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Lead author(s)	Cristina Casareale, Save the Children Italia (SAVETC)
Contributors	-
Reviewers	Alessia Golfetti, Deep Blue (DBL)



LIST OF PARTNERS

N.	Logo	Name	Short Name	Country
1		DEEP BLUE SRL	DBL	Italy
2		WEBGENESYS SPA	WGS	Italy
3		SINTEF AS	SINTEF	Norway
4		SAFETY INNOVATION CENTER GGMBH	SIC	Germany
5		RESILIENCE ADVISORS NETWORK	RAN	Ireland
6		STICHTING VU	VU	Netherlands
7		ISTITUTO DI SOCIOLOGIA INTERNAZIONALE DI GORIZIA	ISIG	Italy
8		TARTU ULIKOOL	UTARTU	Estonia
9		UNITED NATIONS EDUCATIONAL SCIENTIFIC AND CULTURAL ORGANIZATION	UNESCO	France
10		OPENBAAR LICHAAM GEZAMENLIJKE BRANDWEER	GB	Netherlands
11		SAVE THE CHILDREN ITALIA ETS	SAVETC	Italy
12		INTERNATIONAL SAFETY TRAINING COLLEGE LIMITED	ISTC	Malta
13		SCIENCES REUNION - CENTRE DE CULTURE SCIENTIFIQUE TECHNIQUE ET INDUSTRIELLE	SRUN	France
14		REGIONAL COUNCIL NORTHERN REGION	REJGTR	Malta
15		HET NEDERLANDSE RODE KRUIS	RCNL	Netherlands
16		AGENCE OBSERVAT AMENAGE HABITAT REUNION	AGORAH	France



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1. Introduction

The preparation of responders tasked with addressing emergencies caused by disasters is crucial for every community and country. This is particularly true for Malta, an archipelago where responders still face numerous challenges, as highlighted during the *Malta Stakeholders Mobilisation Workshop* (the report is available at [SYNERGIES Malta-Stakeholder-Mobilisation-workshop_report.pdf](#)) organized by SYNERGIES on July 19, 2024. The workshop aimed to better understand the local context to develop effective emergency response strategies.

The event brought together a wide range of local stakeholders to discuss strategies for improving disaster response in Malta, highlighting several key priorities. The need to enhance seismic risk assessment and implement public awareness campaigns to increase hazard awareness emerged as crucial. Additionally, participants underscored the importance of improving coordination among emergency services and the various involved agencies to promote a more integrated approach to managing critical situations. Another key point was increasing the involvement of both trained professionals and volunteers, actively engaging the community in the preparation and disaster response process. Finally, discussions emphasized the importance of strengthening early warning systems and communication strategies, particularly focusing on vulnerable groups to ensure timely access to critical information for everyone.

Building on the challenges identified during the workshop, the DecEx 2024 exercise, held on December 14-15, 2024, in Malta, marked a significant step towards fostering a culture of preparedness and safety. This event was a milestone, being the first national exercise in Malta organized by an NGO and the second-ever civil protection exercise conducted at the national level. While Malta had seen small-scale specialized exercises between 2012 and 2024, these were fragmented and did not foster the inter-organizational synergy required during real emergencies.

1.1 Organisation and structure of the exercise

The exercise, organized by the Canine Search and Rescue Team under the Maltese Association of the Order of Malta – a member of the PC Malta Local Support Team, aimed to bring together all relevant entities (from government bodies and the Civil Protection Department to volunteer organizations) with the responsibility to respond to a disaster. The objective was to learn, collaborate, and motivate one another to enhance a system ability and effectiveness in emergency response.

The choice of dates was deliberate: December 13 marked the 50th anniversary of Malta's republic, a day of extensive celebrations involving the same entities participating in the exercise. This set a realistic scenario of fatigue and stress for the two days of the exercise, mimicking conditions likely to occur during real emergencies. However, this approach also demanded significant effort from the organizers, who had to secure the cooperation of organizations accustomed to working in silos and initially reluctant to collaborate as a cohesive system. To address these challenges, the organizers involved all entities throughout the design process, ensuring their participation in creating a realistic scenario.

Despite initial skepticism, the event successfully engaged 195 responders and 65 volunteer actors simulating affected citizens. The exercise focused on immediate Assessment, Search, and Rescue (ASR) efforts following an earthquake, adhering to the guidelines established by the United Nations International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). Activities included site mapping, needs assessment, prioritization of rescue operations, rubble searches



using aerial tools and canine units, patient extraction and triage, and disaster victim identification (see Annex 1 and Annex 2 for more details about the organisation of the exercise).

The participating organizations included local and foreign teams:

Local Teams

- The Maltese Association of the Order of Malta
- Foreign Search and Rescue Teams
- The Armed Forces of Malta - Medical
- The Armed Forces of Malta - Air Wing
- The Civil Protection Department of Malta
- The Malta Police Forensics Science Laboratory
- Malta Police Force - K9
- Malta Police Force - Recruits
- Mater Dei Accident and Emergency
- Transport Malta
- The Emergency Fire and Rescue Unit
- Emergency Response Rescue Corps
- St John Ambulance and Rescue
- K9 Urban Search and Rescue
- Malta Local Scout Groups

Foreign Teams

- Hajdú Speciális Kutató-Mentő Egyesület (Hungary)
- Voluntari 112 (Romania)
- CISOM - Corpo Italiano di Soccorso dell'Ordine di Malta (Italy)
- EpiDrasis Volunteer (Greece)
- GSAR dogs team (Netherlands)

1.2 The role of SYNERGIES in DecEx 2024

DecEx 2024 provided SYNERGIES with an essential opportunity to collaborate with the local community on disaster preparedness while promoting a culture of safety and resilience. DecEx 2024 indeed helped strengthen collaboration with the Local Support Team established during the event held on July 19, 2024. More specifically, SYNERGIES played a key organizational role to support the event's success). Moreover, the exercise served as an ideal platform for completing the Steering phase of the project, essential for producing project outcomes. It also furthered the promotion of project activities in preparation for the upcoming Evaluation and Validation phases.

1.3 Approach and methodology

1.3.1 Organization and roles

The event was preceded by a series of meetings involving the various PC Malta partners in organizing activities to guarantee the active involvement of SYNERGIES in the exercise activities. Specifically:

- **REJGTR** actively contributed to organizing DecEx 2024 alongside the Local Support Team and ISTC by coordinating meetings and exchanges among the various

organizations involved in the exercise and relaying key decisions to SYNERGIES partners tasked with planning the event's activities. REJGTR also administered surveys to event participants and invited key entities to participate in online interviews. Additionally, REJGTR supported SAVETC in conducting online interviews.

- **SAVETC** coordinated internal SYNERGIES meetings, acted as a liaison with other project work packages, and prepared the necessary materials for the interviews (e.g., questions, information sheets, and consent forms), for the workshop, and for the subsequent reorganization of questions for survey administration. SAVETC also conducted in-person and organised and conducted online interviews.
- **DBL** provided support in organizing SYNERGIES preparatory activities and conducted in-person interviews together with SAVETC.
- **ISTC** contributed to organizing DecEx 2024 alongside the Local Support Team and REJGTR and provided support during in-person interviews.

1.3.2 Methodology, tools and delivery

The activities planned for this event included a preparatory workshop for the exercise, scheduled to take place on December 13, 2024, and a series of open one-to-one interviews with the operators of the organizations that participated in the exercise on December 14 and 15, 2024. A qualitative approach was adopted for each of the organized activities to finalize data collection during the Steering phase.

The workshop was designed with an initial brief presentation of the project and key insights from the workshop conducted in July, followed by two interactive sessions using Mentimeter to allow participants to share their opinions. For each session, a background scenario was defined to immerse participants in an emergency situation similar to the exercise, along with questions to reflect on the proposed scenario. The workshop was planned to be conducted in person at the exercise site. However, due to the demands of the exercise, it could not take place as planned. Instead, the scenarios and questions prepared for the workshop were incorporated into a Google Form (see Annex 3) and distributed during the exercise's award ceremony.

For one-to-one interviews, questions were based on a semi-structured framework developed in collaboration with WP leaders, aligned with the progress of the results they were developing. These questions were adapted during the interviews based on the type of organization being interviewed and the activities observed during the exercise to optimize the information gathered. The interviews were conducted on December 14 and 15, 2024. Additionally, the organization of the field DecEx 2024 exercise activities and the openness of some organizations that could not participate in the event, made it possible to arrange data collection activities in the form of one-to-one online interviews. The online interviews took place between December 18, 2024, and January 31, 2025.

2. Data collection activities key findings

2.1 Stakeholders Consultation Survey

A total of 4 questionnaires were collected between December 15, 2024, and January 31, 2025. The organizations that completed the survey are as follows:

- Canine SAR - Order of Malta
- Training Ship (TS) St Paul Sea Cadets
- Reġjun Tramuntana

The survey highlighted that after an earthquake, the most vulnerable groups include the elderly, disabled, and those living alone without caretakers, as they face higher risks due to physical fragility, mobility challenges, and hydration needs. People with crush injuries are in life-critical condition and require immediate medical attention. Civil protection authorities lead response efforts, supported by medical teams, specialized equipment, and volunteers. Responders must remain calm, assess the environment, and maintain order while assisting safely. Key challenges include language barriers, uncoordinated volunteers, aftershocks, and safety risks, though local involvement can be valuable. Volunteers are organized based on capability and assist with safe tasks like carrying supplies, aiding minor injuries, and clearing rubble in secure areas. Search teams prioritize calmness and listening for survivors while awaiting professional rescue efforts. The INSARAG procedures provide a structured approach to managing spontaneous volunteers, ensuring an effective and coordinated response.

More details about the main insights gathered from the survey are summarized below.

2.1.1 Empowerment of Disaster Management Actors

Background scenario: A violent earthquake has occurred. When you arrive at the scene, there are different groups of people in need (disabled people, marginalised people, elderly, children, people that do not speak the language) and seeking your assistance.

Which groups of people would need help most urgently? How life-critical is the situation for these people?

Most vulnerable groups include the elderly, disabled, and those living alone without responsible caretakers. These individuals are particularly at risk due to physical impairments, fragility, higher hydration needs, or the potential to wander and endanger themselves or others. Situations involving these groups require rapid and rational assessment, as conditions may vary and may not be immediately apparent. Additionally, people trapped with crush injuries are highlighted as extremely critical cases needing urgent attention.

What kind of help do they need? Who should provide it?

Basic needs must be addressed, ensuring access to assistance, and providing psychosocial support in emergencies. Civil protection authorities will have to lead operations and provide instructions. Mobile individuals should be guided away from the worksite, assisted, and questioned about others in need of help or specific requirements. Medical aid and specialized equipment like lifters will play a critical role in supporting the operations.

Has your organisation conducted any preparedness campaign, training or exercise involving these groups to prepare the public for disasters?

The DecEx exercise was made open to the public and intended to train the community with the INSARAG first responder training which allows spontaneous volunteers to assist those in need. However, much more focus should be given to better planning preparedness activities.

2.1.2 Management of spontaneous volunteers



Background scenario: A violent earthquake has occurred. When you arrive at the scene, there are lots of people already there searching for the rubble and extracting survivors using makeshift tools. More and more people are converging to the area carrying powerful machines, food and water, tools or want to provide information or simply ask what they can do.

What are you expected to do?

Responders are expected to take a calm and proactive approach in a situation: assess the environment, seek guidance, maintain order among those involved, and, if safe, assist in the broader effort until directed otherwise.

What challenges do you expect and what opportunities do you identify?

Key challenges include language barriers, uncoordinated or erratic helpers, and well-meaning individuals who may obstruct operations. Despite these, there are opportunities to educate and guide people on effective actions, though this may be difficult in the chaos. Potential issues like aftershocks, religious sensitivities, and safety concerns add to the complexity, while local involvement could be a valuable asset. Personal challenges include staying safe and managing the emotional distress of those panic-searching for loved ones.

What do you envision doing with these people? How are the different offers to help manage considered or rejected?

In an emergency, the focus is on organizing and utilizing public support effectively while prioritizing safety and maintaining order. The public can assist with tasks such as carrying supplies, helping minor-injury victims, providing food and drink, and clearing rubble from safe areas, all while being kept out of harm's way. Individuals are sorted based on physical capabilities, and those with information are directed to designated teams. Stability at the site is ensured before deploying teams, with a capable leader appointed to oversee operations. Equipment and supplies are categorized, and volunteers help plan their distribution. Search parties are organized to locate survivors, with an emphasis on remaining calm and quiet to listen for signs of life, all while awaiting professional help.

Does your organisation have a specific procedure, protocol or guideline to manage spontaneous volunteers? If yes, can you provide an example?

The INSARAG procedures are used.

2.2 In presence interviews

A total of 10 interviews were conducted over the two days, involving 7 different organizations. The interviews highlighted that across various organizations, there is a shared emphasis on training, community engagement, and psychological support to enhance emergency preparedness and response. These activities include educating volunteers and first responders in areas like first aid, medical care, fire response, and lifeguarding, as well as engaging with vulnerable groups through school visits and awareness campaigns. Some organizations also focus on specialized areas, such as search and rescue, with canine teams used to locate missing persons, or providing medical support during large public events. Psychological support for both responders and affected individuals is a key priority, with post-trauma care offered in several cases. While most organizations prioritize collaboration with other NGOs and local authorities, some also advocate for changes to national disaster protocols or provide multicultural outreach to improve communication with diverse populations. Additionally, the management of spontaneous volunteers during large-scale emergencies is recognized as a critical need, though approaches to this differ across organizations. Each group adapts its activities to meet its unique mission and the specific needs of the communities it serves.

More details about the main insights from the interviews, categorized by organization.

2.2.1 The Maltese Association of the Order of Malta

The Canine Search and Rescue team of The Maltese Association of the Order of Malta lead a dedicated canine search and rescue operation with three specialized focuses: search dogs for locating missing or injured individuals, tracking dogs for finding specific persons, such as dementia patients who may wander off, and cadaver dogs for assisting in legal cases involving human remains. Their proactive approach often sees them collaborating with care homes and institutions, providing crucial support even before police reports are filed.

The team places a strong emphasis on inclusivity, actively engaging with the community to inspire participation and raise awareness about their work. Through school visits, they aim to educate and inspire young people, fostering interest in search and rescue operations. Additionally, the inclusion of people with disabilities in their operations is a major component in their mission. The team shared examples of how disabled volunteers have taken on significant roles, such as managing incident command or monitoring equipment. Demonstrations have been conducted to showcase the potential roles disabled individuals can fulfill, and the team has ambitious plans to incorporate more individuals with disabilities into their operations, highlighting the value of diverse contributions.

The team has pointed out that spontaneous volunteers often emerge during emergencies, and while their enthusiasm is valuable, effective management and training are critical to ensuring they contribute positively to operations.

The team has plans to offer both basic and advanced training for volunteers, equipping them with the knowledge and skills to support disaster response effectively. These courses will also extend to local first responders, covering essential areas such as understanding roles during disasters, crowd control, first aid, and supporting local enforcement agencies. By addressing community-specific safety challenges, the training will also serve as an educational tool to raise awareness about disaster response and the dangers involved.

With regards to the DecEx 2024 exercise, after 12 years, the team organized a large-scale disaster simulation exercise, bringing together local and international teams to simulate a real-world crisis. This groundbreaking event underscored the importance of teamwork, communication, and preparedness.

Despite initial communication gaps, teams adjusted strategies and improved coordination by the second day. The event revealed key areas for improvement:

- **Collaboration:** teams that had never trained together before worked side by side, learning to integrate their efforts and adapt to different operating styles.
- **Government Support:** the team stressed the need for greater logistical and strategic backing from government authorities to address identified challenges.
- **National Disaster Planning:** findings from the exercise are being integrated into Malta's national disaster response strategies, ensuring lessons learned translate into better preparedness for future crises.

Effective communication proved vital during the simulation exercise, highlighting the need for clear structures and protocols. While gaps were evident on the first day, improved strategies on the second day enabled smoother operations.

The event also underscored the value of international collaboration. Teams from various countries shared knowledge and expertise, fostering a culture of mutual learning and reinforcing the importance of global partnerships in disaster response.



Looking ahead, the team is focused on continuous training, both for their own members and the broader community. They plan to organize more joint exercises to ensure readiness for real-world disasters, while also expanding their training offerings to empower volunteers and first responders.

The team also emphasized the importance of securing greater funding and support to sustain and enhance their initiatives. By strengthening partnerships with organizations, volunteers, and government agencies, the team aims to build a resilient network capable of responding effectively to crises.

2.2.2 The Malta Police Forensics Science Laboratory

The interviewee emphasized the essential need to save lives during emergencies. At the same time, the interviewee discussed the importance of the Interpol Disaster Victim Identification Protocol, emphasizing the need to give unidentified victims a proper burial, rather than just assigning them numbers.

The team is, indeed, currently educating their personnel on the processes involved in disaster victim identification to ensure proper implementation and understanding. This training has been done since 2018 in collaboration with the European Forensic Institute with the aim of bringing first responders together to focus on saving lives and identifying victims.

In case of emergency Malta has a protocol that mandates collaboration during disasters, but adherence can vary depending on the individuals involved. The interviewee noted that while some departments continue to work well together, others may not prioritize disaster victim identification as much. Indeed, changes in personnel can impact the prioritization of disaster victim identification, with some new members not as invested in the process as their predecessors.

Luckily, this challenge does not involve crucial actors in an emergency, such as the Civil Protection Department and the Health Department that ensures collaboration despite the personal turnover. However, the disaster victim identification protocol is not yet part of Malta's constitution and it would be crucial to incorporate this protocol into the constitution to ensure its consistent mandatory application and make disaster management smoother in its entire process.

Although the collaboration among actors strongly depends on personnel sensitivity and the country has never experienced a massive disaster, the interviewee feels that the Maltese emergency response system is well prepared and would be ready to cope with a massive disaster like the flood that hit Valletta in October 2024.

2.2.3 Malta Police Force - Recruits

The Recruit emphasized the critical importance of emergency preparedness, especially for individuals with special needs. Recognizing the unique challenges they face during emergencies, the Recruit advocated for tailored campaigns and preparedness activities to help these individuals feel less frightened and more equipped to handle crises. Indeed, during the exercise the Recruit played the role of an injured person and elaborated on the bad feeling of not being soon rescued. In this specific case, having been trained in how to behave in case of emergency played a crucial role in keeping the participant calm. In a scenario where a person with special needs was not immediately visible to rescuers, the Recruit underscored the necessity of specialized training and heightened awareness for responders.

Activities like first aid training and civil protection exercises were noted as key tools to help people understand emergency procedures and reduce panic in high-stress situations. Recruit



also suggested innovative engagement strategies, including the use of visual aids such as videos, to reach individuals with little or no prior experience in emergency scenarios. These initiatives could familiarize participants with critical roles and actions, fostering a sense of confidence and preparedness.

The participant elaborated on the comprehensive training police officers undergo to handle diverse and challenging scenarios. Recognizing cultural barriers and language difficulties as significant hurdles, the participant described how officers receive lectures and practical exercises to address these issues. For instance, the Recruit recounted a case involving a robbery at an Italian shop, where language posed a challenge for effective communication.

Training for police officers includes simulations of real-life scenarios, such as domestic violence incidents. These exercises prepare officers to manage uncooperative individuals and work collaboratively with other emergency services. The participant highlighted the importance of joint training sessions, which foster coordination and improve the overall effectiveness of emergency responses.

From addressing cultural barriers to managing complex domestic situations, the participant emphasized the need for comprehensive and realistic training. Such preparation ensures that officers are well-equipped to handle diverse challenges, ultimately contributing to better outcomes during emergencies.

2.2.4 Mater Dei Accident and Emergency

The interviewee discussed the organization's commitment to supporting individuals with extra needs during crises. Mater Dei Hospital ensures that the specific needs and capabilities of staff and volunteers are considered, assigning tasks that match their mental and physical abilities. For instance, individuals who may be psychologically affected are often allocated non-interactive roles, such as retrieving items or managing supplies. This approach minimizes the risk of psychological distress and ensures that everyone can contribute effectively without undue strain.

For those unable to interact directly with patients or their relatives, Mater Dei assigns alternative roles. These include logistical support, inventory management, and other behind-the-scenes tasks. By strategically distributing responsibilities, the organization prevents psychological stress while maintaining operational efficiency during high-pressure situations.

Mater Dei Hospital prioritizes the effective utilization of its resources. Volunteers and staff are matched with roles that suit their mental and physical strengths, especially in emotionally charged scenarios. This thoughtful allocation process helps maintain a functional and empathetic emergency response system, critical when emotions run high, and lives are at stake.

Due to liability concerns, Mater Dei Hospital only accepts volunteers with medical backgrounds. This policy ensures that emergency situations are handled safely and professionally, preventing untrained individuals from inadvertently causing harm. However, the hospital guides non-medical volunteers to organizations such as the civil protection, where their contributions can still make a significant difference.

Collaboration with NGOs is an essential part of Mater Dei's emergency response. Organizations like Saint John Ambulance, the Emergency Fire and Rescue Unit, and the Red Cross provide valuable assistance in areas such as crowd control, logistical support, and non-medical tasks. These partnerships enable the hospital to focus on delivering quality medical care while other critical support functions are managed efficiently.



The interviewee recognises the importance of developing a volunteer portal to streamline the coordination and training of volunteers. This system could enhance resource allocation, ensuring volunteers are placed in roles where they can have the most impact. Such a platform would also promote better integration of community members into emergency preparedness efforts.

Mater Dei Hospital occasionally involves young people and pensioners in training programs to prepare them for non-critical emergency roles. School programs often introduce students aged 15-16 to volunteer opportunities, providing valuable experience and fostering a culture of community service.

The hospital identifies meaningful roles for individuals with physical or mental disabilities, ensuring that these tasks are neither overwhelming nor unsafe. Potential roles include assisting with logistics, command and control, and patient transport for minor injuries. This inclusive approach emphasizes the value of every individual's contribution while prioritizing their safety and well-being.

The interviewee highlighted the importance of educating the public on emergency protocols and basic medical knowledge. While Mater Dei occasionally engages in awareness activities, such as school visits and media campaigns, limited resources prevent the implementation of comprehensive training programs. Expanding these initiatives could significantly improve the community's ability to respond effectively to emergencies.

2.2.5 The Emergency Fire and Rescue Unit

Founded in 2010, the Emergency Fire and Rescue Unit (EFRU) has played a vital role in Malta's emergency response system. EFRU is dedicated to training its members in a wide array of rescue disciplines, including firefighting, first response, and medical rescue. The unit's comprehensive training program ensures that its personnel are equipped to handle the challenges of modern-day emergencies. As part of its strategy to continually improve operational readiness, EFRU collaborates with foreign teams, allowing its members to participate in international training programs and exchange best practices. Additionally, EFRU is a key member of the European Association of Civil Protection Volunteer Teams, an organization that fosters collaboration between various volunteer organizations across Europe to share insights, conduct joint exercises, and enhance emergency response capabilities. This membership facilitates the exchange of best practices, participation in joint workshops, and involvement in multinational simulations. These opportunities help improve the unit's preparedness for a range of emergency situations, ensuring that they are ready to provide effective support, not only within Malta but also in international operations when needed.

Effective leadership is crucial during major incidents, especially when the scale of an emergency demands cooperation from both trained responders and the public. EFRU emphasizes leadership training for its members to ensure they can efficiently manage large-scale emergencies while incorporating the public's support. In many cases, especially when resources are limited, the public plays an essential role in assisting with emergency response. EFRU trains its personnel to work alongside the public, assigning them manageable tasks such as guiding evacuations or providing logistical support. This collaboration between professionals and the public enhances the effectiveness of the response and ensures that critical needs are met during emergencies. By developing clear leadership strategies and fostering public involvement, EFRU ensures that even when the number of responders is reduced, the emergency response remains efficient and coordinated.

An important aspect of EFRU's operations is its ability to adapt to the specific needs of vulnerable groups, including children, the elderly, and individuals with disabilities. Recognizing



that these groups may face unique challenges during emergencies, EFRU has developed protocols to ensure their safety and well-being. The unit specifically identifies members with relevant experience, such as parents, caregivers, or those working with elderly populations, to provide tailored support during crises. This group-specific adaptation helps ensure that those who are most vulnerable receive the necessary assistance in a way that is sensitive to their unique needs. In complex emergencies, EFRU often adopts a multidisciplinary approach, where different areas of expertise come together to provide comprehensive care. This ensures that each individual, regardless of age, disability, or special need, is appropriately supported throughout the emergency response.

EFRU understands that psychological preparedness and specialized knowledge are essential for effective emergency response. The organization provides its members with training not only on physical rescue and medical response but also on the psychological aspects of emergency work. This includes preparing responders to deal with the emotional challenges that often accompany traumatic events. Furthermore, EFRU has made significant efforts to educate its members about specific needs, such as autism and attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD). By collaborating with focus groups and specialists, the unit ensures that its personnel are prepared to support individuals with these conditions during emergencies, which often require special attention and care.

In addition to training its own members, EFRU also engages with the wider community through awareness campaigns. These campaigns focus on raising public awareness about fire safety, emergency preparedness, and the importance of psychological resilience. EFRU visits schools and elderly homes to educate children and senior citizens, using interactive games and discussions to make learning about emergency preparedness engaging and memorable. These visits also serve as an opportunity for EFRU to assess how well its members connect with different groups and identify those who may excel in working with vulnerable populations.

During large-scale emergencies, the number of volunteers offering assistance can often exceed the capacity of the emergency services. While this influx of support is valuable, it also presents challenges in terms of coordination and safety. EFRU acknowledges the lack of formal policies and specific training for managing spontaneous volunteers, which can create complications when it comes to ensuring that these individuals are deployed effectively and safely. In response, EFRU relies on the good judgment and experience of its personnel to manage these volunteers. By coordinating with local authorities and emergency services, EFRU ensures that public support is used efficiently, allowing spontaneous volunteers to assist in non-medical roles that complement the work of trained responders.

EFRU's commitment to continuous improvement is reflected in its collaboration with foreign volunteer organizations. By inviting trained volunteers from these organizations to assist during emergencies, EFRU enhances its response capabilities and increases its operational capacity. This international collaboration not only brings additional manpower but also provides valuable training opportunities for EFRU members, helping them refine their skills and better prepare for future emergencies. These partnerships strengthen the unit's ability to respond to a wide variety of crisis scenarios with a more diverse skill set.

EFRU, in collaboration with an Italian volunteer organization, has developed a series of manuals aimed at guiding both professional responders and the general public in emergency scenarios. These manuals provide practical advice on how to respond to different emergencies, such as fires, floods, and medical crises, equipping people with the knowledge needed to act confidently and efficiently in high-pressure situations. The creation of these manuals is part of EFRU's broader mission to educate the public and ensure that everyone, from responders to civilians, is well-prepared in the event of an emergency.

2.2.6 Emergency Response Rescue Corps

The Emergency Response and Rescue Corps (ERRC) is a non-governmental organization based in Gozo, Malta, established in 2011. Starting with minimal resources, the organization has grown significantly over the years, expanding its operations and capabilities to provide a range of essential emergency services. Its main mission is to respond to emergencies swiftly and effectively, ensuring the safety and well-being of individuals in crisis situations.

ERRC is specialized in three key areas: patient transport, lifeguarding, and severe weather services. The organization offers lifeguarding services across all beaches in Gozo and Comino, ensuring public safety during peak tourism periods. Additionally, ERRC operates various emergency vehicles, including boats, to respond to emergencies in coastal and remote areas. Their capabilities extend to providing critical support during severe weather events, ensuring readiness for any disaster scenario.

Beyond emergency services, ERRC also plays a vital role in ensuring safety at large public events, such as marathons, sports matches, and festivals. The organization is tasked with monitoring emergency response readiness and providing medical assistance during such events to safeguard participants and attendees.

Like during the exercise, in emergency situations, ERRC covers a role of responsibility in the control room, where they coordinate operations by overseeing field teams, assessing the patients' conditions, and determining the necessary resources. This includes monitoring ongoing situations, such as accidents or emergencies, and deploying resources like ambulances or medical staff accordingly. Effective communication is a critical aspect of the control room operations. The interviewee explained how they maintain constant communication with field teams, gathering updates on the status of patients and coordinating further actions. This process ensures that the response is efficient, resources are allocated where needed, and operations are streamlined.

In emergency situations, ERRC prioritizes understanding the type of population affected, identifying any vulnerable individuals who may require special care. Factors such as age, disabilities, and medical conditions are assessed to ensure appropriate resources are allocated for their treatment. Once the affected population is identified, the organization sets up triage areas where patients are categorized based on the severity of their injuries or conditions. This process allows for effective prioritization, ensuring that critical cases are addressed first.

The mental well-being of team members is crucial in the aftermath of traumatic events. ERRC offers psychological support services, including debriefing sessions where team members can process their experiences. Psychologists are available to help staff cope with the emotional toll of their work, ensuring that they remain resilient and able to perform their duties effectively in future emergencies.

To maintain order during an emergency, especially in situations where locals or tourists want to help, ERRC involves bystanders in the response process, such as crowd control or helping organize emergency vehicles. This helps manage the scene and ensure the safety of all individuals involved, allowing emergency responders to focus on patient care without distractions.

ERRC conducts weekly awareness campaigns in local schools, educating students about basic first aid techniques and emergency response protocols. These campaigns are designed to promote the organization's services while encouraging community involvement and volunteerism. The organization also distributes small gifts to engage students and make the



training more interactive. Beyond schools, ERRC engages with the community through open days and other events, where members of the public can learn more about first aid, the services provided by the organization, and how they can become involved as volunteers.

ERRC boasts a multicultural team, with members from various countries such as the UK, Italy, Argentina, and Ukraine. This diversity is a valuable asset, as it allows the organization to effectively communicate with a broad range of tourists and individuals from different cultural backgrounds, fostering trust and cooperation during emergency responses. The organization ensures all team members, regardless of their nationality or background, undergo rigorous training. This includes both basic and advanced courses in first aid, lifeguarding, and emergency management, ensuring that everyone meets the same high standards of preparedness and effectiveness.

2.2.7 St John Ambulance and Rescue

St. John Ambulance is one of the oldest NGOs in Malta. While Malta has not experienced major disasters like large earthquakes, the organization supports the Civil Protection Department for significant events such as severe storms or large fires. St. John Ambulance operates primarily in support of the authorities, focusing on high-impact situations rather than routine operations.

The Organization primarily trains its volunteers in areas such as medical care, fire response, water rescue, and other emergency disciplines to provide effective support during major public events or emergencies. With the Civil Protection now better equipped and funded, reliance on St. John Ambulance has decreased; the service was last called upon less than a year ago.

This reduction is considered positive, as the St. John Ambulance's volunteer-based workforce is reserved for extraordinary situations rather than day-to-day operations. In the past, before Civil Protection's resources were enhanced, St. John Ambulance volunteers frequently had to step in, often working extended shifts despite their volunteer status.

Although the St. John Ambulance does not directly focus on preparedness for vulnerable groups, it conducts awareness campaigns via social media and offers cadetship programs for children or individuals in rehabilitation, equipping them with knowledge and essential life skills.

St. John Ambulance's team is multicultural, with volunteers from countries including Bulgaria, Romania, Serbia, England, Germany, Sweden, Nigeria, South Africa, and Mauritius. This diversity reflects Malta's community, bringing added value to the organization. However, it also presents challenges, especially when working with other organizations in chaotic emergency environments where clear communication is critical. In emergencies, Maltese is the official language, but having international volunteers is a relatively recent development, introduced only in the past three years. Foreign volunteers may, indeed, hesitate to ask for clarification if they do not fully understand their tasks, and the Organization encourages open communication to address this issue.

The presence of foreign volunteers also helps St. John Ambulance reach diverse communities, encouraging more people to volunteer and increasing personnel capacity for emergencies. People tend to trust the uniform, making outreach efforts more effective. However, communication with communities can sometimes be limited.

St. John Ambulance does not utilize spontaneous volunteers and has not tested their integration, as Malta has not faced disasters large enough to necessitate such measures. On the field, St. John Ambulance works with trained volunteers in coordination with the Health



and Civil Protection departments. There is a mutual understanding between these departments about the Ambulance's operations, ensuring effective collaboration.

However, St. John Ambulance recognizes that in the case of large-scale events, it is essential to develop strategies for organizing spontaneous volunteers. Trained personnel in the organization are equipped with leadership skills, which could facilitate synergies between trained and untrained volunteers during a crisis. While Malta has not explored this potential synergy, lessons could be learned from countries like Spain and Italy, where such systems are better established.

In the future, conducting exercises to address the involvement of spontaneous volunteers would be valuable. Depending on the scenario, these volunteers could play useful roles, such as clearing debris to create access for emergency vehicles or managing crowds to maintain safety. Although there is no current practice or protocol for managing spontaneous volunteers, developing one would be crucial for enhancing disaster response capabilities.

2.3 Online interviews

A total of 8 interviews were conducted from December 18, 2024 to January 31, 2025 involving 6 different organizations.

Emergency management in Malta involves various stakeholders, but its effectiveness is constrained by resource limitations. The absence of formalized protocols for volunteer involvement necessitates a case-by-case evaluation of volunteers. While there is a focus on youth empowerment, the country lacks structured disaster preparedness programs, community trauma response mechanisms, and adequate support for people with disabilities. Efforts to integrate the disability register into disaster planning are underway, but more comprehensive and inclusive strategies are needed. Additionally, there is a lack of systematic mapping of vulnerable groups. The Malta Seismic Network operates 24/7 with automated detection, but without a dedicated team for real-time validation, its immediate response capabilities are limited. Simulations and international collaborations have improved preparedness, but Malta's vulnerability to tsunamis, underscored by events like the 1908 Messina earthquake, remains a concern. The absence of seismic-specific building codes heightens risk as urban development progresses. Emergency communication systems, including sirens, FM radio, and planned cell broadcast alerts, are in place, though challenges remain in integrating meteorological services and ensuring telecom resilience during disasters. Public awareness efforts continue but struggle to reach international residents unfamiliar with local seismic risks. While Malta's overall seismic risk is low, flooding is a significant concern, and emergency response structures align with EU directives, though political and public opinion can influence decision-making.

More details about the main insights from the interviews, categorized by organization.

2.3.1 Malta Police Force

The Police Force is one of the key actors in managing emergencies. Along with the Forensic Department, the Police Force organized disaster victim identification (DVI) meetings and simulations. These simulations included scenarios like car bombs and plane crashes, involving multiple stakeholders such as forensic experts, civil protection, nurses, and doctors from emergency services. During these simulations the area is closed off and only trained professionals are allowed in. In larger scale disasters, the situation is more challenging to manage because resources are limited, particularly in the case of natural disasters like earthquakes or tsunamis. With over 2000 police officers working in shifts, it is difficult to manage such large-scale emergencies effectively, and managing volunteers poses additional

challenges. The Police Force, therefore, assess the situation on a case-by-case basis to determine whether volunteers can be utilized or if they pose a risk to themselves and others.

There is no specific protocol for handling volunteers in every situation, and there is no specific protocol or structured document to assess and map vulnerable groups in emergencies. However, the Community Police Teams are familiar with the areas and can liaise with local Sergeants for detailed information. Such a system is considered adequate to guarantee efficiency in case of mass emergencies.

The Police Force use mobile phones, radios, and social media like Facebook to communicate with different groups during emergencies. Each locality has its own Facebook page, in addition to the main police force page, to disseminate information. In the event of system failures, such as mobile network outages, the Police Force rely on physical visits to communicate with vulnerable groups. Area officers are tasked with contacting local entities like schools and elderly homes directly. In non-emergency situations, communication with local entities is often done through area officers who have direct contact with schools, elderly homes, and other vulnerable groups. This ensures that the right message is conveyed in an appropriate manner.

2.3.2 Agenzija Żgħażaġh

Agenzija Żgħażaġh operates through several key pillars, focusing on youth services, empowerment, and support. Indeed, Agenzija Żgħażaġh collaborates with secondary and high schools and offers outreach services outside schools. During summer, it organizes programs for youth aged 12–15, which include leisure activities, social and life skills training (e.g., communication and teamwork), and non-formal education. It provides funding to youth organizations to help them organize activities and projects, as well as offering training for youth leaders within these organizations. These initiatives focus on mentorship for talented youth in arts and music, helping them transition into professional careers. A dedicated unit supports unemployed, vulnerable youth lacking higher education. Through a three-year program, the unit aids around 70 individuals annually in transitioning to further studies or employment.

Agenzija Żgħażaġh addresses immediate challenges affecting youth. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, it offered guidance on coping at home and dealing with isolation. Following the Ukraine war, youth engaged in fundraising efforts for Ukrainian peers.

Despite its broad scope, Agenzija Żgħażaġh lacks a focus on prevention or preparedness for potential future disasters, such as natural calamities. Collaborations have been with entities like the Police on immediate response training, but no partnerships or initiatives have been established with Civil Protection authorities. This gap, highlighted by SYNERGIES research, has prompted reflection on the need to incorporate preventive measures into the Agency's work.

2.3.3 Foundation for Social Welfare Services

The Foundation for Social Welfare Services (FSWS) serves as Malta's national agency for social welfare, aiming to strengthen community-led initiatives and empower individuals. FSWS prioritizes building the capacity of communities to take charge of their own development. The focus is on enabling community members to address the issues affecting them directly. This community-led approach ensures sustainable and inclusive solutions while fostering a sense of ownership and collaboration.

The Agency operates through the Agency for Community and Therapeutic Services, a subsidiary equipped with eight centers across Malta. These centers are staffed by social workers, community development workers, and social mentors. Together, the centers engage



with communities daily, addressing issues such as social welfare, family dynamics, financial challenges, parenting, and employment.

Additionally, FSWS provides specialized services such as home-based therapeutic interventions and psychological support, ensuring a holistic approach to social welfare. The work extends to vulnerable populations, including migrants and individuals in rehabilitation or mental health recovery because FSWS recognizes that reintegration into the community requires both individual support and community readiness.

While FSWS primary focus is on day-to-day social welfare, the Agency is open to expanding the expertise to address broader issues such as disaster preparedness and community trauma, which is not currently covered. Malta's close-knit communities can experience profound ripple effects from traumatic events, as seen during a past community tragedy involving a violent incident.

Such events have highlighted gaps in community preparedness for large-scale crises. For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic, FSWS continued to provide essential services while adapting to public health regulations. It had a dedicated helpline to assist the population that served also as support for the national helpline. This experience underscored the importance of readiness for future emergencies.

The work of the Agency would benefit from collaboration and training to enhance disaster preparedness, focusing on community trauma and resilience. By learning from other organizations and regions, FSWS can equip its staff with the skills and knowledge needed to address emergencies effectively.

2.3.4 Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability

The Commission for the Rights of Persons with Disability (CRPD) is an essential body in Malta committed to safeguarding the rights and promoting equality for individuals with disabilities. It operates independently from the government, yet it is publicly funded. CRPD's role spans a wide range of responsibilities, including raising awareness about disability-related issues, investigating complaints of discrimination, and ensuring equal access to services such as employment, education, and healthcare. The commission also plays a pivotal role in monitoring the implementation of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) within Malta, ensuring the country fulfills its obligations to international human rights standards.

CRPD currently employs approximately 40 individuals who work in specialized units, each addressing specific aspects of disability rights. These include the Research and Monitoring Unit, which gathers data and monitors progress on disability issues, and the Investigations Unit, which handles discrimination complaints. The Compliance Unit ensures that newly constructed buildings meet accessibility standards, and the Communications Unit handles public outreach through accessible platforms such as websites and social media.

While CRPD primarily communicates directly with individuals, it also collaborates with various NGOs and associations in Malta. These organizations, each focusing on different disability-related issues, work with CRPD on a range of projects. The CRPD does not oversee these groups, but its partnerships strengthen their collective impact on promoting disability rights.

Previously, CRPD managed the voluntary disability register, which included individuals who needed access to specific services such as the EU Disability Card or assistive devices. However, this responsibility was transferred to Agencija Supports, the national service provider for people with disabilities. Although CRPD no longer administers the registry, it still retains access and can assist researchers or other entities in reaching out to those who have registered. CRPD previously managed the Blue Badge program, which provides parking



privileges for individuals with mobility impairments; however, this duty has also been transferred to Agencia Supports.

The disability register, which holds around 25,000 voluntary names, is not mandatory. Individuals with disabilities can choose to register if they need access to services provided by CRPD, but many may opt out if they do not require support. This voluntary system aligns with the UNCRPD's emphasis on the right of individuals to disclose their condition as they see fit. However, there is an ongoing debate about whether the registry could play a role in emergency preparedness, such as ensuring individuals with disabilities receive timely assistance during disasters.

In Malta, as in many other countries, emergency preparedness for people with disabilities is an urgent issue. Past emergencies, such as fires, have revealed gaps in support for people with mobility impairments, as emergency responders may not have been aware of their specific needs. CRPD is actively working with emergency services to explore ways to integrate the disability register into emergency response systems, potentially linking databases to allow responders to access information about a person's disability and provide more effective assistance.

CRPD is also considering launching a campaign to encourage people with disabilities to register for emergency situations. This initiative could provide reassurance to individuals that their needs will be considered in the event of an evacuation or other emergency. CRPD ensures that its campaigns are accessible to all, including people with intellectual disabilities, by offering easy-to-read materials, subtitles, and sign language interpretation.

The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of accessible communication. Initially, there were challenges in making information available to people with disabilities, such as those with visual or hearing impairments. In response, CRPD worked swiftly to ensure that COVID-related updates included subtitles, sign language, and easy-to-read formats. This proactive approach allowed CRPD to include people with disabilities in Malta's national response to the crisis.

The National Disability Strategy of Malta, running from 2021 to 2030, includes objectives to improve disaster risk management and preparedness for individuals with disabilities. While progress is being made, further work is needed to create concrete plans that address the specific needs of people with disabilities during crises. CRPD continues to play a vital role in shaping these strategies, collaborating with emergency services and other entities to ensure that disaster planning is more inclusive.

Collaboration with other government bodies and emergency services is crucial for ensuring that people with disabilities are included in disaster management systems. For example, CRPD has worked with the 112 emergency number to include people with disabilities in their databases, allowing them to receive appropriate assistance. Many CRPD staff members, including those with disabilities themselves, contribute invaluable insights to ensure policies and services are genuinely inclusive.

An important aspect of the government's commitment to disability inclusion is the presence of the Minister for Inclusion and the Voluntary Sector. This ministerial role is responsible for overseeing policies and initiatives that support people with disabilities and the voluntary sector in Malta. The Minister for Inclusion plays a key role in ensuring that disability inclusion is a priority across various government departments and that policies align with the principles of the UNCRPD. CRPD works closely with the Ministry for Inclusion to ensure that disability-related issues are effectively addressed in national policies and that people with disabilities receive the support they need.

Despite CRPD's efforts, challenges remain in ensuring that people with disabilities are fully integrated into emergency preparedness and response systems. More training, awareness, and specific projects are necessary to ensure the safety and well-being of people with disabilities in times of crisis. CRPD is committed to working toward policies that fill the gaps in current systems, aiming to provide all individuals, regardless of disability, with the support they need when disasters occur.

The interviewee highlighted how one key issue in emergency planning is the tendency to overlook the specific needs of people with disabilities. Disasters like lockdowns often highlight how routines and daily activities can be disrupted, which can pose unique challenges for people with disabilities, such as those who rely on scheduled routines or face difficulties with mask-wearing requirements. These disruptions can cause confusion or stress, especially when people are not properly informed about exemptions or accommodations for those who cannot wear masks.

According to the interviewee, the experience of the COVID-19 lockdown illustrates the need for detailed planning that takes into account the varied needs of individuals with disabilities. This can only be achieved through a more inclusive approach to disaster response and preparedness that recognizes the diversity of needs within society. While national disability strategies are in place, their implementation remains the true test, and more work is needed to ensure that strategies translate into tangible actions on the ground.

Finally, the interviewee advocated for emergency preparedness for people with disabilities to be incorporated into broader national strategies and policies. This means considering how healthcare, education, and other services can be made accessible to those with mobility, cognitive, and sensory impairments. Similarly, public education campaigns must be accessible to all, including individuals with intellectual disabilities. Services and facilities must consider physical access, and emergency management training should include considerations for people with disabilities. Similarly, it is critical to involve people with disabilities in the planning and implementation of these strategies. Research into the specific challenges faced by people with disabilities during emergencies should be ongoing, and their lived experiences must inform future policies. This approach will help identify gaps and improve systems to meet the needs of people with disabilities in disaster scenarios.

2.3.5 University of Malta

The Malta Seismic Network plays a critical role in monitoring earthquakes and potential tsunamis in the Mediterranean region, utilizing an automated system that operates continuously to detect and analyze seismic activity. While the instruments and software are functional 24/7, the network does not have a dedicated team on duty around the clock for immediate manual validation or response to seismic events. This gap in real-time human oversight underscores a key limitation in the current setup. The network gathers data from eight local monitoring stations distributed across the island and from international partners such as Italy (INGV) and Greece (NOA), ensuring a broader regional coverage. However, data from North African stations is unavailable, representing a significant gap in seismic data for the region south of Malta, which remains a concern for the accuracy of event detection.

The network's primary focus is on seismic hazard assessment, specifically analyzing ground shaking based on geological characteristics. Unlike structural risk analysis, which evaluates the impact of earthquakes on buildings and infrastructure, the network's work concludes at the ground level, providing information that can be integrated with engineering studies for comprehensive risk assessments. Collaboration with Malta's Department of Civil Protection is informal but effective, with open communication channels allowing the team to issue alerts and share critical information during seismic events. However, there is no formal legal



agreement mandating the team's involvement, and resource constraints limit their ability to provide immediate responses in all situations.

Automated systems process seismic data and provide initial alerts, but manual validation remains essential for confirming the accuracy of automated results, particularly for significant events or potential tsunami threats. Recent examples highlight this process, such as a magnitude 4.0 earthquake south of Malta, where the team manually verified data and informed Civil Protection within 15 minutes. This information proved critical in distinguishing the earthquake from other potential causes, such as industrial explosions, and in reassuring the public. The network also runs simulations for historical seismic events, such as the 1908 Messina earthquake, modeling tsunami wave heights and arrival times to improve preparedness and response strategies.

Despite these efforts, challenges persist. Malta lacks a building code specifically designed to address the risks of large earthquakes, reflecting the Country's historically low seismic activity. However, with modern population growth and urban development, the potential impact of a significant earthquake has increased. Moreover, the absence of North African seismic data remains a strategic challenge, as collaboration with these countries could enhance the accuracy and reliability of regional monitoring. Compared to countries like Italy or Japan, where frequent seismic activity necessitates fully staffed, 24/7 monitoring systems, Malta's relatively low hazard levels have shaped a different approach. Nonetheless, the increasing complexity of the country's infrastructure and its vulnerability to rare but potentially severe seismic events underscore the need for continued investment in preparedness and international cooperation.

Malta is also prone to tsunamis. Tsunamis are heavily influenced by the depth of the ocean floor, which can significantly impact their velocity. For instance, a magnitude 7.5 earthquake struck Messina in 1908, resulting in thousands of fatalities during the quake and in the aftermath. Documentation from that event reveals the waves reached areas like the modern-day Marina di Malta, which today houses thousands of boats. A similar earthquake today would cause devastating damage due to increased population and combustible materials near the shoreline. Historical records, like the 1908 event, inform current simulations and disaster preparedness efforts. However, simulating tsunamis, particularly in regions like the Mediterranean, presents challenges due to the trade-off between high-resolution, detailed modeling and the need for real-time responses. For example, during a recent magnitude 7.5 earthquake in Turkey, INGV issued a tsunami warning, but simulations predicted only minor waves, creating a dilemma for civil protection authorities who had to decide whether to take costly preventive actions.

While tsunamis in the Mediterranean are rare, systems are in place to monitor and respond. Recent advancements, including Malta's seismic network and collaborations with organizations like UNESCO, have improved preparedness. High-resolution simulations, though time-intensive, are conducted to determine safe evacuation routes and assess infrastructure vulnerability, as seen in projects at Marsaxlokk. These efforts involve significant resources and cooperation between civil protection agencies and local communities, including drills and educational campaigns. Although Malta, as a small country, has limitations compared to larger nations, its preparedness has improved significantly over the last decade. The primary role of monitoring organizations is to provide timely data to civil protection authorities, who then decide on actions and public warnings. This division of responsibilities ensures that responses are swift and effective, balancing precision with the urgency required in real-time scenarios.

The Department of Geosciences actively engages with the public, media, and educational institutions to promote awareness about earthquakes and their studies, while also highlighting

their work to attract students. Participation in events like the Science in the City Festival allows for direct communication with the public, answering questions and providing education about seismic activity. Their social media presence, particularly on Facebook, reaches thousands of people, though they face challenges in reaching new international residents unfamiliar with Malta's earthquake risks. This issue is compounded by varying levels of awareness depending on individuals' countries of origin.

The department studies local geology and vibrations to assess risks for buildings and infrastructure, considering Malta's unique geological layers that amplify vibrations in certain areas. While modern construction often accounts for these factors, older structures may not. Their data is available to professionals and civil protection agencies for planning purposes. Communication with civil protection agencies is key, as they are the authorities responsible for issuing public alerts and managing emergencies like tsunamis, based on verified data provided by the geoscientists.

Although the department's role is primarily advisory and academic, they aim to inform the public and relevant organizations about seismic risks and response strategies. They note the limitations of their resources and the complexity of reaching all necessary stakeholders. Their system emphasizes real-time data verification before dissemination, ensuring accuracy. However, while they assist in disaster preparedness and simulations, the implementation of automated alert systems, such as SMS-based warnings, falls outside their jurisdiction and is managed by civil protection authorities. Despite these challenges, the department remains committed to maximizing its impact through collaboration, research dissemination, and public education.

Social science research plays a vital role in understanding public perceptions, behavior, and societal responses to crises, particularly natural disasters like earthquakes. However the department does not play a central role in such studies, although it had a role on the topic in the past. Currently, students and researchers engage in minor projects or collaborations with international colleagues to gather data on topics such as risk perception and earthquake or tsunami awareness. These studies frequently involve surveys that sample various demographic groups to analyze how different factors - like age, location, or building type - influence perceptions and experiences during such events. Although the sample sizes are relatively small compared to total populations, they provide valuable insights that can inform public awareness campaigns and preparedness efforts. For example, in past European Union projects, data collection focused on tsunami and earthquake perceptions. Public surveys, such as those asking citizens to report their experiences during earthquakes, have proved instrumental in understanding the intensity and distribution of seismic activity, even when automated detection systems face challenges. Real-time feedback from the public can supplement technical data, helping researchers identify unregistered earthquakes and improve response strategies. These efforts highlight the need for community awareness, especially in regions where earthquake risks are underestimated. Outreach initiatives often emphasize preparedness for local residents and travelers visiting high-risk areas like Italy or Greece, underscoring the importance of knowing how to react during seismic events.

Additionally, social scientists and researchers face challenges when addressing public fear and misinformation during earthquake series, such as the 2023 events near Malta. Many citizens turn to scientists for guidance, seeking reassurance about safety and future risks. This requires not only technical expertise but also the ability to communicate effectively and empathetically. Experiences from other countries, like Turkey, demonstrate the importance of media training for scientists to convey confidence and clarity. Collaborative efforts to foster regional solidarity and mutual aid during crises are also emphasized, reinforcing the idea that collective resilience benefits all communities affected by natural disasters.

2.3.6 *Malta Communications Authority*

The Communications Authority serves as the National Regulatory Authority for electronic communications, established through the implementation of the European Economic Communications Code. Its primary role is to ensure that telecom operators comply with regulations and directives. However, it is not responsible for setting national policies or initiatives. For example, if the government mandates the adoption of a specific early warning technology, the Authority ensures that telecom operators meet the requirements for implementation. Similarly, it ensures that operators provide access to emergency services like the European emergency number 112, even in cases of force majeure. However, decisions on what constitutes a disaster, which early warning system to adopt, and national emergency policies fall under a different governmental body, specifically the Ministry for Home Affairs in Malta.

The interviewees explain that Malta has various early warning measures in place. Sirens are deployed in low-lying areas at risk of tsunamis and flooding, and periodic drills educate citizens on how to react when alarms sound. Additionally, there has been work on implementing cell broadcast technology, which allows authorities to send alerts via mobile networks. While the Communications Authority does not implement this system, it oversees the telecom sector to ensure operators can interface with the infrastructure.

Broadcast media, such as TV and radio, also play a role in disseminating emergency messages. The government has maintained FM radio transmission due to its reliability in disasters. Unlike digital networks, FM radio requires fewer transmission towers and remains accessible even when other communication methods fail. The emergency services have their own dedicated network, separate from public telecom infrastructure, ensuring communication between first responders.

Internationally, Malta is a signatory of the Tampere Convention, which allows radio amateurs to assist civil protection entities. However, FM radio transmission in Malta relies on a single location, which poses risks in case of an earthquake. In contrast, the digital audio broadcasting system operates on a single frequency network, enhancing resilience.

The interviewees highlight that there is no universal early warning system that serves all demographics effectively. Some individuals lack access to advanced mobile technologies, making advanced emergency alerts less effective for them. Moreover, telecom networks are designed for everyday communication, not necessarily to withstand all disasters. Force majeure events, such as severe floods or earthquakes, can render telecommunications infrastructure inoperative, complicating emergency response efforts. The interviewees add that the European Communications Code acknowledges the need for location-based warnings, ensuring messages are tailored to affected individuals. This approach arose after major disasters, such as tsunamis in the Pacific, which demonstrated the importance of customized alerts, those on the beach must seek higher ground, while those further inland should move away from danger zones.

In Malta, the Ministry for Home Affairs oversees both emergency policies and the necessary infrastructure. It has centralized first responder control centers to improve coordination across police, civil protection, ambulances, and military forces. The same control centers also monitor Malta's road network, given that traffic accidents are statistically more likely than natural disasters. Cell broadcast technology has been identified as Malta's official public warning system. However, Malta's meteorological services operate under the national airport, creating uncertainty about their role in emergency preparedness. Unlike other countries where meteorological offices trigger flood warnings, it is unclear which entity holds this responsibility in Malta. Historically, Malta relied on air raid sirens during World War II, which remain in place today and are sounded daily at noon. While sirens are simple and effective, their usefulness



depends on public awareness of appropriate responses. Digital alerts, such as Google's emergency notifications, provide precise, location-based warnings but require users to understand and interact with them.

Emergency preparedness must involve multiple communication channels. A layered approach, including sirens, mobile alerts, and radio broadcasts, ensures that people receive warnings regardless of technological barriers. Citizen engagement is also vital, as informed individuals can help disseminate information to those in need.

Malta has emergency plans in place, aligned with European directives requiring member states to establish disaster response structures. These plans cover various scenarios, and the country is expanding its preparedness measures. However, disaster risks in Malta are relatively low compared to other regions. The island is not significantly exposed to earthquakes or tsunamis, lacks forests that could sustain wildfires, and does not face extreme systemic risks. Flooding remains one of Malta's primary concerns due to the island's topography. The government has taken proactive steps, including relocating residents from flood-prone areas. However, risk management decisions can sometimes be influenced by political and public opinion dynamics.

3. CONCLUSIONS

The DecEx 2024 exercise undoubtedly marked a milestone in strengthening the preparedness of disaster managers and the community for emergencies in Malta. In fact, DecEx 2024 represented the second step (12 years after the organization of the first national civil protection exercise) toward building a culture of preparedness, safety, and disaster resilience. The exercise raised awareness of the issues that primarily hinder effective emergency operations in Malta, such as the entrenched silo work culture and the resulting communication challenges between agencies and operators.

DecEx 2024 laid the groundwork for fostering discussions among first responders, creating an opportunity to include organizations that could not directly participate in the exercise. Alongside the exercise, high-level meetings were already organized between responder organizations and the Maltese government to discuss the lessons learned from the exercise and identify areas for improvement to test in future exercises, aiming to enhance disaster preparedness.

Moreover, thanks to the presence of international responder teams, the exercise facilitated exchanges and discussions on incorporating international standard systems and practices into the daily activities of local responder organizations. This approach aims to create a common operational framework, minimizing the need for adaptation and reorganization during emergencies, thereby ensuring an effective and seamless response.

The support from SYNERGIES was crucial in achieving this milestone in disaster preparedness in Malta. Additionally, the event provided an opportunity to strengthen collaboration with the Local Support Team and enabled the collection of valuable information for finalizing the Steering phase. This effort reached not only responder organizations and volunteers active during the exercise but also actors such as Civil Society Organizations, which had not been previously engaged in earlier activities.

- ANNEX 1: DecEx 2024 Concept Note



ORDER OF MALTA
MALTESE ASSOCIATION
Canine SAR Team

14-15 December 2024

December Exercise

Disaster Simulation 2024

To Learn and Evolve as Malta's Community of First Responders



by the Canine Search and Rescue Team - Maltese Association in August 2024



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Overview

The Canine Search and Rescue Team, under the Maltese Association of the Order of Malta, will host a Disaster Simulation and Training Exercise on the 14th and 15th of December 2024, entitled 'DECEX 2024'. The exercise will focus on the immediate Assessment, Search and Rescue (ASR) efforts following a disastrous event such as an Earthquake. It shall utilise the guidelines set out by the United Nations' (UN) International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG). **These efforts will include the mapping and needs assessment of multiple worksites; the prioritisation of rescue efforts; arial, canine and technical rubble searches; patient extrication and triage; and Disaster Victim Identification.**

The main priority of this event is to learn, collaborate, cooperate and motivate each other to become more effective and efficient at helping those in need. While competition may be healthy at times, it is not the aim of DECEX 2024, **this is being made clear and is non-negotiable.** Each invitee has shown aptitude for such an event in the past, and it is now time to show true Maltese solidarity and our potential to collaborate when it matters.





Participants

Any entity participating in DECEX 2024 is welcome to be involved in the design process for any activities happening during the event. **The purpose of DECEX 2024 is to learn and evolve as Malta's community of first responders.** Invitations are being sent out to the following list of entities:



The Maltese Association of the Order of Malta

Foreign Search and Rescue Teams

Reġjun Tramuntana

The Armed Forces of Malta

The Civil Protection Department of Malta

The Malta Police Forensics Science Laboratory

Mater Dei Accident and Emergency

LESA, TM, Detention Services

St John Ambulance and Rescue

The Emergency Fire and Rescue Unit

The Malta Red Cross

K9 Urban Search and Rescue Malta

K9 Search and Rescue Malta

Emergency Response Rescue Corps

Malta Rescue Corps



Participating entities are to discuss the logistics and extent of their involvement with the Canine Search and Rescue Team (Order of Malta) by not later than the 8th of November 2024 in order to secure a concrete and orderly way forward in planning DECEX 2024. Moreover, being that this is a first responder community-based exercise, we are all expected to step up and pull our own weight in making this happen.

Foreign Search and Rescue teams Hailing from Hungary, Romania, Italy and the Netherlands will be present for the event. Let us all collaborate in making this happen and in setting the scene for further future collaborations and potential accreditation under internationally recognized bodies.



Assessment, Search and Rescue

The UN's International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) lays out the internationally recognised guidelines for Assessment, Search and Rescue (ASR) levels of work prioritisation in responding to disastrous events. Search and Rescue operations are divided into five levels defined as sequential activities, but, in reality, teams may receive assignments in any order. Especially in large-scale operations where Local Emergency Management Authorities (LEMA) identify worksites before teams arrive, different levels of work are being carried out in different areas simultaneously. As such, ASR levels guide work efforts conducted by multiple teams in multiple worksites to maximise life-saving efforts.

ASR Level 1: Wide Area Assessment



This is a preliminary survey of the affected area within a post-disaster environment. An initial, fast visual check of the area is carried out by LEMA, often before the arrival of SAR teams. This provides a macro view of the overall picture and aids in sector prioritisation.

ASR Level 2: Worksite Triage Assessment

This is a sector-specific assessment to identify viable live rescue sites within the allocated sector to allow assignment prioritisation and make a plan of action.

ASR Level 3: Rapid Search and Rescue

In maximising life-saving efforts in the early stages, a surface-level sweep and rescue for non-trapped victims is conducted. Victims are rapidly extracted to triage sites.

ASR Level 4: Full Search and Rescue

Teams work to identify, locate and rescue heavily trapped or entombed survivors.

ASR Level 4: Total Coverage Search and Recovery

Operations carried out to recover the deceased victims. There may be a "miracle" find of a live victim that is achieved as the structure is de-layered or deconstructed.





Calendar

The following is a tentative schedule for the main simulation taking place on Saturday 14th and Sunday 15th December 2024. Additional preparatory and demobilisation work will occur in the days leading up to and after the event.

Saturday 14th December

- Briefing and presentation
- Full joint exercise at Earthquake Site (ASR Level 1,2,3&4)
- Surface level rescue and triage, while K9 and USAR teams are working on ASR4

Sunday 15th December

- Full joint exercise at Earthquake Site (ASR Level 4&5)
- USAR and DVI exercises
- Debrief

Logistics and Support

Participating teams will be expected to show up with their own equipment, or partner up with another team and split the logistical load. In an effort to collaborate between the participating teams, we will host meetings in November and December to finalise and coordinate the necessary logistics and sponsorships. **As such, it is necessary to nominate your focal points (contact persons) from each participating team to streamline communications. Kindly do so when RSVPing for the event.**

Below please find a list of necessities required to host a successful disaster simulation:

On Site Operations Coordination Centre (OSSOCC) - Tent (Provided by the Canine Team - Order of Malta), Generator, electrical extensions, tables and chairs.

Base of Operations - All team vehicles and staging areas, shelter (tents), portable toilets and a portable kitchen (earmarked by AFM).

Worksites - Heavy vehicles with cranes (earmarked by AFM), scrapped cars (should we conduct Road Traffic Collision rescues as well), Personal Protective Equipment (Both for participants and actors), Search and Extrication tools, rigging for rope access and patient extrication tools (stretchers).



RSVP

Contact Information

Casa Lanfredis - 2, Piazza Jean de Valette,

Valletta VLT 1104, Malta

canine.sar@orderofmalta.mt

<https://www.facebook.com/canineSARteam/>



- ANNEX 2: DecEx 2024 Volunteers Handbook



ORDER OF MALTA
MALTESE ASSOCIATION
Canine SAR Team

DECEX 2024



**VOLUNTEERS
HANDBOOK**

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MISSION & VISION



THE CANINE SEARCH AND RESCUE TEAM, UNDER THE MALTESE ASSOCIATION OF THE ORDER OF MALTA, WILL HOST A DISASTER SIMULATION AND TRAINING EXERCISE ON THE 14TH AND 15TH OF DECEMBER 2024, ENTITLED 'DECEX 2024'.

The exercise will focus on the immediate Assessment, Search and Rescue (ASR) efforts following a disastrous event such as an Earthquake. It shall utilise the guidelines set out by the United Nations' (UN) International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG).

These efforts will include the mapping and needs assessment of multiple worksites; the prioritisation of rescue efforts; arial, canine and technical rubble searches; patient extrication and triage; and Disaster Victim Identification.

The main priority of this event is to learn, collaborate, cooperate and motivate each other to become more effective and efficient at helping those in need. While competition may be healthy at times, it is not the aim of DECEX 2024, this is being made clear and is non-negotiable. Each invitee has shown aptitude for such an event in the past, and it is now time to show true Maltese solidarity and our potential to collaborate when it matters.

THINGS TO KNOW.



1 REST MEANS STOP!

If somebody on the team calls REST, that means stop what you're doing, stop making noise and stop talking. The person might need help or might be in distress. This can also be signalled by a **SINGLE** sharp whistle blow.

2 DO NO HARM. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF FIRST.

The hierarchy of care starts with you and next is your buddy. Ensure that you take care not to injure yourself further to your best ability. **If you are not feeling well raise one hand and walk to a safe location.** Someone will see to you.

3 ALWAYS WEAR PERSONAL PROTECTIVE EQUIPMENT

When walking into an active disaster site, always wear the relevant Personal Protective Equipment or PPE. Generally, a helmet, gloves and a vest at a bare minimum.

4 PLAN AHEAD AND STICK TO THE PLAN

Before entering and exiting a worksite, strategise and be clear on what the intentions are and who will be doing what.

5 COMMUNICATE

When carrying out a search or extrication it is very important to maintain communication with the upper hierarchy.

IMPORTANT SIGNALS



1 ONE WHISTLE BLOW

REST. Something is happening and silence is needed. Stop moving and stop making noise.

2 TWO WHISTLE BLOWS (ONE LONG, ONE SHORT)

Resume works, resume the action you were carrying out. Noise and labour intensive work may resume.

3 THREE SHORT WHISTLE BLOWS

Form up on me. Maybe something has gone wrong or someone needs help. Three whistle blows means put down what you're doing and make your way out.

4 THREE LONG WHISTLE BLOWS REPEATED

EVACUATE. If you are in a building stop what you are doing and evacuate the building in a fast timely manner.

PARTICIPANTS

GROWING COLLABORATION BETWEEN LOCAL AND FOREIGN TEAMS TO TACKLE DISASTERS.

Any entity participating in DECEX 2024 is welcome to be involved in the design process for any activities happening during the event. The purpose of DECEX 2024 is to learn and evolve as Malta's community of first responders. Invitations are being sent out to the following list of entities:



05

Local Teams

- The Maltese Association of the Order of Malta
- Foreign Search and Rescue Teams
- The Armed Forces of Malta – Medical
- The Armed Forces of Malta – Air Wing
- The Civil Protection Department of Malta
- The Malta Police Forensics Science Laboratory
- Malta Police Force – K9
- Malta Police Force – Recruits
- Mater Dei Accident and Emergency
- Transport Malta
- The Emergency Fire and Rescue Unit
- Emergency Response Rescue Corps
- St John Ambulance and Rescue
- K9 Urban Search and Rescue Malta
- Local Scout Groups

Foreign Teams

- Hajdú Speciális Kutató–Mentő Egyesület
- Voluntari 112
- CISOM Corpo Italiano di Soccorso dell'Ordine di Malta
- EpiDrasis Volunteer
- GSAR dogs team

ASSESSMENT, SEARCH AND RESCUE

BREAKING SEARCH AND RESCUE
OPERATIONS DOWN INTO
SENSIBLE, MANAGEABLE
CHUNKS.

WHAT IS AN ASR LEVEL?

The UN's International Search and Rescue Advisory Group (INSARAG) lays out the internationally recognised guidelines for Assessment, Search and Rescue (ASR) levels of work prioritisation in responding to disastrous events. Search and Rescue operations are divided into five levels defined as sequential activities, but, in reality, teams may receive assignments in any order. Especially in large-scale operations where Local Emergency Management Authorities (LEMA) identify worksites before teams arrive, different levels of work are being carried out in different areas simultaneously. As such, ASR levels guide work efforts conducted by multiple teams in multiple worksites to maximise life-saving efforts.



ASR LEVELS



1 ASR LEVEL 1: WIDE AREA ASSESSMENT

This is a preliminary survey of the affected area within a post-disaster environment. An initial, fast visual check of the area is carried out by LEMA, often before the arrival of SAR teams. This provides a macro view of the overall picture and aids in sector prioritisation.

2 ASR LEVEL 2: WORKSITE TRIAGE ASSESSMENT

This is a sector-specific assessment to identify viable live rescue sites within the allocated sector to allow assignment prioritisation and make a plan of action.

3 ASR LEVEL 3: RAPID SEARCH AND RESCUE

In maximising life-saving efforts in the early stages, a surface-level sweep and rescue for non-trapped victims is conducted. Victims are rapidly extracted to triage sites.

4 ASR LEVEL 4: FULL SEARCH AND RESCUE

Teams work to identify, locate and rescue heavily trapped or entombed survivors.

5 ASR LEVEL 5: TOTAL COVERAGE SEARCH AND RECOVERY

Operations carried out to recover the deceased victims. There may be a "miracle" find of a live victim that is achieved as the structure is de-layered or deconstructed.

DISASTER CHAIN OF COMMAND

**BREAKING SEARCH AND RESCUE
OPERATIONS DOWN INTO
SENSIBLE, MANAGEABLE
CHUNKS.**

Incident Command	Based at OSOCC, Relays information to and from the sector commander.
Sector Commander	Based at the sector relaying information to the different teams from Incident Command.
Team Leader	In charge of the different teams of an organisation. Helps orchestrate the teams to reach the common goal.
Search Team	In charge of leveraging canines, technology and people to locate persons in the rubble
Rescue Team	In charge of utilising equipment in a minimalistic manner to extricate patients.
Medic Team	In charge of patient stabilisation.



MEET THE TEAM

IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS
DURING TRAINING OR THE
EXERCISE, THESE ARE THE PEOPLE.



JOSEPH SAMMUT
DEPLOYMENT CONSULTANT & EXTERNAL LIAISON

Based at Incident Command, he will be one of the members in charge of orchestrating the simulation.



SAMARA LITTLEJOHN
RESCUE MANAGER & INCIDENT COMMANDER

Based at Incident Command, she will be one of the members in charge of orchestrating the simulation.



SIMON BRIFFA
TEAM LEADER

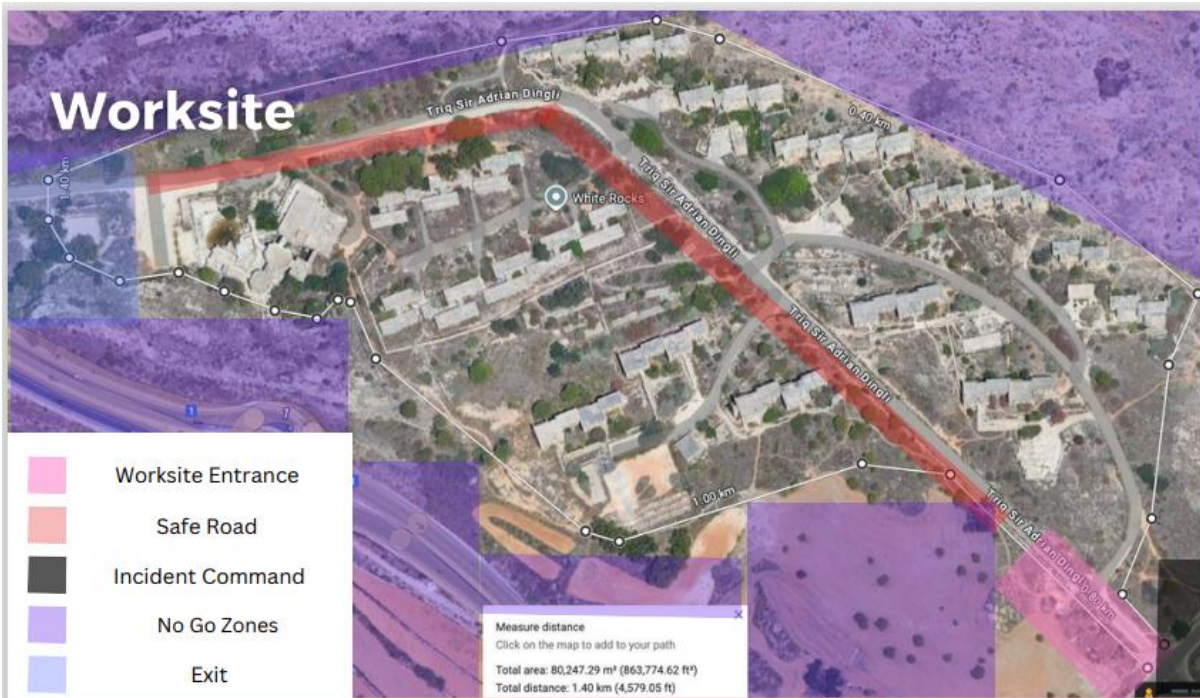
Leader of the Canine SAR Team, also involved in the planning and organisation of logistics for DecEx. Any important questions can be directed to him via whatsapp. **+35679281058**



ELENA MARIM
2ND IN COMMAND (DecEx 24)

Acting as a sector commander and supporting the canine search and rescue team, Elena will play a vital role in guiding teams to successful rescues.





RED TAPE MEANINGS



RED TAPE AROUND AN AREA AS A STRAIGHT LINE SIGNALS A WORKING AREA. ENTER ONLY WITH THE CORRECT PPE.



RED TAPE IN AN X SHAPE SIGNALS A DANGEROUS AREA. DO NOT ENTER.



ORDER OF MALTA
MALTESE ASSOCIATION
Canine SAR Team

VOLUNTEER ROLES

THROUGHOUT THE DAY YOU WILL SHUFFLE THROUGH MULTIPLE ROLES. TO BETTER UNDERSTAND WHAT EACH PART MEANS. ALSO SUPPORTING WHERE FIT.

Patient	Will be kitted out with different forms of injuries either via a card or actual makeup.
Usher	Will support in guiding patients & external parties to the correct positions in the field.
Volunteer	Will be supporting in the general running and logistics of Base of Operations or Incident command.
Community Rescuer	Will shadow active rescue teams to understand how extrications are carried out and support.
Make-up Artist/ Injury Prep	In charge of preparing patients to send out to the worksite with the appropriate injuries based on card.
Photography	Taking photographs of the ongoing event.



ALWAYS WEAR A HELMET, GLOVES AND VEST WHEN ENTERING THE WORKSITE.

VOLUNTEER NEED TO KNOW

HERE'S SOME INFORMATION ON
WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW FOR
THE 14TH AND 15TH DECEMBER

Sign-in / Sign-out

When arriving at the site you will be asked to fill out a liability and media waiver. You will be given a band for entrance. Please sign out when leaving the worksite.

Food and Water

Some water and drinks will be available however it is advisable that you bring your own food for the day. If you are feeling hungry please do take a break at the base of operations and eat.

Waiver

Please ensure to sign the waiver. Note any allergies or health conditions that you have which may affect you during the day.

Base of Operations

We will be providing access to toilets, showers and food heating facilities should you need it.

Dogs

No dogs will be allowed in the worksite other than the working dogs participating in the event. Should you wish to meet the dogs working during the event, please ask the handler to interact with the dog, only when at base of operations.

Photography

Photos and videos will be taken during this event.

Parking

As it stands, parking will be at the Pembroke Park n Ride due to limited parking. However we are working on attaining a carpark close by. More information on this to come. (14th and 15th Only. 7th You may park at white rocks. 13

TIMETABLE



7TH **COMMUNITY TRAINING**
10AM We will be running you through some of the basics of what you need to know when working in the field and you'll see our team at work and join in.

14TH **DECEX 2024 DAY 1 - MORNING**
9AM Arrive at worksite for briefing on the days activity and segregation of teams. ASR Level 1 & 2.

14TH **DECEX DAY 1 - AFTERNOON**
2PM Work continues throughout the day. This is where we will regroup and ensure the teams are still balanced. ASR Level 2 & 3 will be going on at this time.

15TH **DECEX DAY 2 - MORNING**
9AM Arrive at worksite for briefing on the days activity and segregation of teams. ASR Level 3 & 4 will be going on at this time.

15TH **DECEX DAY 2 - AFTERNOON**
1PM Work continues throughout the day. This is where we will regroup and ensure the teams are still balanced. ASR Level 4 & 5 will be going on at this time.

CANINE
SEARCH
AND
RESCUE
TEAM

DecEx
2024



CONTACT US

'Casa Lanfreducci' - 2, Pjazza Jean de Valette, Valletta VLT
1104, Malta | www.orderofmalta.mt | +35679281058 |
canine.sar@orderofmalta.mt | [@caninesar.malta](https://www.instagram.com/caninesar.malta)

- **ANNEX 3: DecEx 2024 Stakeholders consultation Survey**



DecEx 2024 Stakeholders Consultation

Dear Participant of DecEx 2024,

The SYNERGIES (<https://synergiesproject.eu/>) project aims to strengthen a culture of disaster preparedness by fostering a cohesive and coordinated engagement of various stakeholders in disaster management such as first and second responders, citizens, communities, research and education systems, authorities and public administrations, and businesses. SYNERGIES concentrates on five preparedness needs:

- Involvement of all relevant actors in building preparedness
- Strengthening preparedness education and training
- Communicating with citizens
- Management of spontaneous volunteers
- Ensuring the sustainability of solutions for preparedness

We invite you to share your expertise and knowledge by completing this short form. We will use the information you provide to develop tools and repositories as results of the Project together with Regjun Tramuntana to increase disaster preparedness in Malta and Europe. It will take approximately 5 minutes to complete the form.

Your participation is at all times voluntary and you can withdraw your participation at any time by simply closing this module.



Privacy and Data Management:

Privacy and data management have been carefully considered in the SYNERGIES project to ensure compliance with national and international legal requirements and ethical standards. All of your personal data collected in the research will be anonymised and processed only by project research members, and in particular: Michela Cohen at Deep Blue and Cristina Casareale at Save the Children Italia. Only authorised administrators assigned through internal project processes will have access to the data. Moreover, SYNERGIES follows the data minimization principle (Article 5 GDPR). Only data that is necessary for the development of the project's research and outcomes will be collected. Therefore, data that is no longer required to develop project activities will be deleted. For this research activity, we collect the following personal data: name, organisation and community name and email, in order to have a better understanding of your opinion and perspective. The data collected will be stored on the DBL internal server, protected by data security protocols, for a maximum of up to three years after the end of the project.

Contacts for questions or further information:

Contact details of the lead researcher:

Name: Cristina Casareale

Email: cristina.casareale@savethechildren.org

Contact details of the SYNERGIES Project Data Protection Officer (DPO):

Name: Valentina Pagnanelli

Email: valentina.pagnanelli@dblue.it

Contact details of the SYNERGIES Project Coordinator:

Name: Alessia Golfetti

Email: alessia.golfetti@dblue.it

Warm regards,
The SYNERGIES Consortium

I have read and understood the explanation provided to me. I have had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and I voluntarily agree to participate in this study. *

Yes

Avanti

Cancella modulo

Personal information

1. Name and Surname *

La tua risposta

2. Organisation *

La tua risposta

3. Email address *

La tua risposta

Indietro

Avanti

Cancella modulo

Session 1 - Management of spontaneous volunteers

You will be provided with a **background related to the earthquake scenario** and will be asked to answer a set of questions on to manage spontaneous volunteers

Definition of spontaneous volunteers: Individuals or groups of people who seek or are invited to contribute their assistance during and/or after an event, and who are unaffiliated with any part of the existing official emergency management response and recovery system and may or may not have relevant training, skills or experience. (AIDR, 2018).

The objective is to understand the local context for SV integration and identify local needs and solutions already in place.

Background

A violent earthquake has occurred. When you arrive at the scene, there are lots of people already there searching for the rubble and extracting survivors using makeshift tools. More and more people are converging to the area carrying powerful machines, food and water, tools or want to provide information or simply ask what they can do

1. What are you expected to do? *

La tua risposta

2. What challenges do you expect and what opportunities do you identify? *

La tua risposta

3. What do you envision doing with these people? How are the different offers to help manage considered or rejected? *

La tua risposta

4. Does your organisation have a specific procedure, protocol or guideline to manage sponateous vounteers? If yes, can you provide an example? *

La tua risposta

Indietro

Avanti

Cancella modulo

Session 2 - Empowerment of Disaster Management Actors

You will be provided with a **background related to the earthquake scenario** and will be asked to answer a set of questions on how to empower disaster management actors in relation to citizens and vulnerable groups during emergencies.

Examples of vulnerable groups: disabled people, marginalised people, elderly, children, people that do not speak the language.

The objective is to learn what engagement and empowerment strategies work in specific contexts.

Background

A violent earthquake has occurred. When you arrive at the scene, there are different groups of people in need and seeking for your assistance.

1. Which groups of people would need help most urgently? How life-critical is the situation for these people? *

La tua risposta

2. What kind of help do they need? Who should provide it? *

La tua risposta

3. Has your organisation conducted any preparedness campaign, training or exercise involving these groups to prepare the public for disasters? *

La tua risposta



● ANNEX 4: Photos

