

Exercise Unified Response

Design, Delivery & Evaluation Powered by Exonaut®



4C STRATEGIES

Background

The UK Emergency Response sector has seen a growing requirement for effective multi-agency collaborative contingency planning and response measures in the event of disruptive and hazardous incidents. The expectation for a unified emergency response has called for cohesive, integrated, well-resourced and, where necessary, specialist procedures. In order to exercise, verify and analyse these plans, the London Resilience Partnership was tasked with running London's largest multi-agency disaster training exercise as part of the European Commission Exercise Program.

Exercise Unified Response (EUR) was designed to test the activation and efficacy of the EU Community Mechanism to facilitate the provision of mutual aid to the UK from EU member states in the event of a major emergency incident in the capital. The London Resilience Partnership was tasked with simulating the humanitarian, infrastructural and wider economic impacts of a major transport-related incident affecting central London. In the event that the UK's emergency response and recovery resources were insufficient to manage such a major disaster, a request for support from EU member states would be made through the Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) in Brussels.

Major subsurface construction projects, such as the extensive infrastructure currently under development for the Crossrail initiatives, upgrades to the London Underground and substantial high-rise construction projects are underway across London. Previous incidents in the capital have highlighted the risks posed by ongoing city construction and the potential challenges created for emergency services – particularly from an urban search and rescue perspective. As a result, the exercise scenario simulated a large building collapse onto a central tube station, involving heavy transport, mass casualties, thousands of tonnes of rubble and hundreds of emergency responders. An impressive live site was designed to test and improve rescue and civil protection measures in underground facilities.

Exonaut® Solution

A key ingredient for success in an exercise of this scale was the provision of an integrated exercise management system with the capability to manage its complex co-ordination requirements across over 80 participating agencies. Flexible exercise management was equally vital for the main London city command centre and to aid the facilitation of vital information sharing between the UK and participating nations (i.e. missing persons, victims, and public health advice for those involved in the disaster).

EUR required a sophisticated system linking exercise management functions, for the multiple command centres, for exercise delivery (automated injects and resourcing) and allowing for detailed exercise evaluation.

Exonaut® provided by 4C Strategies was selected to provide an integrated management platform to enable i) structured and efficient exercise planning, ii) dynamic and flexible delivery at both a live site and multiple command centres and iii) real-time evidence-based assessments and evaluations, irrespective of location.

Design, Delivery and Evaluation in Exonaut®

Each aspect of the exercise cycle from design, development and delivery through to evaluation was powered by Exonaut®. The software's ability to operate across multiple operating systems (Windows, Android, iOS) and devices enabled exercise Participants, Evaluators and Observers from across the EU to track the live status of the exercise and monitor respective agencies' progress throughout the four day training event.



EUR Design

Exonaut® facilitated the detailed design and complex stakeholder planning that was required for an exercise of this scale. The integrated system scheduled and actively managed over 1800 injects by allocating incidents within the exercise directly to the exercise objectives of the participating agencies. This enabled ongoing analysis and efficient evaluation of the data with a full supporting evidence chain.

EUR Delivery

The impressive live site build for EUR enabled significant exercising and operational rehearsal for major response teams, from Urban Search and Rescue (USAR), EU agencies and Humanitarian Assistance teams, through to Disaster Victim Identification units from multiple EU nations. Exercise participants also benefited from using the Exonaut® Observer (OBS) mobile app as an information sharing tool. In the app, exercise participants could: access the ongoing scenario events; view any dynamic changes made to the scenario in light of participant decisions and actions; view all the supporting exercise documentation and relevant procedural handbooks to support evaluation and assessment.

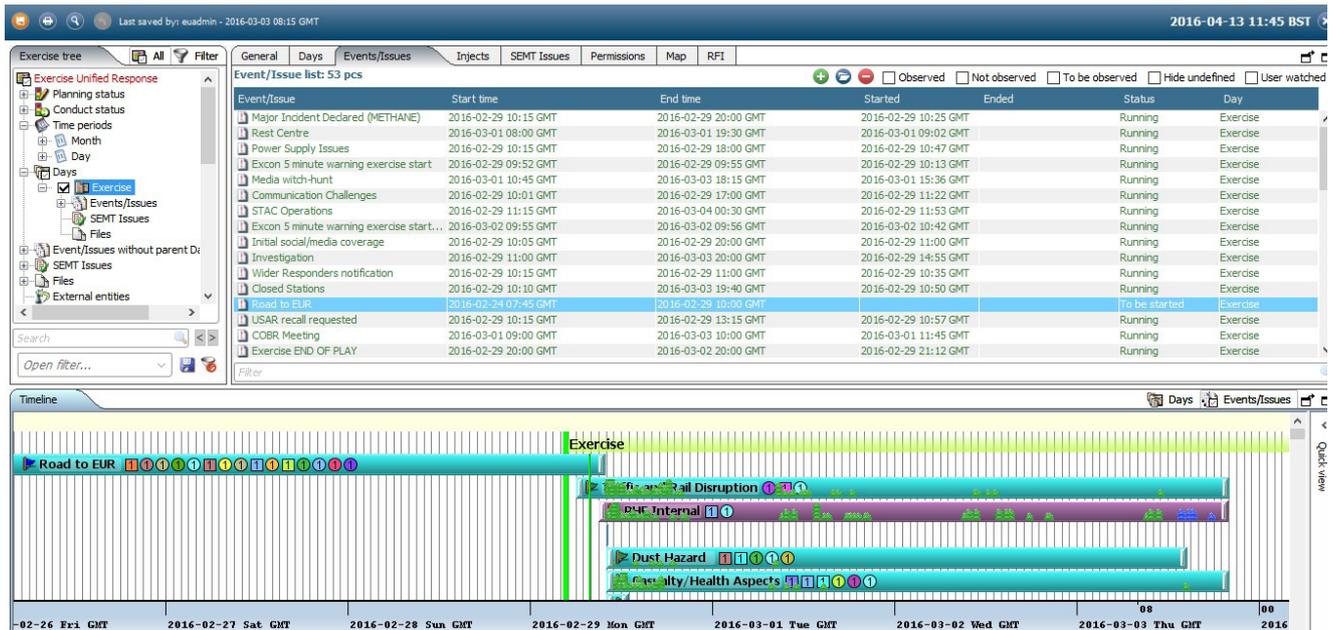
Exonaut® Training and Exercising Manager (TEM) was also relied upon extensively at each command centre to validate London's strategic coordination process. The clear visualisation of the exercise timeline enabled command centres to monitor and control the pace of the entire exercise, simultaneously steering the exercise incidents where necessary and synchronising key scenario developments across the multiple sites.

Simulated Media provided by 4C Strategies

If a major transport disaster occurs in London, there will be significant expectations and pressures placed on the Communications Teams of a wide range of public and private sector organisations. In order to provide exercise participants with an opportunity to be fully immersed in a realistic training event and to challenge communications representatives from the 80 participating agencies, 4C Strategies were also requested to deliver a range of simulated media materials to support exercise delivery. These included: i) Audio/Visual media news clips filmed and edited in real-time by our Media Team throughout the exercise, broadcast as fictitious news broadcasts; ii) our Chirpy™ platform, a simulation tool replicating Twitter functionality, which enabled participants to monitor ongoing social media response and publish their own "Chirps" to respond via social media to the ongoing incident.



EUR Evaluator capturing pictorial evidence to support Observations submitted in Exonaut®



Exonaut® Exercise Synchronisation Matrix and Event Timeline

EUR Evaluation

Exonaut® Observer enabled a team of 80 EUR ‘Evaluators’ (Emergency Unit Specialists) to capture performance observations in a consistent format, supported with pictorial and video evidence and linked to real-time assessments linked to the exercise’s overarching objectives. EUR Evaluators were equipped with smartphones and tablets to capture data on the ground to build a fully auditable evaluation set both for real time analysis and post exercise reviews. Live and ‘real time’ communications between EUR Evaluators enabled a comprehensive data capture process and fully utilised the opportunity to highlight weaknesses and identify lessons for future exploitation.

Value Added

EUR was designed to test and validate current arrangements for integrating assistance from specialist teams – such as those responsible for Urban Search and Rescue – based in the UK and from other countries in the European Union. The 1500 + observations captured by Exonaut® Observer enabled that validation to take place. From strategic command level on an EU wide scale, down to the participating emergency services and local authorities on the ground, each process executed during EUR now has unprecedented levels of evaluative data documenting and verifying capability and, importantly, identifying the training gaps and risks in current contingency plans for continual improvements in the EU Emergency Response procedure.

EUR heralded as a great success

Given its status as the largest civilian exercise in UK history, the exercise attracted a large amount of press attention and public interest. The London Resilience Partnership were successful in using EUR to promote London as a prepared, resilient and leading global city, capable of bringing public and private agencies together. The exercise demonstrated rigorous practice and rehearsal of integral emergency response plans that will be engaged in the event of a major incident. EUR was proudly powered by Exonaut® from strategic management to evaluating the important lessons learnt. Exonaut® supported the London Resilience Partnership in delivering time, resource and cost efficiency, enabling stakeholders to focus on the substance of the exercise, rather than administration and logistics. More importantly, Exonaut® provided the London Resilience Partnership with the opportunity to leverage cutting edge methodology and innovation to deliver a “best in class” approach to exercise management, reinforcing the UK’s position as world leaders in resilience management.