



Swedish Civil
Contingencies
Agency

National exercise plan

**A strategy for cross-sector exercises in the field
of civil protection and emergency preparedness**



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Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB)

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Layout: Advant Produktionsbyrå AB

Print: DanagårdLiTHO

Order No. MSB258-8 - September 2012

ISBN 978-91-7383-258-8

In brief

A strategy has been devised for cross-sector exercises at national level and regional level in the field of civil protection and emergency preparedness. This overarching strategy outlines the pre-conditions and procedures that are considered common for public authorities. Moreover, it is intended to function as a unifying concept within which strategies for Sector Exercises can be accommodated.

The strategy aims to facilitate the direction and coordination of exercises in order to contribute to the enhancement of societal emergency preparedness. It also provides the opportunity to direct and coordinate the participation of Swedish public authorities in EU and international exercises.

The strategy emphasises the need for interaction and interplay between Cooperation Exercises (exercises that aim to enhance cooperation between societal sectors) and Sector Exercises. The intention is to reinforce their reciprocal effects and thereby efficiently help to enhance society's emergency preparedness capacity. Furthermore, to achieve this mutual effect exercises need be evaluated so that their results can be followed up.

The strategy provides a basis for annual, more detailed directions as well as long-term directions of cross-sector exercises at national and regional level.

Individual and collective capacity of organisations

The strategy includes cross-sector exercises intended to enhance both the capacity of individual organisations and their collective capacity. Here, enhancing the capacity of individual organisations refers to the emergency preparedness capacity of an individual authority or organisation, while the collective capacity refers to society's aggregated emergency preparedness capacity. The strategy, however, does not include exercises in conjunction with training courses, since these relate to the ability of an individual to handle a task.

Emergency preparedness consists of two different capacities. Firstly, it consists of the capacity to withstand severe disturbances in functions that are vital for society, and secondly of the emergency management capacity. The latter term embraces both the capacity of management and operational capacity.

An ability to withstand severe disturbances signifies that in each area of operations or responsibility there is an ability to ensure that operations can be undertaken at such a level that society can still function and provide basic services, security and care.

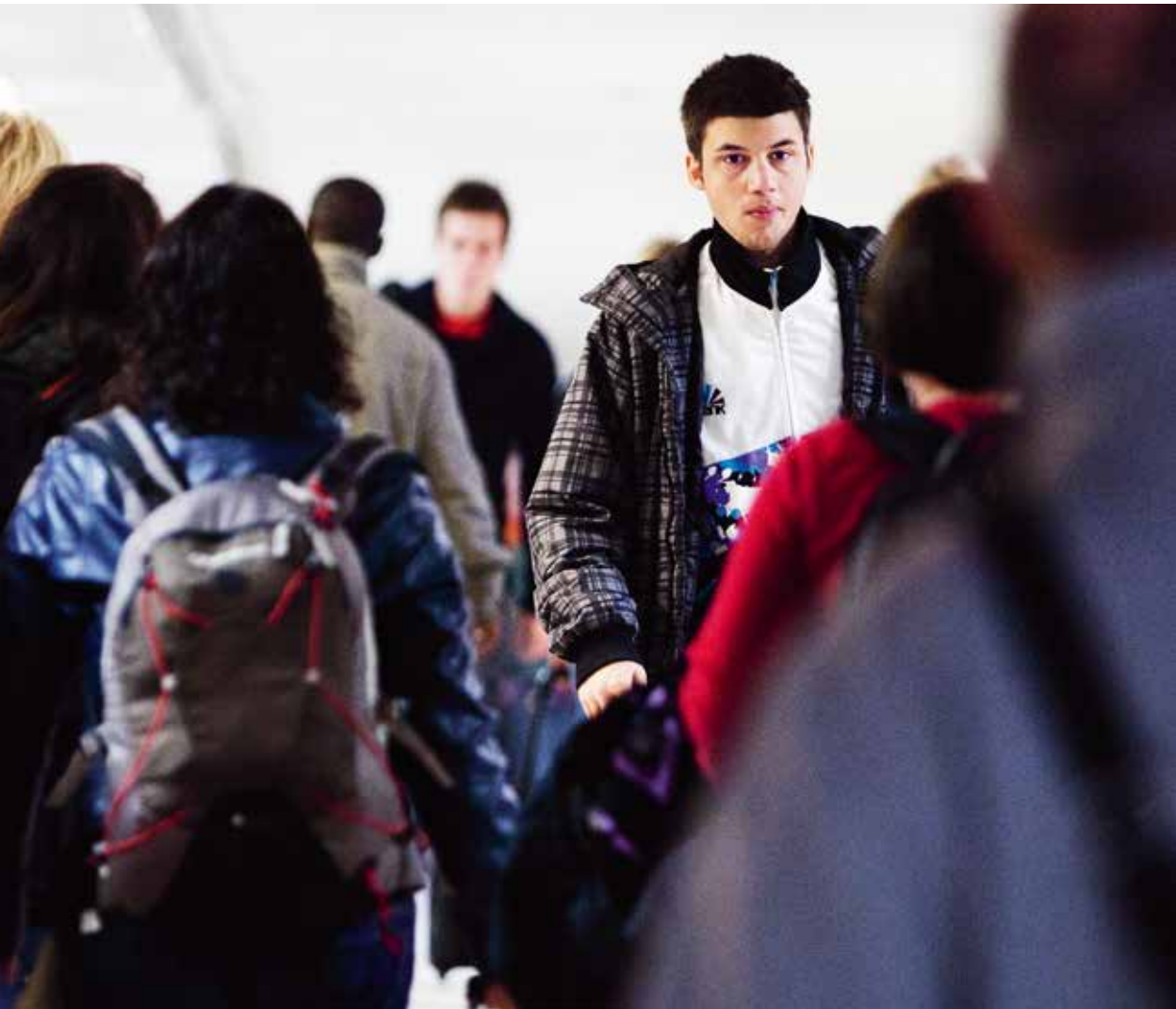
An emergency management capacity signifies an ability to manage in-house operations and take independent decisions in the event of severe disturbances. Furthermore, it refers to the capacity to rapidly disseminate accurate and reliable information and, where necessary, to cooperate in doing this with other organisations. Moreover it signifies an ability to quickly initiate measures to manage, or to participate in managing, the consequences of incidents that have occurred. This also entails the implementation of measures required to rectify, protect and mitigate the effects of such incidents.

What is a crisis?

The Government bill entitled “Stronger emergency preparedness - for safety’s sake” (2007/08: 942) contains the following passage:

“Crisis refers to an event that affects many people and large sections of society and threatens basic values and functions. A crisis is a state of affairs that cannot be managed using the regular resources and systems. A crisis is unexpected, beyond the range of ordinary and commonplace events, and resolving it requires coordinated measures by several actors.”

It is important to remember that different countries and organisations define crisis in different ways. Therefore, Sweden ought to develop exercises that suit different countries and organisations. It is also important to bear in mind how other countries envisage cooperation in this respect.



Strategy for cross-sector exercises at national level and regional level

What is a strategy?

A strategy in this context is a joint long-term guidance to achieve a joint long-term objective. It describes preconditions and procedures enabling organisations to achieve the joint objective within a certain period of time.

Which bodies are included in the strategy?

The strategy covers the public authorities listed in Annex 1 of the Ordinance amending the Ordinance (2006:942) on emergency preparedness and heightened preparedness (twenty-two public authorities at national level and twenty-one county administrative boards at the regional level). The strategy, thus, does not include municipalities and county councils. Municipalities and county councils are, however, affected indirectly by participating in the county administrative boards' Regional Cooperation Exercises (RÖ) and in Sector Exercises that follow the long-term strategy and annual directions.

Which are the objectives of the strategy?

The objective, which this strategy aims to achieve, is to facilitate the enhancement of societal emergency preparedness capacity by means of cross-sector exercises at national and regional level. The strategy provides a procedure to ensure that exercises actually will contribute to such a development.

Another objective is to establish a joint overview of the planned exercises at regional and national level in the field of civil protection and emergency preparedness. This objective also applies to Swedish participation in both EU and international exercises (as an exercise participant or observer, in directing staff or in any other form).

Why adopt a joint strategy?

The enhancement of the capacity to cooperate requires a joint direction and coordination of exercises. Both the results of an inventory review of planned exercises and an evaluation of the Cooperation Exercises (SAMÖ) that have been conducted indicate a need for an extended long-term perspective with regard to planning for exercise. The international dimension and cooperation within the EU must be better integrated with national efforts. A strategy to achieve long-term objectives ensures preconditions required to harmonise exercises between organisations.

What are cross-sector exercises?

Cross-sector exercises aim to enhance cooperation. The capacity to jointly manage the consequences of an incident is practiced. Authorities from two or more sectors of society and authorities with a geographical area of responsibility at various levels - national, regional and local - are the bodies that participate in cross-sector exercises. Such exercises facilitate the enhancement of societal emergency preparedness capacity and play an important role in preventive and preparatory efforts. To perform this function, however, the exercises must have clear aims and be based on joint objectives to enhance and improve cross-sector capacity. There must also be a notion on how these exercises can contribute to enhance emergency preparedness capacity.

Cross-sector exercises require a vast amount of personnel, time and money. These exercises must therefore be coordinated with each other in order to enable long-term planning and thus contribute to greater resource efficiency.

Cross-sector exercises are vital to the system

Authorities with different responsibilities within different societal sectors and authorities with a geographic area of responsibility at different levels can together be considered as constituting a system for meeting the need for a societal emergency preparedness capacity. This capacity is enhanced and tested through cross-sector exercises.



A crucial interaction

There is a need for interaction between Cooperation Exercises and Sector Exercises, so that their effects are mutually reinforcing and together enhance a societal emergency preparedness capacity. The following sections describe how the exercises below relate to, and can reinforce, each other in order to jointly develop an emergency management capacity:

- Cooperation Exercises (SAMÖ) at national level. These exercises are cross-sector in nature.
- Cooperation Exercises at regional level (RÖ). These exercises are cross-sector in nature.
- Sector Exercises at national level. These are cross-sector exercises if they require the participation of authorities in other sectors to fulfil their purpose.
- Sector-specific Exercises at national level. These exercises are not cross-sector since they do not require the participation of actors in other sectors to fulfil their purpose.

Delimitation

This strategy includes only cross-sector exercises at national and regional level. In order to provide a complete picture, it is therefore important to emphasise that the need to exercise cross-sectorally is just as important for authorities at the local level.

Naturally, authorities at national level with sector responsibilities also need to exercise cooperation with for instance the regional level. This interaction between regional and national level is, however, not described here, even though the need is equally great.

It is important to note that all these exercises, irrespective of their designation, practise cooperation.

Cooperation Exercises (SAMÖ) - main purpose and bonus effect

The main purpose of a Cooperation Exercise (SAMÖ) is to practice the joint national capacity to manage a crisis regardless of its cause or origin. Despite this, one must choose a scenario for which to practice. This will naturally involve one or several specific sectors more than other sectors, for instance healthcare, finance, transport or police. Although the main purpose of the exercise is to develop a cross-sector emergency preparedness capacity, the sector-specific capacity that the scenario describes will also be enhanced which is not, however, the main purpose but a bonus effect.

Regional Cooperation Exercises (RÖ) - main purpose and bonus effect

The main purpose of a Cooperation Exercise (RÖ) is to practice the joint regional capacity to manage a crisis regardless of its cause or origin. Despite this, one must choose a scenario for which to practice. This will naturally involve one or several specific sectors more than other sectors, for instance healthcare, finance, transport or police. Although the main purpose of the exercise is to develop a cross-sector emergency preparedness capacity, the sector-specific capacity that the scenario describes will also be enhanced which is not, however, the main purpose but a bonus effect.

Sector Exercises at national level - main purpose and bonus effect

The main purpose of exercises within a societal sector is to enhance the sector-specific capacity. Authorities within a sector are responsible for continuously strengthening their capacity to manage emergencies within their area of responsibility and thus to exercise with regard to sector-specific scenarios and objectives.

In order to fulfil its purpose certain Sector Exercises require the participation of authorities from other sectors of society. Such Sector Exercises will be cross-sector in nature and can thus contribute to also enhance a cross-sector emergency preparedness capacity. This is not, however, the main purpose but a bonus effect.

Sector-specific Exercises at national level

The main purpose of the exercises within a single societal sector is to enhance a sector-specific capacity. Authorities within a sector are responsible for continuously strengthening their capacity to manage emergencies within their area of responsibility and thus to exercise with regard to sector-specific scenarios and objectives.

Sector-specific Exercises are held without requiring the involvement of authorities in other sectors of society in order to meet their purpose.

Interaction between cooperation and Sector Exercises

A precondition for conducting Cooperation Exercises (SAMÖ and RÖ) with a high level of effectiveness, is the existence of an established sector-specific capacity to manage emergencies in every societal sector. This capacity must be continuously maintained and enhanced through both Sector Exercises and Sector-specific Exercises.

Feedback of experience

After a Cooperation Exercise, the evaluation will reveal both strengths and weaknesses with respect to both sector-specific capacity and the capacity to interact between sectors during an emergency. The evaluation results must be followed-up and utilised in future Sector Exercises prior to the next Cooperation Exercise. This interaction between Cooperation Exercises and Sector Exercises must be an ongoing process, through which experiences from each exercise are utilised and gradually enhance the emergency preparedness capacity of both individual authorities and of society as a whole.

Evaluation of exercises

Evaluations are important in order to be able to follow up and give feed-back on lessons learned, experiences and shortcomings in capacity that identified during the exercises.

The overall objectives of an exercise must be broken down into measurable variables in order to enable their evaluation. This ought to be undertaken as soon as the objectives have been formulated and accepted, so that each authority in turn can formulate own goals for their organisation based on the overall objectives.

Selection of scenarios that link exercises

Although an emergency preparedness capacity means being able to handle a crisis, regardless of its cause or origin, one must select a scenario for which to train. To obtain the input values for exercise scenarios, exercises ought to be associated to a greater extent with analyses performed within the field of preventive efforts and with experiences from past incidents, with regard to emergency management, and the emergency preparedness that preceded the emergency. Currently, considerable resources are allocated to identify and analyse threats and risks, while less is devoted to develop proposed measures and to test whether these and the knowledge acquired will result in enhanced capacity.

Work on Risk and Vulnerability Analysis (RSA), capacity assessments, strategic analyses, etc. are important inputs for the scenarios that should be prioritised, as these provide indications of the capacities that need to be enhanced and to which exercises can contribute.

The scenarios chosen for exercises ought therefore to be based primarily on:

- Results of capacity assessments (based on annual themes).
- Results of RSA.
- Results of exercise evaluations.
- A report on interdependence in society.
- External examples (developed by SEMA on behalf of the Government).
- External analyses.
- Annual report “Threats, Risks and Vulnerabilities”.



- Long-term strategic analyses (identifying future problem areas through e.g., trend analyses).
- Experiences of past crises.
- Documentation of research results.
- Direction and action plans.
- Experimental undertakings.
- Political decisions.

Overarching direction for cross-sector exercises

In order to contribute to the enhancement of societal emergency preparedness capacity, cross-sector exercises at national and regional level need to exercise the capacities mentioned below. The same applies to Swedish participation in EU and international exercises. The following selection, which is listed in a non-priority order, is based primarily on directions from the government and the capacity shortcomings revealed during evaluations of previous Cooperation Exercises (SAMÖ). This list must be continually adapted to changing needs, experiences and the enhancement of emergency preparedness capacity.

Private-public partnership ought to permeate cross-sector exercises by inviting the business sector, voluntary sector, faith communities and other organisations.

An authority within one societal sector that conducts an independent exercise determines if and which of the following capacities that are to be exercised in order to enhance emergency preparedness capacity.

Regardless of the choice of exercise scenario, its design should therefore be such that these capacities can be exercised and clarified:

The significance of geographical area of responsibility at the national, regional and local level as well as the relationship between these in the event of an emergency. This also includes acquiring knowledge of the roles, responsibilities and mandates of the various actors.

Cross-sector cooperation. The authorities' knowledge of, and interaction with, other authorities outside their own area of responsibility need to be enhanced through, for instance, processes, networks and functions pertaining to information exchange between sectors.

Cooperation with regard to shared situation awareness. Situational reporting must not be one-way communication to the Government Offices (RK). There must also be feedback from national level to the County Administrative Boards.

The conveyance of government decisions and information by the Government Offices to a certain authority as well as the manner in which other authorities concerned are informed.

Emergency communications and information coordination. The authorities' capacity to communicate with the media, public and victims needs to be enhanced. Working methods for gathering, verifying, coordinating and disseminating information need to be strengthened, and the knowledge of media routines and procedures need to be improved. The responsibility for coordinating information needs to be clarified. The capacity to distribute information in languages other than Swedish and communicate with resource-poor groups ought also to be enhanced.

A key aspect of emergency communications is also the ability to manage information crises and crises related to confidence in authorities.

Exchange and dissemination of intelligence information/strategic intelligence in relation to new threat patterns and responsibilities, and the development of channels and forums between operational and more strategically focused authorities.

The importance of symbolic leadership and trust. Emergency management includes not only an operational approach but also a symbolic aspect. The functional aspects of management, coordination and information management is a necessary, but insufficient, basis for successful emergency management. The symbolic aspect of leadership and cooperation in emergency management needs to be clarified by demonstrating responsibility and instilling trust; all management must be viewed from this dual perspective.

There needs to be a growing realisation of the importance of this dual perspective. In planning cross-sector exercises at national and regional level, this should therefore be taken into account so that there is also an opportunity to exercise the symbolic side of leadership.

The responsibility, role and task of the Government and the Government Offices in emergency management. These bodies have the highest geographical area of responsibility and thus represent a key function for societal emergency preparedness. The need for exercises exists at both a political and a civil servant level (according to Draft Bill 2007/08:92, Section 6.2 Training and Exercises).

Cooperation within the EU and internationally. It is equally important to be able to cooperate within the EU and internationally as it is to do so across sectors at different levels within the country. Protection against accidents, emergency preparedness, civil defence and international operations require joint exercises in order to achieve closer mutual links. Sweden ought to actively contribute towards the enhancement of European and international exercise cooperation. Joint exercises in the Nordic countries, within the framework of the EU, NATO/PFP and the UN are important instruments for enhancing the capacity to manage serious emergencies.



Emergency communication and information coordination within the EU and internationally also need to be exercised.

International humanitarian efforts, peace-promoting measures and cooperation between civilian and military authorities and organisations need to be improved. Present-day peace-promoting measures are often of a multifunctional kind, with both civilian and military components. It is essential that the high level of aspiration for Sweden's participation in international peace-promoting measures impacts on the way in which the authorities that provide police officers, judges, prosecutors, experts in the field of administration, democracy experts, emergency services and other civilian staff categories handle international issues. Civilian and military components have not always been exercised jointly.

Acceptance of international support measures ought to be included in the exercises that are regularly held at national and regional level. The national level must improve its current ability to assist the local and regional level. The capacity and procedures for accepting international resource reinforcement and for cooperating with, and assisting, other countries in acute crises, is primarily a responsibility for the national and regional level and must therefore also be enhanced.

Support from the Armed Forces in crises. An emergency management capacity through cooperation between civilian and military authorities and organisations needs to be highlighted and exercised, as well as the capacity to accept support from the Armed Forces during an emergency.

Endurance. Working over longer periods, which requires shifts, needs to be exercised. This applies to both in-house personnel and the staff of voluntary organisations. Endurance needs to be exercised during national as well as EU and international exercises.

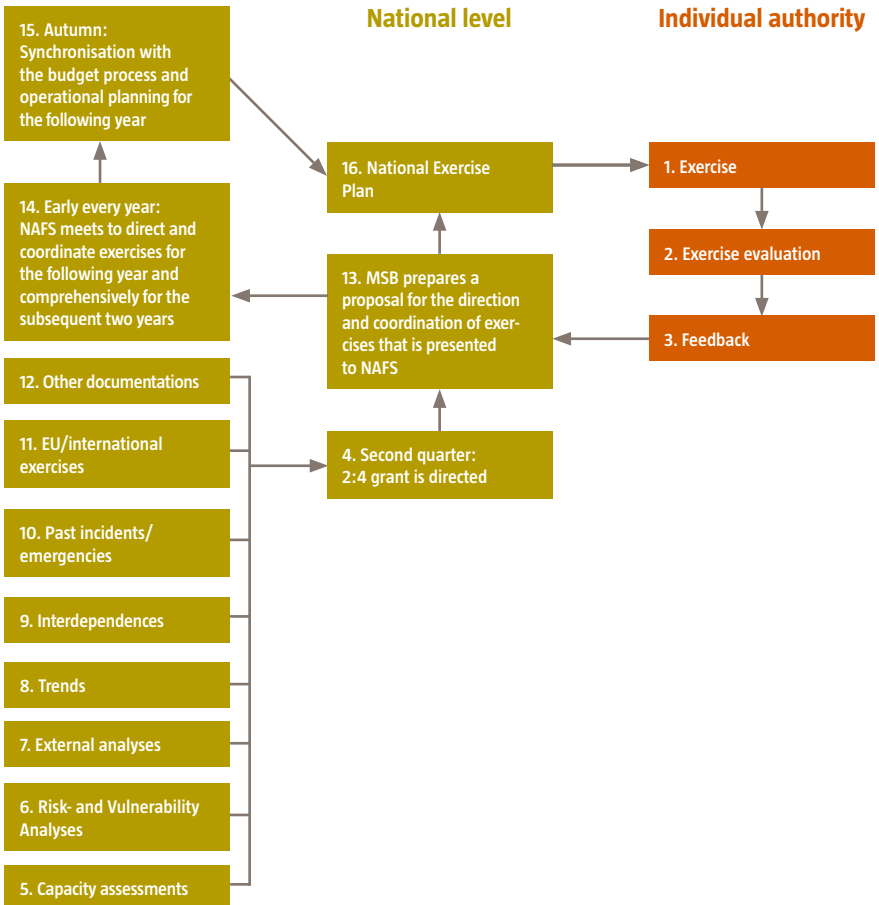
Prioritisation of resources. The ability to prioritise limited resources (personnel, equipment, energy, etc.) needs to be improved through exercises. This entails being able to prioritise among national authorities as well as among Nordic, EU and international actors.

Direction and coordination of cross-sector exercises

The model below describes how a joint direction and coordination of cross-sector exercises are undertaken. It provides a description of what transpires at individual authority level, as well as how such a direction is determined at national level.

The model and subsequent comments describe an ongoing process to annually direct and coordinate cross-sector exercises at national and regional level, based on a joint strategy and an overarching direction. A direction for Swedish participation within the EU and international exercises can also be derived on the basis of this national direction.

Annual process for the direction and coordination of exercises based on a joint strategy/national plan





Feedback from exercises

The authority holds an exercise (Box 1), evaluates it (Box 2) and feeds back the evaluation results (Box 3) to MSB (Box 13).

Direction of the 2:4 Grant

During the second quarter of every year, MSB distributes a direction document with a decision on the 2:4 Grant to the authorities (Box 4). This direction provides additional input for the documentation to be listed in boxes 5 to 12 (see below), in order to initiate planning for the following year's exercises.

Assessment of capacity

The authorities' results from, e.g., capacity assessments, trends, experiences of past incidents/crises, EU and international exercise operations, and other important documentation (boxes 5 to 12), are processed and assessed by MSB and result in a proposal on the direction and coordination of exercises at national and regional level during the following year as well as Swedish participation in EU and international exercises.

MSB also proposes a more comprehensive direction and coordination for the subsequent two years after the following year (Box 13).

National forum for communication about the direction and coordination of exercises (NAFS)

Under the leadership of MSB, a national forum (NAFS) for the direction and coordination of exercises, directs and coordinates cross-sector exercises at national and regional level as well as Swedish participation in EU and international exercises.

Early every year, NAFS holds a meeting (Box 14) to unite on a direction for the following year's cross-sector exercises at national and regional level as well as for Swedish participation in EU and international exercises.

This meeting also aims to unite on a long-term direction and coordination of exercises. This long-term direction also relates to cross-sector exercises at national and regional level as well as to Swedish participation in EU and international exercises.

Synchronisation with the budget process

During the autumn, exercise planning for the following year must be synchronised with the budget process and operational planning (Box 15).

This means that in September/October, MSB receives applications from authorities for funds from the 2:4 Grant for the following year's exercises. In November/December, MSB issues notification of allocations from the 2:4 Grant, and an agreement is signed by MSB and the recipient. Funds from the 2:4 Grant can be used for both national exercises and Swedish participation in EU and international exercises.

There are resources earmarked for supporting the County Administrative Boards, which are made up of both human resources for Regional Cooperation Exercises (RÖ) and financial resources for Regional Cooperation Courses (RSK).

At the turn of the year, a decision is taken on the following year's budget and possibly also on funds for the subsequent one to two years. The public authorities receive notification of this, and are thus aware of the level of financial resources that will be available for the planning and holding of exercises during the following year.

National exercise plan

Each authority determines, based on direction and coordination decisions taken by NAFS early every year (Box 14), its plan for the following year's cross-sector exercises in the field of civil protection and emergency preparedness and for its participation in EU and international exercises. These exercises are incorporated into the National Exercise Plan, i.e., the Exercise Calendar (Box 16).

Each authority also determines its long-term plan for cross-sector exercises and its participation in EU and international exercises, which are incorporated into the National Exercise Plan, i.e., the Exercise Calendar (Box 16). This plan is based on direction and coordination decisions for the subsequent two years after the following year.

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Order No. MSB258-8 - September 2012 ISBN 978-91-7383-258-8