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Project acronym: VetMedZg

Project title: „Upgrading the research performance in molecular medicine at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine University of Zagreb“

Funding Scheme: Coordination and support action

Periodic report: 1st

Period covered: from 01 July 2014 to 31 December 2014

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Deliverable D7.1 – Project Kick-off Meeting
1. **Description of deliverable – D7.1** Project Kick-off Meeting: Project Kick-off Meeting conclusions [month 6]. The Activity 7.2 "Kick off Meeting (and creation of the Management Board)" was supposed to be accomplished between months 3 and 5 of the project implementation. This deliverable was postponed to month 10 of the project, due to the legitimate reasons all explained in the previous report on Deliverable D7.2 – Report of administrative and financial support.

1.1 **Introduction**

Due to the unforeseen situation with repeating the ERA Chair holder selection process, only one required deliverable within the first reporting period was not carried out according to the predicted List of Deliverables; D7.1 Project Kick-off Meeting. After the project coordinator had informed the Project Officer that the firstly selected candidate (prof. André de Almeida) had to resign the ERA Chair holder position, he immediately implied that the Kick-off Meeting may not be carried out in the given deadline (month 6). Failure to carry out the project Kick-off Meeting is directly related to repeating the Panel for the ERA Chair holder selection, which was then completed on 16th of December 2014 (when prof. Mangesh Bhide was selected), and there was no sufficient time to organize and hold the meeting. Being aware of the missing deliverable and at the same time the lack of time to organize the Meeting professionally and accordingly to the protocol, the project management has made a decision to delay the date of the Kick-off Meeting to March 2015, as soon as the ERA Chair holder prof. Bhide started working on the project.

![Fig. 1.1.1 – Project associates waiting for the Kick-off Meeting to begin](image-url)
2. Organization of the Kick-off Meeting

The organization of the Kick-off Meeting began immediately in March 2015, as soon as prof. Mangesh Bhide arrived to Zagreb. Firstly the protocol of the meeting was discussed and the project management established which objectives and issues should be presented at the meeting. The date of the meeting was then set for Wednesday 8th of April, so enough time was left for all important preparation.

Very important issue for the project management was for all project associates to appear and participate in the meeting, so all of the associates were informed on the date and time of the meeting almost a month in advance, so they could clear their schedule.

2.1 Dissemination material

After setting the date, project management started working on the dissemination materials that were going to be presented at the meeting, but used for dissemination of results throughout the project implementation. The web page of the project was completed in December 2014 (month 6), and for the purposes of the meeting it was being updated with all new relevant information on the project implementation. The dissemination materials connected to the project were also being produced and designed during March 2015.

Project management was highly involved in the production of dissemination materials, with the most effort vested by the project coordinator prof. Vladimir Mrljak, ERA Chair holder prof. Mangesh Bhide, WP leader prof. Renata Barić Rafaj and project administrator Sandra Dobranid. In coordination with each other they have managed to produce, design and print the first project leaflet, project poster and roll-up banner. Based on a few different offers, the company for the printing of material was also selected and subcontracted. All materials were prepared in time for the meeting; 100 project leaflets, 10 posters and 2 roll-up banners.

For the purpose of the Kick-off Meeting, a catering company was selected (among few different offers), in order to provide refreshments for the attendees of the meeting. After short consultation with the project associates, the time of the meeting was also set for 1.00 pm, and all were invited by an official invitation letter. Members of the Faculty Directorate were also invited, as well as interested employees of the Clinic for internal diseases, since the meeting was organized in the Clinical lecture room.
Deliverable D7.1 – Project Kick-off Meeting
Upgrading the research performance in molecular medicine at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine University of Zagreb

VetMedZg

7th Framework Programme European Research Area (ERA) Chair project 2014 – 2019

www.vetmedzg.eu era-chair@vet.hr www.facebook.com/vetmedzg.eu www.twitter.com/VetMedZg

Fig. 2.1.3 – Project Roll-up banner
Deliverable D7.1 – Project Kick-off Meeting
3. Kick-off Meeting - conclusions

VetMedZg project Kick-off Meeting was held on Wednesday 8th of April, starting at 1.00 pm, and it lasted for approximately 2 hours, until 3.00 pm. The meeting started with an opening speech by the project coordinator prof. Vladimir Mrljak, who had prepared a presentation of the project for the purposes of the meeting.

![Project coordinator prof. Vladimir Mrljak presenting the objectives of ERA Chair call](image)

During his presentation, that lasted for approximately 40 minutes, prof. Mrljak had presented objectives and purpose of the VetMedZg project and the ERA Chair call itself. In his presentation prof. Mrljak summed up the main and specific objectives of the project, so that the participants of the meeting who are not involved in the project as associates could get a clear vision of the project. Prof. Mrljak also presented all of the project work packages and their objectives and most important activities, as well as all the expected impacts of the project implementation on the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine, and broader region.
As a final part of his presentation, prof. Mrljak introduced the selected ERA Chair holder on the project, associate professor Mangesh Bhide. Since prof. Bhide arrived to Zagreb in March, and immediately he started working on key issues for the project implementation, most importantly the purchase of equipment, most of the project associates did not get the chance to meet him in person before the Kick-off meeting. Prof. Mrljak said a few words about prof. Bhide's experience in project management, his scientific work and publications, and his scientific expertise.
Professor Mangesh Bhide introduced himself briefly, his education and background, but mostly he focused on presenting his working experience, which is very important for the objectives of the project. The focus of prof. Bhide’s presentation was emphasizing how his previous work in Slovakia has served him as an excellent basis for the work that is going to be implemented on VetMedZg project. Prof. Bhide explained his experience in the establishment of the laboratory in Slovakia, purchasing all the necessary equipment, working as a mentor for post-doc students and PhD students, and his project writing and management experience.

3.4 – Prof. Mangesh Bhide at the Kick-off Meeting

As a conclusion of the Kick-off Meeting, Prof. Bhide presented his vision and research plan for fulfilling the predicted objectives of his ERA Chair position. The first line of research proposed for the ERA Chair team and the project is in the field of Epidemiology and Disease diagnosis; a) Rapid disease diagnosis – proteomic tools, biotyping, and b) Multiplexing – Protein line blotting, protein array. The second line of research is proposed in the field of Wildlife, ecology, disease resistance, health (molecular principles); a) HPLC, 2DGE, LC-MS in wildlife research. The third proposed line of research is; a) Biomarker discovery (e.g. Tumors/cancer in pets, metabolic disorder, genetic defects, defects in adipose tissue metabolism), b) Identification of key molecules in cancer pathways – LC-MS, and
c) Comparative proteomics – differential protein expression in healthy and cancer cells. The final proposed line of research for the time being (it is possible to evolve and expand the line of research as the other members of the ERA Chair team arrive and start working) is a) Host-pathogen interactions, PPI, cell signalling, inflammation -> Drug design.

Finally, prof. Bhide pointed out the importance of building partnership and collaborations within the project; Bi-lateral projects, Twinning calls, Horizon 2020, as well as commercial partners. Long term sustainability of the project itself will be enabled by applying to national and EU funds and translation of research into commercial outcomes.

Fig. 3.5 – VetMedZg project team, together after Kick-off Meeting

Full album of the project Kick-off Meeting photographs is available at the project website www.vetmedzg.eu: http://www.vetmedzg.eu/en/media-centre-details/kick-off-meeting-8
4. Participants of the Kick-off Meeting

All the project associates were formally invited to the Kick-off Meeting, after the confirmation of the exact date and time. The coordination of the relevant date and time for the meeting was of high importance, since there are a lot of researchers involved in the project, and almost all of them have the obligation to perform classes at the Faculty. Together with the project associates, the members of the FVM Directorate were invited, as well as the employees at the Clinic for internal diseases of FVM, since the Kick-off was organized in the Clinical classroom. Of approximately 50 invited people, 28 people has attended the meeting, including almost all of the project associates (only 2 of them were excused for the previously organized commitments they could not postpone). In the attachment there is a full list of participants to the Meeting.

Attachments:

1. Project leaflet
2. List of Kick-off Meeting participants
**THE PROJECT**

The essential equipment for the project, in total value of 585,000,00 EUR, will be purchased on a public competition according to the national laws and regulations. Some of the key items are:

- Mass spectrometer which will serve for various investigations in proteomics and metabolomics. It is essential part of Proteomics facility which will be established within the project.
- New Thermo Scientific TSP PC1000 chromatography manager software for HPLC will be essential part for our permanent HPLC.
- The Low Speed Saw is a precision sectioning saw designed for cutting various types of materials with minimal deformation.
- PCR equipment is essential part of the Laboratory for molecular pathology. It will serve for PCR analysis of the animal samples.

**FEW FACTS ABOUT THE PROJECT**

Participants: 19 FVM researchers
9 FVM departments and clinics

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<td>Equipment</td>
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Coordination and Support Actions
FP7-ERA Chairs-Pilot Call-2013
Acronym VetMedZg
Duration VII 2014 – VI 2019

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**Upgrading the research performance in molecular medicine at the faculty of Veterinary Medicine, University of Zagreb**

7th Framework Programme
European Research Area (ERA)
Chair project
2014 – 2019
Key features of the project

- ERA Chair Pilot project is a prestigious European grant awarded only to 11 research institutions in Europe within the Seventh Framework Programme
- ERA Chair holder will manage the project and create his team
- European Commission financial contribution: 2,378,334.00 EUR
- Project duration: 60 months, with the starting date of July 1st 2014

The main objectives of the project

To reinforce research performance of FVM through:
- Enhancing capacities in molecular veterinary medicine
- Attracting outstanding foreign researchers (ERA Chair team)
- Transfer of knowledge and research potential

Specific objectives of the project

To upgrade, develop and enlarge the capacities for research and research performance in molecular veterinary medicine:
- Post-genomic technology (proteomics and metabolomics)
- Comparative tumour analysis
- Wildlife research

ERA Chair’s expected deliverables

- Promote excellence
- Increase of critical mass of excellent researchers at the host institution
- Contribution to growth and jobs

Project expected results

To accomplish all the scientific and technological objectives of the project we will:

- Employ outstanding, leading, experienced researcher (ERA Chair holder) for 52-month-long research contracts.
- Employ four distinguished experienced researchers for 48-month-long research contracts.
- Apply at least two Horizon 2020 projects as a coordinator institution, as well as several bilateral (international and national) projects.
- Establish core facility in proteomics at FVM
- Update existing laboratories in molecular veterinary medicine.
- Organise eight thematic workshops and numerous trainings for young and promising researchers of FVM.
- Invite nine eminent visiting scientist from the partnering institutions for transfer of know-how and skills.
- Promote the capabilities of FVM by showing its scientific excellence.

ERA Chair team:

Recruitment of ERA Chair team - ERA Chair holder as a leading researcher (R3/R4) and 4 experienced, outstanding researchers with profile R3 or R2 is essential task of the project and it will be performed during first 12 months of the project implementation.

- ERA Chair Holder (outstanding researcher and research manager with a proven record of effective leadership) will be in a position to apply as a lead scientist/principal investigator for national/international funding at the FVM, publish independently as a senior author, make appropriate resource allocation decisions and supervise ERA Chair team members.

- One recruit experienced researcher will establish and run Laboratory for proteomics with the mass spectrophotometer.

- One recruit experienced researcher will be familiar with the application of proteomics and metabolomics in veterinary medicine.

- One recruit experienced researcher will be familiar with molecular pathology (molecular biologist).

- One recruit experienced researcher will be familiar with host-pathogen interactions of wildlife diseases.
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