

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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BTSF is evaluating the tenders for the call 2012 and new contracts are expected to become valid early in 2013. The national authorities of countries which are eligible to send participants to the workshops have a vital role to play. Please have a look to the subjects.

Aside from calls on the two re-launched programmes, EAHC is launching a further call for tender covering provision of support for enforcement of EU food and feed safety, animal health and welfare and plant health legislation; a new subject for BTSF.

Please have a look to the subjects, try to identify the participants and enjoy beautiful autumn colours.

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Agency begins evaluation of 2012 calls for tender



Autumn 2012 sees the Executive Agency for Health and Consumers (EAHC) continuing with the preparation of BTSF activities for 2013. An important part of this is evaluation of responses to the calls for tender launched in 2012.

It is worth remembering that EAHC introduced a new procurement strategy for the 2012 BTSF calls. This entailed grouping of related subjects into single programmes made up of different work packages and longer contract duration. The aim was to make the prospect of organising BTSF activities more attractive.

The new strategy has met with a positive response from potential contractors and EAHC has now set in motion the process for evaluating the tenders. It is hoped that training in the various programmes will begin in early-2013, but for this, speed is of the essence.

The activities cannot begin until contractors have been identified to implement each one. EAHC is thus working to ensure a fast, effective evaluation process which identifies the most suitable contractors in the shortest possible time.

Important role for national contact points

However, it is not only EAHC that can help to get the training up and running early in the new year. The national authorities of countries which are eligible to send participants to the workshops have a vital role to play.

This comes primarily in the identification by the BTSF national contact points (NCP) within those authorities of suitable participants to take up the training places allocated to their country. Early identification of candidates by NCPs will prove invaluable in ensuring that the 2013 activities get off to a strong start.

Subjects:

The subjects of the 2012 calls are as follows:

- Feed production and contaminants in food and feed with work packages on animal by-products, feed law and contaminants in feed and food (see http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tender_2012_btsf_01.html);
- Movement and import controls of feed, food and animals with work packages on border controls, controls on feed and food of non-animal origin, the Trade Control and Expert System (TRACES) and control of commercial and non-commercial movements of dogs and cats (see http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tender_2012_btsf_02.html);
- Food microbiology and food-borne outbreak management with work packages on microbiological criteria and food-borne disease outbreaks (see http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tender_2012_btsf_03.html);
- Animal welfare with one work package on animal welfare in poultry and pig production, at the time of killing and during the transport (see http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tender_2012_btsf_04.html);
- Food composition and information with one work package on the EU rules on general food labelling and claims as well as on specific categories of foods (see http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tender_2012_btsf_05.html).

Evaluation meetings

EAHC is now looking forward to finalising the tender evaluation. Evaluation meetings will be held from Tuesday 16 October until Friday 26 October in Brussels. The members of the Evaluation Committees will come together in meeting rooms in the COV2 building in the COVENT GARDEN, Research Executive Agency, Place Rogier.

After the evaluation of the tenders and the award of the contracts, it will be time to start the training activities. EAHC will again work closely with the NCPs in order to ensure that the BTSF training remains at the highest level and is backed by an effective selection of participants.



EAHC launches calls for internal auditing and quality schemes training

Although procurement for much of the 2013 training is nearing its conclusion, EAHC's planning of future activities is by no means done, as two new calls for tender are under preparation. They are aimed at identifying contractors for re-launched programmes on audit systems and internal auditing and on EU quality schemes.

Training in each of the programmes is mainly for official control staff of EU Member States and candidate countries working in the relevant areas. Places will also be allocated to controls personnel of European Free Trade Association, European Neighbourhood Policy, Mediterranean basin and third countries. Each workshop within the two programmes caters for around 30 participants.

A need for training on audit systems and internal auditing arises from the EU's requirement that national authorities set up systems for independent auditing of official controls. While Member State officials are familiar with auditing of food establishments, they are less used to auditing authorities' performance of controls.

National Auditing Systems (NAS) are now under development and providing training at this stage will help to establish a consistent approach and spread good auditing practices. This is important given the positive influence that NAS can have on the quality of controls.

The programme comprises 16 four-day workshops. Of these, eight are to focus on setting-up and implementing NAS. These provide an introduction to auditing and examine subjects including safeguarding the independence of audit systems, preparing audit programmes, setting-up of audit teams and training of auditors.

The other eight workshops aim to develop participants' ability to conduct audits of implementation of official controls. They give background on internal auditing and look at how to prepare audit plans and define an audit's scope and objectives. They also consider pre-audit activities, collection of evidence, drawing of conclusions and reporting.



Guaranteeing product quality

EU quality schemes encourage production of foodstuffs that meet strict specifications, protect valuable product names from misuse and give consumers guarantees about product characteristics. These schemes are only credible if backed by effective controls to ensure that products carrying their labels are produced in line with requirements.

Member States have to carry out these controls in line with EU law. The training should give participants a clear understanding of the requirements and help to spread good control practices.

The quality schemes programme is made up of 20 three-day courses. Half of these are on organic farming, while the other half cover three EU protected designation schemes for agricultural products and foodstuffs; namely the Protected Designations of Origin, Protected Geographical Indications and Traditional Specialities Guaranteed schemes.

Workshops look at controls on primary and secondary production, distribution, transport and retail and application of control requirements to quality schemes. They also discuss the responsibilities of national authorities, control bodies and other organisations operating product certification systems.

A brand new subject for BTSF



Aside from calls on the two re-launched programmes, EAHC is launching a further call for tender covering provision of support for enforcement of EU food and feed safety, animal health and welfare and plant health legislation; a new subject for BTSF.

National systems for enforcing EU standards in these fields are regularly inspected by the EU's Food and Veterinary Office (FVO). This programme is aimed at helping Member States to comply with EU rules in areas where deficiencies have been detected by the FVO.

It is made up of two activities, the first of which is the organisation of two three-day workshops, each of which trains 30 Member State officials. The workshops will be tailored to participating countries' needs, providing an explanation of EU food safety standards with a focus on recent legislative developments at European level.

The other activity involves around 180 days of sustained training and technical assistance in different Member States. This is aimed at supporting authorities in the beneficiary countries, including at local and regional levels, in the areas covered by the programme.

Experts will be seconded to different Member States to assess the implementation and control of EU rules through meetings with officials and site visits. They will also support the authorities in developing plans aimed at improving compliance with EU legislation in the areas in question. Intervals between missions in any one country will give the authorities sufficient time to put recommendations into practice and thus ensure lasting results.

Further information on all three new calls will be available in due course at <http://ec.europa.eu/eahc/food/tenders.html>.

Upcoming Courses

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