



Cross border safety (CB Safe) Sustainability and implementation of safety info with different user groups, sustainability plan

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1 Introduction

The main objective of the Cross border safety project (CB-SAFE) is to improve safety in border areas and for those crossing the border. Through the measures implemented, safety awareness will increase and information will be more clearly and effectively communicated to those crossing the border. Similarly, the capacity and capabilities of rescue sector actors will also be improved through the virtual training and training environment developed in the project. The project also aims to improve models for cooperation in the rescue service sector and to test out rescue equipment that uses the latest technology. The project brings together key end-users and developers by involving them directly in the project's activities. This ensures that the results of the project can be directly applied in practice.

The project's safety info and measures to improve this are being implemented through Work Package 1 (WP1) = Development of safety info and communications to meet the needs of those crossing the border. LAB University of Applied Sciences is responsible for implementing WP1, while the Southern Karelia and Kymenlaakso Rescue Department is participating in WP1 as one of the substance representatives and development partners from the rescue services sector.



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2 Themes

Six rescue departments that border with Russia (South Karelia, Kainuu, Kymenlaakso, Lapland, Oulu – Koillismaa and North Karelia) were interviewed in 2021 in connection with the work package. The aim of the interviews was to explore the knowledge and experiences of these key actors in relation to the objectives, implementation, functionality and development of border cooperation. In line with this goal, the main theme for the interviews was “How is the safety of border areas maintained and developed through cooperation between rescue service authorities?”

Each rescue department considered that the safety information to be produced in the work package would be very important for tourists and travellers. Based on the interviews, five seasonal safety themes were highlighted as a focus for safety info aimed at tourists and travellers:

1. Taking care when in nature during times when there is weak ice
2. Using winter tyres when road conditions are slippery
3. Ban on making open fires and generally taking care to avoid sparks when a forest fire warning is in force
4. Consideration of storm warnings and the importance of preparing oneself for possible storms
5. Hikers’ understanding and preparedness for the strains of hiking and for changing weather conditions (clothing, food, mobile phone, first aid kit).



3 Safety info for tourists and travellers

In November 2021, LAB University of Applied Sciences held a workshop for students of social services in which the selected theme was presented. They were shown what kind of materials the rescue services have already produced for their public safety communications on similar themes in the past. Questions were discussed as to what kind of safety info should be shared, how the information would reach people, how to take into account different nationalities, and how language and reading skills are given consideration in public safety communications. If videos are made, can we use audio and text or should it just be consistent visual material? Representatives of the South Karelia and Kymenlaakso rescue departments participated in the development work as substance experts from the rescue services sector, providing the work package members with several tried and tested websites and other sources of information from which to draw inspiration for communications and the use of signs.

LAB – University of Applied Sciences compiled the feedback on the basis of which it was decided to compile the work package’s safety info in video format so that it can be used in as many places as possible. Based on the feedback, it was also decided that the video would contain only images and jointly agreed hazard signs. The objective is that the safety videos will be displayed during the project period on television screens acquired and installed at border crossing points in south-eastern Finland. In cooperation with the Finnish Border Guard, LAB University of Applied Sciences is responsible for ensuring that the presentation material is displayed on the screens. This material, produced within the project, is aimed at people crossing the border and tourists coming on holiday to Finland. These people can view the videos while waiting at the border crossing point.

Due to the COVID19 pandemic and the global political situation, it has not been possible to carry out one passenger survey in the Southeast Finland region, which was a planned part of the work package, due to travel restrictions and reduced border traffic. The purpose of the passenger survey was to collect information on what kind of safety info border crossers need during their journey, what kind of information should be produced by rescue services and how, and what are people’s own thoughts about safety and making preparations both before travelling and during their trip.

LAB - University of Applied Sciences has decided to carry out the planned passenger survey among the international students studying at their educational institution during



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autumn 2022. This is too late, however, from the rescue services' point of view. The continuity plan has therefore been drawn up without the data that would be gained from the passenger survey. Customer research and a customer perspective is therefore not available this time round.



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4 Production and use

The videos have been produced through cooperation between LAB University of Applied Sciences, South Karelia Rescue Department and Kymenlaakso Rescue Department, meaning that the significant workload of video production has been distributed among several different actors. In this way, each organisation receives a better return on their investment in terms of the finished materials they can make use of. The videos can be shared through the social media channels of rescue services, for example, or displayed at fairs or public events to those visiting the rescue services' offices and premises. In addition, the videos can also be made available to other regions via the rescue departments' national collaboration networks.

The approach used in the videos is to communicate about safety visually without any audio content, and so the content is suitable for everyone regardless of their mother tongue. In addition to their use at border crossing points, the videos can also be used in the rescue services' own activities, for example when providing general safety info on hiking and weak ice. The purpose of the safety info in the videos is to improve the safety of ordinary people at home, at work, and in their leisure time.

Efforts have been made to take into account the long-term needs of the user so that it will not be necessary to update the content later on. The possible need to update content has been considered, however, so the rescue services can both update the videos they have made and share the updated versions with one other. Indeed, the videos should be updated if any of the matters covered changes – outdated videos must not be used at border crossing points or in the social media channels of rescue departments. Such details could include substantial upgrades to equipment and vehicles or new signs used for hazards such as forest fire warnings. When using the videos in communications, it must also be ensured that the theme-based safety videos are used appropriately at the right time of year, thus serving the safety needs of tourists and travellers.



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5 Continuing cooperation

After the completion of the project, rescue departments will have the opportunity to continue sharing and disseminating safety info on the Finnish Border Guard's display screens. Through the cooperation between the rescue authorities and the Finnish Border Guard, the displays can be used to display information and daily matters such as details of forest fire warnings, incoming extreme weather or other exceptional situations or disruption. Where needed, this information can also be quickly changed or modified. The scope for producing safety info to serve tourists and travellers is almost limitless.

Moving forward, this safety communication channel will be taken into account in the safety communications plans of both Kymenlaakso Rescue Department and South Karelia Rescue Department, and the responsibility for producing and updating safety material will remain with the security services of each rescue department. In order to ensure a rational allocation of resources, it is worth continuing the cooperation between rescue services in the production of safety info.

In South Karelia and Kymenlaakso, people crossing the border are included in safety communications plans as a separate target group. The project has found that there is no communication channel that is clearly allocated and focused towards tourists and others crossing the border. In addition, the effectiveness of direct communications at border crossing points and shared information has been confirmed by the cooperating authorities, Finnish Customs and the Finnish Border Guard, and thus should be continued. Almost all safety info produced for border crossers and tourists is also available in the other public safety communications of the rescue services. The time- and resource-intensive video production work carried out is seen as being beneficial to all target groups both at the national level and in the various rescue service areas.



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6 Future prospects

In the view of the authorities involved, the safety info produced within the project is a good start for public safety communications targeted at tourists and travellers at border crossing points. The safety info needs and relevant topics for such people – as well as the accidents that take place – vary from one season to another and from one year to the next, and there are many identified areas of safety info. As a result, it is a good idea to have ready options to choose between when making decisions on public safety communications. It is possible to systematically adjust, where needed, both the quantity of the traveller-focused safety info developed in the project and the specific content. The most important thing is that the information that is shared meets travellers' needs, is up-to-date, and can be updated when needed.

There have been discussions about rescue services developing a shared material bank. In particular, it would be important for rescue services in border regions to work together and share similar information in a targeted manner.

From the perspective of accident prevention and risk management, it would be important in future for authorities to work together on border area communications and to produce safety info for tourists and travellers based on a shared situational picture. This would ensure the production of safety info content that proactively serves the needs of the target group as well as effective management of related accident risks.



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