

# **BIOSAFETY-EUROPE**

**Proposal for initiating training in  
biosafety/biosecurity for countries  
within Europe and external to Europe,  
with particular attention to  
International collaboration partner  
countries (ICPCs)**



**SIXTH FRAMEWORK  
PROGRAMME**

The Biosafety-Europe consortium has identified training needs for biosafety and biosecurity within European countries by means of questionnaires and summarised the results (Deliverable 30). Members of the consortium with considerable experience of providing training within their own countries or institutions used this information to organize training courses in Prague and Timisoara. This allowed them to identify the key factors required for successful organization of courses outside their own countries. Although this project has concentrated on European countries, the principles set out here could be readily extended to other territories with which they have scientific interchange such as International collaboration partner countries (ICPC, former “INCO” countries).

The consortium that organized these courses produced the following recommendations for the successful organisation of training workshops:

- ▶ **Training needs:** There seems to be a clear need for training courses in the new European member states in biosafety and biosecurity at all levels, including practical exercises and visits to laboratories. Deliverables 30 and 34 will be useful in developing suitable training courses though the details may need to be refined to suit the needs of special groups as described below. The availability of courses throughout Europe and the provision of trainers should be coordinated by suitable partners, e.g. The European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC), who could monitor and improve the training programme through regular interaction with senior members of the Biosafety/ Biosecurity profession.
- ▶ **Funding:** Funding should be made available by the European Union to sponsor the training courses, by supporting the development of transferable training materials, speakers and translation. Most participants from the newer EU member states were only able to attend the course because there were no or only minor fees for to be paid for by their institute’s budget To enable participation to continue, funding from appropriate sources, e.g. Marie Curie Instruments, is desirable.
- ▶ **“Train-the-Trainer” Courses.** These are a valuable concept. By this means, experienced biosafety professionals, whose primary professional activity is not the repeated delivery of training, could be used to train groups of experienced trainers about the key concepts to be included in biosafety courses. Those who receive this training would then use the information gained to develop biosafety training courses which they would deliver in their own part of Europe.
- ▶ **Local course organisation:** In order to facilitate the organisation of courses and to attract participants from the region, it is important to involve a local person, institution or organising committee who is familiar with local conditions such as any language barrier.
- ▶ **Target audience:** The primary objective should be the training of biosafety / biosecurity professionals to a good standard. There is also a demand for higher level courses on specialist biosafety topics for biosafety professionals as currently planned within the U.K. There is also a need for short courses on biosafety tailored to the specific needs of laboratory workers (researchers, technicians), cleaning personnel, maintenance personnel, engineers, architects, management, legislators, safety auditors and inspectors. However it is not proposed that these short, specialised courses should be planned or provided centrally since well-trained biosafety professionals ought to be able to specify what is needed for these groups and either deliver the courses themselves or arrange for them to be provided by local training specialists.
- ▶ **Course language:** It would be beneficial for participants to have simultaneous translation since not all participants are very comfortable when speaking English. It seemed that most participants in Prague and Timisoara understood very well but were rather reluctant to

speak English. Trainers should be recruited to cover a range of native languages and adapt the core syllabus to meet the needs of their own language group. Harmonisation is best achieved when language barriers can be overcome..

- ▶ Course outline: The scope of the workshop and the target audience has to be clearly defined in advance. A short description of the desired course outcome is helpful. The course should include both lectures and a more practical part including break-out discussion groups and even practical exercises in a laboratory such as carrying out safety inspections or audits. Enough time should be allowed for the practical part and the discussions. Sufficient knowledgeable tutors should be available to guide the break-out groups. The number of participants should be limited to a maximum of 25-30 people in order to allow a more lively discussion.
- ▶ Course content – topics: Legislation (national and international), risk assessment, emergencies (fire, spill, accident, incident, medical etc.), plant biosafety, animal biosafety, buildings issues, air handling, waste management, disinfection / decontamination, good microbiological practice, hygiene practices and procedures, biosafety manual, biosafety management, audits, transport (for additional detail, see Deliverable 24)
- ▶ Course documentation: It would be beneficial for further courses to provide not only course documentation, including copies of the presentations, but also some material (eg. GloGerm Kit, Personal Protective Equipment etc.) that could be used afterwards by the participants for practical training.
- ▶ Course evaluation and credits: Participants should always be asked to evaluate the training course in order to improve subsequent courses. There should be a credit system in place and organisers should seek to obtain national or international course accreditation. Participants often find it easier to justify attendance at courses when they are officially recognized or accredited. Ideally there should be an exam or test at the end of the course to evaluate the acquired knowledge and competences. If so, participants should be provided with a certificate of attainment, otherwise a certificate of attendance should be issued.
- ▶ Other issues: A publicly available database listing all training courses offered within Europe would be very helpful. A first attempt at producing this list was made with Deliverable 29.