

Further Information on:

EU Project Specific Support Action

“Training and mentoring early career scientists from candidate, associated and Mediterranean countries in a whole food chain approach to quality and safety”

Opportunities for Animal Scientists

- **To gain Knowledge and Skills**
 - **To take part in Networks**
 - **To derive new research proposals**
- in**
Meat Quality and Safety

Coordinated by: EAAP with
NFC, (Ireland); IRTA (Spain); UNKA (Hungary) and
ILRT (UK).

Project Summary

There is a need to reconnect the food chain by improving the transparency and accountability of systems. This is particularly important in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. The project aims to increase knowledge and networking for initially 40 Early career animal scientists (ECS) through training and mentoring in a whole food chain approach to meat safety and quality. Mentoring will be supported by a multidisciplinary steering group representing stakeholders in the chain. The ECS will be selected on personal attributes and the quality of RTD concept notes submitted. A selection will be developed into full proposals for future EU programmes. Training events will provide awareness of EU research and the challenges of the whole food chain approach. The ECS will lead the research development process to ensure that the issues are relevant to their countries. A symposium/round table discussion, led by the ECS, to involve the meat chain industry and stakeholders will give wider exposure and ensure relevance of the proposals. Training in presentational and eLearning techniques will assist in further dissemination (train the trainers). eLearning materials will be developed to form a key part of the dissemination process, supported by networks created in the target countries in co-operation with the EAAP contacts, FP6-Food NCPs and the parent research centres of the ECS. Four regional dissemination events targeted at over 300 stakeholders will be organised for interaction, dissemination of research, promotion of eLearning packages, training of other ECS and meat chain industries and feedback of RTD ideas relevant to target country needs. The proposal fits the aims of Theme 5-Food and to aiding co-operation with new, associate and candidate countries. It will provide a forum for the ECS to interact with their peers in mainstream European research, deliver RTD proposals and provide enhanced dissemination of research through innovative eLearning methods.

Objectives of the project

A major study funded by EAAP (Federation of European Livestock Science) 'After BSE – A future for the European Livestock Sector' has highlighted the consequences of recent crises in the food animal chain. The report emphasizes the need to reconnect the food chain by improving the transparency and accountability of systems and the imperative of meeting consumer needs in terms of meat quality and safety. The global consumer demand for high quality animal products that are safe and nutritious will mean that Europe, and particularly the countries of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean that have recently joined or are candidate or associated to the EU (Target Countries), will not only need to comply with food standards that are trans national but also to adopt innovative strategies on quality and safety to remain competitive. Importantly the study emphasizes the need for a whole food chain approach to ensuring quality and safety.

The principal objective of this project is to strengthen the total food chain approach in these countries, with particular emphasis on improving the quality and safety of meat. Specifically the proposal aims to enable Early career animal scientists from the target countries to take part in future activities in this area through the submission of collaborative research proposals on the future framework programme and to improved dissemination and exploitation of research results relating to a whole food chain approach to meat safety and quality.

These objectives will be achieved through training, mentoring and research development extended by a dissemination programme. The project will be led by a project management team advised by a multidisciplinary steering group supported by an existing strong network of contacts in the target countries and strengthened by the inclusion of national contact points (NCP) for the food quality and safety programme of the EU. The ECS will play a full part in advising the development of the project.

Specifically the proposed project aims to capitalise on this strong and existing network to:

1. Select, train and develop 40 Early career animal scientists from Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean to ensure that they are fully equipped to take part in future RTD and eLearning activities in a whole food chain approach to meat quality and safety. The regions/ country groupings from which the Early career scientists will be selected are:

Newly entered: Cyprus, Czech Republic, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Slovakia, Slovenia, Estonia.

Mediterranean rim: Egypt, Israel, Morocco, Tunisia, Turkey.

Central and Southern: Albania, Bulgaria, Croatia, Serbia and Montenegro, Romania.

Former Soviet Union Republics: Byelorussia, Ukraine, Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan.

They will undergo a rigorous and fair selection procedure and be appointed by the of month 3. The selection process will also involve the submission of RTD concept notes which will be used later in the project. The project will monitor and mentor the progress of the ECS through the advice of experienced multidisciplinary scientists in the steering group and the support of the project team to meet their needs and to ensure their involvement with existing centres of excellence. They will be trained in communications and eLearning techniques and be made aware of the state of the art in meat quality and safety in two seminars (months 6 and 9) to enable them to take full part in future activities.

They will be further supported by the creation of a network established between the Early career scientists, members of the Project Steering Group, the EAAP country contacts and the appropriate FP6 National Contact Points (NCP) and centres of excellence for Food Quality and Safety (months 9 to 34). Throughout the period (months 6 – 34) they will be assessed on their state of knowledge against learning outcomes and support given to ensure that the training meets their needs.

2. The project aims to produce eLearning training and awareness materials that will be subsequently used for wider dissemination of the whole food chain approach to meat quality and safety. The work will improve exploitation of research results, research information flow and dissemination through adaptable e-based technologies and resources. The aim is also to encourage innovative approaches to training and awareness, e.g. use of interactive technologies, group work and problem-based approaches and the creation of an online community of practice for collaboration, research and dissemination (across the EU and between members of the target countries).

Course materials will be developed for the various training / workshop events and based on these face to face activities, eLearning materials will be derived. The first drafts will be produced at months 6, 9 and 13. Feedback on the eLearning materials through the ECS and from the audiences attending the events organised by the project will enable further refinement to allow delivery at month 28. The materials will be available on demand from the project websites.

3. A major objective is to develop joint RTD proposals in meat quality and safety that are relevant to the problems of Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean. The aim is also to better integrate and strengthen the ERA by providing the ECS with the skills and contacts necessary to take part in future collaborative RTD activities in support of the priorities of the work programme on Food Quality and Safety.

These aims will be achieved by presenting to the ECS, the latest state of the art whole food chain research approaches on meat quality and safety and to use 8 to 10 selected project concepts (synthesised from the 40 concept notes submitted as part of the selection process) to further develop in a workshop environment whole chain RTD proposals (month 13). These proposals will be subsequently exposed to wider scrutiny in a symposium / round table event (month 18) so that they better meet public needs. The proceedings of the workshop, feedback from audiences and recommendations for future action will be recorded (months 16 and 21) together with an edited Audio -visual record of Symposium/ Round Table (month 21) for future dissemination. Finally it is anticipated that 8 to 10 RTD project proposals in current part 'B' format (i.e. Scientific and technical objectives, relevance, impact, and workplan) capable of further development through the established network will be produced (month 32). It is further anticipated that, post project, at least half of these (4 to 5) will be submitted as full project proposals in appropriate format to FP7.

4. The final objective is to disseminate the outputs from objectives 1 to 3 by informing EU NCPs in Food Safety and Quality, centres of excellence in R&D, meat chain industries, EAAP member organisations and country contacts in the target countries (and wider) of the eLearning training materials and RTD proposals being developed as examples of the whole food chain approach.

This will be achieved by creating and sustaining a project (and embedded eLearning) website (from Month 1 and extending beyond the lifetime of the project). The events will also, through questionnaires, provide feed back on the both the eLearning materials and the RTD proposals for further refinement and also on the wider aspects of the overall value of the project.

The project will organise 4 regional events in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean (months 22 to 27). Each event will extend the format used for the Symposium / Round Table (modified by feedback analysis) to display an abridged audio- visual version of the Symposium / Round Table, describe the 8 to 10 project proposals resulting from previous activity as examples of a whole chain approach to meat quality and safety, describe and promote the e -

based learning packages to be led by the early career scientists and supported by the project eLearning experts.. Scientists, meat industry (especially SME) and stakeholders in the whole chain will be invited and their attendance supported. The events will enable feedback, through audience response and questionnaires, on the relevance of the proposed RTD projects in relation to regional priorities and the relevance and interest of local Institutions in supporting and promoting eLearning packages. As such they will assist in setting up a framework for sustainable delivery of eLearning training packages in Central and Eastern Europe and the Mediterranean with the support of early career scientists, their parent organisations, EAAP contacts and NCPs and delivered initially through EAAP and ILRT, Bristol websites

Summary of Main Activities and Timetable

Training seminar in presentational and eLearning techniques to assist in the further dissemination.

Training seminar to provide awareness of EU research and the challenges of the whole food chain approach

Workshop to develop research proposals later to be submitted as full RTD proposals to the EU.

Round Table/ Symposium in EAAP meeting in Antalya on Meat Quality and Safety

eLearning materials developed for dissemination, supported by networks.

Four regional dissemination events

A timetable of the main activities of the project is presented in table 1. The early career scientists will commit to attending all the events of the project

Project management and advice

The project will be managed by the project management group comprising the 5 partners supported by the EAAP secretariat and the Project Coordinator, Prof. Cledwyn Thomas, the VP of EAAP. They will be advised by a multidisciplinary Steering Group covering sectoral and regional interests. The ECS will be represented by the ECS platform elected by the ECS to liaise with the Steering Group and the project management team to ensure that the needs of the ECS are being met. These groups will meet on 54 occasions during the project.

Table 1 Timing of Activities

| Month | May / June 2005 | | | | J | A | S | O | Nov | | D | Jan 2007 | Feb | March | Apr | May | |
|-------|---|---------------------------|---|---|---|-----|---|---|--|-----|------------|----------|------------------------------|---|--------------|-----|---|
| | Selection process | | | | | | | | Training Seminar 1 (2 days) | | | | Awareness Seminar 2 (3 days) | | | | R |
| | PMT meet | | | | | | | | | | | | PSG,PMT and ESCP meetings | | | | |
| | Mentoring and RTD development | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Develop and assess training materials | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Month | June 2006 | | | | J | A | S | O | N | | D | Jan 2007 | Feb | March | Apr | May | |
| | Workshop (5 days) | | | | | | | | Symposium and Round Table (WP4) (3 days) | | | | | Regional dissemination/ training events (2 days per event)) | | | |
| | | | | | | | | | PSG,PMT and ESCP meetings (WP1) | | | | | | | | R |
| | Mentoring and RTD development (WP3 and 4) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Develop and assess training materials (WP2) | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| Month | June 2007 | J | A | S | O | Nov | | D | Jan 2008 | Feb | March 2008 | | | | | | |
| | Regional dissemination/ training events | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Develop and assess training materials | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | Mentoring and RTD development | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| | | PSG,PMT and ESCP meetings | | | | | | | | | | | PSG,PMT and ESCP meetings | | Final Report | | |

PSG - Project Steering Group; PMT - Project Management Team; ESCP – Early Career Scientist Platform
R denotes delivery of interim project report to EU (months 12 and 24)