



EDITORIAL



Better Training for Safer Food is getting better and better. We have now entered a period of intensive activity in preparation for the next phase of our work. We are currently in the process of contracting for the projects which will be carried out over the next two years.

These projects will cover both our current fields, and some new subjects, ranging from agricultural quality schemes to animal welfare and from auditing to veterinary inspection at

the EU's external borders. When we issued our call for tenders earlier this year, we expected a high-quality response, and that is what we received. Now we are selecting the best proposals in order to finalise the contracts.

BTSF has shifted a gear upwards in fulfilling the mission entrusted to us by the European Commission. We are increasing the size and scope of our operations, but maintaining quality in line with our commitment.

And all of this means, not only better and better training, but safer and safer food – and that is what we are about.

Salvatore Magazzù

Head of Consumers and Food Safety Unit
Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC)

New BTSF training programmes are on the way!

By the end of 2010, we expect to have signed 11 contracts for new BTSF training programmes. These are the first to be finalised within the 2010 work programme, and in total they are worth more than €11 million.

In addition, calls for tenders for four more projects are to be launched in the coming weeks, including one on using **e-learning** as a new form of training.

How the contracting process works

Our contracts for the organisation, management and implementation of training programmes are based on calls for tender. For these projects, the notice of invitation appears in the Official Journal of the European Union in S series, and the offers are evaluated in light of the criteria stated in the technical specifications.

This newsletter provides information on activities organised within the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) initiative. You'll find the latest news and views about BTSF training and issues related to the initiative as well as upcoming dates for your diary.

For the selected offers, an award decision was made, and all the tenderers notified of the results. Within 48 days from the signing of a contract with a successful tenderer, a contract award notice is published in the Official Journal of the European Union, officially closing the procurement procedure.

Want to know more about implementing training services?

Guidelines exist to help contractors meet their obligations. BTSF's operational guidelines for the implementation of contracts has recently been updated. It sets out the roles and responsibilities of contractors running training courses, and of their appointed project leaders, project managers, event managers and training coordinators, as well as minimum qualifications for tutors. It defines training sessions and courses, and sets out the standards for venues for training sessions, including conference equipment, information packs and training materials, and accommodation and catering, as well as the rules on travel expenses. The guidance provides indications of the requirements for social elements in the programmes too, designed to "promote the networking within the group and foster networking among national authorities through strengthened personal relations among officers of different nationality". It also spells out the rules relating to the number of countries from which participants can come to ensure the highest possible mix. Guidance is also supplied on the reports that contractors must deliver at the start of the contract and throughout its duration.

http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/documents/food/BTSF_Oper_Guidelines_100803.pdf

A parallel set of guidelines – on visual identity – also indicates how contractors should fulfill their responsibilities of giving adequate publicity to the DG SANCO Better Training for Safer Food initiative, to its logo and its actions, as well as to the funding provided by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers. This covers requirements for websites, for leaflets, brochures and newsletters, and display panels. It also makes clear how the link to BTSF should be identified in correspondence with stakeholders too. The guideline provides extensive examples and templates of how to meet these requirements.

http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/documents/food/tenders/BTSF_VI_Guidelines_090724.pdf

Spreading the word about BTSF

BTSF was present at SIAL 2010, one of the largest food marketplaces in the world, which ran from 17 to 21 October in Paris. The exhibition attracted 136,500 professional visitors, of which two-thirds came from abroad – from 200 other countries. SIAL's role as a catalyst for global economic trade overlaps neatly with BTSF's work in harmonisation of controls to help create a level playing field for food businesses, and in training officials so that consumer interests are fully protected as trade expands.

During the exhibition, BTSF staff met hundreds of people interested in our activities and the services BTSF can provide to them. The fact that we organise training sessions specifically for non-EU countries was of particular interest to many participants, as familiarity with EU requirements makes it easier for them to gain access to the EU market for their products – and helps assure the quality of EU imports.



Profile of a trainer

The ringmaster – Dr. Anton Bartl

Amid dozens of snakes, lizards, spiders and exotic birds, and surrounded by curious veterinarians and training staff, I was thrilled to be at the centre of this "circus", as the person responsible for organising and management of a BTSF-training course for border control, focused on import control and handling of zoo animals. I had the entire of Vienna zoo as the backdrop for my training ground – and, fortunately, the careful attention of its zookeepers looking after their charges!

Back in 2006, as an official of the Austrian Federal Ministry for Health, I was given the opportunity to take part in a call for tender concerning a training course at airports. We had acquired useful experiences during the Austrian presidency of the EU that year, and we had a recently-built, well-equipped and well-staffed border inspection post at the airport in Vienna. So I accepted the challenge. It was at the time that the BTSF programme was just starting up, so there was little precedent to go on. It was long before the programme had developed some of the procedures and approaches that nowadays we take for granted – such as practical workshops, small working groups, specialised advanced courses, agreement on language regimes, or using questionnaires to form coherent groups.

Practical information: BTSF News is published six times a year. To receive the newsletter in digital form, please go to www.btsf.eu. For current and past editions of the newsletter, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/newsletters.html>. For further information on all issues related to BTSF please visit: www.btsf.eu

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Over the next three years, based on successful participation in further calls for tenders, I had the chance to organize seven training courses for the Austrian Federal Ministry for Health. Airport veterinarians are a relatively small community, and to keep them interested we decided to organize different courses, with training at the highest professional level, and combined with Austrian traditions of hospitality and gastronomy. We offered general courses for beginners, advanced courses, and special training sessions focused on the import of animal by-products, on transit and trans-shipment, on cooperation with customs, on audit and management, and – which is how I got so close to the action – on zoo animals.



Upcoming events

Training Sessions on Plant Health Controls

6–10 December 2010, Lisbon, Portugal

Plant Health Import Quarantine – Wood Packaging Materials 2

Training Sessions on Food Hygiene and Control of Fishery, Meat and Dairy Products

Specific sessions on Fishery products will be held in Hirthals (7 February–11 February 2011)

Specific sessions on Meat & meat products will be held in York (21 February–25 February 2011)

What's new on the website?

Have you seen the BTSF videos of training courses? They offer a snapshot of how the sessions work. The video on border inspections, for instance, focuses on a training session in the UK port of Southampton, with practical case studies – including procedures for checking a consignment of Thai crabcakes. As participants in the session remark, training provides an invaluable opportunity to learn from other professionals in an expanding EU with so many differences in import trends across its many external borders. Take a look at:

http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/training_courses_videos.html



Training in procedures for checking a consignment of crabcakes