

Better Training for Safer Food

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

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New BTSF newsletters are here. This edition is bringing to us:

- Interview with Mr Koen Van Dyck HoU G4 presenting his new BTSF team at the COMMISSION
- New BTSF subjects
- Kick offs for the new BTSF 2013 projects had been started

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Interview - "More opportunities for synergies between BTSF and related activities"



In the December 2012 edition of the BTSF newsletter, we spoke to Koen Van Dyck, Head of the Food, Alert System and Training Unit in the European Commission Directorate-General for Health and Consumers (DG SANCO), about new BTSF responsibilities with which EAHC was recently entrusted by the Commission. However, changes have also been made of late to both the composition and tasks of the DG SANCO sector responsible for setting the policy to be executed by EAHC. Mr. Van Dyck discussed the main aspects of these changes with us.

BTSF: How has DG SANCO's BTSF sector been strengthened by the recent changes?

Koen Van Dyck: The main way in which the sector has been strengthened is by bringing together colleagues responsible for the policy direction of the EU-based training and those overseeing development of training for third countries into a single team.

BTSF: Hasn't that always been the case?

Koen Van Dyck: Not exactly. Third country training has always been as integral a part of BTSF as that taking place in the EU. Moreover, everyone involved in defining programmes, be they EU- or third country-based, has worked closely together on aspects such as definition of annual work programmes throughout the initiative's lifetime. Also, both sides work in close collaboration with EAHC in order to give the Agency the means to implement all of the BTSF programmes successfully, which it has done since 2008. However, while colleagues in the BTSF team did work on third country programmes, much of the work in this area was done by SANCO's Multilateral International Relations Unit. I am therefore very happy that colleagues from that Unit who have been so important to the development of the initiative have now joined our BTSF sector.

BTSF: What benefits will come from this reinforcement?

Koen Van Dyck: We are confident that these changes will lead to more opportunities for synergies between BTSF and related activities than has hitherto been the case. This is largely due to the fact that, with this expansion of the BTSF sector, a large part of DG SANCO's international sanitary and phytosanitary (SPS) capacity building work has been brought more closely into the orbit of BTSF. In addition, I believe that having their principal SANCO contact

points on BTSF all working in a single sector will also benefit our colleagues at EAHC in their execution of the training as it should help to make communication flows and coordination on BTSF matters between EAHC and SANCO that bit smoother.

BTSF: What does this mean in practice?

Koen Van Dyck: First and foremost, it has the effect of broadening the scope of BTSF to the extent that it can no longer be seen in the wider international context simply as a training programme. Rather, it now encompasses such aspects as cooperation and exchange on SPS regulatory issues and can thus take on a more active role in promoting a better understanding of EU requirements in this field worldwide. As a result, the BTSF sector, and indeed the EAHC BTSF team, are in a much stronger position to provide input to the Commission's overall SPS capacity building work. The initiative is also better able to make a constructive contribution to other international fora dealing with SPS capacity building.

BTSF: Could you give some concrete examples?

Koen Van Dyck: A good example is the contribution BTSF is now able to make to the work of the Standards and Trade Development Facility (STDF) in Geneva. The STDF supports developing countries in building their capacity to implement international SPS standards and is closely linked to the World Trade Organisation. Provision of technical input on SPS capacity building within the EU's bilateral and multilateral trade agreements is another case in point. On this issue, the BTSF sector works closely with the Commission inspection service of the Health and Consumers Directorate General (Food and Veterinary Office), the service responsible for inspecting and auditing the checking of compliance with EU SPS standards by national authorities of both EU Member States and the EU's trading partners.

This benefits non-EU countries by supporting their efforts to meet EU and international SPS standards and thus export more food products both to the EU and globally. It also benefits EU Member States by helping to ensure higher rates of compliance with EU standards among the food consignments which they import from non-EU countries, thereby reducing problems during EU border inspections. In this respect, the SANCO BTSF Sector's SPS capacity building work provides the perfect back up for the training activities which EAHC executes.



[VAN DYCK Koen](#), [HEYINCK-VAN CALSTER Daniella](#), [ROLLIER Isabelle](#), [CHALUS Thierry](#), [COULON Sylvie](#), [PHUONG Stephane](#)

Eleven new BTSF training programmes set to begin

With 2013 now under way, work done by EAHC in 2012 is beginning to bear fruit and nowhere more so than in the launch of training programmes resulting from calls for tender published over the last 12 months. Eleven 2013-14 programmes for which calls were launched last year are now in the start-up phase.

Seven have been re-launched and cover animal by-products (ABP), feed law, checks at border inspection posts (BIPs), controls on food and feed of non-animal origin, the TRACES control IT system, application of microbiological criteria in food and animal welfare. Four are new programmes on control of contaminants in food and feed, commercial and non-commercial movement of cats and dogs, investigation of food-borne outbreaks and food composition and information.

EAHC with the assistance of SANCO experts has met with the contractors designated to implement these activities following evaluation of the tenders. The meetings were mainly aimed at setting out technical and logistical aspects of the programmes, such as dates and locations of workshops and issues related to content and delivery.

These matters are on the point of being finalised and the training is set to begin. The focus now shifts to the BTSF national contact points (NCPs) in EU Member States, Candidate Countries and European Free Trade Association (EFTA) countries. Each NCP is responsible for coordination of BTSF-related aspects relevant to his or her own country and a key element of this is participant selection.

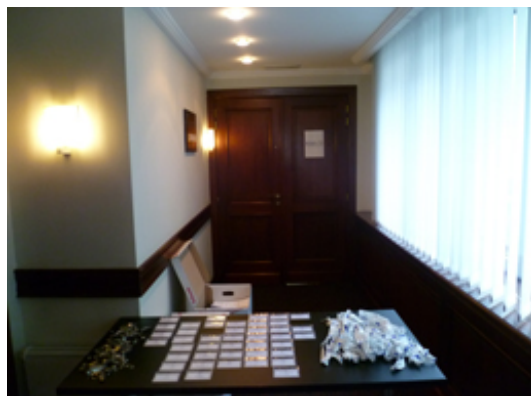


Training contractors contact the NCPs in advance of each workshop to notify them of the event and the number of places allocated to their country. The NCPs identify the most suitable people to participate from their own national authorities. They then draw up a list of participants and send it to EAHC for approval. Participant selection for 2013 is up and running in several countries and will begin shortly in the others.

A set number of places for each country

In terms of allocation of places, for ABP training, 450 participants are to attend. Of these 390 should come from EU and Candidate Countries, with 20 from each of the six large Member States (Germany, Spain, France, Italy, Poland and the UK) and 10 from each of the other Member States and Candidate Countries. A total of 10 participants should come from EFTA countries and 50 from other non-EU countries.

The feed law programme will be attended by 395 participants, with 365 places for EU and Candidate Countries. The six large Member States supply 16 participants each, with 10 coming from each of the other Member States and Candidate Countries. Six participants can come from EFTA countries and 24 from other countries. Training on contaminants in feed and food caters for 525 participants, of which 455 will be from EU and Candidate Countries, 10 from EFTA countries and 60 from other countries.



Training on BIP checks is divided into workshops on airport, seaport and road and rail BIPs. Allocation of participants reflects the relevance of each field to each country. EU and Candidate Countries have between two and six places for each type of workshop and 10 participants should come from EFTA countries.

The programme on food and feed on non-animal origin caters for 30 participants each from Bulgaria, Greece and Romania, 370 in total from all other Member States and a further 40 from Candidate and EFTA Countries. Workshops on movement of cats and dogs have places for 260 EU and Candidate Country participants, 10 from EFTA members and 40 from European Neighbourhood Policy countries.

Different courses for different kinds of imports

Training on TRACES is split into different courses for different kinds of imports, namely animals and products of animal origin, products of plant origin, plants and intra-EU trade. The first three courses each cater for 235 participants from EU and Candidate Countries, five from EFTA countries and 30 from other non-Member States. The course on intra-EU trade has places for 56 EU and four EFTA participants.

Workshops on microbiological criteria can train 370 people, of which 310 should be from EU and Candidate Countries. Of these, 15 should come from each of the six large Member States and eight each from all other Member States and Candidate Countries. Ten places are for EFTA countries and 50 for other non-EU countries. The food-borne outbreak programme should train 610 participants, 560 of which could come from EU and Candidate Countries, the six large Member States supplying 28 each and all other countries 14 each. A total of 20 can come from EFTA countries and 30 from other countries.

The animal welfare programme has places for 770 participants, of which 640 should be from the EU, 20 from EFTA countries and 110 from other invited countries. Finally, the programme on food composition and information should train 615 people, of which 25 from each of the six large Member States, 15 each from other Member States and Candidate Countries, a total of 10 from EFTA countries and 60 from other selected countries.

Further information on all continuing, re-launched and new BTSF training programmes will be made available in due course at <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/calendar.html>.



EAHC publishes new operational guidelines for BTSF

February 2013 has seen EAHC finalise an update of the Operational Guidelines for BTSF training contractors. A meeting between EAHC representatives and the contractors responsible for training implementation was held in Luxembourg on 20 February 2013 to discuss the new Guidelines.

EAHC opened the meeting by welcoming delegates and giving an overview of the training activities to be carried out within BTSF during 2013-14. New elements of the BTSF training contracts signed in 2012 were then discussed. Prominent amongst these is the possibility of implementing contracts over two two-year phases, with initiation of the second phase dependent on budgetary availability and approval of the final report on the first phase.

Attention then turned to the updated Guidelines themselves and EAHC presented the key elements within them as regards aspects such as reporting on contract implementation, payment procedures and execution of training activities.



A substantial amount of time was set aside for a question and answer session so as to enable the contractors to gain a clearer understanding of the main changes arising from the modifications to the Guidelines.

A vital support to training implementation

The main purpose of the Guidelines is to provide advice to help contractors implement the training programmes in the correct manner. They begin by explaining the legal framework governing BTSF as a whole and the contracts concluded within it and outline the different stakeholders and their role in the initiative.

The Guidelines go on to provide activity-related information. This deals with aspects including selection of training venues and accommodation, travel costs, organisation of social events, main tasks to be carried out during training sessions and languages in which training is given. Possible deviations from the initial contracts are also covered, including replacement of designated experts and modification of training dates and locations.



Further advice concerns participation, including allocation of places to different countries and at different workshops, participant registration procedures, storage and provision to EAHC of participation data and deviations from contracts as regards participant quotas. Another section is devoted to reporting and covers drafting and submission of first, second and third interim reports and the final technical report, as well as the possible division of contracts into two phases and the implications for reporting of this division.

A step-by-step guide to payment procedures

Guidance on payments also refers to the division of contracts into two phases, explaining that payment procedures are identical in each phase and setting out general payment terms. This section begins with a time frame for submission of deliverables and execution of required tasks under the contracts. It goes on to describe payment steps, including pre-financing, first, second and third interim payments, balance payments and requirements for requesting payment under contingency budgets.

Provision by contractors of financial guarantees against pre-financing is also covered, including guarantee rules under the previous Financial Regulation which applies to contracts signed before 1 January 2013 and requirements under the new Financial Regulation which governs contracts signed from 2013 onwards. Further information covers rules and recommendations for offers of accommodation and catering to training participants and observers attending at their own expense.

Finally, the procedure for contractors' communication with the EU institutions is outlined, with EAHC named as the sole point of communication.

For further information on all BTSF guidelines for both contractors and tenderers, please visit: <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/guidelines.html>.



Do you know where this is?

Send your answer with the reference "February newsletter" to the EAHC-BTSF-PROJECTS@ec.europa.eu and participate to win BTSF USB key card.

Upcoming Courses

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