



TERMS OF REFERENCE

Food- and Waterborne Diseases and Zoonoses programme

Expert Exchange Programme for public health experts in food and waterborne diseases, Legionnaires' disease and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (FWDEEP)

Overview of FWD Expert Exchange Programme (FWDEEP)

One of the key activities in the ECDC Food- and Waterborne Diseases and Zoonoses programme Disease Programme (FWD DP) is to support capacity building in the national public health reference laboratories and institutes in the EU/EEA. Starting in 2015, the ECDC FWD DP has introduced an Expert Exchange Programme (FWDEEP) for public health experts working with food/waterborne diseases and zoonoses, Legionnaires' disease and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease at national, regional and local level. The aim of this exchange is to offer a flexible and sustainable programme for a bilateral, hands-on learning opportunity for public health experts to develop their skills and competences. These exchanges will be advertised through an open call for invitation, which will be addressed to the National Focal Points and advertised to the relevant ECDC networks under the auspice of FWD DP, namely FWD-Net, ELDSNet, and EuroCJD.

The FWDEEP entails an exchange visit of professionals between public health institutes or laboratories across the EU/EEA. Individual experts from national, regional or local level, depending on the national priorities that will add EU value, will have a chance to spend a period of two to five days in a selected hosting site on an on-the-job training principle.

The identification of hosting sites will be via a free match approach, whereby the applicant expert identifies a suitable hosting site and asks for a written acceptance for a visit from the hosting site. Pending budget availability, ECDC will organise and cover the logistical costs (travel, accommodation, per diem) of this exchange. No direct compensation is foreseen for hosting sites but they will get a priority when sending their own experts to visit another institute.

An individual expert will visit one hosting site in the EU/EEA, whereby each learning visit is organised around one or more specific topic/s as outlined in the scope of the application.

The exchange is expected to cascade newly gained knowledge to his/her colleagues in his/her home country after the exchange period and/or have a significant impact on improving public health laboratory capability, surveillance, as well as detection and response to food- and waterborne outbreaks.

At the end of the exchange visit, the expert is expected to submit a report of the exchange in the format outlined in Annex III. This report will summarise the exchange, outlining its scope and topics of the exchange and discuss the outcomes and skills that were acquired and delivered thereby highlighting how the knowledge and learning objectives were met. It will conclude by explaining how the skills and knowledge gained through the exchange will be cascaded to the expert's institution or Member State. The exchange visit may also be executed as an audit, for instance where an external expert (the exchange) visits a laboratory and audits a specified area of laboratory work or assess the outbreak investigation capacity.

Selection criteria for experts to participate in FWDEEP

The FWDEEP is open to all technical experts working in an EU/EEA public health institute or laboratory at the national, regional or local level. The application of experts working on regional or local level must be supported by the relevant National Focal Point.

The host institute of the exchange must be an EU/EEA Member State public health entity, for instance a public health institute or a public health laboratory. Exchange visits must be between two EU/EEA countries.

The area of expertise of the applying expert should include one or more of the diseases covered by the ECDC FWD DP¹, namely:

anthrax, botulism, brucellosis, campylobacteriosis, cholera, cryptosporidiosis, echinococcosis, giardiasis, hepatitis A, legionnaires' disease, leptospirosis, listeriosis, norovirus infection, salmonellosis, shigellosis, toxoplasmosis, trichinellosis, typhoid and paratyphoid fever, variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease, Shiga toxin/ verocytotoxin - producing Escherichia coli (STEC/VTEC) infection, and yersiniosis.

Other diseases within the field of food- and waterborne diseases or zoonoses may be proposed, e.g. in case of a new, emerging food- and waterborne disease or zoonosis, which is not listed above.

Professional profiles of applicants may include: epidemiologist, microbiologist, laboratory technician, bioinformatician, quality assurance expert or any other public health expert fulfilling the national interest for capability building.

The selected expert should present a plan how the acquired skills/knowledge will be cascaded further within his/her country and how this will add public health value in the EU.

¹ Additional information on ECDC Food- and Waterborne Diseases and Zoonoses programme are available on the ECDC website: http://www.ecdc.europa.eu/en/healthtopics/Pages/health_topics_disease_group.aspx

A previous hosting site will receive a priority when sending their expert to visit another institute.

Content and learning objectives

The **scope** of the training may include, but is not limited to the following topics:

- diagnostics, confirmation and further characterisation of isolates or directly from clinical samples, including molecular typing and sequence-based methods;
- quality assurance in a laboratory;
- outbreak detection, investigation and management.

The foreseen **learning objectives** are:

- to facilitate harmonisation and sharing of good laboratory practices across the EU/EEA;
- to encourage mutual learning and networking within the EU/EEA;
- to improve countries national, regional or local capacity and competence to diagnose and identify the organisms causing the diseases, particularly as part of surveillance;
- to respond to outbreaks/clusters and apply relevant methods for the outbreak investigation.

The **knowledge objectives** are:

To understand the principles and technical challenges in performing diagnostic and molecular typing methods (detection, confirmation, and further characterisation) currently available for diagnostics;

- to understand the relevant epidemiological methods and how they interact with the laboratory results;
- to understand the quality assurance principles and processes in a laboratory, including requirements for accreditation;
- to understand the multidisciplinary dimension of FWD diseases, Legionnaires' disease and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease included, outbreak investigation, management and prevention.

The **skills** to be acquired could promote national competence through:

- improved ability to carry out selected diagnostic and characterisation technique/s, including molecular typing methodologies and subsequently improved surveillance;
- ability to develop and/or implement a quality assurance system in the laboratory, supporting the activities towards accreditation;
- ability to perform laboratory investigations in a Legionnaires' disease cluster or foodborne outbreak situation;
- ability to conduct outbreak investigations.

Selection process:

The participating experts will be identified by their National Coordinators/National Focal Points and selected by ECDC on the basis of their application to the expert exchange. The application will be evaluated in accordance with the Terms of Reference, the general criteria and the content and learning objectives set out within. The application will be weighted according to the points allocated to the three criteria in the application form.

The identification of hosting sites will be via a free match approach, whereby the applicant expert identifies a suitable hosting site and is able to provide written acceptance by the hosting site. A host site, defined as a Member State public health entity (e.g. public health institute, public health laboratories) must be willing to host the expert for a period not longer than one working week for an on-the-job training; and be capable of providing the expert with necessary mentoring support by one or more on-site staff member. No direct compensation is foreseen for hosting sites. The choice of host site identified in the application will also be taken into consideration. The exchange visit may also be executed as an audit, for instance where an external expert (the exchangee) visits a laboratory and audits a specified area of laboratory work or assess the outbreak investigation capacity.

The proposed host site must:

- Be a public health institute or laboratory in the public sector based in one EU/EEA Member State;
- Work in the field of activity that includes food- and waterborne and zoonoses, Legionnaire's diseases and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease;
- Be willing to host the expert and identify a contact point for the purpose of the exchange;

Documents to be submitted:

For the application to be considered valid, the following documents must be submitted to FWD@ecdc.europa.eu :

- Completed application form
- Curriculum Vitae
- Written acceptance by host institution
- The application of experts working on regional or local level must be supported by the relevant National Focal Point.