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|  | **EUROPEAN COMMISSION****CONSUMERS, HEALTH, AGRICULTURE AND FOOD EXECUTIVE AGENCY****Contract 2013 96 10**Organisation and implementation of training activities on strengthening Member States' response to Union audits under the Better Training for Safer Food initiative |

Invitation

BTSF Workshop on Aquaculture

To be held at Directorate General for health and Food Safety, (Directorate F, Health and Food audits and analysis) offices,

Grange, Ireland on 8-10 March 2016

Dear participant

You are invited to attend the BTSF workshop on Aquaculture to be held at the European Commission Directorate General for Health and Food Safety (DG SANTE), Directorate F, Health and food audits and analysis offices (Directorate F), Grange, Dunsany, County Meath, Ireland from Tuesday 8 to Thursday 10 March 2016.

The workshop is being organised by Food Safety Training Solutions (FSTS) under the European Commission Better Training for Safer Food (BTSF) initiative.

**Overall objective**

The overall objective of BTSF training under this contract is to strengthen Member States’ response to audits carried out by Directorate F (formerly the Food and Veterinary Office - FVO).

Regulation (EC) No. 882/2004 of the European Parliament and of the Council concerns official controls performed to ensure the verification of compliance with feed and food law, animal health and animal welfare rules. Article 45 of the Regulation requires that Commission experts carry out general and specific audits in Member States. The main purpose is to verify that official controls take place in accordance with multi-annual national control plans and in compliance with Community law.

The **goals** of the workshop are that participants and their respective authorities:

1. take ownership of the findings and conclusions of audit reports on the audits on the topic and use them to improve their official control activities;
2. gain an understanding of good practices in the EU and how they might be adopted in their own situation, possibly with modification to the specific structures and organisation of controls;
3. discuss weaknesses and recurring problems with a view to identifying possible root causes and solutions to remedy or alleviate the problems.

Participants should have sufficient professional experience and responsibility to be in a position to pass on their training to others following the course.

**Background to the workshop**

Directorate F carried out a fact finding project comprising a desk study in 2014, followed by series of fact finding missions to EU Member States during 2014 and 2015, on the aquaculture sector. The primary objective of the study and missions was to gain a broad overview of the structure and variety of aquaculture finfish production in Europe - both seawater and fresh water - and in particular:

* How official control systems ensure compliance with feed and food law applicable to food and feed business operators in the aquaculture sector;
* The suitability of planned arrangements in achieving the objectives of EU legislation in aquaculture, including the promotion of high animal health and welfare standards;
* To identify and disseminate to stakeholders good practice in this sector;
* To contribute to the EU Commission’s Strategic Guidelines for the Sustainable Development of EU Aquaculture.

**Specific objectives of the workshop**

To present and discuss the key findings of the project and in particular to disseminate good practices and to explore how key challenges identified during the study might be best addressed.

**Target participants**

1. This workshop is targeted at senior competent authority officials at central and regional levels who are involved in policy making, planning of controls and staff training. Participants will be invited from EU Member States and EFTA states.
2. This BTSF event is intended as a workshop session and will provide opportunities for peer group discussion. The format is designed to encourage participation and sharing of ideas. Participants will have an opportunity to share their experiences and ideas in the group and plenary sessions.
3. Member State experts from Denmark and Ireland, together with Commission experts from DG SANTE, DG Maritime Affairs and Fisheries (MARE) and the Joint Research Centre (JRC) in ISPRA will be invited to make presentations on specific topics and to act as tutors in group sessions.
4. Participants should guarantee to disseminate the findings from the workshop on return to their competent authorities. Dissemination methods will be addressed in group discussions and follow-up support will be provided, including the use of web tools.
5. Information packages will be forwarded to participants before the workshop.
6. Please note that the workshop will be conducted in English and interpretation will not be available.

The workshop is being organised by the Food Safety Training Solutions (FSTS) Consortium who will act as facilitators and provide pedagogical support. This will include specific web-based services to enhance communication before, during and after the event.

The outputs of the discussions and other findings will be posted on the web during the event in order to keep participants fully informed of progress made. We therefore suggest that participants who have a laptop or tablet computer should bring it with them to the workshop if possible. A Wi-Fi connection will be available during the workshop sessions and Wi-Fi is also available in the hotel.

**Commission contributors**

The following Commission staff will contribute presentations to the workshop:

DG SANTE: Niall Gerlitz (Series Coordinator), Knut Roenningen, Dean Bosnjak, Wolfgang Trunk

DG MARE: Eoin Mac Aoidh

JRC: Johann Hofherr

As well as Member State experts, other contributors include Jordi López Ramon of the Federation of European Aquaculture Producers (FEAP).

**Timing**

The workshop sessions will start on Tuesday, 8 March 2016 at 14:30hrs and end on Thursday, 10 March 2016 at 12:30hrs.

Depending on flight schedules to Dublin airport, it is expected that most participants will travel to Directorate F, Grange, Ireland on the morning of Tuesday, 8 March 2016 and return home on Thursday afternoon, 10 March 2016.

Participants for whom it is not possible to arrange suitable flight connections may have to arrive one day earlier on Monday 7 March, or return one day later on Friday 11 March.

**Workshop agenda**

An outline workshop agenda is sent as an attachment to this invitation.

Further information and course material will be made available to participants on a dedicated website before the start of the event.

**Social events**

A welcome cocktail party will be held at the hotel on the first evening. FVO staff and course tutors will be invited. This will be followed by dinner for participants.

A three course dinner will be held on the second evening followed by Irish music and entertainment.

**Logistical arrangements**

The Food Safety Training Solutions Consortium (FSTS) led by Agri-Livestock Consultants Ltd (ALC) has been appointed to organise the event and make logistical arrangements. The FSTS contact address is alc.btsf.aquaculture@gmail.com. Participant arrangements will be made by the ALC-FSTS team, who can be contacted at this address.

The following costs will be paid for participants by FSTS under its contract with the European Commission:

1. Economy class (or equivalent) flights from the nearest convenient airport to Dublin or first-class train or bus travel as appropriate; transfer from and to Dublin airport to the hotel; transfers from the hotel to Directorate F offices and any visit locations.
2. Travel costs from the participant’s home to the nearest airport/bus station/train station will be covered if requested together with an estimate of the costs. You are expected to travel by public transport wherever possible.
3. Full board accommodation including: room, breakfast, lunch, welcome drinks and dinner.
4. Refreshments during morning and afternoon tea/coffee breaks.

**Travel**

It is anticipated that most participants will arrive at Directorate F, Grange on Tuesday morning, 8 March 2016. Some participants may need to arrive on Monday, 7 March 2016 if it is not possible to arrange flights on Tuesday morning. Most participants will depart on Thursday 10 March unless it is not possible to arrange flight connections and it is necessary to stay an extra night.

Please note that it usually takes between 45 and 60 minutes to transfer from the airport to the FVO offices and the hotel.

**Hotel**

Accommodation will be provided at Trim Castle Hotel, a short coach journey from the Directorate Foffices at Grange:

Trim Castle Hotel, Castle Street, Trim, Co. Meath, Ireland

Telephone: +353 (0)46 948 3000

Email: info@trimcastlehotel.com

Web: <http://www.trimcastlehotel.com/>

**Application to attend the workshop**

Please complete the attached Excel registration form including all required details.

Please send the completed registration form to your national contact point (NCP) for BTSF training with a copy to alc.btsf.aquaculture@gmail.com

Please note that your application is binding and we will proceed to make non-refundable bookings.

An up-to-date list of NCPs is available from the website: <http://ec.europa.eu/food/training_strategy/participants/ms_contact_points_en.htm>

FSTS has planned this workshop in close cooperation with the Directorate F. In most cases Directorate F has already contacted officials in Member States and EFTA states about this course.

Depending on the number of registrations, we may have places for a second participant from a few countries. We therefore welcome applications from other individuals as well as the first nominated participant in case additional places become available.

**Please complete the attached registration form and send to your National Contact Point (NCP) with a copy to** alc.btsf.aquaculture@gmail.com by **Friday 19 February 2016**.

Please send your application sooner if possible. This makes it easier for us to find suitable flights according to your requirements.

We apologise for the short notice period for registrations. If you are unable to finalise your application by this date, please let us know and we can discuss your specific arrangements.

Thank you for your cooperation and we looking forward to receiving your application.

David Dewar

Event Manager

FSTS Consortium

alc.btsf.aquaculture@gmail.com

cc. National Contact Points