



NEEDS

Handbook for Societal Security Education in the Baltic Sea Region

Based on project results and how results are transferable

Co-funded by the
Erasmus+ Programme
of the European Union



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IO7.4 Combined Handbook

The 'Needs-based education and studies in societal security' (NEEDS) project

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Project note

NEEDS – Needs-based education and studies in societal security was an innovative project aiming to strengthen the quality, attractiveness and scope of education in societal security through tackling the mismatches between the focus of education, and the knowledge needs in the field. As an EU Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region's Flagship project under Policy Area Secure, NEEDS was exemplary for cross-sectoral, multi-level and transnational cooperation on the joint approach for the education of future professionals in the field of societal security.

For further information on NEEDS, see: <https://cbss.org/projects-cbss/needs/>

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Preface: about the NEEDS project

The ‘Needs-based education and studies in societal security’ (NEEDS) project addressed the skills gap and mismatch between higher education and the knowledge needs in this field, as well as the fact that there is a lack of structured transnational cooperation and dialogue between higher education institutions, practitioners, and experts in tackling these issues.

The project was co-funded by the EU Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership (project code 2020-1-SE01-KA203 078013) and ran from September 2020 through August 2023. It was led by the Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat, an intergovernmental regional organisation with ten member states. The project partners represented a variety of Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), regional organisations, and national authorities from Finland, Germany, Norway, Poland, Latvia and Sweden. The objective of NEEDS was to better prepare the next generation working in the field of societal security by boosting their educational experiences with the most relevant, field-specific and up-to-date knowledge and skills. This objective was to be achieved through the co-creation of educational materials by cross-sectoral, multi-level and transnational teams, where the input for developing such material was collected directly from those working in practice in the field.

The NEEDS project focused on the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), made up of ten countries (i.e., the full members of the CBSS: Denmark, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Iceland, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland, and Sweden). Even though the NEEDS project focused primarily on the BSR, the results may also be relevant for other regions. During the project lifetime, the project worked on meeting societal security challenges by 1) developing common learning materials for a short online course on societal security for the BSR, as well as 2) establishing a professional networking community and an interface for collaboration. Transnational and cross-sectoral teams were at the centre of these efforts and drew upon an innovative pedagogical approach. Nurturing strategic partnerships and cooperation strengthened trust and deepened understanding between sectors and countries in the BSR, helping to improve common efforts and reduce the risk of conflict and misunderstanding.

This handbook represents the NEEDS project’s result – using Erasmus+ vocabulary – Intellectual Output 7 (IO7) Task 4 (IO7.4). In this work package, it assembles and brings together three previous tasks:

- IO7.1 – *Analysis of the results* developed in the project
- IO7.2 – *Exploring and defining the sustainability of results*
- IO7.3 – *Evaluation considering the transferability to HEIs in other regions*

In total, the handbook looks at results from the entire project (from a viewpoint when the handbook is written in the then ongoing project). It provides background information and guidelines for HEIs in and outside of the BSR. The main objective for the handbook is to analyse the results of the project, as well as their sustainability and potential for transferring them to other organisations and/or regions.

1 Introduction

This handbook is based on the results of the project and discusses how the results can be transferred to HEIs and practitioner organisations both in the BSR and other regions. The NEEDS project was built on the partners' knowledge from their national context to contribute to the different project outputs, specifically taking into account transnational cooperation.

One of the main outputs of the NEEDS project was to create an online course module on societal security. It is innovative for the Baltic Sea Region to develop such a course / curriculum in the field of societal security transnationally, together with educators, practitioners and learners, and the results of these efforts are applicable for other regions as well. Societal Security itself is a newer area of study, where the boundaries are not yet delineated. It is relevant for many different geographic regions in Europe and globally to handle societal security challenges on a regional level. In addition, the field is practice-oriented and directly contributes to operational protection of society, which necessitates that teachers, learners and practitioners collaborate on making courses / curricula that draw from this perspective.

The overall objective of this output (IO7) is to present the reader – namely other HEIs, but potentially also other experts and stakeholders – with a guide for carrying out a course / curriculum in societal security, from a transnational perspective. It is especially for other regions to utilise. This handbook includes an analysis of the following results from:

- the glossary (IO1),
- review of the study programmes in the field of Societal Security in the BSR (IO2),
- case study publication with methodology (IO3),
- the joint pedagogical approach (IO4)
- and policy recommendations (IO8, in progress).
- In addition, the online course module (IO5), the e-platform and online community, as well as the Intensive Study Programmes (ISP) developed within the project can rightly be considered relevant in terms of transferability beyond the BSR.

As mentioned above, the handbook includes a study of the sustainability of these results from the project, and an assessment of the transferability of the results to other regions. The transferability potential is the focus of this IO and outlines how it can be done. This handbook was researched and written by different partners, both from HEIs and the practicing side. This ensures collaboration and bridging the gap through to every project output. The primary material for the handbook was the partners' expertise, and their knowledge of the project processes and development. Moreover, an internal survey was conducted to critically review good practices and lessons learned from the project's own working ways. The analysis considered the feedback from so called Intensive Study Programmes (ISPs) conducted by the project, where students and practitioners participated in testing and further developing the project results. It also included experts' and participants' views from other project activities, on how sustainable or practical the project, the course and the content were.

Being aware of the thematic and structural changes in the field, the handbook does not claim to always present the latest information, but to present the steps taken to develop the outputs, and

especially the course module and community on the topic. It aims to review which steps were helpful in how far and which lessons were learned. It is then up to the stakeholder to decide and conduct the latest research for their region.

With the transferability potential as a main part of this handbook, and the HEIs direct expertise at hand, the current document discusses these issues within the broader European context of Higher Education (HE), including large-scale policies such as the [European Higher Education Area](#) or the [European Education Area](#), further concretised in such programmes as [Erasmus+](#) or the [European Universities Initiative](#). These processes are aiming at a certain level of approximation between the HE institutions (HEIs) in terms of the degree criteria to ensure the mutual recognition of qualifications, as well as strengthening the quality and relevance of learning and teaching, including student and staff mobility.

However, while the above envisage higher-level top-down integration through policies and legislation, the current NEEDS effort can be understood as a more bottom-up approach to approximate understandings and practices in one specific field, namely societal security (whatever nomenclature is used), while enhancing the connections between HE and practitioners in this field.

The partnership believes that the NEEDS project has resulted in a rather easily transferrable package of knowledge and practices that may also be useful outside the BSR. That said, it not only provides a basis for one-sided knowledge transfer, but also a framework for mutual European learning. NEEDS hopes that the project will contribute to developing an approximation of societal security HE, irrespective of the national label one uses for this emerging multidisciplinary field of studies.

Also, to bear in mind: the more practical and profession-oriented side of societal security. Societal security, under a variety of labels, is present in any country's public policy and also in non-governmental and business activities. Given that current societal security risks and their respective hazards are increasingly of a transnational character – such as climate change-induced hazards, pandemics, cyber security, and mass migration – the need for transnational and cross-border cooperation is obvious. In the EU context, the public policy level of this transnational cooperation is best expressed in [the EU Civil Protection Mechanism](#). The mechanism aims to strengthen cooperation between the EU countries and nine participating states on civil protection to improve the prevention, preparedness, and response to disasters within the EU and beyond. The partnership believes that the NEEDS project for its part may contribute to the development of a professional epistemic community with shared understandings about some of the basic issues and challenges in this field of joint EU activity.

2 Intellectual Output 1: Glossary of terms in Societal Security Education

2.1 Analysis of the Glossary

The first output of the NEEDS project was a glossary of terms. The purpose of the glossary was to establish common terminology to acquaint participants with the particular terms used in the project and consequently representing usage in the BSR. It also guides the reader in what to expect from the course material. The objective was to create a framework that can be used for educational purposes and to explain what societal security is; in addition, it was also crucial to build a term base that can be employed by future experts, practitioners, professionals, and policymakers. The main aim of the glossary was to establish a common understanding among all regions.

The glossary has been compiled by an experienced team of partners. All partners collaborated on this Intellectual Output (IO) and provided valuable input on terms to be included in the glossary. The final version comprises more than 120 terms structured both based on main topics and in an alphabetical order thus making it easier to find specific terms. The partners also explained how these terms were specific to the Baltic Sea Region (BSR), since other countries have distinctive terminology or use terms with different meanings. All terms which are translated into all languages represented by the project partners – Latvian, German, Swedish, Finnish, Polish, and Norwegian. However, the key issue during the translation process was to find a trusted target language equivalent. Some countries explain each term differently; therefore, the project organised internal discussions about which term would best fit the project's needs and what explanation or definition would be best for the glossary. At times, it was also difficult to find a proper and reliable source of definitions for the glossary items. Readers can follow the sources for more or better understanding, as most of the terms in the glossary have additional information on scientific articles or books. All in all, due to the extensive teamwork, the glossary is now facilitating the use of various terms and is building a more common understanding of the terms and underlying concepts specific to the fields and challenges of societal security in the Baltic Sea Region.

The innovative character of the glossary was introduced in the NEEDS project's ISP, within which the students worked on visualisations of the terms, creating short video content for a selection of them.

In one of the last working steps, close to the end of the project, project partners reviewed the glossary and added new terms that were crucial to the project. The need for additional terms became evident based on the progress of the other project results and the changes in the field of societal security.

2.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Glossary

The glossary is not only a collection of definitions. It shows the perception of concepts connected with societal security by different countries in the region. Some countries explain terms differently that may lead to some misunderstandings when people (i.e., practitioners) meet and discuss societal security related issues. As already witnessed in the NEEDS project activities, the glossary helped during the work and in the Intensive Study Programmes: using the same terminology made the work easier, as there was less lost time in discussions about meanings of specific terms.

To achieve longer lasting easy work and use, it is important to continue promoting the glossary by the project partners and their networks. It is important to use the glossary in daily activities and

spread via the colleagues for internal work and, especially, when collaborating with other partners in the Baltic Sea Region. Practitioners at the NEEDS Multiplier Event in Hamburg, December 2022, already expressed heightened interest in the continued and wider-spread use and application. Using the glossary regularly and sharing it even with new partners and colleagues, potentially from outside the BSR, can make discussions more fruitful and give the glossary a broad and stable base.

The glossary is published on several partner organisations' websites and has been included in the online communities used or developed by the NEEDS project. It is thereby visible and easily accessible to all network participants. Furthermore, the glossary is included in the NEEDS online study course for students and practitioners to learn the terms and create a unified understanding in the region.

It is important to keep the glossary up to date by regularly reviewing the terms and add new terms. During project cooperation and activities, terms came to mind that were important but not previously included. Another situation for updating the glossary could be that new terms are emerging or become connected to the field of societal security through geopolitical and security related developments in society. To achieve better and joint understanding, it would be important already agree at an early stage on the terms and their definitions, so that the understanding would not vary across the Baltic Sea Region. This has been done throughout the project's lifetime but is not sustainable in the same way after the project's end.

Work on the glossary will however be sustainable through the online community, where members can discuss and introduce new terms via a forum or other type of communication. Furthermore, during the project NEEDS Intensive Study Programmes students had to create short video reels (visual explanations) of some of the terms. This process strengthened the understanding and knowledge of the specific term, as well it created additional visual materials. Such an activity also promotes exchange between students, as did the overall creation of the glossary between project partners. Another way to further work on the longevity of the glossary can be: HEIs could integrate the creation of short videos as a new task for their students in the study process. Short videos of the glossary terms are also addressing another/ the young audience and might be uploaded to social media, thereby promoting the terms and the glossary which might lead to educating society about societal security. In addition, the HEIs, EUSBSR PA Secure Steering Group, the CBSS Civil Protection Network and UBC Safe Cities Commission can promote the glossary, working on it and can potentially work on it themselves.

Even as a stand-alone, the current glossary version is useful in the years to come. The terms will be relevant still and definitions of terms are not expected to change rapidly. This glossary may be utilised further to create a joint understanding of societal security in the BSR through the terms described.

The glossary consists of over 120 terms in seven languages. It received much attention and interest also, if not especially from practitioners from the region. While focusing on the BSR, it has universally applicable terms and could be adapted to other regions. It can be a stand-alone tool, as well as a great addition to academic and practical education, also for continuously working on a common understanding of societal security in the BSR.

3 Intellectual Output 2: Guidelines and Recommendations for Societal Security Education in the BSR

3.1 Analysis of the Guidelines/ Recommendations

This IO studied and analysed the state and best practice guidelines from current higher education in the field. To do so, the project/ IO mapped out the existing study programmes in the field of Societal Security in the BSR; analysed the curricula used specifically in the study programmes regarding Societal Security in the BSR; analysed the student-practice interfaces used in the study programmes and of the cross-border/transnational/global dimensions of the study programmes in the field of Societal Security in the BSR; as well as it reviewed and summarised the study programmes in the field of Societal Security in the BSR.

While the glossary works on supporting a shared understanding of societal security, it is based on linguistic terms and their translations and definitions. To work (parallelly) on other parts of the project, it was important to have a common working definition of Societal Security as a concept as well – also to be able to sort through higher education programmes and now whether they would be considered part of the field of societal security education. To get such definition, all partners filled out a questionnaire to gain an overview of the different definitions of the term.

Afterwards, a mapping of the existing study programmes was carried out, and the results showed that it was possible to identify 27 first-cycle societal security degree programmes (Bachelor's or equivalent) and 37 second-cycle study programmes (Master's or equivalent) in the BSR. Then the curricula of the different degree programmes were gathered and summarised and the report of the findings was compiled. The initial review and summary of the study programmes explored within the NEEDS project gave the impression that the programmes cover unrelated subject matters. However, the more in-depth analysis revealed that certain key elements had rather similar qualities, although addressed from different disciplinary angles; especially concerning the second-cycle programmes (Master's or equivalent). When considering these elements more thoroughly, one might notice an overlap in the programmes. While there was a certain concern regarding the learning outcomes, relevance and knowledge duplication, the overlap also allow for synergies, and the programmes complement each other. Curricula are of a similar nature but that creates a common basis, with the programmes then addressing different aspects, allowing for a different focus, and giving different perspectives on the topic.

The IO also helped to produce three reports:

- Enhancing Societal Security graduate employability in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Higher Education Study Programmes in the Field of Societal Security in the Baltic Sea Region;
- Societal Security as Higher Education: The State of the Art in the Baltic Sea Region.

The definition of Societal Security and the content of the reports were invaluable for the work in the ISPs. Parts of the articles were given as reading material for students prior to the ISP.

3.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Recommendations

The NEEDS project partnership is aware of the fact that the reports can only ever present the state of higher education in the field at the time that the project was conducted (2020-2023). For a

sustainable and continuously up-to-date overview of societal security higher education, the reports and outcomes produced in the IO would have to be reviewed after a certain amount of time, i.e. every five years to see the tendencies, trends and changes in the societal security education in the BSR and new updated recommendations could be developed.

While not possible as part of this original NEEDS project anymore, it would, of course, be interesting to see new trends and developments beyond the project duration, as well as to compare expectations and basic knowledge in the topic from student beginners to graduates. The methods for the review should be the same as the initial ones to allow for a sustainable and comparable follow-up. Based on the initial reports and outcomes that would be compared to the new results better image of the societal security education field would be shown. Furthermore, the results should be made public and even provided to HEIs of the region that are working with the education in the field of societal security. If the HEIs would know how the field looks like (in the BSR or wherever applied), it would be a good ground for developing new cooperation between the institutions. Furthermore, even for the practitioners it would be a good basis for development, i.e., looking for the possibilities to self-development, looking for the possibilities to cooperate with the HEI to achieve better education for the future practitioners and so on.

Overall, to raise the quality and accessibility of the societal security education in the Baltic Sea Region it is important to know what is going on in the field, who the stakeholders are and what could be developed further. In addition, the next step could be to map out different courses in the societal security field that might not be provided by HEIs but they might be able to include them in some of their courses.

The reports on guidelines and recommendations are state of the art research and insights into the field of societal security HE in the BSR. Standing as they are, they have great value in gaining a better understanding of the status and they have been an invaluable resource to the project and for learners. Sustainability or updates on the developments would be of interest – however, most likely available only through other projects or initiatives picking up on the cause or if new projects or other regions consider this a lesson learned and put a more long-time study into their approach.

4 Intellectual Output 3: Case Studies

4.1 Analysis of the Case Study

One main driver for the entire project was the need for demand-driven and well-tailored, reality-based training and education activities. To achieve that, the case studies of this third output were fed into such case-based learning material and highlight the main societal security concerns and challenges in the BSR.

When choosing case studies, their future usability as learning materials in an online course had to be considered. The selection of case studies for the NEEDS project was guided by various criteria. Among other, the following was considered when selecting the studies:

- how up to date was the topic and/ or specific case,
- what was their relevance – especially when it comes to a transnational nature,
- were the global situation and future trends represented.

A first step was to survey stakeholders across the region and ask for which topics were most interesting to them. To then select the most appropriate case studies, the partnership took a decision on the survey replies and above-mentioned criteria. Four case studies were chosen:

- WannaCry. Cyber security was a topic of high interest to stake holders. The WannaCry case was considered a good example for learners to approach the topic through: A ransomware worm that in May 2017 rapidly took over numerous computer networks. First, it infected a Windows computer, where it encrypted hard drive files to the point where users were unable to access them and then it demanded a ransom payment in bitcoin to decrypt the files.
- Climate change. Its very nature and consequences come with major uncertainty, as its future effects are largely unknown and unpredictable. Although society already witnesses rising sea levels and more regular extreme weather events, one can also expect future effects to be more dramatic and to affect more areas than they do now.
- Pandemic. Since starting the project during a pandemic time, it was no surprise that the topic was on people's minds. The coronavirus pandemic (most known as COVID-19, caused by an acute respiratory syndrome coronavirus 2 (SARS-CoV-2)) took countless lives during its initial outbreak, pointed out severe shortcomings in many societies' preparedness and was/is considered an ongoing global pandemic.
- Youth and security. Youth was high on many political agendas and is justifiably an important societal topic. Youth are a big part of society, influenced just as much by crises, and they are the future experts and practitioners of the field and region.

This Intellectual Output was a great example of including youth/students in the project work. Students from the different HEI partners were researching and writing case study analyses which were then fitted to the online course. Moreover, each of the three ISPs focused on a different case study: ISP 1 was looking at climate change, ISP 2 centred around youth security, while ISP 3 focussed on the pandemic. This was especially appreciated in connection with the need for concrete, practically oriented training.

4.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Case Studies

For the development of the case studies, a joint approach was decided on where the case study format and content were created based on the so called six makings-principle. Basing new work and material (partly) on proven theoretical concepts was intended to ensure the quality and sustainability of the results. As a result, the case studies are available in the NEEDS project's online course and online community (and on project webpages). In the online course, they are well-packaged and crucial for the learning experience. In the online community, they have a chance of sparking further discussions and being promoted further.

This output was a good example of student involvement – a practice that should be further utilised by at least the project's HEIs. The Case Study format should be used further to develop new case studies and to promote further the approach and deepen the knowledge of the students, future practitioners, and other stakeholders. It is a task that could be given to students during their studies: to develop and create new cases studies on other topics, thus deepening the knowledge and understanding on various processes, impacts and further effects. By creating the understanding on why crisis and disasters happen and getting deeper knowledge of the impact they have, future

practitioners will be better prepared. The target audience could include (but not limited to) incident managers, executive personnel and professional hazard controllers with wide background knowledge who might be able to connect data and information. Case studies can also be useful for practitioners in the field, as they would be learning from the case studies. The usage of the six makings is an important part: through the case studies it is showed how the makings can be used in daily work by societal security professionals. While there is good integration of the Case Studies already, it is important to promote them further and for practitioners to provide cases (examples) for students to create new case studies from.

The NEEDS project is aware that there will be new cases and new focus on other topics over time. Therefore, it is possible that the existing Case Studies not only provide some good practices for action on what to do in similar situations, but serve as a base as well, for new topics, discussions in the NEEDS online community or even some new projects (which could deepen certain aspects or topics that the NEEDS project dealt with).

In short, after the project NEEDS, the developed case studies can be utilised as a tool to gain knowledge on how the cases developed and how the six makings can be used in analysis in their work, and they can serve as templates and create a sustainable working way.

The case studies are considered a crucial part of the response to the need for demand-driven and well-tailored training and education. They have proven to be a practical, knowledge providing tool both through the process and as a result. It is highly recommended to include students (and practitioners) at an early stage of the development.

5 Intellectual Output 4: Joint Pedagogical Approach

5.1 Analysis of the Joint Pedagogical Approach

The NEEDS project was an educational project that focused on tackling skills gaps in the field of societal security studies and education and considered in its work how to measure skills development. In debates about education, the traditional teaching followed by testing the students' performance is often criticised. Others criticise that new innovative approaches (problem-based learning or inquiry learning) do not work well without proper instruction and support. As far as it concerns Societal Security, students need instructions and more customised and interactive hands-on learning. Traditional methods suffice when complex theoretical matters and related methodologies and techniques are being taught; however, when the topic concerns practical matters, e.g., how to manage crises hands-on, it is more advisable to use interactive approaches. With this output, IO4, NEEDS worked on finding an innovative fitting, joint pedagogical approach both for the project activities and the therefrom resulting NEEDS online course on societal security.

The joint pedagogical approach has been developed through partners combined knowledge where HEI partners elaborated on approaches used in their universities [including for example: Problem Based Learning (PBL), Learning by Developing (LbD), Online International Learning (OIL) and Participatory Development (PD)]. Partners also researched platforms and digital tools to decide on best possible and fitting combination of approaches and tools for the course pedagogics. Digital learning and connectedness became more and more important over the years but experienced both a reminder and push through the pandemic as well, which supported the process of finding

pedagogical and digital solutions. A joint pedagogical approach derived from those collections of experiences and tools. The approach was chosen for the ISPs based on the work within this IO and it is applied for the online course as well. Teachers and trainers participated in a corresponding training before going into the ISPs.

5.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Joint Pedagogical Approach

The chosen pedagogical approaches and their implementation in the learning, teaching and training activities during the NEEDS project can, of course, be a subject of further research as long-term success and practicability can only be proven after longer use. At the same time, the project had a certain focus on creating a fitting pedagogical approach for the ISPs mainly. Also, it means that the joint pedagogical approach of the NEEDS project can be used as an example and can be analysed (and potentially implemented in other study courses). It thus serves as experience for lessons learned and good practices. During the NEEDS project an infographic of the used pedagogical approaches was developed and in the future that may be a great reference point as well an example to use in other online study course development. It is noteworthy that the joint pedagogical approach was chosen and based on real challenges, which may create added value as it is innovative. Moreover, one challenge was that the work was carried out during the Covid-19 pandemic and the first training event and ISP took place online. This means that the pedagogical approach was indeed tested both digitally and in face-to-face settings later.

During the project various approaches were discussed and the most suitable were chosen. Nevertheless, it is important to look for better and more efficient pedagogical approaches: with one of the produced outcomes being an online study course and considering that the online environment is developing quite fast, it is important to observe and look for new approaches in online education. The process of researching pedagogical and digital solutions for creating a joint learning process is however conveniently transferrable as such. The NEEDS project proves that it is important and possible to tailor approaches to even one specific course module. The learning community of the BSR can significantly gain from these learning efforts and they could have a widespread impact. Due to the vast connectedness of the online learning environment, other geographies might also benefit by taking an example in tailoring approaches to their (new) courses or online modules.

Another part of this intellectual output was the accreditation system for the ISPs. Students who took part in the NEEDS project Intensive Study Programmes received wherever possible ECTS from the hosting partner institution, and always a certificate. While courses will always be more sought after with ECTS points (meaning potentially more sustainable), the certificates can be used in applying to other study programmes and applying for work or internships. They have proven to be successful and valuable. By using the certificates, participants bring further and indirectly promote the name of the NEEDS project. New interest might be generated and that may involve new course takers and/ or members in the online community for the societal security practitioners.

The joint pedagogical approach is an output of the NEEDS project that shows how online study process for societal security can be utilised and taken to create new online study courses. It shows that existing teaching methods can be joined to fit a specific topic, framework or audience. It is again important to take pedagogical and technical developments into consideration and therefore acknowledge potentially newer best practices.

6 Intellectual Output 5: Online Course Module

6.1 Analysis of the Online Course Module

The purpose of the online course module (IO5) was to reduce the lack of skills in societal security issues among both old and new students and practitioners in the BSR by providing an online module for self-study that aims to increase knowledge of resilience (societal security). Since societal security education and training has not really made use of online modules so far, it is considered an innovative course and approach. It includes other outputs as learning material in parts or full – such as the glossary or reports. And the course is based on or includes again some of the outputs – such as the case studies or pedagogical approach.

Within the framework of the project, an online learning platform was chosen (CANVAS as indicated in the application) and a course module was created on the CANVAS platform, which is easily accessible and usable without the involvement of an additional mentor. It was partly chosen because several HEIs including some partners are already using the platform which makes the introduction of the NEEDS online course into such HEIs much easier. The content was created throughout the course of the project by drawing upon the knowledge and experience accumulated during the ISPs or provided by the partners and their expert networks. The online training course was then tested several times - students gave their assessment during the ISPs, and several professionals were invited to test the platform. Several workshops were organised with the partners of the NEEDS project, during which the best solutions were found – both in the development of the online course plan and in the analysis and improvement of the content.

The course opens and closes with a self-test skills assessment, providing the opportunity to compare one's skills development. After completing the course, the learner receives a certificate of course completion. It was not possible to guarantee ECTS points through the course alone.

6.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Online Course Module

A major concern regarding the sustainability of the online course was how to run it after the end of the NEEDS project. The question was how to create a self-study course that could add to a learner's skills development and give added value despite not having supervision or direct exchange necessarily. The project developed the online course in such a manner, that it does not require special administration from any of the project partners – neither when it comes to the logistics, nor the content supervision. It is hosted on one of the project partner's CANVAS platform, but anyone will be able to access it (registration required). The content in the online course includes various societal security issues and is fitting for students and practitioners. Having it tested by and amended in accordance with learners' and experts' feedback ensures to a certain degree the interest and use for academia on the one hand and practitioners on the other – hence closing the gap between studies and skills needs.

After finishing the online course, the learner will receive a system provided certificate for completion of the course. As mentioned above, credit points might be more attractive but cannot be issued through a project's course. The course would have to be legally connected to a HEI. This is one step for sustainable application of the course: it was not only considered and developed as a self-standing course for individuals, but it can also be adopted by teachers or HEIs to be included in their curricula or a specific programme. This way, even supervision and potentially sought after ECTS would be

available. RTU as a partner HEI had announced to do exactly that – offer the online course module in their range of studies.

All in all, the course needs to be known and available in order to get established. Sustainability is depending less on interest or need: the latter has been established before the project/ is the reason of creating such a course and testers and practitioners who were made aware or included in the NEEDS process have representatively expressed interest. Sustainability depends now on anchoring the course in HEIs, organisations or in other regional activities.

The NEEDS online course is a very concrete output directed at students and practitioners (beginners or professional). It can be used as such or serve as an example or base for others to develop course modules. It is versatile in the way of being used (individually, as part of a HEI programme etc.). It was considered good to include learners and experts as much and as early on as possible in the development of such a course in order to achieve the most attractive and fitting outcome.

7 Intellectual Output 6: Online Community

7.1 Analysis of the Online Community

The aim of IO6 was to establish a platform online which would combine and host the online course with a shared space for communal exchange. It was acknowledged that a common digital platform is missing in the field and networks of societal security in the BSR. The goal would be to have a digital space for sharing among other knowledge, experiences, education material, questions, announcements and be in dialogue between professions, sectors, organisations and countries.

To successfully implement this IO, a survey was conducted at the beginning of the project where stakeholders from all networks across the region were invited to give insight and feedback from their professional experience in societal security issues. In total, 67 respondents took part in the survey, who answered questions about what topics they think should be included in the training, as well as what the platform should look like in order for them to be interested and to take part in the online community. Respondents indicated that the platform should for example be user-friendly, easy to use, and accessible from mobile devices. More requirements and ideas were collected throughout the project lifetime in activities such as ISPs and Multiplier Events (ME). There it was also made clear that too many platforms or communities already exist – to the extent that on the one hand one does not even know which tools and platforms are out there, which ones are useful, and on the other hand one does not want to join even more communities.

The NEEDS project had promised to deliver the course and community in CANVAS and to research further, potentially better options. The CANVAS promise and option was kept as it is technically maintained and will be maintained by one of the partners, the Swedish Defence University. It is a well proven tool, known to especially students already. However, several possible platforms were analysed for the online community, such as LinkedIn, CONRIS, ACA, TUOVI, CMINE and others. While the message is well understood – there are too many platforms already, the partners of the NEEDS project decided to use two of the researched ones in addition to CANVAS: TUOVI (<https://sisainturvallisi.fi/en/sign-in>) and CMINE (<https://www.cmine.eu/>). This is to learn by actual

use, which one will turn out to be sustainable. Partners continue to actively engage members in and populate these platforms.

7.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Online Community

As just described, not to create a new platform in the field, where various online platforms and communities are available, the NEEDS project decided to create and invite the community to already existing platforms. It is important to create an active community for it to be sustainable after the project NEEDS will end. Project partners may continue to promote and be involved in these communities, further involving their networks like the EUSBSR PA Secure Steering Group, CBSS Civil Protection Network and UBC Safe Cities Commission. They will promote these communities in their networks, and initiate discussions.

The challenge would or will be that without active participants and involvement an online community cannot be sustainable as its foundation is communication and interaction. At this moment ideas are being discussed about how to keep the community active, i.e. once a month organizing Q&A or webinar, etc., promote various events as well as post internships. That could be a way how to involve students easier in the community.

The main take away from this IO work was not to duplicate but to find easily accessible, interesting platforms that are already used by the stakeholders. While there is strong interest in a community and all the functions, it is considered a challenge to keep the community active.

8 Intellectual Output 8: Policy Recommendations

8.1 Analysis of the Policy Recommendations

Part of the overall project idea and ambition was to connect the outcome(s) and lessons learned to the policy level. To do so, the project created policy recommendations in this last IO (IO8).

In order to create the recommendations and thereby achieve the goal of this IO, an analysis of the project results and the project work process was carried out. The review provided feedback on the following IOs of the project: Glossary, Guidelines and Recommendations for Societal Security Education in the Baltic Sea Region, Case studies, Pedagogical Approach, Online Course, and Online Community. The policy recommendations are drawn from and based on all project activities with external interaction (students, experts, practitioners, etc.). They include not only feedback, but also challenges and good practices, as well as ideas for further development and what should be promoted in the future to improve cooperation in the field of BSR societal security dialogue. This was published as a report created and reviewed in collaboration of the partners.

As mentioned above, feedback was provided through activity outputs: so called Learning Teaching Training and Multiplier Events, as well as surveys. Notes were taken as another task of this IO and they served as reference. To successfully implement the project, challenges in the field of societal security research were also analysed, as well as those challenges that were identified during the NEEDS project. The analysis addressed topics that were identified as challenges to societal security research and a common societal security culture in BSR. Similar to the challenge analysis, good practices in societal security research and the NEEDS project were also considered.

In the end, the project partners got together to draw from all the (external) input and the analyses several recommendations for the future of societal security in the BSR. These were written and presented to the Directors General of Civil Protection at their annual Civil Protection Network Meeting.

8.2 Exploring and defining the sustainability of the Policy Recommendations

The developed policy recommendations can be very useful for the future. During the preparation and review of the policy recommendations, civil protection stakeholders, societal security practitioners and students from the NEEDS project's ISPs provided suggestions that were incorporated into the policy recommendations. Because of such a cut through the stakeholder spectrum, the recommendations are very close to practice and should play an important role when it comes to sustainability of the NEEDS project's outcomes.

The recommendations will be included in the online community. But it is important that the policy recommendations are presented in various networks, such as the EUSBSR (European Union Strategy for the Baltic Sea Region) Policy Area Secure, the Council of the Baltic Sea States, Union of the Baltic Cities, Civil Protection Network etc. The policy recommendations reflect sustainability for both the project and stakeholders: From the project's side to give recommendations to policy makers and take influence on the developments in the field of societal security – both keeping the project legacy up, as well as sharing expertise with the stakeholders. And from the stakeholders' and networks' side it shows that they are making use of existing expertise and synergies with best practices on improving policies and work in the field.

The policy recommendations are a concrete attempt to ensure sustainability of the project and its objectives. They do not guarantee continued impact but are a start to anchor results and needs in the overall field. NEEDS project partners would highly recommend reaching out to the policy level and include policymakers early on in the process of such a project. However, it is also clear that not each course or entity that might create a course is connected to the policy level, meaning it is not necessary simply for creating a course. It depends on the overall objectives and goals that are connected to the course creation and the target group. If HEIs create courses (best in transnational cooperation) mainly to extend their offered programmes, it might be enough for sustainability to anchor the course or module in their curricula. As the NEEDS project aimed to bridge the gaps between the actors, it was important (and results showed it was a clear recommendation from stakeholders) to involve the policy level.

The creation of policy recommendations is always a next possible step. It is crucial for strengthening the field of education and training in societal security, but it is not a part of developing the course module necessarily. If given the chance, one should reach out, also to further the sustainability.

9 Evaluation considering the transferability to HEIs in other regions

The presented document is an analysis of the project working ways, an overview of potential sustainability and it now aims to assess and give insights to the transferability of the NEEDS project results to other regions beyond the Baltic Sea Region (BSR). Being an Erasmus+ Strategic Partnership

project, the focus was on the European Union and its Higher Education Institutions (HEIs). The overview aimed at proposing ways of and channels for capitalising on the project results, especially its curricula-related development work as well as its pedagogical approaches, including the online course and glossary.

The approach to discussing the transferability of NEEDS results beyond the BSR, given that this horizon is outside the project’s lifetime, is to rely on, and make use of, existing and permanent European platforms for collaboration as much as possible.

The remainder of the current paper is divided into three main sections. Section 1 is a concise SWOT analysis of the potential for and challenges of transferring the NEEDS project’s results beyond the BSR. Section 2 illustratively identifies some existing platforms that could be used for transferability, focusing on those IOs and the respective results mentioned above, while bearing the wider context of opportunities in mind. Section 3 summarises conclusions into a concise list of practical activities to be considered by the NEEDS project or any future (BSR) project and its partners during and after the project.

9.1 SWOT analysis of the transferability of the NEEDS results in wider Europe

The current SWOT analysis lists internal strengths and weaknesses as well as external opportunities and threats with regard to capitalising on the NEEDS project’s results in a wider European context. Internally, the issue is complicated by the fact that the project ends in August 2023, thus offering little time and few internal tools. Externally, the issue is similarly complicated as, by definition, the project has no control over these elements. Hence, while necessarily somewhat self-critical, like any SWOT analysis, being aware of some of the main results of this kind of evaluation may provide a basis for developing tangible strategies and options to the effect of this task on transferability.

Table 1. SWOT analysis of NEEDS results transferability beyond the BSR

	<i>Positive</i>		<i>Negative</i>
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<i>Internal attributes</i>	<p>Strengths</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has a solid two-part mission: a) transnationalisation of societal security HE, with the aim of a certain approximation of curricula, and b) bringing the HE and practical societal security activities closer to each other. - The project partners have – to some extent – existing collaboration networks in Europe (beyond the BSR) that may provide shortcuts for transferring the project results more widely. - The project has gained practical experience in testing the functionality of issues mentioned in Section 1 under the respective IOS. 	<p>Weaknesses</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The project has no ‘business model’ to ensure post-project activities. - The project has no centralised website, or communication strategy towards a wider European audience and stakeholders. - The project results are largely tailored based on certain BSR or Nordic societal security understandings. - The project represents only a very small number of BSR HEIs with societal security degrees. - The project is anchored not so much in institutions but rather in individuals.
<i>External attributes</i>	<p>Opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -The multidisciplinary field or discipline of societal security needs to acquire a more solid and approximated meaning as an HE degree. - There are plausibly a number of closely related degree programmes in Europe that ponder the same kinds of issues. - Transferring NEEDS results beyond the BSR would potentially add to more European-wide and global networking, contributing to the development of a European epistemic community in this field. - The existing professionals in this field are increasingly looking for more educational and training opportunities that would enhance their capabilities and careers. 	<p>Threats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The identified existing networks and platforms for transferability, some of which are identified in Section 3, are typically already anchored in their respective strategies and activities. Therefore, they may have neither the time nor the will to become familiar with the NEEDS project, especially as there is an abundance of research and educational projects in this field. - The concept of societal security is not particularly well-known outside the BSR, and may not be directly transferable within the context of other European countries’ established and institutionalised vocabulary and culture.

9.2 Making use of existing European platforms

Building Europe-wide collaboration in the field of societal security education presupposes knowing the respective HEIs, departments and institutes that are active in this field. If one adds the professional societal security actors and stakeholders that are also addressed by the NEEDS project, the list of actors and potential collaboration partners easily becomes huge.

When it comes to cooperation in Europe beyond the BSR, the NEEDS partners obviously have their own preferred bilateral and other contacts with specially nominated exchange HEIs. For a more

structured and concentrated effect, however, NEEDS proposes that the partners should utilise and join the permanent European networks, both in the field of HE as well as professional organisations. In the illustrative list below, some of those relevant in the wider European context in particular have been noted.

CONRIS

[Cooperation Network for Risk, Safety & Security Studies \(CONRIS\)](#) is a network of universities with accredited degree programmes in risk, safety and security management. Its mission statement declares that CONRIS aims at increasing safety and security in Europe through collaboration in education and research. Of the NEEDS partners, Laurea and UiT already participate in CONRIS activities. The network facilitates bachelor- and master-level student exchange and collaborative activities. [CONRIS Summer School 2023](#) on ‘Modern challenges of crisis management’ is a good example of the network’s activities.

The CONRIS platform is most suitable for presenting and applying the NEEDS IO1–4 results as well as ISP experiences as blueprints for respective cooperation. This might include a systematic comparison of curricula, joint online courses, summer schools, and so forth.

ACA

[The Academic Cooperation Association \(ACA\)](#) is a membership-based organisation focusing on internationalisation of HE in the European context, and based on national-level agencies and organisations active in the field of international higher education. The organisation’s Secretariat is located in Brussels, Belgium. While not limited to societal security, it has also organised courses, events and publications about such issues as crisis and emergency management HE.

For NEEDS purposes, the regular ACA Newsletter in particular might serve as an important information channel for project results and developments in the societal security field, thereby reaching a wider audience in Europe and among HEIs.

TUOVI

[TUOVI portal](#) is an interactive digital platform for security experts, professionals, stakeholders and networks, with collaboration spaces where registered members can work together. While it is Finnish-based, it also has an English-language version. This collaboration network is most suitable for established professionals and volunteers in the field. Limitations stem from the fact that it may focus more on the BSR rather than Europe at large due to its membership. However, formally there is no such limitation.

In terms of NEEDS, TUOVI portal might be relevant for almost any of the above-mentioned (and other) IOs as a channel for information exchange. It would also work as a basis for maintaining an open societal security online community (in NEEDS this is IO6), providing an existing online infrastructure for an established and maintained network.

CMINE

[Crisis Management Innovation Network Europe \(CMINE\)](#) is a hub for crisis management professionals in the EU and beyond, requiring registration for membership. It is, however, open to crisis management organisations, associations, research projects and practitioner networks, as well as individual professionals. While it does not deal directly with HEI education, it can be used to transfer the NEEDS results and also training platforms to a wider European societal security community.

Much like the above-mentioned TUOVI, CMINE's main activities are organised around thematic groups. For NEEDS purposes, the 'Innovation in Learning, Training and Development' thematic group would be useful. By joining this group, for instance, one could conduct important information exchange with experts and professionals, particularly relevant to NEEDS IO4.

CIPedia

[CIPedia](#) is a wiki-based solution and online community service, with a searchable multilingual glossary of hundreds of concepts, as well as other information. While the service originally focused on critical infrastructure-related issues, it has grown to cover basically all the fields relevant to societal security (such as risk and crisis management or cyber issues). The service is free of charge, professionally moderated (by the Fraunhofer Institute, Germany), and any volunteer can join it to enhance its content, as in any other wiki solutions.

The CIPedia moderated online service would be relevant to IO1 (NEEDS vocabulary), where its results would reach a large existing audience of societal security professionals and students. By the same token, it would become self-completing and updated to some extent. However, a drawback of integrating the NEEDS vocabulary with CIPedia is that one needs volunteers (e.g., students but also professionals) to feed the vocabulary into the system.

ICSSS

[The International Cyber Security Summer School \(ICSSS\)](#), as the name suggests, is organising what will be its eighth course on this special theme relevant to societal security in 2023. The week-long summer school is typically a rather large-scale event, with a multinational group comprising several dozen master's students, PhD students and young professionals.

For NEEDS, joining the ICSSS summer school network would be relevant, particularly the cyber security- related case study (IO3), possibly applying some elements of the NEEDS joint pedagogical approach (IO4), and also for using some of the NEEDS ISP methods and lessons learned.

ESDC

[The European Security and Defence College \(ESDC\)](#), while focusing more on external crisis management by the EU, is a relevant network for all crisis management professionals in the EU context. Its course offering in 2023, for instance, includes courses on EU Integrated Crisis Management as well as Disaster Relief in the CSDP Context.

The ESDC might be relevant for NEEDS in terms of the latter's knowledge of the civilian side of crisis and disaster management. In terms of IOs, the case studies (IO3), pedagogical approach applications (IO4), some ISP experience with a focus on mid-career professionals, as well as the online elements developed in the project could be used to this effect.

FERMA

[The Federation of European Risk Management Associations \(FERMA\)](#) is the representative organisation of the risk management profession at the European level. This is essentially an organisation of several countries' risk management associations, established to enhance the transferability of good practices and representing its national members in a wider European context.

In terms of the NEEDS project, some elements of all of the respective IOs 1–4 might be of relevance and interest to FERMA.

9.3 Considering practical activities to further a project's transferability

Conferences and events

Conferences and events at the European level are useful networking and knowledge transfer channels, not least for NEEDS results. For instance, the above-mentioned [CMINE](#) and the European Commission's [DRMKC – Disaster Risk Management Knowledge Centre](#) keep updated lists of main events. Illustratively, one can highlight the following major events:

[CRITIS 2023](#) is the 18th International Conference on Critical Information Infrastructures Security and will be held on September 13–15, 2023 at Laurea, a NEEDS partner.

[ESREL2023](#) is the 33rd European Safety and Reliability Conference of the [European Safety and Reliability Association \(ESRA\)](#).

[European Civil Protection Forum](#) is the EU's official major event in the field of societal security, which was organised for the seventh time in 2022.

The NEEDS project has not utilised the opportunity to present its results in broader conferences and events outside of its so-called multiplier events. Obviously, standard project presentations in terms of NEEDS results, when turned into proper conference papers (e.g., IO3 and IO4), might fit into the conference programmes. Furthermore, many conferences offer an opportunity for a poster exhibition, which could be relevant for all NEEDS IOs.

Academic journals

Academic journals, preferably peer-reviewed, are the most natural channel for informing the academic community about any project's results. There are a number of European and international journals in fields related to both societal security as well as HE, for instance in terms of pedagogical challenges, methods and techniques.

The NEEDS project has not fully utilised the opportunity to turn the project results into standard academic journal articles. This should be seen as a post-project opportunity for the respective IOs.

Erasmus+ staff exchange

Erasmus+ staff exchange makes it financially possible to visit other European HEIs in one's respective field. In such a case, the sending institute pays the costs of the visits, but is reimbursed through the

Erasmus+ programmes. These are typically short-term (several days, sometimes more), informative and learning-from-each-other visits, perhaps including some presentations or lectures. As a rule, HEI-level (central administration or faculty-level) pre-agreements are expected to be in place between the exchange partners.

The Erasmus+ staff exchange programme provides an easy and convenient opportunity for the NEEDS HEIs to contact their European counterparts to organise this kind of exchange. During such a visit, it would be customary to provide information about one's relevant projects and teaching approaches. All NEEDS IOs and the ISP experience are relevant.

10 Roadmap forward

This Handbook has given insights into the NEEDS project by analysing the intellectual outputs and describing their working ways, by critically reflecting on the sustainability of each of the outputs and by looking into the transferability potential.

Working ways are quite subjective and can differ from project to project and between different partnership constellations. It is potentially helpful to consider lessons learned and good practices and the NEEDS project partners hope to contribute to that via this handbook.

Looking at the sustainability reflection, however, lead to some considerations for moving forward.

- 1. It is important to be aware that most outputs would in one or another way need revisiting after a project ends. Sustainability must therefore be anchored into all relevant steps from early on in order to minimise the risk, as the nature of projects does not usually allow (give room and resources) for activities after the end of the project. This is a challenge even NEEDS might be facing for some of its outputs.**
- 2. A balance should be achieved between outputs that are sustainable as such (stand-alone, beyond the project duration, like the glossary) and those outputs that are rather furthering or attempting to further sustainability because they are an action or activity (like policy recommendations).**
- 3. Sustainability does not always mean producing something new and keeping that output the only valid and sustainable outcome. NEEDS also looked at existing projects and outputs to create synergies and thereby furthered their sustainability as not to duplicate or overcomplicate the work.**

When it comes to the transferability, it has outlined some opportunities and challenges to capitalising on the NEEDS project's results outside of its main focus region, namely identifying relevant information exchange channels with partners outside the BSR. The main conclusions are threefold.

- 4. While utilising each partner's individual contacts, the main strategy for the transferability of NEEDS results beyond the BSR is to rely on, and make use of, existing and permanent European platforms for societal security collaboration as much as possible. This concerns both**

cooperation with HEIs in this field as well as working together with experts, professionals and societal security stakeholders.

5. The SWOT analysis of the NEEDS project to this effect reveals some internal strengths as well as weaknesses. Wherever possible, weaknesses should be addressed during the remaining project period (by August 2023), and the project's final recommendations (IO8) could potentially take those elements of SWOT into account that need further follow-up in the post-project period.
6. In particular, one should agree upon a concrete road map on how the existing and permanent platforms among European societal security HEIs, more general HE platforms, as well as expert, professional and stakeholder societal security organisations should be approached.



Partners

Council of the Baltic Sea States (CBSS) Secretariat - **Lead Partner**

Hamburg Fire and Rescue Service (Germany)

Laurea University of Applied Sciences (Finland)

Main School of Fire Service (Poland)

Riga Technical University (Latvia)

Swedish Defence University

UiT The Arctic University Norway

Union of the Baltic Cities, Safe Cities Commission (represented by the Liepaja Municipal Police - Latvia).

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