

Better training for Safer Food

BTSF Newsletter is prepared by the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers and issued six times a year.

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EAHC launches new calls for tender for BTSF activities



The Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) has now launched calls for tender related to a range of programmes within the Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) initiative. These calls are aimed at identifying contractors to organise, manage and implement activities running from 2013 onwards. The deadline for submission of tenders in response to these calls is 28 September 2012.

A total of five calls have been launched, all of which are mainly for participants from EU Member States. Places on the courses are also open to participants from EU candidate countries, European Neighbourhood Policy countries and European Free Trade Association countries. On certain programmes places are also allocated to Mediterranean basin countries and selected third countries, as appropriate.

In a departure from previous years, each call is made up of one or more different work packages rather than divided into lots. This means that the contractor eventually selected will be responsible for the implementation of all of the work packages within that call.

Another change is the extension in the duration of the contacts to be concluded from two to four years. The maximum budgets for the full four-year duration of the contracts range from EUR 2.8 million to EUR 6.14 million.

Multiple packages

Of the five calls, the first covers feed production and feed-related issues and comprises three work packages. These packages focus on animal by-products, feed law and controls on contaminants in feed and food respectively.

The second is related to training on movement of and import controls on feed, food and live animals and is made up of four work packages. These cover controls at border inspection posts, import controls on certain types of food and feed of non-animal origin, sanitary and phytosanitary aspects of the EU's Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) and control of commercial and non-commercial movement of cats and dogs.

Microbiology and food-borne outbreak management are the subjects of the third call which is divided into two work packages. The first deals with microbiological criteria in foodstuffs, while the second is focused on investigation of food-borne disease outbreaks.

The fourth call, on animal welfare, comprises a single work package with each activity within the programme focusing on a different aspect of animal welfare. These are welfare of both poultry (including laying hens and broiler chickens) and pigs, welfare at slaughter and killing for disease control and welfare during transport.



The subject of the final call is food consumption and information which is also made up of one single work package and focuses in particular on controls on food labelling requirements.

New training subjects

Four programmes which are the subjects of calls are included in the BTSF training offer for the first time. These are the courses on controls on contaminants in feed and food, commercial and non-commercial movement of dogs and cats, investigation of food-borne disease outbreaks and food consumption and information.

All together, the programmes related to the new calls will provide training for around 5 300 participants across 140 workshops. This, alongside those programmes launched in 2012 which continue into 2013, is a further demonstration of the continued expansion of BTSF.

For more information on these calls for tender, including invitations to tender, contract notices, technical specifications, annexes and other relevant documents, please visit:

<http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tenders.html>.

More attractive calls for potential contractors Interview: Salvatore Magazzù, Head of CFS Unit



Salvatore Magazzù, Head of the Consumer and Food Safety (CFS) Unit within EAHC

The training subjects which are to make their debuts within BTSF from 2013 are not the only new aspects of the calls for tender. As of 2012, EAHC has decided to adopt a new strategy for public procurements. We spoke to Salvatore Magazzù, Head of the Consumer and Food Safety (CFS) Unit within EAHC, about the reasoning behind the new strategy and elements which have been introduced.

BTSF: Why has EAHC revised the procurement strategy for the 2012 BTSF calls for tender?

Salvatore Magazzù: One reason is to make the prospect of organising BTSF activities more attractive to potential contractors, thus giving rise to more interest. We hope that this will lead to the receipt of a higher number of tenders from competent, efficient and committed bodies which offer value for money and top class tutors. The new strategy should also simplify procedures for tenderers and for EAHC. Reducing administrative burden is particularly important given the increases in the number and scope of training activities. A further aim is to ensure sound financial management and cost-effective control of activities, while generating economies of scale.

BTSF: What are the main changes made to the procurement strategy?

Salvatore Magazzù: A key aspect is the grouping of related subjects, which would previously have formed separate training programmes, into single programmes made up of different work packages, with one package for each subject and one contractor managing the whole programme. This cuts the workload for tenderers, as they do not have to submit separate tenders for each subject. It will also make it easier for EAHC to deal with aspects such as reporting and payments. Furthermore, we are extending contract duration from two to four years, with contracts implemented in two phases, thus reducing the frequency with which we will need to launch procurement procedures. From now on, the contractor will carry out all training-related tasks in the first phase and repeat them in the second phase but without needing to prepare training materials again, thus cutting costs. Costs will be indexed to market

prices after the first phase and funds should also be set aside as contingency for unforeseen events. Another simplification involves allowing tenderers to propose a fixed price for the entire service and a unit price per participant, covering all costs. Previously, contractors had to present supporting documentation in order to be reimbursed for participant transport, accommodation and food, which were considered separately from training costs. This placed an extra burden on contractors and on EAHC staff responsible for verifying the documentation.

BTSF: And what steps are being taken to enhance competition?

Salvatore Magazzù: The work packages, simplified procedures and longer contract duration should all enhance the attractiveness of the calls and generate competition. The increased volume of contracts should also encourage tenderers to form larger consortia with greater technical expertise, thus increasing the number of actors involved. We are also relaxing selection criteria which it was felt restricted the market unnecessarily, particularly requirements related to the volume of similar training previously carried out by tenderers. Another way in which we are encouraging competition is by allowing more time for submission of offers, with the 2012 deadline set for late-September. In addition, we are promoting the calls more extensively via channels such as the BTSF Infoday and letters to permanent representations of EU Member States informing them about the calls.

BTSF: With increased simplification, is there a danger that monitoring of activities could suffer?

Salvatore Magazzù: Not at all. Our new strategy comprises steps to strengthen control of contracts in terms of quality and quantity. One example is an increase in the number of payments made within each contract from three to five; pre-financing, three interim payments and a balance payment. Before each interim and balance payment is made, the contractor must submit a report which then has to be approved prior to payment. Also, the second and third interim payments are conditional on the contractor training a certain percentage of the total number of participants foreseen by the time those payments are due. As an additional safeguard, prior to making balance payments, we will require contractors to provide a certificate from an independent auditor to attest that the training has been carried out in accordance with tender specifications and the contractor's offer.

Plant-related training to get back under way - Please identify training participants



Two contracts have now been awarded for the organisation of BTSF training on plant health controls and an on evaluation and registration of plant protection products and control of their use and marketing. Both subjects have formed part of BTSF for some years and training within the re-launched programmes is expected to start in late-2012 and run over two years.

Plant health controls training is aimed at official plant health control staff from EU Member States and candidate countries, as well as Switzerland. The programme comprises 16 workshops, each focusing on one of six areas and catering for around 30 participants.

Two workshops are to be held on each of the EU plant quarantine regime for potatoes and the internal plant quarantine regime. Three workshops, each are to take place on the EU plant quarantine regimes for imports and wood packaging material, and on internal controls required by EU emergency decisions on harmful organisms typical for both forested and non-forested areas.

The training on plant protection products includes six workshops on evaluation and registration and a further four on control of use and marketing. Around 40 participants should attend each workshop from EU Member States and candidate, European Free Trade Association and European neighbourhood Policy countries. They will come from national-level bodies responsible for evaluating pesticide approvals or for control of use and marketing of pesticides, as appropriate.

For more information, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/calendar.html>.

Upcoming Courses

For up-coming training sessions please check [BTSF calendar](#).