the conduct and eventual dimensioning of DISTAFF.
- Continuing work, summary, and conclusion.



5.6 Between planning conferences 2 and 3

If the actor-specific objectives have not been established after PC 2, it needs to be done as soon as possible. The objectives are necessary if the actors are going to be able to write their incident descriptions. Concerning the actors' own evaluations, LE need to prepare and organise the procedure for it, based on the information that was provided at PC 2, in order to adapt it to their own organisations. If LE did not participate in PC 2, the LEL needs to report on the information provided during the conference. This applies in general to those parts that could affect LE.

During this period, a great deal of work is being done by more than just the actors. In the exercise management, the evaluation leader continues to plan the conduct of the evaluation by concretising what needs to be done. This involves a great deal of work! First, the actors' joint indicators and evaluation questions need to be established, and second, the way that they are going to be assessed, or whom will address them, needs to be planned. This means that the assessment criteria need to be finalised and established, planning of training for the evaluators needs to begin, and the work of processing the result after the exercise requires preparation. Read more in Chapter 6 about preparations leading up to the exercise. The evaluation leader also writes the evaluation instructions during this period (see Section 7.1).

If the exercise management has considered recruiting a so-called public network, which, by answering questions during the exercise can provide support in the evaluation of the exercise actors' communications capacity, then it is high time to plan that now.



Suggested reading

Read more about methods for using a public network, in the report, "Allmänhetens bedömning av kriskommunikation i övningar – lärdomar och rekommendationer till hur allmänheten kan involveras," [The public's assessment of crisis communication in exercises – lessons learned and recommendations for involving the public] of which an English summary is available.

5.7 Planning conference 3 – from an evaluation perspective

The purpose of the third and last planning conference deals with going through, for one last time, the entire exercise planning, as well as planning and coordinating the final details. The documents, *Exercise Instructions for Conduct*, *Exercise Management Instructions*, and *Evaluation Instructions* will be presented, so that they can be disseminated after PC 3.

During PC 3, LEL participate, primarily, but if there is room LE can also participate. This is decided by the exercise management. LE are going to be invited, in any case, to their own separate training, after PC 3.

The evaluation leader needs to present the evaluation instructions and the evaluation organisation that will be conducting data collection during the actual exercise. The evaluation leader can also present an overview of how the data collection will proceed and provide a little preview of what the post-exercise process of analysis and assessment will be like. One may once again allow a brief discussion about the expectations for the evaluation result. If LE do not participate in this planning conference, the LEL need to disseminate parts of the information presented at PC 3 to LE. The Evaluation Instructions also need to be disseminated to both LEL and LE.

For the planning period following PC 3, proceed to Chapter 6.

6. Preparing for the exercise

When the final planning conference has been conducted, there is perhaps not much time remaining before the exercise, but there is much to do. The work that began between PCs 2 and 3, to concretise the evaluation, needs to be finalised. It is also time to conduct the course for the evaluators and complete the final preparations for the exercise. These different segments are described in this chapter.

6.1 Selecting the data collection method

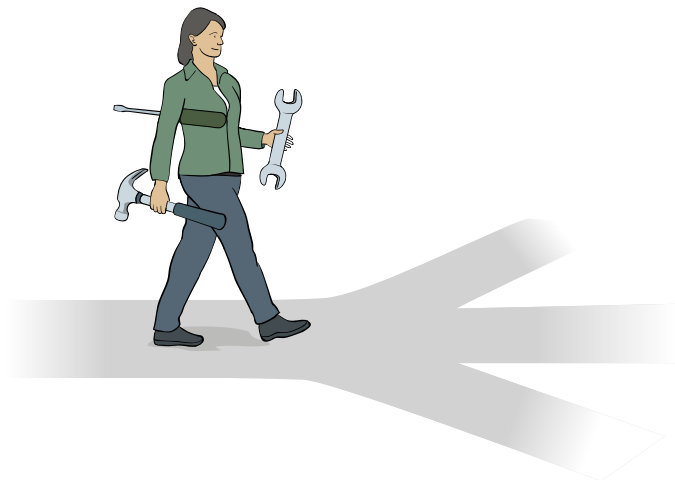
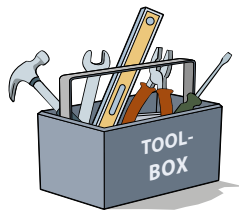
When the work on the objectives has been concluded and the evaluation procedure has been established, it is time to decide which data collection methods will be used during the exercise. This work can already begin in the period between PCs 2 and 3, and then finish after PC 3. The evaluation leader prepares the methods that are needed for the actors' joint evaluation and LE produce the additional methods that are needed for evaluating their respective organisations.



To think about:

The LE have a double assignment and will need to collect data both for the evaluation leader, regarding the actors' joint evaluation, and for the evaluation of their own organisations.

It is difficult to provide a specific recipe for the choice of data collection methods, since it depends on what information one wishes to collect during the particular exercise (see Chapter 4, on the conduct of the evaluation). It becomes important, then, to choose the data collection method in relation to what one wants to investigate (which is steered by the objectives produced for the exercise), and to choose a combination of methods, including, for example, both an evaluation protocol during the exercise, and evaluation questionnaires and interviews after the exercise. The methods are summarized below. Remember to delimit the data collection and to avoid collecting just for the sake of collecting, thinking that it's "good to have," or just to be "on the safe side," but to collect what is needed for the planned evaluation.



6.1.1 Data collection via protocols and questionnaires

Evaluation protocols and evaluation questionnaires to collect evaluation material during and after an exercise are probably the most common way to collect information. Evaluation protocols support observations in real time, that is, during the course of the exercise, while evaluation questionnaires are used to collect information after the exercise. The questions in the evaluation questionnaires can also be formulated afterwards, to complement the collection that has already been done. Creating and designing questionnaires for investigations is in itself a science, and not pursued in depth in this section. Consult the reading suggestions at the end of this booklet.

Evaluation protocols are used by LE and SE for assessing the exercise actors' action in relation to the objectives, during the exercise, and include any indicators and evaluation questions. The evaluation protocol for the actors' joint evaluation is produced by the evaluation leader and deals with the actors' joint objectives. The evaluation protocol for the actor-specific evaluation is produced by LE for the respective actors and deals with the actor-specific objectives.

Evaluation questionnaires are used to collect material from other target groups that can provide valuable support in assessing the exercise participants' actions in relation to the objectives. Evaluation questionnaires are primarily used in the actors' joint evaluation, and are produced by the evaluation leader. They are used after the exercise, either directly after, or even a few days later. Target groups for these questionnaires may be the exercise participants, the DISTAFF (for example, those playing the role of media, or the general public), experts (for example, in crisis communication), or of a public network with representatives from the general public, if there is one in the exercise. With the evaluation questionnaires, the evaluation leader receives help from these target groups by letting them be part of things and assess the exercise participants actions during the exercise. All this collected material not only has the purpose of being a support in the assessment, but also to be able to understand, interpret, and explain how it went, and why. Evaluation questionnaires can also be sent to the LE and LEL to collect material about the conditions in the exercise.

Examples of evaluation questions that have been answered and collected in various ways as support in the assessment of an actors' joint objective about communication are shown below.

As an evaluator, one wants to create a questionnaire with questions that capture one's intention. It is the evaluation procedure and the evaluation questions that determine which answers should be collected. Do we want to receive figures, or words? Will justifications in free text be allowed? Who can answer the questions? Open questions allow room for a respondent to express opinions and reflections, but imply much work for the one who is going to collate the responses to the questionnaire. Questions with multiple choice answers provide less of an opportunity to express nuanced answers, but are easier to manage for the collator of the responses.

The notion that the work in creating the protocol and the questionnaire is generally considered to be a simple task creates the risk that too little time is put into it. One perhaps also has little time so close to the start of the exercise. This results in flaws in the data one collects and, in the end, a lack of quality in the evaluation results.

One can also consider this from the respondent's perspective, people who spend time in answering the questions. It is thus even more important that this is not a process that one, as evaluator, rushes through.

Examples of evaluation questions in an evaluation protocol that is filled in by LE for the actor that LE is assigned to evaluate:

- Does the communications work follow the county's joint crisis communications plan?
- Does the actor participate in any collaboration conference for communications coordination with other actors? Please describe how it went.
- Describe how the actor works to produce an aggregated operational picture.
- Is the aggregated operational picture used as supporting material for direction and coordination of communication? If so, please describe how.
- Does the actor perform contextual analysis of opinion in different kinds of media as supporting material for communication?

Examples of evaluation questions in an evaluation protocol that is filled in by SE, who is an expert in crisis communication and monitors the Exercise Web during the exercise:

- Do you consider that the messages to the public and media that the actors formulate are coordinated? Please explain your answer.
- What do you consider were the greatest strengths and weaknesses in coordination?
- To what extent do the actors adapt their communication to the target groups?
- Do the actors' homepages have information in different languages?

Examples of evaluation questions in an evaluation questionnaire given to persons who play the role of media in DISTAFF:

- Do you consider that the messages to the public and media that the actors formulate are coordinated? Please explain your answer.
- Is it clear who the spokesperson/contact person is in those information items that you have been a part of?
- Do you consider that the actors take the initiative on information? I.e., are they in the lead in anticipating and meeting the general public's and the media's need for information? Please explain your answer.
- Do the government organisations use media in a conscious way, that is, as a channel for spreading information about the event, about how the public shall act, etc? If so, please describe.

Examples of evaluation questions in an evaluation questionnaire that is completed by LEL and LE for the actor they are working with:

- To what extent do you consider that the length of the exercise enabled the actors to demonstrate their capacity, based on the objectives produced?
- From your observations, did the amount of injects create realistic premises for the actors to demonstrate their capacity, based on the objectives produced?
- Do you consider that the quality of the injects has contributed to the actors' premises for demonstrating their capacity, based on the objectives produced?

Examples of evaluation questions in an evaluation questionnaire completed by the exercise participants for their respective actors:

- To what extent does the organisation have routines for how information is exchanged with other organisations, with the purpose of creating an aggregated operational picture?
- To what extent does the organisation have routines for how decisions in directing communications operations are taken?
- To what extent does the organisation have routines/plans for how information for different target groups is coordinated during a societal disruption?



The protocol and the questionnaire can be completed on paper, directly in Word on a computer, or in a web-based questionnaire programme, or other technical system. Emphasize that those who fill in the questionnaires need to write clearly, if they are printed on paper (only short, simple questionnaires) and that it is preferable that they are completed digitally (in Word, for example, or as a web questionnaire), to make it easier for those who will have to collate them later.

In addition to ensuring that the contents of the questionnaire are well thought out, as an evaluator one also needs to spend time on the formulation of the instructions, the questions, and the choices of answers, as well as the layout of the questionnaire and how it is going to be distributed. There are many suggestions in the literature about what one should think about when formulating questions in a questionnaire, to ensure that the respondent is motivated to answer the questionnaire and easily make their way through it, follow the instructions, and answer the questions in a correct manner.

Something that one often rushes by is the testing of the questionnaire. This is when it becomes obvious which questions do not work. Thus, test the questionnaire on your colleagues (if it is a questionnaire that is intended to be used by, for example, the exercise participants, or by LE, but not on those who are actually going to participate in the exercise), or on members of your family, or friends (if it is a questionnaire that is intended to be used, for example, by a public network).

6.1.2 Data collection via interviews

The questionnaires may certainly be complemented by interviews, so as to be able to delve more deeply into any question. Much literature about interview technique is also available; see the suggested reading at the end of this booklet. The types of interviews that are especially useful are structured and semi-structured. In structured interviews, the questions are formulated in advance, while the questions in semi-structured interviews are flexible, depending on the answers that are provided. Structured interviews are well-suited for short answers to simple questions, while semi-structured interviews are a suitable tool for illuminating more complex contexts.

Target groups for interviews can in principle be the same as those for questionnaires, i.e., the exercise participants, DISTAFF, and so on. It is suggested that the evaluators conduct interviews directly after the exercise, so as not to be too disruptive during it. The interviews can be conducted with individuals or in groups.

6.1.3 Data collection via other types of documentation

During an exercise much documentation, which may be useful for the evaluators to collect as material for the evaluation, is produced. This can include the exercise participants' logs, e-mail, recorded collaboration conferences, or other telephone meetings, news articles, press releases, information on WIS, or in some other journal form, and so on. Consider that even DISTAFF, or others who have been closely involved in the exercise, may have logs and notes that may be useful to consult. What is to be collected is defined by the exercise objectives, which questions will be asked, and so on. Once again, it is important to avoid collecting for collecting's sake. As an evaluator, you must be able to receive and



handle the material, also, and it quickly accumulates. Collection of the documentation needs to be prepared prior to the exercise, which means, among other things, that as an evaluator, one has checked that the equipment that is needed, for example, recording equipment and log-ins to various systems, are in place. Of course, the exercise participants can be contacted afterwards to request complementary material, but it is less troublesome for everyone if it has been prepared in advance.

As an evaluator, it is beneficial to make a checklist for oneself, on what will be documented during the exercise, so that nothing is missed. It needs to be based on what is going to happen in the exercise, for example, when collaboration and press conferences are going to be held.

6.1.4 Technical aids for data collection

Several kinds of technical aids are available for data collection during the exercise. These may be computer programmes or applications, tablets and cell phones, on which observations can be continually registered during the exercise, and where photographs or video recordings can be uploaded. This may also include programmes for web-based questionnaires, which allow assessment protocols and information questionnaires to be communicated via a link and filled in by the recipient directly on the web. This type of programme often also has functions that enable simpler compilations and analysis of collected data, which can assist the evaluation leader or the LE.

If some sort of technical aid for data collection is going to be used by the evaluators during the exercise, it is important to remember that they need to receive training in how to use the tools, so that valuable time and energy is not lost during the exercise. Read more about training for evaluators in the next section. Technical aids that facilitate data collection, however, may result in the collection of more data than what is needed or can be dealt with. Thus, planning the data collection is best done before the exercise; consider what kind of data needs to be collected and what it is going to be used for.



6.2 Training the evaluators

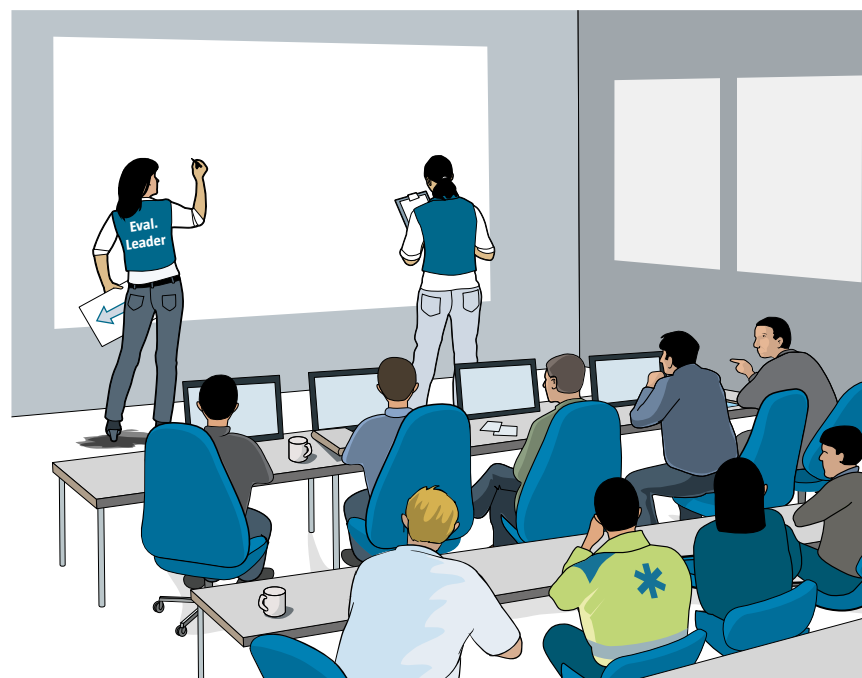
It is necessary that the evaluators receive training in their assignment. It is the evaluation leader's responsibility to offer a short course for LE and SE before they embark on the task of evaluating the exercise. Such a course may be held after PC 3, a few weeks before the exercise. Internally, in their own organisations, and if there is something specific that affects them, LEL may need to prepare the LE for their assignments. Read more about this in the next section.

Prior to the exercise, the evaluation leader, physically or via video/tele-conference, gathers all the LE and SE. This is when one should go through how the evaluators will be working. In principle, the evaluation instructions are presented, with opportunities for questions and dialogue. If it is not possible to assemble the evaluation organisation physically, the briefing can be filmed and distributed via YouTube, for example. Since such a briefing is one-way, it can be complemented with dialogue via telephone meeting. It is also helpful if relevant evaluation documents, together with the evaluation instructions, can be disseminated in advance via e-mail, so that they can be studied before the briefing.

During the course, practical aspects of the data collection methods need to be gone through (such as when protocols and questionnaires will be distributed, how they are filled in, and so on). It is also necessary to hold a discussion of how the evaluator can act during the exercise. How much interaction with the participants should one have? Should one ask the participants questions during the exercise?

If any technical aids will be used for data collection – for example, observation applications for computer, tablet, or cell phone, or web-based questionnaire programmes – during the exercise, they need to be gone through thoroughly to avoid problems during the exercise. Then, there can be a discussion about what will be collected with the technical aids, and whether there are any limitations, or other things to keep in mind, regarding for example taking photographs, audio recording, and so on.

The training should also include information about the occurrence of important waypoints in the scenario and in the conduct of the exercise, such as decisive events that affect the exercise participants' action, and when and how collaboration conferences are held, and so on. The evaluation leader can receive assistance in these segments from colleagues in the exercise management.



In addition to the training, the evaluators themselves need to act to increase their knowledge of the exercise, to read through the exercise material and the documents that have been produced. This involves the general aspects of the exercise and their respective organisations.

The evaluation leader provides support in the more general aspects of the exercise and its evaluation, and the local exercise leader supports with information about the organisation and the exercise participants, the actors' specific objectives, and so on. The preparations increase the likelihood that the evaluators will succeed in collecting the information sought during the exercise.

The evaluators' own preparations and training are needed if they are to have a shared view and understanding of what will be evaluated and how. If different interpretations of the mandate are made at this point, the reliability and comparability of the results may be limited.

It is therefore appropriate, during the course that the evaluation leader holds, to go through the questionnaires that the evaluators will use to document their observations and assessments during the exercise. The course can also be used to test the questionnaires on the evaluators – a little pilot study to calibrate the questionnaires – to ensure that those who will be completing them do so in the same way. This facilitates the eventual processing of the collected questionnaires and makes it possible to achieve a higher quality result.

It is important to educate the evaluators and to use this time well, by letting it take the time it needs. It is recommended that an entire day is allocated for such training. It is also valuable if the evaluators can meet in person, providing them the opportunity to discuss and network. The course day can even be filmed, or documented in some other way, so that those who don't have a chance to participate can access the material before the exercise.

6.3 The days prior to the exercise

The days prior to the exercise are when the evaluators need to prepare themselves and finalise the practical aspects of their plans. The LEL are responsible for much of the practical preparations. Below is a checklist that the LEL can use to prepare LE before the exercise day:

- Ensure that they have received adequate training for the task.
- Discuss the exercise setup.
- Present where the actor is located.
- Arrange the necessary security passes and keys so that LE can move about freely; name tag.
- Plan and prepare a post-exercise debriefing.

It is also helpful if the evaluators can make their own checklists of the equipment and material they will need to take with them to the exercise (for example camera, recording equipment, questionnaires, schedules and so on), and of what will be documented and when, during the exercise.

Before the exercise it is normal to conduct a technical test of the equipment and contact channels that are going to be used during the exercise. In some exercises, this is part of the general rehearsal, or "genrep." Don't forget that the evaluators need to be part of the technical testing, to test that the contact channels between persons the evaluators need to be in contact with function, to test recording equipment, and the camera, and so on. The questionnaires should already have been tested in advance.

7. Exercise documentation

In the Exercise Guidance's Basic Manual, the documents that are produced during the exercise planning process are described. The document that concerns the exercise's evaluation, the Evaluation Instructions, is described in this chapter. The concept of exercise documentation is to be distinguished from the documentation (data) that is collected during the exercise.



Suggested reading

The evaluation report is also a type of exercise documentation that follows the exercise, and is described in Section 16.1.

7.1 Evaluation Instructions

The evaluation's central planning document, the so-called Evaluation Instructions, contain specific information connected to the actors' joint evaluation of the exercise, and is written by the evaluation leader. The document's target groups are LE, SE, and LEL; it should not be shown to the exercise participants, since it contains detailed information about how the evaluation will be conducted, the assessment criteria, etc. In simpler exercises, the contents can be presented under a separate heading in the Exercise Management Instructions. The document is complemented by a number of appendices. These include the Evaluation Plan, which indicates how the measurements will be conducted, that is, when, to whom and in what way the questionnaires will be distributed, observations conducted, and so on. The appendixes can also include questionnaires, protocols, and other evaluation documents, for example, assessment criteria. The evaluation instructions are presented at PC 3 and disseminated afterwards.

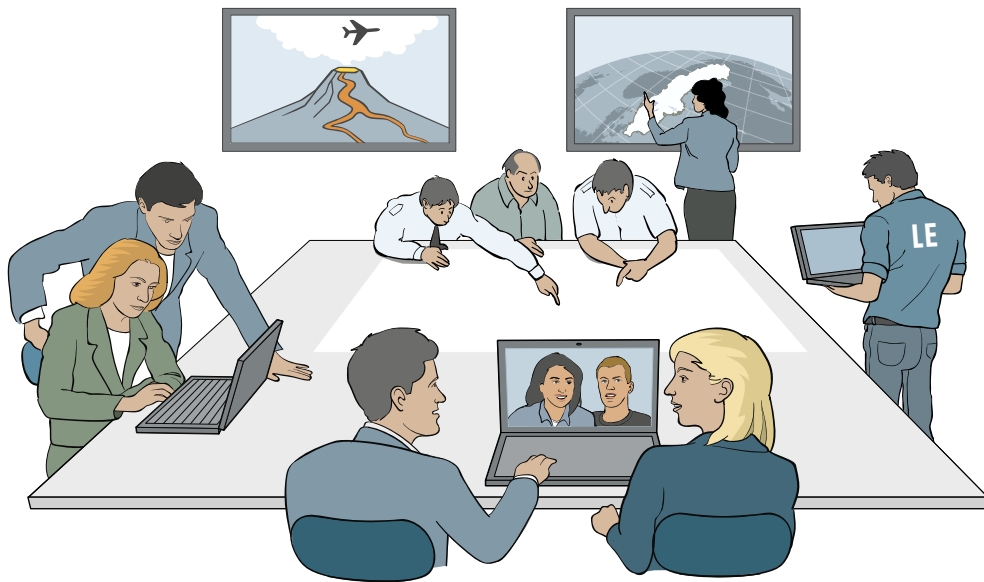
LE do not need to write evaluation instructions, but they need to have documented their procedure and to have some documented plan for their evaluation work.

Further examples, in Swedish, of evaluation instructions that may provide inspiration, can be found at www.msb.se

PART II
DURING THE EXERCISE

8. Introduction

During the exercise, parts of the evaluation plan are executed (see Section 7.1). A high-quality evaluation effort during an exercise can be labour-intensive, since much of the exercise's chain of events must be documented. This is done via direct observation of the exercise participants actions during the exercise, in meetings and telephone calls, and so on, and of their activities, such as logs, e-mail traffic, recordings of press conferences, among other things. All of this constitutes documentation that can contribute to the evaluation. What is collected needs to have been decided far in advance, during the planning process that is described in previous sections. In all of this intensive work, one must recall that the evaluation activities during the exercise shall be based on respect for those who participate, and that they are to be carried out in a good atmosphere.



It is important to pay attention to how many persons will participate in the exercise and what the exercise venue looks like. A small group of people in a room requires fewer evaluators and observers to follow the exercise, of course, than a large group in several locations would. On the other hand, an exercise site must not be allowed to be flooded with evaluators, since they may risk the dynamic of the exercise. A balance is needed, so that the participants are not disturbed, at the same time as the right circumstances must prevail, so that the evaluator can collect necessary information.



Suggested reading

Read more, about the number of evaluators that are needed, in Section 2.2.3.

During the exercise, the evaluator systematically studies how the actor acts, based on his or her evaluation protocol. There may be specific checkpoints or events in a scenario that the evaluator needs to pay special attention to. This should have been part of the evaluators' training, held just prior to the exercise. The LE, as described previously, have a two-part assignment, which entails both observing and assessing the actors that they are appointed to be LE for, and submitting material to the evaluation leader and the actors' joint evaluation. This may result in the LE needing to fill in two evaluation protocols.

8.1 Different exercise formats

Even if the focus in this Method Booklet is on evaluation of a command post exercise, its contents are applicable to all the formats, with only minor adjustments. Below, a brief description is provided of how a table-top exercise can be evaluated.

Evaluation of table-top exercises

A table-top exercise generates supporting documentation that can be used when writing the evaluation report. The evaluation material can be structured into the main sections, questionnaires and documentation. Evaluation questionnaires can be used to obtain supporting documentation in the form of for example self-assessments from the exercise participants. Documentation resulting from a table-top exercise mostly consists of notes from discussions and reporting on the different phases of the exercise. If an exercise is conducted in a joint venue, either open or concealed minutes may be used. If the exercise is distributed, every actor must submit written documentation to the evaluation leader.

Generally, in table-top exercises, purposes are used more than objectives and the evaluation can thus differ, when compared to other formats. The exercise form does not support conducting an evaluation of capacities in the same way as in a command post exercise. If the evaluation is going to assess fulfilment of objectives, the exercise participants can undergo a test, but usually the exercise participants do a self-assessment.

9. The evaluator’s way of working

9.1 Being curious about what happens

The evaluator’s main task during the exercise is to observe, document, and assess the actions of the exercise participants. The evaluator may need to move around during the exercise, to follow developments from beginning to end. The evaluator shouldn’t be standing in a corner, missing what is going on, at the same time as he or she must not disturb the exercise by getting in the way. Generally speaking, the evaluator doesn’t need to be “a fly on the wall,” but has permission to pose questions to the exercise participants, to be able to follow the sequence of events, for example, “Who did you call now?” These questions, though, must not be allowed to affect the exercise participants, but should only be for the sake of understanding better. Read more, in the next section, about asking questions.

It is important to consider, before the exercise, how to document observations. Notes can be extremely comprehensive, which to some extent can be dealt with by structuring them and through revision. Not everything can be documented, so it’s important to trust one’s assessment and order priorities. A portion will be discarded as inessential, misunderstandings, or uncertain observations. After the exercise, the exercise participants may be interviewed, or asked complementary questions. One way to reduce the quantity of notes is to consider that whatever can be logged in existent systems, such as e-mail, WIS, or similar systems, requires no further note-taking during the exercise.

The focus for the evaluator should be decided before the exercise, along with which methods and tools should be used (see Chapter 6). Similarly, there are several questions that the evaluator must always keep in mind, and these involve what, when, how, who, and why; all of these questions assist in getting an idea of, and being able to explain, what happens:

- What happened?
- When did it happen?
- How did it happen?
- Who was there?
- Why did it happen?

The fact that the above questions are often central and need to be explained does not mean that they are easy. Neither do the actual questions provide any hints about where the evaluators should “turn their gaze” during the exercise. To discover (observe) the answers to these and other questions, as evaluator you must have a sense of curiosity, and the following suggestions can provide support:

- During the exercise, documents are most likely produced that may be of interest for the evaluation. Where do they go and who produces them? Make copies or request to receive those documents that may need to be analysed after the exercise.
- It is not always enough to merely observe. Take note even of oral communication and listen when contacts are made within the actor organisation and with other actors. Which contacts are made and why? Which equipment is used? Are there group discussions or conversations held two-on-two? Is the actor proactive, or more passive, in its internal and external communication?

- Note even non-verbal communication between the exercise participants, attitudes, and body language. It is likely that there are formal and designated structures and leaders that can have significance for the result.
- What are the technical conditions? What are the systems and which are used? Do the exercise participants reflect on who and how many are reached by each technical system and is the choice of system based on that? Is there technology present that no one masters and therefore is not used?

As the above list shows, there is much that is of interest to the evaluator. It is therefore useful if, before the exercise, one has decided and agreed on what should be observed, so that the evaluators can prioritise their work during the exercise. It is also an advantage if an evaluator knows the venue or the place where the exercise is being conducted. The evaluator cannot be everywhere; thinking through how one will move between various rooms and working groups is therefore critical. Remember that a choice means that something else is not chosen, which implies that there will be things you will not see. A group may be functioning even if it is not doing so precisely when you are looking.

It may even be beneficial to examine more closely the material that is created during the actual exercise. This is, of course, the result of the exercise participants' work. This can involve fictitious interviews that have been held for fictive media, written reports or news about the fictive crisis, logbooks that the exercise participants have kept, about their own actions, or photographs of notes that they have written on whiteboards and such.

The evaluator's observations and documentation of the sequence of events during the exercise are central, but spontaneous impressions, emotions, and reflections just as much from the exercise participants as from the evaluator can also comprise good material. The evaluator must dare to rely on his/her assessment, and also include impressions that are not captured by prepared templates and trained attitudes.

Remember, do not forget to note the times and order in which observations or assessments are made, so as to facilitate understanding of what happened during the exercise.



9.2 Asking questions

It is important, as evaluator, to maintain a low profile during the exercise. This does not exclude the need to ask questions and to interact in other ways with the exercise participants; to clarify for example a situation one doesn’t understand. It must nevertheless be done in a way that affects the exercise as little as possible. The following advice is useful to keep in mind:

- Minimise the number of questions by noting them down to see if they are answered later in the exercise.
- Ask questions when it is convenient for the exercise participant to answer. This could be done during a coffee-break or during a temporary lull in the tempo of the exercise.
- Ask questions quickly and let the participants return to their task.
- Ask questions without using evaluation jargon and avoid questions that require reflective, reasoned responses.

Apart from these general suggestions, it is important that the very formulation of a question does not itself influence the exercise. Below are several examples of leading and suggestive questions, respectively.

9.2.1 Leading questions

Avoid leading questions. A leading question is one that influences the respondent, the exercise participant, to answer in a certain way. Imagine, for example, an evaluator observing an evacuation. Think about the difference between the questions:

Leading questions

“Were the citizens evacuated within an appropriate timeframe?”

“Were the sick actually evacuated quickly enough?”

Non-leading questions

“At what time was the evacuation of the citizens begun?”

“At what time was the evacuation of the sick finished?”

Suggestive questions

Suggestive questions are those that can influence the actions of the exercise participant and, as a result, the entire exercise. They can sometimes almost be taken as proposals from the person who is expected to be assessing one’s actions. Compare the following questions:

“Haven’t you begun the evacuation of the victims from the area yet?”

“Have the sick been evacuated in a special order, as stated in the strategy?”

A more objective question that avoids the risk of influencing the respondent’s answer to the same high degree can be:

“Are there any people in the affected area?”

It also happens that evaluators receive questions from the exercise participants, especially in those cases where the evaluator’s role includes supporting the game leader. To avoid, as an evaluator, taking on the role of an advisor, one can instead pose a counter-question. For example:

- “How would you have acted if I wasn’t here?”
- “How would you act in a real situation?”

A concluding suggestion, regarding questions, is about how one receives the answer: the evaluator must not show any displeasure with the answer, neither in facial expression, body language, nor tone. This also risks affecting the exercise participant.

9.3 Waypoints during the exercise



This section has been written as an example of a checklist of what LE and SE should do during an exercise day.

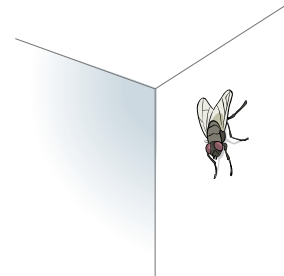
- Be in position in good time before the start of the exercise. As LE, you need to familiarize yourself with the venue and plan where you will be during different activities during the exercise. You must also manage to synchronise the day's schedule and waypoints with the LEL one last time. Even various technical aids, material, and logins may need checking one last time prior to the start of the exercise.
- Establish contact with the evaluation leader if something has been decided about how the communication between the evaluators and the evaluation leader will proceed during the exercise. Also contact other potential LE and SE.
- Present yourself to the exercise participants. In those cases where LE is not already known to the exercise participants, it is important to try to establish a good contact with them before the start of the exercise, which will facilitate the coming observation work. The presentation should include a concise description of the mandate, how collected material is treated, contact information, an explanation of how the evaluation will proceed during the day, and what the continuing work involves.
- If applicable, gather material about the participants. If there is any need for background information, either about the exercise participants themselves, or their organisations, for example, information questionnaires that include self-assessments, it can be helpful to collect them before the exercise. It is sometimes easier to receive questionnaire responses before an exercise than after.
- Supply continuous information to the evaluation leader during the exercise, according to agreed-on routines.
- Conduct the planned post-exercise debriefing, according to the evaluation instructions. See Chapter 11 for a description of such a debriefing.
- Gather remaining documentation and leave them with the evaluation leader. Part of the information can be gathered and handed over after the exercise; read more about data collection in Chapter 14. There may be material, however, that has been documented in technical systems, but that perhaps will no longer be available after the exercise. For example:
 - event logs,
 - image or audio recordings,
 - timelines,
 - the exercise participants' notes,
 - incident reports.
 - telephone calls, logs, and recordings,
 - copies of incoming, outgoing and internal messages.

10. Challenges and pitfalls

10.1 The evaluator's presence

Data collection through observation can be affected by more than just the evaluator's prejudices and perspective. It can also be affected by their very presence. It is well documented that when evaluators observe an exercise, the behaviour of the exercise participants may change. As a result, there is a risk that the evaluator sees (observes) atypical activities. A common way to counteract this is that the evaluator tries to be "a fly on the wall," at the same time as much of the data collection during an exercise is based on the evaluator's movement in the venue, asking to read a computer screen, or to photograph. If there is going to be any audio recording, photographing, or filming, one must, as evaluator, inform the exercise participants of this before the exercise starts. Much can also be prevented by establishing, also before the exercise even starts, a good and confidence-building contact with the exercise participants.

The evaluator's presence can also affect the exercise participants if they predict what the evaluator is looking for, and "meet" these criteria earlier than what the situation calls for. For example, perhaps the exercise participants want to perform a task in a way not designated in the plans, but feel forced to follow the planned procedure when the evaluator is watching. The evaluator can reduce this influence by explaining to the exercise participants that the evaluation report will not identify specific individuals.



10.2 Multi-perspective understanding

The evaluation always proceeds from one or more perspectives. In exercises, one can describe and assess events and actions based on the perspective of the victims, lawyers, crisis managers, or emergency services personnel. Depending on "which eyeglasses one puts on", different parts of a phenomena will be interesting, or observed, to a greater degree. Conversely, the evaluator risks missing certain things depending on her or his "eyeglasses." This entails being aware of what eyeglasses one has on as an evaluator, and trying to imagine various perspectives.





Also, closely tied to perspective is the requirement to position oneself according to power relations. In this context, a power relation implies not only the relation between bosses and administrators, but even tacit structures that may exist, for example, between men and women, older and younger colleagues, and between different professions. Against this background, one can consider the composition of groups and ask questions such as, “Who gets to speak?” and “Who sets the agenda?” and to be aware of this in one’s work.



Suggested reading

Read more about power relations in Section 14.8, about whose voice weighs most.

10.3 Pitfalls to be aware of

Evaluations can never be better than the data material they are based on. To ensure the quality of the data material, it is good to be aware of several pitfalls that evaluators occasionally land in during the actual collection of material. Some examples of mistakes include:

Observer Drift – arises when the evaluators lose interest or are missing a common framework of reference during an exercise. It is most often the result of fatigue, or a lack of motivation. This can be minimised by feedback from the evaluation leader, or with food, drink, and breaks.

Errors of Leniency – arise when the evaluators tend to grade all activities positively.

Errors of Central Tendency – arises when evaluators describe, or assess, all activities as average, to avoid making tough decisions.

Halo effect – arises when evaluators assume a positive impression about a person or group at the beginning of an exercise and allow this impression to influence their observations. Being aware of the phenomenon can to a certain extent prevent it.

Hypercritical Effect – arises when evaluators believe that their job is to discover mistakes, whatever the performance of the exercise participants.

Confirmation Bias – occurs when the evaluators know how an activity was conducted in an earlier exercise and allow that knowledge to influence their expectations. This can be minimized through education.

Evaluator Bias – refers to errors that can be traced to the evaluator’s characteristics, such as partiality. Partiality in evaluators can be minimized through careful selection of evaluators, or by relying on several evaluators for the same functions. Being aware of one’s own relation to what one is evaluating prevents partiality.

There are many more examples of potential mistakes or difficulties, and it is difficult to assure oneself that they do not influence how the evaluator understands an event or measure. Generally, awareness of this reduces the risk, but it is no guarantee. This topic is also something that can be discussed during the course for evaluators (Section 6.2).

11. Post-exercise debriefing

Directly after the exercise has been completed, the LE can hold a short debriefing, together with the LEL, with the exercise participants. The purpose of the post-exercise debriefing is that everyone is provided the opportunity to give their direct and, most often, spontaneous views of how the work proceeded during the exercise, as well as the possibility for the exercise participants to describe their immediate impressions of the performance while their recollections are fresh. It may be valuable to hear the participants' impressions of the exercise before they have been discussed and analysed within their respective organisations. It also creates a valuable opportunity for the evaluators to fill eventual gaps in their notes.

It is better if the post-exercise discussions follow a predetermined structure. Depending on what one wishes to derive from the exercise, one can divide the participants into groups. Administrators can be mixed with decision-makers, or debriefings can be conducted for the respective groups.

The debriefing should be documented, since what emerges can comprise important supporting material in further analysis of the exercise's results. In connection with the debriefing, any evaluation questionnaires could be distributed, completed, and collected. The debriefing should conclude with information about what will be happening next, in the form of evaluation activities and debriefings, and about how the work with the evaluation report will proceed and when it is expected to be finished.



PART III
AFTER THE EXERCISE

12. Introduction

When the exercise has been conducted, the work is far from over. The figure below is an enlargement of what happens in the planning arrows after the exercise, that is, to the right of the "Ex" in the arrows. The different elements are described here, in Part III – After the Exercise.

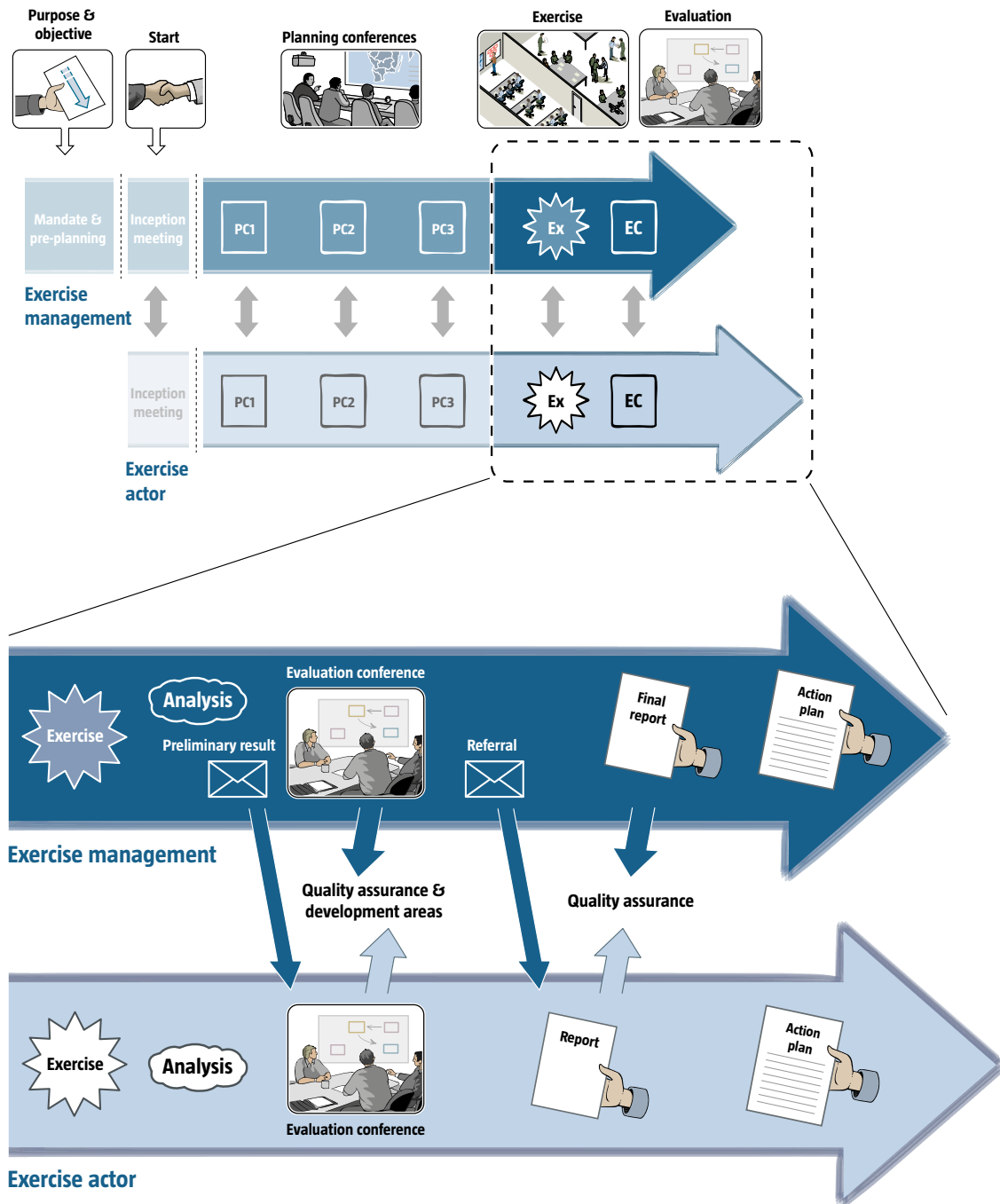


Figure 7: The planning arrows with magnification of what will happen after the exercise.

13. Organisation and time-plan

13.1 Staffing for the post-exercise phase

Now begins the important work to find out how the exercise went and to explain why. This means dealing with and disseminating the results of the exercise so that they are administrated and lead to action and operational development. The evaluators' heaviest workload begins now, when the analysis that will lead to the evaluation result is performed. The evaluation, as described in Part I – Before the Exercise, has been planned for a long time, and it is now that all the preparatory work is going to pay off. The objectives and the questions that will be answered, the evaluation's procedure and assessment criteria are ready, and the exercise has been conducted. Material from the exercise is on the way in. It is now time, as evaluator, to roll up one's sleeves and move into high gear to work according to the evaluation instructions.

As described in Part I – Before the Exercise, it is essential to remember to staff the organisation for the phase after the exercise, and perhaps to reinforce with persons who can help with data collection and the first structuring of the data. It may also be useful to bring in someone with skills in statistics and analysis, who can contribute to the analytical work and in the production of the results, possibly together with some specialized expert who can assist in interpreting it.



Suggested reading

Read more about background and competence of LE, in Section 2.2.2.

The evaluator should not be left to stand completely alone when the exercise has been conducted, but ensure that there are people who can help, and that everyone doesn't just return to their usual jobs, just because the exercise is over. It is therefore important to make sure that the evaluation leader isn't left alone in the exercise management, and that the LE is not the only one left from the exercise actor. On the other hand, not everyone in the exercise management needs to assist the evaluation leader in analysing and producing the result and eventually writing the evaluation



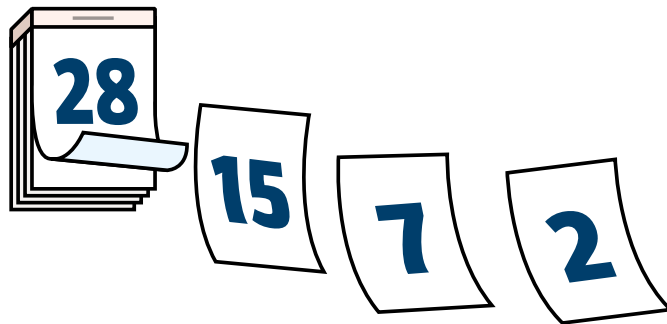
report, or the exercise actor's equivalent. The exercise leader and LEL still have an overall responsibility and should remain accessible, and those persons who have worked with producing the scenario and conducting the exercise are knowledgeable about what may prove valuable when interpreting and explaining the result.

A minimum of staffing in the exercise management, apart from the evaluation leader, could consist of the exercise leader and those responsible for the exercise scenario and its conduct. From the exercise actor, the corresponding minimum of staffing, apart from LE and potential personnel reinforcements on the basis of competence, could be the LEL and those persons who worked especially with the exercise scenario and conduct.

Both the reference group and the steering committee remain connected to the exercise, and the role they will have in the work following the exercise is described in Section 15.6, about quality assurance.

13.2 How long is this phase?

It is difficult to say how long it takes to produce a result and a final evaluation report from an exercise. This depends on the extent and complexity of the exercise and the direction and procedure of the evaluation. One can reflect on the fact that it takes time to gather and compile all the material, perform the analysis and produce a quality-assured result, and write and present the evaluation report. Since it is such an important phase, time must be allowed for it. At the same time, the work needs to be done and the result communicated while the memory of the exercise is still fresh. A rule of thumb can be that it takes between three to six months, from the time of the exercise to the finalising and communicating of the actors' joint evaluation report.



14. Data collection, compiling and analysis

14.1 Producing the exercise's result

To compile and analyse the material and the data that has been collected during the exercise for producing the exercise's result is perhaps the most important part of the evaluation. It is now that the evaluator will answer the two overall questions, "How did it go?" and "Why did it become so?" and carry out the actual assessment of how it went, based on the assessment criteria that have been produced for the exercise.

An evaluation is conducted in a structured manner and on the basis of scientifically-grounded methods for data collection and analysis. The analysis shall be thorough and alternative interpretations presented. Observations, conclusions, and recommendations shall be expressed clearly and rest on the analysis that has been conducted. Any limitations or uncertainty in the conclusions shall be reported. In addition, evaluations shall be characterized by openness and clarity. Recipients and interested parties shall be able, via traceability in the method and material, to follow the entire evaluation process. The data collection methods and analysis used shall also be presented, and the material collected shall be valued systematically, on the basis of the assessment criteria that were established before the conduct of the evaluation.

This chapter's purpose is to provide support and tools for this process. Its contents apply both to the evaluation leader, who will analyse the material for the actors' joint evaluation, and for the local evaluators who will do the respective analyses for their own evaluations.

14.2 What, when and how?

Section 6.1, on data collection methods, describes the type of material that can be gathered during an exercise, for example, questionnaires, copies of the exercise participants' logs, e-mail, and recorded collaboration conferences. Exactly what should be collected for a specific exercise should be evident from the evaluation instructions and attached evaluation plan. They should indicate when the material should be collected, by whom, and how, – i.e., with which method. This chapter describes in more detail a procedure for this and for how the collected material will then be structured and handled.

It is probably not going to be until several days after the exercise that the evaluation leader and LE have received all the material. Certain questionnaires should perhaps not even be distributed until several days after the exercise. Several reminders may also be required before all the material is collected. In order for the handling of the material to proceed as smoothly as possible, those who submit the material need to tidy up and collate the material digitally, to the extent they can.

It may also be that a portion of the collection work is planned for the period immediately after the exercise. It is not only during the exercise that material may be collected, in other words. The evaluation leader and the local evaluators can plan interviews, focus groups, or other meetings with the exercise participants, after the exercise, to gather in-depth observations, material, and experience. Perhaps they will need to ask several specific respondents some complementary questions, and perhaps there are complementary evaluation questionnaires that are only intended to be distributed and completed once the exercise has ended.



The time-plan for when the data collection will occur should therefore be readied in advance, and this is specified in the evaluation plan. If the evaluators plan to contact various respondents after the exercise, they should be informed of this before the exercise.

LE, as described above, has a two-part assignment and needs to be able to differentiate between the material that is gathered for the actors' joint evaluation and is to be submitted to the evaluation leader, as well as the material that is gathered for the evaluation of his or her own organisation.

LE has collected material to be handed over to the evaluation leader, and this may need delimiting. The evaluation leader will probably want answers to specific questions, and can then encourage LE to use his or her material based on the needs that his or her own organisation has of the evaluation, otherwise the evaluation leader is going to drown in material. Once again, these boundaries need to be coupled to the work with objectives and the evaluation's procedure, and these need to have been specified in the evaluation instructions and discussed during the evaluation course held before the exercise.

The evaluation leader should invite the evaluators to a brief meeting, lasting 1–2 hours, relatively soon after the exercise (read in Chapter 11 about how they are gathered directly after the exercise). Getting the LE together relatively soon after the exercise makes it possible to discuss assessments and impressions from the exercise and to make joint interpretations. It may be appropriate to conduct a separate meeting for SE and LE. The purpose of the meeting may be to provide an opportunity for coordinating and getting an idea of how everybody is doing in the data collection process. Having a forum where the evaluators can gather and discuss, where they can ask each other questions and where they can find new energy and support, is going to lift and strengthen the evaluator group.

14.3 Structuring the material

The collected material is going to be extensive and consist of material in different kinds of formats. If one is the evaluation leader for a relatively complex and extensive exercise, with several respondents submitting evaluation material, and with a public network involved, it can involve compiling thousands of responses and comments. It is also an extensive body of material for LE, who will analyse the gathered material for her or his own organisation. To be able to deal with the collected material, it needs to be structured.

The material also needs to be structured in such a way that traceability of the material is preserved. Read more about traceability in the next section.

The collected data can consist of both text and numbers, multiple choice questions with alternative answers, and long textual documents and extracts from logs and open diaries. It is therefore valuable if there is someone to assist who is used to structuring and processing large quantities of data. The collected questionnaires can be collated using Excel, to enable simpler statistical calculations. One can, for example, receive internal assistance from someone with those skills. Perhaps there is a data analyst or statistician in the organisation who can help during a defined period of time?



Structure all material

14.4 Traceability

There needs to be traceability in the evaluation. Traceability implies that conclusions that are presented in the evaluation, regarding strengths, weaknesses, and development areas can be clearly deduced from the material that the evaluation has collected and the analysis that has been done. This also means that any methodological premises for the result that is presented in the evaluations need to be reported.

Indicators and evaluation questions should be supplied clearly along with the results. The evaluator should also present the method that was used in the analysis leading to the result. If pure assumptions have been used in the analysis, that should also be reported, where applicable. The requirement of traceability applies both to the actors' joint evaluation and the actor-specific evaluations.

14.5 Assessment criteria

The material that is gathered should be assessed systematically, based on the assessment criteria that were established before the evaluation's conduct. The process is described in Chapter 4, in Part I – Before the Exercise.

Assessment criteria are what give the collected material meaning. It is when the material is compared to the criteria that positive or critical areas emerge and can be identified, to then become a focus of the analysis, so that strengths and weaknesses, respectively, may emerge. Applying the assessment criteria thus allows us to delimit the analysis to specifically interesting parts of the material.

It is also important here to pay attention to a difficulty in analysing and assessing the actions of the exercise participants. The participants must feel that they have been justly evaluated, if they are going to accept the evaluation. The planning process that was described in Part I – Before the Exercise, builds on involvement between the exercise management and the exercise participants. By having worked together during the planning phase to produce the assessment criteria that will apply in the exercise, the risk that the participants will consider that they have been unfairly treated is minimized.

14.6 Compiling and analysis, step-by-step

It can generally be said that an exercise evaluation deals with comparing what one wanted to find out in the exercise (capacity to manage the event based on prior-developed objectives and assessment criteria) with the actual actions during the exercise. By identifying what went well (strengths) and what needs to be developed (weaknesses), and by understanding why it went that way, one can go on to the development areas and measures.

One has then answered the overall evaluation questions, "How did it go?" and "Why did it become so?" The three steps below describe a proposal for a way of working to compile material and draw conclusions from it.



Analyse

Step 1: How did it go?

One way to find an answer to the question, “How did it go?” in the extensive material, is to begin trying to structure it in chronological order in one and the same document, for example, in Excel. Draw a timeline to base the structure of the material on what happened during the exercise over time, such as main events, activities, and decisions. Create an overview from completed questionnaires, interview material, and other documentation, to make the timeline. Structure the parts of the timeline according to what happened (based on the collected material) and what was intended to happen (based on the exercise objectives and the assessment criteria), and note whether there is any difference between them. Another way is to structure more delimited processes: whether an action follows the plan, decision-processes, production of aggregated operational pictures, etc. This structuring of the material becomes a first attempt in approaching the answer to the question, “How did it go?” Note whether the action led to any consequences (positive, negative, or neutral) and what can be learned from them. Perhaps it is already possible at this point to produce a few recommendations for developing the action described.

Step 2: Why did it become so?

This step’s purpose is to explain why there were differences in the action observed during the exercise, compared to what was supposed to happen. One asks oneself why something happened, or why it didn’t. A way to proceed with this is simply to ask the question, “Why?” until one has arrived at the basic reason and explanation. In the box below, a simplified example is provided; it shows how the evaluator can trace an observation backwards in trying to understand and explain a result.

Example of tracing backwards to answer “Why?”

In an exercise, the evaluator works to analyse the actors’ capacity to communicate to the public in a manner that is both need- and target group-adapted. The collected material appears to give the impression that it is not clear who the actors are turning to with information. In certain cases, it is perceived as questionable, if the actors know what the target group is, or what it needs.

Why did it become so?

The problem appears to originate in the fact that the actors do not perform joint analyses of the need for information. To find an explanation for this, the evaluator needs to delve into the collected material.

...and why did it then become this way?

Among the material are notes from the collaboration conference on actors’ joint information coordination, which the exercise actors conducted during the exercise. A review shows that there was a point on the agenda where the actors were to report on “the general public’s need for information.” The conditions for information coordination seemed, in other words, to be present.

...and why did it then become this way?

On reading through the notes, the evaluator notices that the point about the general public’s need for information seems to have gone no further than each actor’s respective experience and reporting of the general public’s need for information, and that there wasn’t any further discussion of the collective need.

...and why did it then become this way?

The evaluator cannot find any more information in the material about why the actors didn’t achieve any coordination, even though the conditions for that seemed to be in place. It is possible that the evaluator will eventually find explanations in other parts of the material, but notes the above, for now, as a weakness, even if the explanation, so far, remains somewhat unclear.

Step 3: Producing the recommendations and development areas

Once one has figured out how it went and why it became that way, the evaluator needs to develop recommendations for improving preparedness. These recommendations, the so-called development areas, are worked on together at the evaluation conference (EC). These then become the baseline values for identifying actions in an action plan.



Suggested reading

Read more about the development areas in Section 15.1; about the evaluation conference in Section 15.5; and about action plans, in Section 17.1.

14.7 Statistical analyses

A significant part of the analysis is going to consist of descriptive sections, where observations and assessments are interpreted and described. In those instances that provide figures and values such as times, ages, quantity, or figures for the response scale, “to some extent,” “to a great extent,” and so on, it can be an advantage if one can perform both simpler and more advanced calculation to demonstrate average values, median values, and other statistical distributions in describing the material. If there is access to data from a public network, this creates the possibility of performing both non-response analysis (those who didn’t answer the questionnaire) and analyses of differences in what various groups thought about the communication during the exercise, based on such factors as sex, age, and education. The analyses can thus be done both descriptively and in all simplicity, just as, given enough time and resources, they can be performed in a more statistically advanced fashion, to squeeze out as much as possible from the data that has been collected. For these parts, the evaluator may find it helpful if this is assisted by a statistician or data analyst. Otherwise, the evaluator conducts the statistical analyses that he or she is capable of.

14.8 Whose voice has the greatest weight?

The various questionnaires and interview results that have been gathered will consist of a number of different voices with varied points of view. As an evaluator, this is when one needs to establish a balance of different voices from different sources. How did LE assess the actors’ communication with the public? What was the opinion of the communications expert who was designated SE? What did the public itself think about communication (in the event there was a public network)? This is one example of when numerous voices express viewpoints that must be weighed against each other. The evaluator must place the various opinions in imagined weigh-scales to see if they are equal, or if they rest unevenly. When they do dip to one side, one may need to analyse why, and ascertain exactly what was in that weighing pan. How heavy is it? These can be tough considerations. Does the general public’s answer weigh more than that of the communications



expert? Hopefully, one has already reasoned through this in the assessment criteria in the planning prior to the exercise.

This doesn't mean that one must strive for balance, or that the weighing pans must weigh the same. Both the communications expert and the general public may be right. The fact that they weigh differently may very well be interesting. There can be a variety of ways to see and assess what has happened.

When the different voices have been weighed, the evaluator may need to adopt a position on the power relations and dependencies. There can be strong individuals in evaluator functions, who have clear opinions, or their own agendas, which the evaluator may need to be aware of. It may also be a question of decision-makers and such, who perhaps want the evaluation to produce a certain result. It can even involve power relations between sexes, ethnicities or ages. In these cases, the evaluator needs to feel that he or she can, when needed, discuss with the exercise leader or others in the group, so that one is not alone as evaluator in dealing with these tough questions.

14.9 Relating to the conditions of the exercise

The exercise's format, scenario, and participating actors create conditions which the exercise participants will be affected by. As an evaluator, one needs to be aware of the conditions and that the evaluation result may need to be interpreted in their light. How it went will be seen to have depended on the challenges that the exercise actors were faced with, and it may be that it is in those same conditions that a part of the explanation for why it became what it did will be found.

The fact that it is an exercise that is the evaluation object makes this area of evaluation science rather unique. Exercises constitute a simulated reality that has been planned and constructed long before the exercise itself, and that in addition can be steered and influenced during the actual course of the exercise. Given that it also involves collaboration between several of the exercise actors, who are dependent on each other in different ways, there may be several circumstances that influence how they perform in the exercise.

Examples of conditions that can influence the exercise's result may be the absence of key actors in the exercise, which may affect the collaboration aspects. It may involve technical equipment that doesn't function as intended, too high a tempo in the scenario, injects that do not lead to the intended action, a sense of unreality in the scenario, etc. In one's own participating organisation, further conditions may arise that influence the activities, but are on such a level of detail that it is not possible to lift them into the actors' joint evaluation, such as that key persons were not involved in the exercise, or that work tasks during the exercise diverged in other ways from daily life, and so on.

Several of these parameters should be so well-planned in advance that problems do not arise. Actors that are not exercise actors can nonetheless be part of the DISTAFF, the technology can be tested in advance, etc. The unexpected is difficult to plan away, which means that the evaluator needs to expect that things may arise that hinder the analysis work. The kinds of conditions, and how they are dealt with, will probably vary from exercise to exercise. Perhaps, as evaluator, one has decided not to place much emphasis on these questions. In those cases where the conditions do affect the result, this needs to be stated in the evaluation report, so that the result is traceable.

Since one has, as exercise leader, ensured staffing even for the phase following the exercise, there is hopefully someone in the group who may have worked with the scenario and the conduct of the exercise who can contribute to the work of interpreting the exercise's result in the light of these conditions.



15. The result and quality assurance

15.1 Strengths, weaknesses, and development areas



**Strengths Weaknesses
Development areas**

The analysis has now been completed, and the exercise has an evaluation result. What are the parts that this result needs to contain and how will it be presented? The result should include a descriptive part (a description of what has been seen) and an assessment part.

A central portion of the processing of the evaluation result is that the evaluator should deliver a conclusion, a so-called evaluative conclusion. The conclusions of an exercise evaluation should be based on the analysis (assessment) that was done and they should be traceable. The conclusions should consist of strengths (what functioned well) and weaknesses (what didn't function so well), as well as recommendations/development areas. The descriptions of the strengths and weaknesses should be sharp and clear, which facilitates the continued work with the development areas and actions. The evaluation leader is the one who produces this for the actors' joint evaluation, and LE is responsible for the actor-specific evaluation.

Development areas

When the conclusions' strengths and weaknesses have been produced, the evaluator proposes recommendations for mitigating the weaknesses. In the exercise context, these are called development areas. The assignment to produce development areas is in principle always included in the evaluator's tasks, and Section 15.5 about the evaluation conference, describes how this can proceed in a way that increases the participation and anchoring among the exercise actors.

The development areas that the evaluator presents should build on the evaluation's conclusions and be traceable to the analysis and all the way back to those capacities that the exercise was directed to develop. In their simplest form, an identified weakness is transformed into a development area; for example, based on the assessment that the information has not reached the target groups, recommend that the information must be broadened, or disseminated, in another way. Development areas should therefore identify areas of weakness that need to be improved. However, remember also the identified strengths, i.e., areas that functioned well and can thus be recommended to be retained as they are. Development areas may pertain to both short- and long-term solutions, and they need to be consistent with the other recommendations in the result.

The work of producing the development areas is divided, just as before, into the actors' joint development areas and actor-specific areas.⁴ The actors' joint development areas are produced at the evaluation conference, while one's own are produced in internal forums or meetings within the exercise participant organisations.

4. In Sweden, the actors' joint development areas should be reported to MSB; the actor-specific development areas do not need to be reported to MSB.

15.2 The level of detail of the result

When the result is documented in the evaluation report, questions often arise about the difficult balance between being too bland or too detailed and demonstrative. If the report is too general or diffuse, there is a risk that no one will read it.

The level one chooses to rest on needs to be established in advance. This is due to the baseline values provided for the evaluation, especially about the evaluation's function. A reflection about the report's level of concreteness also needs to be discussed within the frame of the evaluation's deliverables.

To avoid mistaken expectations about the level of the result, the planned deliberations need to be communicated to the exercise actors. This especially applies to the importance of communicating the difference between the actors' joint evaluation and the actor-specific evaluations. The different evaluations may be landing on various levels, where one's own evaluation can delve into a greater degree of detail.

These questions may already have been raised at the inception meeting, when an in-depth review of the evaluation is conducted, and afterwards at PC 1, when the objectives structure is presented. One can then issue regular reminders about this, so that the expectations land correctly, and to avoid any surprises or disappointments at the end, when the result is presented. Within one's own organisation, the level of the result is an important point to discuss during the mandate dialogue that is held between LEL and LE.

15.3 Criticism and secrecy



In evaluations of exercises, individual persons are usually not what is being evaluated, but organisations and their collective action. Exercises always include assessments, however, so it thus resides in the nature of the result that it may include what has been assessed as functioning not as well. These are presented in the conclusions as weaknesses. There is a risk that these weaknesses are taken as criticism, so the reaction from a receiving actor might be less than favourable for development.

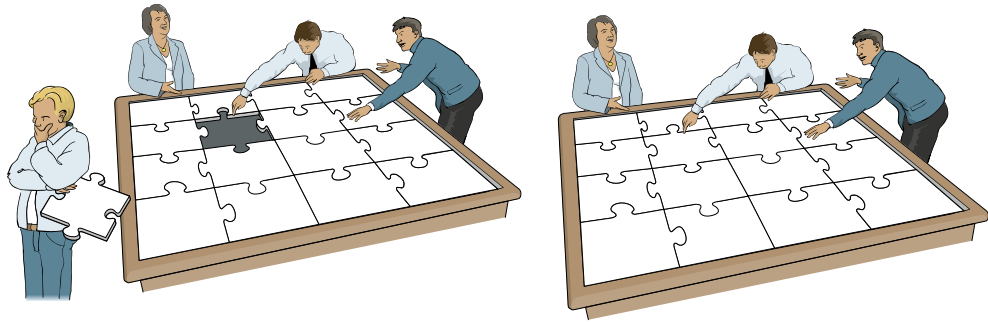
Just as in the reasoning in the section above, about the level of detail of the result, these questions need to have been discussed, already, in the planning process. For a variety of reasons, there may be parts of the result that are directly pointed. It is thus important to discuss this in advance. By all means, contact the actor or actors implied. Choosing just the right words may often be what is needed for acceptance of written criticism. Once again, being able to trace the result in the supporting documentation and in the analysis will be necessary.

In questions of pointedness and criticism, issues of secrecy follow. Exercise evaluation reports are often public documents. There may be a difference between actors, however, and certain parts of the result may be protected by secrecy. The evaluator also needs to take into account current rules and regulations about how personal information is treated. Just as in the question of the degree of detail and criticism, reflection on this issue early in the planning process is needed, preferably before the inception meeting.

It is vital with regular communication and documentation of what was agreed on during the planning process about how the result of the exercise shall be managed, and by whom. Questions surrounding secrecy should be documented in the evaluation instructions.

15.4 Quality assurance throughout the entire process

Quality assurance of the evaluation process and the result that is produced is central, which is why a separate chapter is dedicated to it. In the chapter, quality assurance is raised primarily through an emphasis on participation and regular dialogue with the exercise actors, and on having a reference group attached to the planning and conduct process. Participation implies that everyone needs to be part of solving the puzzle of understanding how it went, and why it became so. The various parts are treated in more detail in the next section.



15.5 The evaluation conference (EC)



A central and important way to provide quality assurance of the evaluation result is by inviting the exercise actors to an evaluation conference (EC) after the exercise.

The evaluation conference has three purposes. The first, more overall purpose, is to provide the actors an opportunity to collaborate on the evaluation result. The second purpose is quality assurance of the preliminary result produced by the actors' joint evaluation, and the third is to work together in proposing actors' joint development areas.

The target groups for EC are LEL, LE, SE, and if possible exercise participants. The exercise management, led by the evaluation leader, is responsible for the invitations to the conference.

Prior to EC, it is helpful if the exercise management distributes the descriptive part of the result via e-mail, for a fact-check by the actors. Are the descriptions correctly understood? The actual assessment part is discussed during the conference.



Depending on how far the evaluation leader has come with that part, it could be sent around before the conference, giving the participants time to read it and prepare themselves.

The evaluation conference is likely held 1–3 months after the exercise. It is difficult to say exactly when, since it depends on the extent and complexity of the exercise, and on how long it takes to analyse the material for producing the preliminary evaluation result for presentation.

Conduct of the evaluation conference

The EC, which is one day, can be divided into two sessions. Half the day is dedicated to acquiring deeper familiarity with the result, while the other half is focused on thinking ahead and working with the development areas. As preparation, a suggestion is that the actors bring three development areas with them from the actor-specific evaluation that can be interesting for other actors and/or includes a collaboration perspective. These can be presented, discussed, and grouped together during the second half of the day, as an introduction and contribution to the work of producing the actors' joint development areas. This requires that the evaluation leader prepares and raises proposals based on the evaluation result, so that one is not beginning with an empty page when working with the actors' joint development areas.



To think about:

What else can one think of, as evaluation leader and LE, that will drive the work of producing the development areas forward?

- Clarify and delimit the concept of development area. Discuss, with the actors, which weaknesses should be raised as development areas. Is it all of them, or just some of those from certain areas?
- Also discuss how the development areas will be described and formulated. At what level of detail should they be described?
- It is preferable to have fewer, but well-defined, thoroughly analysed, and properly anchored development areas rather than many that are broad and vague in character.

The emphasis in the identification process can be placed on those development areas that are meaningful for several actors/collaboration entities, no matter whether they are within one or more actors' areas of responsibility. The development areas that only affect one specific actor's crisis management capacity should be managed and valued primarily within the actor's internal processes. Weaknesses need to be acted on at all levels, but it isn't necessary for all the weaknesses to become development areas.

Equivalent quality assurance work needs to be conducted within one's own organisation, with the respective evaluation result that LE has produced. This is done in an "actor-specific evaluation conference," which can be termed an evaluation meeting/workshop/seminar, or similar. The purpose and setup can be the same as for the joint evaluation conference, but one's own meeting has the purpose of quality assurance of the actor-specific evaluation result and to produce the development areas that apply to one's own activities. The target group for this meeting is the exercise participants and the management, i.e., decision-makers within one's own organisation. The meeting is led by LEL and LE. This meeting is scheduled to occur before the joint evaluation conference.

15.6 Reference group and steering committee

Section 3.3, in Part I – Before the Exercise, describes the importance of having a reference group, or experts attached to the work of planning, conducting, and evaluating the exercise. In working to produce the evaluation result, the reference group has a central role as the quality assurance function. Depending on the setup of the work and the planning one has applied to contacts with the reference group, one can communicate or meet now and then. Appropriate consultations in this phase can occur when a first picture of the result has emerged, immediately prior to the evaluation conference, and when the actors' comments have been worked into the material after the evaluation conference and the actors' joint report is going to be finalised. Within one's own organisation, one can even meet with one's reference group, prior to the evaluation meeting, and before the actor-specific evaluation report is finalised.

Depending on the planning one has done, for consultations with the steering committee, decision-makers, or whomever (depending on how the steering committee has been organised), it is also suitable to hold consultations with them when the preliminary result is ready to be presented. This can occur either before or after the evaluation conference, but definitely before the evaluation report is disseminated for referral.

15.7 Validity

The concept of validity means genuineness, and is something one must think about when planning an evaluation. Is what is going to be evaluated actually evaluated? What is going to be evaluated in an exercise is specified through the work on objectives. This means that the evaluation, if it is going to generate a genuine result, must be designed in such a way that it actually captures what the objectives designate. If the evaluation is not designed correctly, then the result generated by it will simply be irrelevant. Validity is actualized by, among other things, the careful formulation by the evaluation leader and LE of indicators and evaluation questions for evaluating exactly those capacities that the actors' joint and the actor-specific objectives specify will be tested.



16. Presentation of the result

16.1 The evaluation report

The evaluation report becomes the written presentation of the evaluation result. It is the evaluation leader who writes the report for the actors' joint evaluation⁵ and LE writes the report for the actor-specific evaluation.

The exercise actors also need to produce their own evaluation report that presents the result of the actor-specific evaluation, and this is something that they already need to be informed of – and know the justification for – early in the planning process, that is, at the inception meeting. During the actor-specific evaluation, it will be possible to present the more detailed level that is required if an actor is going to find out “*How did it go for us?*” and “*Why did it become so?*”. This degree of detail may be difficult to extract from the actors' joint evaluation, which is produced on the basis of a comprehensive perspective. The actor-specific evaluation becomes a central baseline value in the actor's work with risk and vulnerability analysis and other capacity assessments, the multi-year exercise plan, and in other work with lessons learned activities and operations development. The evaluation leader assumes an important role in supporting LE, so that he or she can perform their evaluation, to find out “*How did it go for us?*”



The outline of the actors' joint evaluation report is decided in consultation with the exercise management, based on the direction from the mandate dialogue regarding the evaluation's deliverables. The content is discussed with the actors, based on the level of detail and confidentiality already established within the planning process, as described earlier.

Roughly speaking, the evaluation report includes a descriptive part and an assessment part, followed by conclusions, in the form of strengths, weaknesses, and development areas (see Section 15.1). The evaluation report should state how the evaluation was conducted, which evaluation questions were posed, where the answers came from, and what the assessment criteria were, so that anyone referring to the result can, in turn, form an opinion about its worth.

5. In Sweden, the actors' joint evaluation report should be reported to MSB; the actor-specific evaluation reports do not need to be reported to MSB.

An evaluation of the exercise as method, of the planning process etc, should be distinguished from the evaluation report that describes the result of the evaluation of the actual exercise. If such an evaluation is conducted, the result can be presented as a separate report, or as an appendix to the evaluation report.

Below is a proposal for an outline that can be used especially for the actors' joint evaluation report, and as more of an inspiration, or of titles that might be selected for use in the actor-specific evaluation reports. The content of several of the titles in the outline proposal can easily be retrieved from the texts in the evaluation instructions.

A proposed outline of an evaluation report

- **Summary** (builds on the brief summaries of each chapter)
- **Introduction**
 - Brief summary
 - Background of the exercise (for example, based on the needs analysis in the multi-year exercise plan)
 - Central baseline values, e.g., overall purpose of the exercise, capacities, etc.
 - The evaluation's function and product
 - What needs to be found out (objectives)
 - Conditions for the exercise, e.g., exercise format, overall description of the scenario and the conduct of the exercise, exercise actors, overview of the planning process
- **Method**
 - Brief summary
 - The evaluation procedure
 - Indicators and evaluation questions
 - Assessment criteria
 - Evaluation organisation
 - Method of data collection, analysis, and quality assurance
- **Result**
 - Brief summary
 - Description of what happened (what happened in the exercise, chronologically, such as main events, activities and decisions)
 - Assessment of how it went and why it became so
 - Results compiled and set in their context, coupled to conditions, boundaries, and any interpretation difficulties with the material
- **Analysis and conclusions**
 - Brief summary
 - Strengths
 - Weaknesses
- **Development areas**
 - Brief summary
 - Weaknesses advanced to development area status
- **References**
- **Appendixes**
 - Protocols and questionnaires, if applicable
 - Deepening of the explanation of the evaluation's procedure, if applicable
 - Deepening of the result, analyses, diagrams, etc. if applicable
 - Result of the evaluation of the exercise as method, if applicable

16.2 Referral process for the evaluation report

Chapter 15 describes the important quality assurance process. The first part of the quality assurance of the result that will be presented in the evaluation report was to work on it together, at the evaluation conference, and even in one's own organisation. When the comments on the assessment result have been worked into it, and the analysed and prioritised development areas are inserted, the product is an actors' joint evaluation report that can be sent back to the exercise actors for referral. The corresponding process occurs internally for one's own report. The referral process becomes yet another step in the quality assurance of the report's result.

16.3 Finalising the evaluation report

When the evaluation report has been sent for referral and the actors have responded with their comments, the evaluation report, after one more processing, can be finalised. As a suggestion, the decision-maker, the commissioning actor, or the equivalent, can write a foreword, which adds weight to the report and justifies the continued lessons learned activities.



To think about:

Remember to anchor the result with the steering committee, a similar constellation of decision-makers, or management attached to the exercise project, before the dissemination of the referral. This is to avoid surprises and delays that arise from their being unaware of the result, or opposing it in some way.

Now, the evaluation report has been finalised and it is ready to be distributed and communicated, both in written, oral, or other form; see the next section. The evaluator's role in this needs to have been clarified in advance, in the mandate.

16.4 Disseminating the result

Now the evaluation report has been produced, quality assured and finalised and it is time to disseminate the result. The written presentation, the evaluation report, needs to be sent to those concerned within the organisations, both exercise participants and non-participants, as well as to administrators and decision-makers. The contents also need to be communicated in another way. The way that the result is communicated, and who bears responsibility for the work, needs to have already been planned in the planning process. What is the direction from the mandate dialogue? What has been agreed on in the evaluation's mandate? Is the mandate over now, or does the evaluator also have a role in the communication of the result? The evaluator has created conditions for the use of the result, that is, has made it possible to transform the result into activity by presenting the result in a well-structured, easily understood, and user-friendly manner, but it is not obvious how much the evaluator should work to disseminate the result.



Regarding the question of whether to hold an actors' joint final evaluation seminar, and gather the actors once more to present the final result, it is not necessary to hold it in a traditional manner. Experience has demonstrated that it is difficult to gather participants for a closing seminar, since the evaluation report has already been finalised and possibly even distributed. One alternative is to attract participation by first distributing the report at the final seminar, but that hasn't shown that it attracts so many more participants either. We therefore propose that the exercise management thinks creatively about communication of the evaluation result. Perhaps it can be distributed as a film, or conducting a webinar. It can be presented in various collaboration forums, for example those of the collaboration areas. The result can be spread with the help of various media by holding a press conference where several central conclusions are given.

**Suggested reading**

In Section 3.2.1, read more about the evaluator mandate, and in Chapter 17, about when the mandate has concluded.



17. When the evaluation is concluded

17.1 Action plans



The development areas addressed the issue of what/which weaknesses need to be acted upon. These need to be transformed into proposals for actions that concretise how, when, and by whom these will be conducted. However, these often reside beyond the responsibility of the exercise management and the evaluator. When the actors' joint development areas have been produced and established in the evaluation report, the actor responsible for the exercise, for example the county administrative board, also has the responsibility for transforming these into an actors' joint action plan.⁶ The question of who in the organisation has the responsibility for producing the action plan and who is responsible for following up on whether the actions are conducted needs to have been clarified early in the mandate dialogue. In one's own organisation, one's own development areas also need to be transformed into actions in the specific actor's action plan. As a rule, it is not the responsibility of the local evaluators to produce these action plans.

To transfer the result of an evaluation to an action plan is facilitated by the analytical quality of the evaluation. An evaluation of good quality, in the form of analyses and conclusions, makes it possible to elaborate concrete recommendations. These can then be directly transferred into actions, which makes it easier to identify proposals for actions at a level of detail that promotes the operation's development.

Communication

To maintain interest in the exercise and the developmental actions that it leads to in the organisations, it is important to communicate about the improvement-inducing actions that are planned and being conducted as an outcome of the exercise. Thus, distribute the action plan as widely as possible and provide continuous information within the organisation as the actions are conducted. Some of the most vital outcomes that an exercise can generate are visible and observable positive changes. Obviously, all communication must be undertaken with consideration for any confidentiality requirements.

NO.	DEVELOPMENT AREA	ACTION	RESPONSIBLE	DEADLINE	DOCUMENTATION	FINAL REPORTING
1	Develop routines for use of WIS.	WIS routines are developed in the project "Crisis Management and Collaboration" and all WIS-users in the county have been consulted.	County Administrative Board Administrator: "Name."	Dec 2016	The document will be addressed in connection with the regional council's fall meeting, 6 November 2016.	In the project, "County guidelines for joint use of WIS" produced. Document is finalised December 2016.
2	Finalised preparedness planning in the event of a dam breach.	Actions are created in collaboration with the river group, under the direction of the County Administrative Board.	County Administrative Board Administrator: "Name."	Dec 2016	New preparedness plan tested and evaluated during exercise, 2017.	Revision of the preparedness plan occurs when the exercise is evaluated and finished.
3					

Figure 8: An example of an action plan.

6. In Sweden, at the latest one year after the conclusion of the exercise, a copy of the actors' joint action plan should be reported to MSB. In the action plan, the actions that have been conducted, and those that remain to be conducted, must also be presented. The actor-specific development areas do not need to be reported to MSB.

17.2 The mandate is concluded

Now the actors' joint evaluation is concluded and the result has been disseminated and transformed into action plans. The project that has driven the actors' joint exercise planning is thus going to be concluded. Before the project is entirely over, one needs to, along with the exercise management, seize the experience and lessons that have emerged during the process. There has perhaps even been an evaluation of the exercise as method, which has contributed valuable experience in advance of the next exercise planned.

For the exercise actors, the mandates of the LEL and LE have also concluded. The work for the actors remains, however, through their continuing work with both the actors' joint and the actor-specific development areas and actions.



SOURCES AND SUGGESTED READING

18. Sources and suggested reading

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18.2 Suggested reading

The following are suggestions for more detailed reading about scientific methods, questionnaires and interviews (in Swedish).

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Trost (1994), *Enkätboken*, fjärde upplagan 2012, Lund: Studentlitteratur

Miscellaneous

For an in-depth discussion of development areas in exercises, see the report (especially Chapter 5.3): *Lättare sagt än gjort – kartläggning av arbetet med utvecklingsområden efter SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011* (in Swedish) [Easier said than done – the handling of the development areas from SAMÖ-KKÖ 2011]. The report can be obtained by contacting the Exercises Section, MSB.

